

2026-27 Federal Budget Submission

Shift problem recognition into strategic investment to stop men's use of domestic and family violence



Acknowledgement of country

No to Violence acknowledges First Nations Peoples across these lands; the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters. We pay respect to all Elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge a deep connection with country which has existed over 60,000 years. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded, and this was and always will be First Nation's land.

About No to Violence

No to Violence is the Australian peak body for organisations and individuals committed to ending men's use of domestic and family violence. For over 30 years, we have worked to end men's use of domestic and family violence. We undertake research, training and advocacy to stop domestic and family violence at the source. We support specialist men's domestic and family violence services and operate the national Men's Referral Service, a 24/7 telephone and online counselling and referral service to link men to the support they need to get on a pathway of change and end their use of violence.

As a feminist organisation, the safety of women and children is at the centre of everything we do. It is by ending men's violence that families can have happier, safer, and more fulfilled lives.

Our members come from a diverse range of professional and community backgrounds and work in a number of settings including the community sector, government, and private practice.

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Summary of recommendations

1. Establish a strategic and coordinated approach to ending men's use of domestic and family violence
 - a. Develop a dedicated whole-of-government strategy to address men's use of domestic and family violence
 - b. Develop systems architecture to coordinate the implementation of the strategy across government
2. Significantly increase investment in interventions for men using and at risk of using domestic and family violence
 - a. Scale early intervention approaches for men at risk of using or beginning to use violence at critical life events and through universal, legal and allied service touchpoints
 - b. Increase funding for a broader integrated continuum of interventions for men using domestic and family violence
 - c. Expand the delivery of MBCPs and resource programs to be delivered to best practice standards
3. Establish a National Violence Intervention Learning Collaborative
4. Invest in First Nations community-controlled, self-determined solutions
5. Increase investment to enable the successful delivery of the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children
 - a. Invest \$1.01 billion over 4 years to lift the domestic, family and sexual violence frontline out of a state of crisis
 - b. Fund victim-survivors and domestic, family and sexual violence peak bodies to shape the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children

Executive summary

Recent data from the Ten to Men study reveals that approximately 35% of Australian men aged 18-65 have used intimate partner violence in their lifetime¹, based on self-reported emotional, physical or sexual violence toward a partner. This represents approximately 2.5 million Australian men.² When considering men's use of violence against other family members – such as children and parents – for which comparable national data is limited, the enormous scale of perpetration of domestic and family violence becomes clear.

The consequences of this violence are devastating. One in four women (27%) have experienced intimate partner violence since the age of 15, and 39% of Australians have experienced family violence in childhood.^{3 4} At least 362 women have been killed by an intimate partner and 123 children killed by a parent in the last 10 years.⁵ The social, health and economic impacts that reverberate from this violence are horrific. Available data shows that intimate partner violence is the leading preventable contributor of death, disability, and illness for women aged 18 to 44⁶, and violence against women and their children costs Australia more than \$28 billion each year.⁷

Despite widespread perpetration, responses to men using domestic and family violence remain limited and predominantly come far too late. There is an over-reliance on late-stage criminal and civil legal responses, with the reactive status quo enabling rather than preventing harm and crisis. In addition to the devastating impacts for victim-survivors outlined above, the enabling of this escalation of violence places a significant strain on systems: approximately 40% of police resources are devoted to responding to domestic and family violence⁸; courts are clogged with domestic and family violence cases, including 86% of parenting cases in the Federal Circuit and Family Court involving allegations of family violence⁹; and family violence is a primary driver of the child protection system and contributes to poorer educational outcomes.^{10 11}

This largely stems from a lack of dedicated national focus and coordination of efforts to stop men's use of domestic and family violence at the source, resulting in fragmented and piecemeal approaches.

¹ O'Donnell et al. (2025). [The use of intimate partner violence among Australian men](#). Insights #3, Chapter 1. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies

² Lifetime use estimated using [Ten to Men study finding that 35% of adult men aged 18-65 have used intimate partner violence](#), out of 7.3 million Australian men aged 20-64.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023). [Personal Safety Survey](#).

⁴ Haslem et al. (2023). [The prevalence and impact of child maltreatment in Australia: Findings from the Australian Child Maltreatment Study: Brief Report](#).

⁵ Miles and Bricknell. (2025). Homicide in Australia 2023–24. Figures calculated from 2014-15 to 2023-24, Table A6 and Table A7.

⁶ Ayre et al. (2016). [Examination of the burden of disease of intimate partner violence against women in 2011: Final report](#). ANROWS.

⁷ KPMG. (2016). [The Cost of Violence Against Women and Their Children in Australia](#). \$22 billion in 2015-16 calculated to equal \$28.27 billion in 2024-25 adjusting for inflation.

⁸ Estimate that [40% of NSW police work relates to domestic and family violence](#) and [Queensland police spend 40 per cent of their time on domestic violence calls](#).

⁹ Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia. (2025). [2024-25 Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia \(Division 1\) and \(Division 2\) Annual Reports](#).

¹⁰ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2025). [Child protection Australia 2023–24](#).

¹¹ Campo. (2015). [Children's exposure to domestic and family violence: Key issues and responses](#). Australian Institute of Family Studies.

A tiny number of specialist domestic and family violence-informed interventions are funded each year. In Australia's two most populous states, New South Wales and Victoria, there is only a combined 5,300 men's behaviour change program (MBCP) places funded each year despite there the enormous amount of men who have used domestic and family violence in their lifetime in these two jurisdictions.¹² This means the vast majority of men using domestic and family violence do not receive support to change their behaviour.

