



NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF DFV SPECIALIST SERVICES

Validation report

Part 2 of NADFVSS
Consultations to inform
the Second Action Plan

1 October 2026

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Introduction

The National Alliance of Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Services (NADFVSS) and their member networks are pleased to deliver this validation report regarding the Second Action Plan.

The report must be read alongside and with an understanding of the:

- 1) [NADFVSS thematic report](#) and
- 2) [Wesnet submission](#) to the Second Action Plan.

Please also note, that as the NADFVSS consultation and validation were held with FDV specialists, this report is predominantly focused on the levers that can make maximum impact with and through the FDV response sector, not the entire landscape of change required.

Since the development of the above submissions, the National Cabinet agreed to six priorities that will inform the drafting of the Second Action Plan. These are:

1. improving support for victim survivors to leave violence safely and recover
2. intervening earlier to stop violence across health, education and community services
3. enhancing supports for children and young people who have experienced violence
4. strengthening efforts to prevent and respond to rising rates of sexual violence
5. preventing, responding to and countering online harms
6. targeting people at risk of using violence and holding perpetrators to account.¹

Our approach to validation and the development of this report has taken this announcement into account by structuring the validation process around the existing recommendations as they relate to these six National Cabinet priorities.

What came through very strongly at our validation session is that, in addition to the six priority areas, there is a critical need to take a tranche of actions to build a truly coordinated and integrated specialist domestic and family violence service system. As noted by the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission's report released in September this year, while parts of the FDSV system have been reformed and strengthened, there remains significant work to be done in developing a clear shared vision for what a mature, national response to domestic and family violence looks like.² It is impossible to achieve this without the specialist family and domestic violence and sexual assault sectors and respective workforces at the heart of systems design and implementation. For this reason, we have collated an additional set of dedicated recommendations titled 'Coordinated and integrated national FDV system', that must be urgently actioned alongside the other six priority areas. These recommendations have been developed in recognition of the need to define and strengthen the essential work of the specialist FDV sector and workforce, and our role in ensuring and enabling coordinated systems responses for victim survivors. We support NASASV's recommendations to also be strengthened as a peak body for sexual violence.

¹ <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/meeting-national-cabinet-26-august-26>

² Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission (2026) Yearly Report to Parliament: September 2026, Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission, Australian Government.

The validation session also strongly highlighted consistent underpinning principles which participants advised should inform the planning and implementation of the Second Action Plan, and also how the recommendations in this report should be understood. These include Aboriginal self-determination, the need for clear distinction between gendered drivers of violence and reinforcing factors, the need for an intersectional lens, a focus on children and young people and the importance of lived and living experience in all parts of planning and implementation.

Approach to the validation

To inform the validation process, Wesnet convened one 90-minute online Zoom validation session with NADVVSS and their member networks on 22nd September 2026. Questions used an intersectional lens, and focused on what is tangible, scalable and achievable in the next five years.

To inform this discussion, Wesnet compiled a table reorganising the recommendations from the NADVVSS Thematic Report and related member submissions to align under each of the six National Cabinet priorities along with details on what, by whom and by when over the duration of the Second Action Plan (five years). This report presents the final version of the validation table that reflects participant feedback.

Further, while many recommendations in this report specify federal government responsibility, all the recommendations should be implemented with genuine co-design principles with the specialist FDV sector and Aboriginal community-controlled specialist services that must be resourced to do this properly.

24 participants contributed to the validation discussion. Participants were invited to provide feedback on if recommendations reflected the previous five consultations, thematic report and their experience supporting victim survivors. Network members ranged from First and non-First Nations specialist family violence response practitioners, refuge practitioners, specialist children workers, policy makers, CEOs, lawyers, social workers, men's behaviour change workers that are involved in partner contact, and general support workers. There was also geographical representation across the continent, as well as services from inner and outer metropolitan areas, and RRRR communities.