Approaching the halfway mark of the second National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children and with the development of its Second Action Plan underway this year to achieve its vision, Australia is at a critical juncture in the fight to end domestic and family violence. While there has been growing recognition of the urgent need to increase engagement of men and boys, investment is yet to match this rising concern. In this submission, No to Violence outlines five key recommendations to strengthen the national approach to ending men's use of domestic and family violence:

- Recommendation 1: Establish a strategic and coordinated approach to ending men's use of domestic and family violence
- Recommendation 2: Significantly increase investment in interventions for men using and at risk of using domestic and family violence
- Recommendation 3: Establish a National Violence Intervention Learning Collaborative
- Recommendation 4: Invest in First Nations community-controlled, self-determined solutions
- Recommendation 5: Increase investment to enable the successful delivery of the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children

These recommendations represent the views of No to Violence members and aligned stakeholders from across Australia working to end men's use of domestic and family violence. Throughout 2025 we engaged closely with stakeholders to develop our Federal policy recommendations, including consultations with over 100 people and organisations committed to ending men's use of domestic and family violence. This included nationwide consultations with members and sector partners, including specialist domestic, family and sexual violence services and peak bodies, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), and organisations working with marginalised people and communities.

¹² [Ten to Men study finding that 35% of Australian men aged 18-65 have used intimate partner violence \(IPV\) in their lifetime.](#)

Recommendation 1: Establish a strategic and coordinated approach to ending men’s use of domestic and family violence

Men using violence are everywhere. They are our family, friends and colleagues. They show up in GP clinics, schools, hospitals, financial services, utilities, social security, the family court, child protection and other government systems and services. Too often they are not formally identified or responded to, escaping the attention of systems and services meant to keep victim-survivors safe.¹³

Biases, such as those measured through the National Community Attitudes Survey, help men using violence hide in plain sight and block support for those experiencing violence.¹⁴ For example, 41% of Australians believe using domestic and family violence is equal across genders and 37% agree women falsify claims of domestic and family violence to win custody battles.¹⁵ Views like these are held by a wide variety of community members and most likely proliferate across areas of government and the service system responding to domestic and family violence. Misinformation and disinformation about domestic and family violence can fuel fear and uncertainty about challenging men using violence, leading to missed opportunities for family, community members, workplaces and staff in critical systems to respond to the source of domestic and family violence.

Victim-survivors want men who harm them to know what they have done is wrong, understand the impacts of their actions and to stop using violence.¹⁶ Specialist interventions with men using violence have operated for more than 30 years in response to this call from victim-survivors.¹⁷ Interventions focused on men using violence, with in-built family safety and advocacy case management, are one of the few support pathways available for victim-survivors who are not ready to leave the relationship or do not want to leave. 91% of Australians agree support should be available to victim-survivors whether they choose to remain in the relationship.¹⁸

The scale of men’s violence is massive. Still, specialist responses to men using violence are under-utilised and remain under-developed in line with the evidence base on perpetration.¹⁹ Lessons learned from three decades of work with men to stop their violence are going unharnessed. Knowledge

¹³ See [recent reporting by The Guardian including on Minister for Social Services, Tanya Plibersek’s comments](#); Economic Abuse Reference Group (2024) [Submission to the Review into Financial Abuse within the Tax System](#); National Domestic and Family Violence Bench Book (2023) [Systems Abuse](#); and Women’s Legal Services Victoria (2018) [“Officer She’s Psychotic and I Need Protection”: Police misidentification of the ‘primary aggressor’ in family violence incidents in Victoria](#).

¹⁴ Department of Social Services (2023) [First Action Plan 2023–2027 Under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032](#).

¹⁵ Coumarelos et al. (2023) [Attitudes Matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey \(NCAS\), Findings for Australia](#).

¹⁶ For an exploration of varied victim-survivor aims see Ackhurst (2020) [Listening, or ‘Led By’? Belief, innocence and the risks of a ‘survivor-led’ feminist politics](#).

¹⁷ Helps et al. (2025) [The Role of Men’s Behaviour Change Programs in Addressing Men’s Use of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence: An evidence brief](#).

¹⁸ Coumarelos et al. (2023) [Attitudes Matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey \(NCAS\), Findings for Australia](#).

¹⁹ Stopping Family Violence (2017) [Family and Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programs](#).

gleaned from these specialists is not being used to improve the identification of men using violence or effectively responding to them. Specialist responses are not integrated with the government systems critical for addressing domestic and family violence.²⁰ Federal systems involved in domestic and family violence response are themselves disconnected from each other. For example, there are disjunctures between the family court, child support and health, and are further disconnections with men's intervention services. Better co-ordination would aid accountability and behaviour change in men using violence and reduce burdens on victim-survivors.²¹ The result is patchy application of justice and safety for victim-survivors.²² Consequently, meaningful accountability and behaviour change for men using violence is not being fully realised.

Despite this dire picture, there is no plan to end men's violence. Neither the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children (2022-2032) or the National Men's Health Strategy (2020-2030) include detailed focus on addressing men's use of violence or plans to increase attention on them. While violence, including but not limited to domestic and family violence, is noted in the Men's Health Strategy as a risk factor for poor health outcomes across boys and men's life cycles, stopping men's use of violence is not discussed in the strategy. The National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children includes a commitment to perpetrator accountability but has over relied on stronger domestic and family violence laws to achieve it – baking in the current approach where system responses wait for risk to escalate, enable and encourage violence and burden victim-survivors with compliance requirements and increased risk.²³ As a result, most men using violence escape the attention of the legal system but show up in universal systems.

Systems responding to domestic and family violence must be set up to act much earlier and utilise the full range of effective, targeted and available responses to men using violence. Recent attention on earlier intervention is a much-appreciated trajectory which must continue to effectively reduce and end domestic and family violence. Achieving this vision requires a coordinated focus across the domains of the National Plan, and the areas of government they touch, for maximum impact. There is an urgent need for a strategy to stop family violence at its source. The strategy should provide a systemic framework to disrupt trajectories headed towards using violence and redirect those men already using violence towards opportunities to change their behaviour and invite the potential for respectful, loving relationships.

Ending men's violence requires strategic and coordinated focus on men using violence

Government efforts to end domestic and family violence are strongest when they simultaneously target the source of violence and support families and communities to recover and heal. The potential of existing services and systems to end violence will be fully realised when responses across prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and healing are connected and enable continuous learning between these functions. Recent collaborative efforts to identify and end systems abuse

²⁰ See Chung et al. (2020) [Improved Accountability: The role of perpetrator intervention systems.](#)

²¹ See for example [recent Australian-first research advising health professionals boost their capacity to recognise patterns of coercive control and its impacts.](#)

²² See for example [recent reporting by The Guardian including on Minister for Social Services, Tanya Plibersek's comments.](#)

²³ See for example international research problematising current policing approaches to domestic and family violence in the United Kingdom - Robinson et al. (2025) [Project Bright Light: Transforming the police response to domestic abuse.](#)

across 18 federal government departments and agencies is an excellent example of the power of connected efforts focused on users of violence.²⁴ Using the wealth of knowledge available from the specialist sector working with men using domestic and family violence is critical to help government ensure universal and related sectors, such as mental health, alcohol and other drugs and housing, develop the most effective identification processes and responses to end violence.

Domestic and family violence touches every area of government. Victim-survivors' contributions to the evidence base tell us critical times to intervene include during pregnancy and after birth of children, after job loss and during economic insecurity, during disasters like floods and bushfires and after permanent injury or cognitive decline.²⁵ Connecting key universal sectors with accurate and timely information about how to identify the person using violence and the best programs to refer men to depending on their circumstances will go a long way towards meeting this need.

Utilising and developing responses to men using violence which shift the dial requires coordination and cooperation across government. Coordination needs to stretch across existing strategies to bridge the gaps where men using violence fall out of sight. The collective and individual responsibilities of departments and agencies need to be made clear through progress measurements connected with related areas of work to maximise strategic implementation. Integrating a whole-of-government coordinated response to end domestic and family violence requires prioritising, planning and resourcing to stop violence at its source.

Specialist domestic and family violence responses to men using violence need to be better integrated within the areas of government relying on these responses – this includes, but is not limited to, family law, police, child protection, health, criminal and civil courts and community corrections. Specialist practitioners' work to motivate behaviour change and accountability can be undone when the departments and agencies also responding to men using violence do not identify, respond to and refer these men. Equipping all responders with the authorising environment they need to focus on the source of harm, including necessary legislative reforms and shared funding responsibility across areas and levels of government, will help end unfair focus on victim-survivors' behaviour and circumstances and instead connect victim-survivors with the support they need to thrive.

Development of the Second Action Plan under the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children is a critical opportunity to embed a strong focus on men using violence. It is a critical opportunity to connect the dots and build a co-ordinated, impactful system architecture for comprehensive implementation.²⁶ Improved systems architecture to support the National Plan to End Violence would include arrangements that would enable collaborative governance by connecting departments and agencies in Federal Government and with responsible Ministers for each jurisdiction. For example, with the Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council and Commonwealth National Plan Implementation Committee. Cross-government visibility on men using violence would help to

²⁴ No to Violence recommended the federal systems abuse audit through our collaboration with the Economic Abuse Reference Group and provided a case study used in their [submission to the financial abuse inquiry](#).

²⁵ See Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (2020) [Identifying and Responding to Domestic Violence in Antenatal Care](#); Boxall et al. (2022) [The "Pathways to Intimate Partner Homicide" Project](#); Fitz-Gibbon et al. (2024) [Securing Women's Lives](#); Morgan and Boxall (2022) [Economic Insecurity and Intimate Partner Violence in Australia During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

²⁶ See detailed discussion in Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission (2025) [Yearly Report to Parliament](#).

facilitate measurable action to decrease biases which add burden to victim-survivors. There are no permanent collaborative mechanisms focused on men using violence. Without dedicated focus on the source of violence, progress towards ending violence stalls.

A strategic, coordinated approach to ending men’s violence requires:

- Develop a dedicated whole-of-government strategy to address men’s use of domestic and family violence
- Develop systems architecture to coordinate the implementation of the strategy across government

Recommendation 2: Significantly increase investment in interventions for men using and at risk of using domestic and family violence

Action must be taken to intervene earlier and prevent violence

No to Violence members and sector partners stress that current responses to men using domestic and family violence are far too reactive, intervening only once the abuse has reached crisis point. Missed opportunities to intervene early with those at risk of using and those using violence are allowing violence to begin and escalate, meaning victim-survivors are forced to endure more abuse, and the attitudes and behaviour of those using violence becomes more entrenched and harder to change. The Second Action Plan must have a strong focus on engaging men at risk of and using domestic and family violence earlier. This can be achieved by taking the following actions:

- **Scale early intervention approaches for men at risk of using, or beginning to use violence at critical life events and through universal, legal and allied service touchpoints**

There is enormous potential to prevent and reduce harm by intervening at common critical life events where violent behaviours can escalate. As outlined earlier, these events include during pregnancy and after birth of children, after job loss and during economic insecurity, during disasters like floods and bushfires, and after permanent injury or cognitive decline.²⁷ While the use of violence is always a choice through these life events and is underpinned by gendered drivers of domestic and family violence, these risk factors can increase the likelihood of perpetration. The Federal Government has direct responsibility for supporting people through these life events: administering income support and employment services, overseeing Medicare and health systems, and providing housing assistance and aged care support. These responsibilities position the Federal Government to play a pivotal role in mitigating the risk of domestic and family violence by embedding early intervention strategies within existing social service systems. There is opportunity to scale these interventions to millions of men – for example

²⁷ See Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (2020) [Identifying and Responding to Domestic Violence in Antenatal Care](#); Boxall et al. (2022) [The “Pathways to Intimate Partner Homicide” Project](#); Fitz-Gibbon et al. (2024) [Securing Women’s Lives](#); Morgan and Boxall (2022) [Economic Insecurity and Intimate Partner Violence in Australia During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

almost 300,000 men become first-time fathers each year²⁸, and more than 600,000 men lost employment or became unemployed after leaving a job in the last year.²⁹ The earlier these risks are identified and intervened at, the easier it is to disrupt pathways into use of domestic and family violence.