Participants were informed before and during consultations that consultations would be recorded, purely for use in developing this report. Participants were advised that material contained in the report would be deidentified. This assisted in ensuring frank and fearless discussion and was important to the integrity of the process. Participants also provided written feedback and copies of organisational submissions to the Second Action Plan to strengthen recommendations.

Consultation outcomes

Build the foundations for a coordinated and integrated FDV system

Participants agreed that the need for a coordinated and integrated FDV system is a priority. An integrated FDV system would ensure that the entire ecosystem is functioning as effectively as possible for the safety and well-being of victim-survivors and to ensure perpetrators are in view and held to account. While the validation table provides substantial recommendations, building such a system will need to be carried out in phases, including foundational key tasks. These tasks are to collaboratively:

- 1) develop shared national definitions for domestic and family violence and specialist FDV service delivery, as well as a shared set of evidence-based practice standards.
- 2) establish a shared national understanding of specialist FDV practice and service delivery, and a national approach to supporting, training and retaining a strong specialist workforce.
- 3) develop and implement a coordinated national strategy for data collection and expenditure reporting.

We firmly agree that ending domestic, family, and sexual violence in one generation cannot be achieved by the specialist sector alone. The FDV sector knows this and joins the call for a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach that activates adjacent workforces and a wide variety of other holistic multi-sectoral and culturally informed approaches. But this must be coordinated. The National Plan acknowledges the “vital role that specialist FDSV services have played in supporting and uplifting their clients for decades”³, in this next action plan ensuring that the specialist FDSV sectors can support the transition to a mature model.

These foundational steps would support a shared understanding of the FDV system-wide, provide clarity on the distinct but complementary roles and responsibilities of the specialist FDV services and other adjacent sectors in supporting victim-survivors and holding people using violence accountable, and recognise the vital work of the specialist FDV sector in leading a coordinated system response to keep survivors safe.

To not undertake these foundational key tasks risks:

- Continued fragmentation of the service system due to lack of shared understanding of FDV and mechanisms to ensure coordinated system pathways for victim-survivors seeking support. This results in victim-survivors and perpetrators falling through gaps in the system by not getting an appropriate response or referral at the right time.
- Continued ambiguity about the distinct but complementary roles of different parts of the service system (specialist FDV and adjacent sectors)

³ Commonwealth of Australia (Department of Social Services)(2022) *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-32*, Canberra. p70.

- Survivors experiencing further unnecessary barriers to seeking safety and support due to lack of clear pathways to support, safety and recovery, leading to an escalation of risk.

Ending GBV requires a much broader range of services to recognise, respond and refer, but not all services can provide a specialist FDV response, nor is it safe or appropriate for them to do so. So much of the successful implementation of a National Plan pertaining to domestic and family violence needs to be informed by the Specialist FDV sector, and currently there is no national body funded to support and coordinate the FDV Specialist sector. Instead each State/territory implements the relevant reforms in isolation. As a result, there are few structured co-design opportunities to share knowledge and good specialist FDV practice at the national level.

Although the delivery and funding of FDV response services is the function and role of the State/Territory governments, the role of the federal government is to provide the overarching policy framework through the Action Plans. It is argued that there is a role for a national peak body such as Wesnet to not only draw on and communicate the collective expertise of our member services, but also to play a coordinating role in ensuring that good specialist FDV principles and practice inform national system design and the broader workforce capacity building in adjacent sectors to respond to FDV.

Recognise the specialist work of the Specialist FDV sector

The specialist FDV sector is necessary to the work of an integrated and coordinated FDV system. The sector often leads and coordinates family violence responses, including comprehensive, coordinated and collaborative risk assessment and management.⁴ We support victim-survivors through advocacy, ensuring their right to safety and dignity are recognised by the broader service system. We do this by ensuring that all relevant services (including police, Child Protection and other support services) have an up to date understanding of the level of risk and can work to keep the victim-survivor(s) safe and hold the perpetrator in view and accountable. Our work is vital even though we are a small sector. We refer you to [Safe and Equal's](#) and [DV New South Wales'](#) submissions.