Similarly, many men using domestic and family violence are not identified despite their engagement with universal and allied services – including with health and mental health, housing, alcohol and other drug, disability, migration and education services. An analysis of intimate partner homicides found that a large proportion of offenders had recorded histories of alcohol (53%), drug (41%) and mental health (46%) illness.³⁰ This indicates there are significant opportunities to increase the identification and engagement of men using domestic and family violence through their touchpoints with service supports for these issues. Increased responses at these junctures must improve identification but also develop and expand intervention programs and educational campaigns. This is critical because current referral pathways for men using domestic and family violence are predominantly designed for after significant harm has already occurred, which are often unsuitable for men at the early intervention stage.

The design of early intervention initiatives targeting these life events and service system touchpoints must be shaped by victim-survivors and underpinned by gender transformative domestic and family violence service principles.

When men are formally identified, the primary response is an intervention order – a surface-level response that rarely drives meaningful behaviour change. Most men receive no additional interventions until they breach their order – which is common and accounts for 40% of domestic and family violence offences nationally.³¹ There is significant opportunity to leverage these crucial early engagements with the criminal legal system to increase early intervention with men using domestic and family violence. By connecting these men to practitioners with specialist domestic and family violence expertise, these responses can help prevent escalation of violence by supporting users of violence to build their understanding of the impacts of their behaviour and encourage reflection on the relationships they wish to have. While the Federal Government does not have direct responsibility for the criminal legal systems of each state and territory, it does fund vital national counselling services that offer a critical engagement point for men using violence and offer a link to specialist men’s domestic and family violence services and appropriate allied services, such as mental health and alcohol and other drug services.

Strengthening these pathways would not only create greater opportunities for earlier intervention but also enhance the correction of misidentification of the predominant aggressor. Specialist

²⁸ Gasser et al. (2025). [Ten to Men: Health outcomes and health service usage among first-time fathers in Australia](#).

²⁹ Calculated by combining the number of males who lost a job last year and the number of males who were not employed since leaving a job in last year. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2025). [Job mobility- Table 1. Labour mobility, retrenchments and duration of employment](#).

³⁰ Fitz-Gibbon et al. (2024). [Securing women’s lives: examining system interactions and perpetrator risk in intimate femicide sentencing judgments over a decade in Australia](#). Monash University and University of Liverpool.

³¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2025). [Criminal Courts, Australia](#).

domestic and family violence services possess deeper expertise in recognising patterns of control and abuse – expertise that is often less developed within police and court responses.

“The first intervention they get is an intervention order and they get this bit of paper that says you’ve been bad, don’t be bad. And then nothing happens to them again until they breach that. And then the justice system comes in. The system needs to be much more responsive because the men that come through our services in their offending period will offend against three different women. So, by the time we’ve removed the first family to safety, we’re two families behind.” –

Claude Robinson, Manager, Rainbow Lodge

Intervention programs need to be expanded and broadened to stop violence at the source

Australia funds only a small number of specialist domestic and family violence-informed responses for men using violence. No to Violence estimates a maximum of 10,000 MBCP places are funded each year nationally³², with no national dataset capturing the delivery of MBCPs nor other specialist interventions with men using domestic and family violence. This is vastly insufficient given the estimated 120,000 men who start using violence each year and the 2.5 million Australian men aged 20-64 who have used violence in their lifetime.³³

This gap stands in contrast to the substantial funding directed to criminal legal responses – such as police, corrective services and prisons – to respond to users of domestic and family violence, despite a lack of evidence these approaches effectively change behaviour in the long term.³⁴ As the resourcing of criminal legal responses is not reported nationally, a jurisdictional example demonstrates the disproportionate emphasis on late responses. In NSW, while \$12.7 million per year is spent on MBCPs, approximately \$545 million is spent intervening too late – after violence has escalated to very high levels – through incarcerating men using domestic and family violence.³⁵ A further \$2.2 billion is spent on police responses to domestic and family violence.³⁶ Until funding is re-directed to enable earlier interventions with men using violence through evidence-based, specialist domestic and family violence interventions, the safety and wellbeing of women and children will remain at risk.

There is also a lack of diversity of specialist interventions for men using domestic and family violence, with group-based MCBPs the predominant option. While MBCPs are effective for many men and affected families, they are not suitable for all. For instance, some men are ineligible for MBCPs because they are too high risk to be in a group environment, while others have complex, co-occurring

³² [Victoria funds 4,400 MBCP places](#), [NSW funds 900 MBCP places](#), and the [NT funds under 200 MBCP places](#). The number of funded places in interventions other than MBCPs is not consistently reported.

³³ [Ten to Men study](#) estimated 120,000 men aged between 18 and 57 start using intimate partner violence each year. Lifetime use estimated using Ten to Men study finding that 35% of adult men have used intimate partner violence.

³⁴ Travenza and Poynton. (2016). [Does a prison sentence affect future domestic violence reoffending?](#). NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

³⁵ Calculated by applying the [\\$168,375 per year cost to keep a person in prison](#) in NSW to the roughly [3,242 men in NSW prisons for domestic and family violence-related offences](#) in September 2025.

³⁶ Calculated based on the estimate that [40% of NSW police work relating to domestic and family violence](#), applied to the [NSW Police Force’s allocation of \\$5.6 billion in the 2025-26 NSW Budget](#).

needs that makes group-based programs inappropriate. Although there has been some important investment in a broader suite of interventions, such as increased funding for the Innovative Perpetrator Response initiative, funding remains minimal and short-term, which restricts practice development.

Enormous investment is required to ensure the Australian Government's response meets the scale and diversity of domestic and family violence interventions so that all men using violence can access appropriate and effective interventions. We recommend:

- **Increase funding for a broader integrated continuum of interventions for men using domestic and family violence**

Men using domestic and family violence are a diverse cohort with a complex range of motivating and contextual factors influencing their use of violence, and subsequently, a broad continuum of interventions is needed to effectively facilitate behaviour change. The suite of interventions must be integrated and available at different stages of their life cycle because a person's journey through accountability and behaviour change is typically non-linear and may require multiple, potentially concurrent, interventions. This means collaborative information sharing is critical between interventions for men using violence, as well as with victim-survivor services and allied services to support effective risk assessment, family safety support, and intervention tailoring. Program models with emerging practice expertise and evidence of effectiveness which require increased investment to expand include:

- **Fathering-focused interventions** – show promise for challenging traditional gender norms and leveraging relationships with children as motivations for change.³⁷
- **All-of-family approaches** – work with all family members – including mothers, fathers, children, and other family members within kinship groups – to address experiences of harm, intervene to reduce and end violence and safety-planning.
- **First-Nations-led and healing focused programs** – most appropriate response for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and should be self-determined, locally specific and strengths-based.³⁸
- **Residential-based interventions** – to enable victim-survivors the choice to remain in their home while reducing men's housing insecurity, a key barrier to intervention engagement and behaviour change.³⁹
- **Intensive case management** – to enable tailored approaches to individuals' unique situations, to support addressing specific behaviours and co-occurring issues.
- **Age-tailored interventions for young men and boys using domestic and family violence** - trauma-informed programs to address interconnected challenges facing young people using violence, recognising most have also been victims of family violence.^{40 41}

³⁷ Wynter et al. (2024). [Effectiveness of Father-Focused Interventions to Prevent or Reduce Intimate Partner Violence During Pregnancy and Early Parenthood: A Systematic Review](#). Trauma, Violence, & Abuse.

³⁸ Carlson et al., (2024). [What works? A qualitative exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing programs that respond to family violence](#). ANROWS.

³⁹ Fitz-Gibbon et al. (2024). [Engaging in Change: A Victorian study of perpetrator program attrition and participant engagement in men's behaviour change programs](#).

⁴⁰ Campbell et al. (2023). [WRAP around families experiencing AVITH: Towards a collaborative service response](#). ANROWS.

⁴¹ Nicholas et al. (2025). [Improving responses to young men's use of intimate partner violence: Towards a best practice approach](#). Western Sydney University.

- **Cross-sectoral interventions** - which address co-occurring issues, such as domestic and family violence and the misuse of alcohol and other drugs.⁴²

Establishing and expanding the Innovative Perpetrator Response program has been an important mechanism to support the broader suite of interventions required. However, to fully realise its potential for advancing practice capability, greater sustainability of funding and transparency is needed – specifically publishing the entire list of programs that receive funding and sharing program evaluations.

○ **Expand the delivery of MBCPs and resource programs to be delivered to best practice standards**

As highlighted above, only a small proportion of men using domestic and family violence can attend MBCPs each year due to extremely limited funding. There is a gap between funded places and demand, with NTV members outlining men are often waiting between three to five months on waitlists before accessing programs. Similarly, there are large geographic regions of Australia that are many hours' drive from the nearest MBCP. Significant investment is required to expand the availability of MBCPs to ensure men from anywhere in Australia can access a program in a timely manner.

In addition to expanded scale, “MBCPs need to be better funded to provide tailored, holistic and timely services that can support meaningful behaviour change.”⁴³ Currently, MBCPs are not funded to deliver critical components of best practice programs – including family safety support (which provides support to partners, former partners and children of men who engage with a MBCP), individual work and case management with men using violence, post-group support for men who have completed programs to continue their journey of change, and ensuring practitioners are supported through adequate supervision and professional development.

MBCPs play three key roles in responding to domestic and family violence. They support the safety of victim-survivors, work to improve outcomes for behaviour change and accountability, and deliver important risk management. While public debate most often focuses on whether MBCPs change the behaviour of participants, they play a critical role in actively assessing and managing risk while assisting victim-survivor safety.⁴⁴ For many victim-survivors, family safety support delivered as part of an MBCP is the first time they have been provided domestic and family violence support and is a source of new referrals to other support services.⁴⁵ MBCPs help many men reduce their use of physical, sexual and emotional abuse^{46 47}, often sowing important seeds to facilitate future attitudinal and behaviour change. There is also significant opportunity to enhance the impact of MBCPs, with a growing body of evidence showing MBCPs have not been

⁴² Kertesz et al. (2022). [KODY, an all-of-family response to co-occurring substance use and domestic violence: protocol for a quasi-experimental intervention trial](#). BMC Public Health.

⁴³ Helps et al. (2025). The role of men’s behaviour change programs in addressing men’s use of domestic, family and sexual violence: An evidence brief.

⁴⁴ Chung, Anderson, Green & Vlais, R. (2020). [Prioritising women’s safety in Australian perpetrator interventions: The purpose and practices of partner contact](#). ANROWS.

⁴⁵ Vlais et al. (2017). [Family and domestic violence perpetrator programs: Issues paper of current and emerging trends, developments and expectations](#). Stopping Family Violence.

⁴⁶ Kelly and Westmarland (2015). [Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes: Steps Towards Change. Project Mirabal Final Report](#).

⁴⁷ Vall et al. (2023). [Measuring the Outcome of Perpetrator Programmes through a Contextualised and Victim-Centred Approach: The Impact Project](#).

effectively integrated as part of a whole-of-system approach to responding to users of violence.⁴⁸
⁴⁹ For further information on MBCPs and their effectiveness, see [The role of men’s behaviour change programs in addressing men’s use of domestic, family and sexual violence](#).