In many remote communities, there may not be a local specialist FDV service. Health services, ACCOs and other local organisations may provide the main FDV response and hold specialised local knowledge. The definition of specialist services should recognise who holds the expertise and models such as specialist workers, secondary consultation, outreach and cross-sector partnerships that reflect local capacity and needs.

Please see our recommendations relevant to building a coordinated and integrated national domestic and family violence system in the table below.

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<https://www.dss.gov.au/national-plan-end-violence-against-women-and-children/resource/national-family-and-domestic-violence-risk-assessment-framework> p.76

Coordinated and integrated national FDV system

Throughout both the initial NADSVSS consultations and during the validation process, there was strong call for the 2AP to progress the essential work of laying the foundations for a coordinated and integrated national FDV system. The validation process also reiterated strong support for dedicated and sustainable funding for specialist ACCOs and the need for genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to design culturally safe and responsive system pathways for victim-survivors. Participants highlighted the need for an improved national approach to data collection to enable visibility and reporting of DFSV funding and expenditure, and to better understand demand and capacity of specialist FDV services nation-wide.

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
Resourcing the peak body for specialist FDV services	0.1 Dedicated funding under the 2AP to support the essential role of Wesnet as the peak body for specialist domestic and family violence services in Australia. Wesnet currently provides a wide range of expert policy and practice advice, consultancy, support directly to the specialist FDV sector and governments as well as national coordination of the National Alliance for Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Services, all work which is predominantly unfunded. With appropriate funding, Wesnet would be best placed to support the significant work agenda set by the Second Action Plan, including many of the recommendations set out in this report.	DSS	12 months
	0.2 Dedicated funding for Wesnet to convene, coordinate and provide secretariat functions for the National Alliance of DFV Specialist Services (NADSVSS), ensuring that the Government has access to timely, evidence-based advice from the national FDV Specialist Services sector, and providing an instrument with which to implement the work of the DFSV Commissioner and the National Plan.	DSS	12 months

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
Defining, recognising and strengthening specialist FDV practice and services	0.3 The specialist FDV sector must be resourced to develop a) a nationally agreed definition for domestic and family violence and (b) a nationally agreed definition for specialist domestic and family violence services and service delivery, to support the mapping of service systems and to clarify roles and responsibilities to better support victim-survivors. <i>Network members proposed mapping service systems to identify which parts non-specialists can and should engage in and where DFV services are integrated. This would help clarify roles and responsibilities to better support victim-survivors.</i>	DSS NADFVSS	1-2 years
	0.4 Wesnet to be funded to develop a national Code of Practice for specialist FDV services in conjunction with the NADFVSS.	DSS NADFVSS	1-2 years
	0.5 Develop safer service systems through embedding risk assessment and management through system and service design principles into Commonwealth/state agreements and resourcing specialist services to advise non-specialist services. <i>Participants strongly agreed that a lack of clarity between non-specialist and specialist responses contributes to system failure. More worryingly, in practice, participants noted that non-specialist services continue to be un- or insufficiently aware of risk assessment and management for victim-survivors and perpetrators</i>	DSS NADFVSS	1-2 years
	0.6 Resource the specialist FDV services to support opportunities for integration, coordination and advocacy. This recommendation supports the vision and recommendations under priority 3 (Intervening earlier to stop violence across health, legal, education and community services), as specialist FDV services hold the highest level of responsibility and	DSS	12 months