No to Violence recommends the Commonwealth Government develop national best practice principles for MBCPs

While we welcome the commitment to national standards, we are concerned they default to a lowest-common-denominator approach that limits innovation and progress, rather than advance the development of best practice. Instead, best practice principles supported by practical guidance would give jurisdictions a clear benchmark for improving their standards and strengthening service delivery. Principles are also better suited to supporting the expansion and development of an integrated suite of interventions. By outlining core practice foundations – such as family safety contact, a gender transformative domestic and family violence lens and preventing collusion – principles support improved consistency while still allowing flexibility, innovation and tailored approaches.

To facilitate the required expansion of responses outlined above, there must be a parallel investment to build the capability of specialist domestic and family violence and allied service workforces to identify, safely engage and work directly with men to reduce and end their use of violence. To build this capability, we recommend:

- **Resource specialist domestic and family violence services to undertake ongoing foundational domestic and family violence training**
To support national consistency of practice and the sustainability of the specialist domestic and family violence workforce, service providers must be resourced to provide access to foundational training. Many service provision contracts do not include funds for ongoing professional development for specialist domestic and family violence practitioners, hindering upskilling of the workforce and fuelling recruitment and retention challenges. This investment should subsidise training to make it affordable for service providers and cover significant on-costs and administration costs.
- **Expand pathways into the specialist domestic and family violence workforce and improve pay and working conditions as part of a National Workforce Strategy**
To meet the growing demand for a larger workforce, we need to diversify the pathways into the domestic and family violence sector. This should include more accessible opportunities for people with lived experience and cultural knowledge to ensure services reflect the communities they serve. Better pay, alongside improved working conditions, is essential to recruit, retain, and support a workforce that must navigate complex, at times dangerous, situations and often brings significant emotional burden. There must also be support for organisations to strengthen recruitment, supervision and leadership processes that are key to shaping the conditions and cultures that workforces exist within.

⁴⁸ Helps et al. (2025). [The role of men’s behaviour change programs in addressing men’s use of domestic, family and sexual violence](#).

⁴⁹ Allen + Clarke Consulting. (2025). [Evaluation of Family and Relationship Services and Specialised Family Violence Services](#). Department of Social Services

- **Develop training and educational resources for the broader response system to build capability to identify and respond to men using violence**

As outlined above, many men using violence are engaged with the broader response system, which includes police, courts, child protection, corrections, and universal and allied services, like education, disability, housing, migration and healthcare. While these men's use of violence may be suspected or known, it is too often not responded to effectively because many frontline responders across the broader system lack the knowledge, skills or tools to identify and engage with those perpetrating violence. Enhanced capability can be achieved by building understanding of the patterns and dynamics of domestic and family violence perpetration, safe engagement strategies, and knowledge of and ability to use referral pathways. Significant investment is required to develop and support access to training and educational resources. This is particularly important for community services in universal and allied areas, where limited budgets are a major barrier to supporting their workforces to attend professional development training.

"Primary health, mental health, AOD, and housing services are often in contact with people using violence before police or courts are. Staff in these services could be better trained to identify indicators of family violence perpetration and make warm referrals." – North East Men's Behaviour Change

Recommendation 3: Establish a National Violence Intervention Learning Collaborative

Practitioners working with men who use domestic and family violence consistently identify critical gaps. How can we distinguish genuine change from mere compliance? What keeps men engaged? What defines success, and how do we measure it? Australia still lacks a systematic infrastructure to address these questions. Knowledge is fragmented across jurisdictions. Research rarely reaches frontline workers in accessible ways. Innovations occur in silos, with no process to capture, evaluate, or scale what works.

Consultations with NTV members and stakeholders in 2025 underscored a consensus for sector transformation: transitioning from static "knowledge hubs" to dynamic, practice-driven learning collaboratives. These models should integrate practitioner insights with academic research to drive continuous improvement.

"I like the word learning rather than knowledge, because knowledge is no good unless you use it... It also speaks to evaluation, being able to be about impact, but also about learning, like having a developmental evaluation as a feedback loop and an opportunity to learn..." Jane Lloyd, National Partnership Lead, The Men's Project, Jesuit Social Services

Members highlighted that one-size-fits-all models are ineffective in violence intervention. Approaches must be tailored to the unique needs (and protective factors) of different communities, contexts and individuals. They called for collaborative infrastructure that fosters peer learning and genuine knowledge exchange, rather than relying on top-down dissemination of so-called "best practice."

"We actually don't even have consistent data collection across the various state and territory programs, and that becomes a very strong driver in collecting evidence as well, about impact, about what's working. I mean, at best, we collect widgets. We collect numbers of people attending programs, which tells us nothing. There's very little data linking into the experience of victim survivors and children, you know, around impact." Margaret Augerinos, CEO, Centre for Non-Violence

For example, while the Federal Government's Innovative Perpetrator Response initiative supports project-level evaluation, broader sector impact can be achieved through systematic knowledge sharing. Practitioners require mechanisms to synthesise and disseminate learnings, enabling cross-program insights. Many are eager to connect with peers but currently lack effective channels. Furthermore, organisations supporting marginalised communities often face resource constraints for documenting and sharing their innovations. Without support, valuable practitioner expertise may remain underutilised.

This proposal has been developed in consultation with ANROWS.

A National Violence Intervention Learning Collaborative, developed with ANROWS, would integrate Australia's research infrastructure with practice expertise from NTV's national network through six key proposed functions. This would equip practitioners with rapid access to actionable guidance, consistent evidence on what works, and create a responsive community that can adapt successful innovations nationwide:

1. **Research synthesis and translation:** Synthesise research into practice-ready guidance that practitioners can immediately apply, aligning with ANROWS' evidence portal redesign.
2. **National Outcomes Framework:** Establish a nationally consistent framework with common indicators that capture genuine behaviour change (not just attendance). Use validated measurement tools and systems to collate and compare data nationally. This enables consistent evaluation, while allowing program adaptation to local contexts.
3. **Innovation translation and mobilisation:** Translate the Innovative Perpetrator Response Fund and other evaluations into plain English, synthesise findings across projects, and facilitate peer learning.
4. **Community-led knowledge building:** Provide grants for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTIQ+, culturally and racially marginalised, and disability organisations to document and share their innovations on their own terms.
5. **Knowledge exchange through networks:** Mobilise knowledge through communities of practice, virtual platforms, and regular sharing of findings across the national network to foster meaningful peer exchange.

6. **Global connections:** Connect Australian practitioners with international innovations, translating evidence for local contexts.
7. **Training and workforce development:** Develop and deliver foundational training programs for practitioners working with men using violence, subsidised to ensure affordability for organisations. Create comprehensive practice guidance documents that translate evidence into practical application for frontline workers.

Operating model

The proposed Collaborative model would operate virtually, coordinated by dedicated staff. Governance would be structured to ensure intentional representation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTIQ+, culturally and racially marginalised, and disability organisations. Priorities would be set quarterly by a research-practice task force comprising ANROWS researchers, NTV practitioners and lived experience representatives. The governance approach would embed Indigenous data sovereignty principles ensuring First Nations communities retain authority over their knowledge and data.

Why collaborative models work

Traditional knowledge translation approaches often rely on delayed academic publications (with a 3–5-year lag behind practice innovation), conference presentations (with limited reach), or centralised "hubs" (one-size-fits-all models with low practitioner engagement). Learning collaborative models internationally have shown success by: (1) producing evidence syntheses WITH practitioners not FOR them, (2) using virtual platforms to enable peer exchange not just content delivery, (3) respecting community-specific expertise not homogenising it, and (4) operating with distributed governance not top-down control. Research on knowledge mobilisation consistently shows that evidence uptake increases when practitioners are involved in identifying priority questions and co-producing translations—not just receiving finished products. These design principles are what make the difference between research that sits on shelves and research that changes practice.

Maximising impact: An effective partnership with ANROWS

ANROWS brings research infrastructure, an evidence portal, synthesis expertise, academic networks, evaluation frameworks, and established evidence synthesis methodologies.

NTV brings national practitioner network (100+ organisations), trusted relationships, 30+ years of practice expertise, convening capability, policy leadership, a deep understanding of practitioner learning needs and barriers to evidence uptake, and an established communities-of-practice infrastructure.

Why this partnership avoids duplication:

- ANROWS's current mandate focuses on producing research and making evidence available through their portal.
- This Collaborative model builds on ANROWS' research portal by working with practitioners to translate evidence into usable practice and by creating feedback loops that ensure frontline experience informs research priorities.

- NTV's practitioner networks foster evidence uptake complementing ANROWS's research role without redundancy.
- The training and practice guidance components address implementation gaps that sit outside ANROWS's research-focused mandate.
- Community grants enable practice innovation documentation that feeds back into ANROWS's evidence base.

Proposed division of responsibilities:

- **ANROWS leadership would drive** research synthesis methodology, evidence quality assessment, academic network engagement, evaluation framework design.
- **NTV leadership would enable** practitioner engagement and training, practice guidance development, community of practice facilitation, network coordination.
- **Joint governance:** The research-practice interface taskforce ensures priorities serve both evidence development and practice needs, with ANROWS maintaining research integrity and NTV ensuring practical applicability.

What the funding delivers:

- **Coordination team** managing synthesis, monitoring and evaluation rollout, and knowledge translation.
- **Community-led knowledge grants** (10/year), ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTIQ+, culturally and racially marginalised, and disability organisations can document innovations.
- **National digital learning platform** connecting practitioners with evidence, guidance, and peer learning.
- **Monitoring and evaluation infrastructure**, including common indicators, validated tools, and national data systems.
- **Independent evaluation** measuring impact and equity of access.

Commonwealth funding is sought for all Collaborative functions, including coordination, research synthesis, development of a monitoring and evaluation framework, community grants, knowledge translation, and NTV's network coordination role. This investment is expected to result in faster adoption of effective practices, more reliable sector-wide data, improved program outcomes, and enhanced support for diverse communities. Ultimately, it aims to deliver safer outcomes and more responsive services across the sector.

Strategic alignment

- **Operationalises multiple ANROWS National Research Agenda (ANRA) 2023-2028 priorities**
The Collaborative would directly respond to ANRA's call for infrastructure that moves research from "sitting on shelves" to changing practice. Specifically, it addresses:
 - Research synthesis and translation: The ANRA identifies the need for "practice-ready guidance that practitioners can immediately apply" and notes the current 3–5-year lag

between academic publication and practice uptake. This Collaborative creates the infrastructure to close that gap.

- Community-led knowledge building: The ANRA emphasises creating "space for pilots and evaluations of community-led interventions" and recognises that "organisations working with marginalised communities lack resources to document and share their innovations." The community grants program in this proposal directly addresses this gap.
 - Ways of working: The ANRA advocates moving from "centralised hubs" toward models that "produce evidence syntheses WITH practitioners not FOR them" using "distributed governance not top-down control." This Collaborative embodies these principles in its governance structure and operating model.
 - Addressing structural inequities: The ANRA highlights that "mainstream services were not developed with diverse populations in mind" and calls for addressing inequities within services. The Collaborative's intentional representation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTIQ+, culturally and racially marginalised, and disability organisations in governance ensures these voices shape evidence priorities and translation.
 - People who use domestic and family violence as a priority population: The ANRA identifies this as "critically under-researched" with pathways and interventions needing urgent attention. This Collaborative creates dedicated infrastructure for this evidence gap.
- **Responds to the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission 2025 Yearly Report** recommendations for improved information sharing, risk assessment, trauma-informed approaches, and national leadership in workforce capability development through "coordinated, accountable and agile delivery."
 - **Supports the development of the Second Action Plan** (commencing 2026) by providing evidence infrastructure that ensures the plan is informed by both research synthesis and frontline practice-based knowledge, with transparent reporting on which interventions work to engage people earlier.
 - **Complements ANROWS's evidence portal redesign** by creating the practitioner engagement infrastructure that maximises portal accessibility and impact. While the portal makes evidence available, the Collaborative ensures practitioners can find, understand, and apply it—avoiding duplication while creating synergistic value.