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
	expertise and lead coordinated system responses to keep survivors safe.		
	0.7 Recognise the place-based prevention work that specialist FDV services already do and provide consistent, flexible secure funding to undertake place-based and community-led prevention work.	State Govts	5 years
Strong specialist FDV workforce	0.8 The specialist FDV sector must be resourced to develop a dedicated and comprehensive national workforce development strategy for the specialist FDV workforce, which would align with existing State and Territory-based strategies and complement and inform the broader national workforce development efforts. This strategy would address capability, recruitment, retention, workforce sustainability and wellbeing (for example burnout and vicarious trauma prevention), and would include a dedicated national capability framework for specialist FDV practice.	Federal government	1-2 years
	0.9 Improve funding models to raise remuneration for specialist family violence practitioners to attract and retain skilled staff and better prevent burn-out. This could include pay parity with the public sector and recognition of Aboriginal expertise and lived experience.	Federal government	1-2 years
	0.10 Ensure that the work and impact of specialist domestic and family violence services is recognised through funded formal evaluations and the establishment of a national evaluation hub.	ANROWS	1-2 years
	0.11 Explore the feasibility of a peer network workforce in the specialist FDV sector.	Wesnet NADVSS	1-2 years
Data collection	0.12 The federal government should collaborate with the specialist FDV sector to design a national data collection framework expanding the existing work of the	Federal government	1-2 years

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
	Safety Measures project and the work being done by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) on developing a pilot data collection on specialist crisis family and domestic violence services⁵. This is to improve national data collection to ensure outcomes are measured adequately. <i>(from S+E sub) Utilise the findings of the Specialist Crisis FDV services pilot project to inform data system improvements to better collect and understand service demand at both the national and across states and territories level</i>	Safe & Equal AIHW	
	0.13 The federal government should work with states and territories and in partnership with the DFSV sector to develop a national funding mapping framework to enable visibility and reporting of DFSV funding and expenditure nationally to inform and guide ongoing Action planning. The framework needs to: (a) establish agreed definitions of DFSV funding, (b) create consistent categories for recording DFSV funding to enable services to report on DFSV work undertaken in other funding streams (e.g. homelessness, Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, health) that contributed to improved outcomes for people experiencing DFSV, (c) embed reporting requirements into bilateral agreements under Federation Funding Agreements, and (d) capture actual expenditure for reporting.⁶	DFVS Commission with Wesnet, NADVSS and NASASV	12 months
Strong and resourced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	0.14 Provide funding for FNAAFV and First Nations domestic, family and sexual violence peaks at jurisdictional levels to support the work of the national peak, Our Ways Strong Together.	Federal government	12 months

⁵ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/pilot-data-collection-fdv/notes> and https://static1.squarespace.com/static/683c06644ca7910ca1a03b88/t/6a795aedde82be16c2f10d4a/1786338029725/SafetyMeasures_Measurement-with-meaning_2026.pdf

⁶ We note that the DFSV commissioner recommended undertaking the national funding framework with the Lived Experience Advisory Council. We strongly support the lived and living experience panel but it should not replace the practice wisdom of the SFDV sector. This work should be undertaken with the specialist FDV sector.

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
communities and services	0.15 Ensure alignment between the Second Action Plan and <i>Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence 2026–2036</i> .	Federal government	12 months
	0.16 Provide long-term funding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled specialist family safety sector, Aboriginal governance and decision-making, and culturally grounded healing and prevention.	Federal & State/Terr	12 months
	0.17 Fund Aboriginal Community Controlled specialist sector in a holistic manner to reduce multiple administration and reporting to multiple government departments.	Federal & State/Terr	1-2 years
	0.18 Mandate and fund a Child Protection Notification and Referral Scheme that automatically refers to independent Aboriginal Legal Services and wrap-around support. The referral should clearly specify the recipient, purpose, consent and privacy arrangements, Aboriginal data governance and the safeguards against increased surveillance or child removal.	Federal & State/Terr	1-2 years
	0.19 Ensure access to services and resources is culturally safe, appropriate and responsive to community needs. Cultural safety is determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities.	Federal & State/Terr	1-2 years
A national domestic and family violence risk information sharing scheme and register	0.20 A national domestic and family violence risk information sharing scheme and register, that includes family court orders, family violence orders, child protection orders and other relevant information regarding risk factors. This should be accompanied by strong safeguards to minimise risks associated with information sharing.	Federal /State govts, FCFCOA, police and DSS	1-2 years

Underlying principles

This report reiterates and provides a summary of underlying principles detailed in the above, as they were expressed during validation. These underlying principles should be embedded in the Second Action Plan and inform the way that the recommendations are read.