Recommendation 4: Invest in First Nations community-controlled, self-determined solutions

Violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is occurring at epidemic levels, with women up to seven times more likely to be murdered and 34 times more likely to be hospitalised due

to family violence than non-Indigenous women.^{50 51} First Nations women who seek help often face racist and discriminatory systems. For example, First Nations women are regularly misidentified as the predominant users of violence and, consequently, face the removal of their children. A significant proportion of this violence against First Nations women, children and families is perpetrated by non-Indigenous men.⁵²

To change this, the Federal Government must increase investment in First Nations community-controlled, self-determined solutions to help achieve commitments under the National Agreement for Closing the Gap. More needs to be done to ensure accountability to these commitments, with no new data available since the baseline year to assess progress on achieving Target 13's aim to reduce all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children by at least by 50% by 2031.⁵³ Similarly, Priority Reform Area 2's commitment to increasing the amount of funding for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations is awaiting the development of measurement tools.⁵⁴

The *Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices* plan provides a crucial framework by centring self-determination, healing and community-led programs, systemic reform, evidence and accountability, and strengthened social and economic security⁵⁵. It is crucial the 2026/27 Budget works to ensure Federal Government supports its key actions: providing at least 50% of new funding to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and ensuring long-term, flexible contracts (5+ years) that enable stability, workforce development, and place-based responses. This is outlined in the National Women's Alliances' (NWA) Budget Submission which had input from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA).⁵⁶

Recommendation 5: Increase investment to enable the successful delivery of the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children

Invest \$1.01 billion over 4 years to lift the domestic, family and sexual violence frontline out of a state of crisis

Supporting victim-survivors' safety and dignity underpins No to Violence's and our members' commitment to ending men's use of domestic and family violence. It is critical the 2026/27 Federal

⁵⁰ Bricknell S & Miles H 2024. *Homicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women*. Statistical Bulletin no. 46. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. <https://doi.org/10.52922/sb77604>

⁵¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2019. Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019. Cat. no. FDV 3. Canberra: AIHW.

⁵² Our Watch. (2018). [Changing the picture, Background paper: Understanding violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women](#).

⁵³ Productivity Commission. (2025). [Closing the Gap: Annual Data Compilation Report July 2025](#).

⁵⁴ Productivity Commission. (2025). [Closing the Gap: Annual Data Compilation Report July 2025](#).

⁵⁵ National Women's Alliances. (2025). [2026-2027 Pre-Budget Submission](#).

⁵⁶ National Women's Alliances. (2025). [2026-2027 Pre-Budget Submission](#).

Budget increases investment in specialist domestic, family and sexual violence services, as called for by the [Fund the Frontline Campaign](#) and the NWA.

The NWA's funding proposal for \$1.01 billion over four years will address key service gaps to improve support for victim-survivors. Importantly there is an urgent need to increase support for victim-survivors from marginalised groups, including First Nations people, people with disabilities, culturally and racially marginalised people, and children and young people. The myriad system and service gaps shaping their experiences include but are not limited to: institutional racism, misidentification of the predominant aggressor, visa insecurity, limited legal recognition and/or protection, fragmented pathways through, and inaccessibility of, services, and limited financial support.

To address this, the NWA package prioritises immediate frontline service needs, expanding early intervention efforts, strengthening prevention infrastructure, and enhancing the efficiency of resource allocation through increasing immediate response (total investment uplift: \$675 million over 4 years); support recovery and healing (total investment uplift: \$150.3 million over 4 years); increase early intervention (total investment uplift: \$155 million over 4 years); and enhance prevention and systems reform (total investment uplift: \$75 million over 4 years). Key actions include strengthening crisis and transitional accommodation, expanding specialist sexual violence services, creating free mental health plans for victim-survivors, increasing access to legal services, providing a bridging safety net for women on temporary visas, and establishing a HECS-HELP forgiveness scheme for social work and human services graduates ([see NWA's Budget Submission here for more detail](#)).

Fund victim-survivors and domestic, family and sexual violence peak bodies to shape the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children

To enable the National Plan to realise its ambitious objective of ending gender-based violence in a generation, the Federal Government must ensure victim-survivors and the domestic, family and sexual violence sector are resourced to add their crucial insights. Similar to the benefits of recognising and resourcing Women's Legal Services Australia's peak body role through the National Access to Justice Partnership, there are untapped advantages of resourcing alliances and peak bodies, such as No to Violence, to ensure the development of effective, impactful policymaking.

While the new governance arrangements of the National Plan importantly elevate decision-making opportunities for victim-survivors, there are significant opportunities to strengthen engagement of the domestic, family and sexual violence sector to inform implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Realising this requires dedicated funding to domestic, family and sexual violence peak bodies to ensure the complex policy development in multi-faceted, whole-of-government, cross-jurisdictional issues, like men's use of violence, is based in on-the-ground knowledge about the enablers and dynamics of violence. This complex policy development goes beyond what is possible through routine engagement and consultations.

Ensuring the knowledge of frontline practitioners, working day-in, day-out with victim-survivors and people using violence is critical for best practice policy making. Tackling an issue this pervasive will be near impossible without the collective wisdom and action of several peak bodies currently operating without national policy resourcing.