Aboriginal self-determination

Culturally safe responses that support Aboriginal self-determination are paramount while maintaining the principle of prioritising victim/survivor safety and well-being and perpetrator accountability. Colonisation is the underlying context for violence against First Nations women and children.⁷ The impacts of colonisation are ongoing. Urgent attention and accountability are required to address the drivers of violence to ensure that First Nations communities can live free from harm and thrive. There was unanimous agreement with the recommendations outlined in the Validation table that can contribute to Aboriginal self-determination, including that the Second Action Plan align with the action plan of *Our Ways, Strong Ways, Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence*, and that First Nations Advocates against Family Violence (FNAAFV) and Our Ways Strong Together, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled specialist family safety sector should be resourced.

The critical need for clear distinction between gendered drivers of violence and reinforcing factors

Since the publication of the [Prevention Rapid Review Report](#), there have been increased efforts on including additional policy levers to address violence against women and children, particularly reinforcing factors, such as AoD, gambling and mental health issues. While these are important, gendered-based violence drivers should not be conflated with reinforcing factors of violence against women and children. The drivers of gendered-based violence are condoning violence against women, men's control of decision-making and limits to independence, rigid gender stereotyping and dominant masculinity, and male peer relations emphasising aggression and control. There should be continued investment in addressing broader gendered drivers of gender inequality. These include reducing the gender and wealth pay gap, increasing women's leadership and representation, protecting bodily autonomy, access to income and welfare entitlements and other essential services.

It is essential that the drafting of the Second Action Plan retains and strengthens the distinction between gendered drivers of violence, and reinforcing factors. It is also critical that technology is recognised and treated as a tool, and in some cases a force multiplier, but not a driver of violence. Even when a technology is specifically designed for violent purposes, it is still a user that currently makes use of the technology. It's important to note that technology can be misused but it can be used to increase safety and agency. For gender equality to occur and for victim-survivors to be

⁷ Changing the Picture, p.13 <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/change-the-story/changing-the-picture>

safe and empowered, they need full access to technology and know how to use it safely. To entrench any further barriers to access to technology to women and girls for example would result in eroding social and economic participation in society.

The need for an intersectional lens

Victim-survivors have a right to access safety no matter who and where they are. While some recommendations under National Cabinet priorities one and two speak to particular communities, it is important that community needs are addressed across all priorities. Forms of discrimination and inequality, including ableism, ageism and transphobia, intersect with gender inequality to create barriers for victim-survivors and perpetrators to engage in the FDV service system. The Second Action Plan must use an intersectional lens to ensure dedicated, tailored responses for individuals and communities. Communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; those from migrant and refugee communities; people with disability, those that identify as having diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, and those from rural, regional, remote and very remote (RRRR) areas, should have equal access to culturally safe, trauma-informed and strength-based support.

Participants again emphasised the need for the Second Action Plan to reinstate a strong and discrete focus on addressing the distinct barriers facing victim-survivors and the services that support them in RRRR areas. Research examining the implementation of national frameworks highlights that approaches developed in jurisdictions with greater service capacity and institutional infrastructure may not translate effectively to remote settings. For instance, an [evaluation across eight services in the Northern Territory](#) found there was no single pathway for implementation. In rural and remote settings, victim-survivors may experience fragmented service responses, limited pathways to safe housing, and barriers created by systems that do not reflect remote community realities. Services needed to adapt implementation to their local contexts. Place-based resources should be strengthened by ensuring policies, programs, services and funding are adapted to the geographical, cultural, social, workforce and service system contexts of all communities in all parts of Australia. We also refer you to [NTCOSS'](#) and [the National Regional, Rural, Remote and Very Remote Community Legal Network's](#) submissions that draw attention to the RRRR setting.

Focus on children and young people

Participants strongly support the National Cabinet's agreement to prioritise children and young people. Children and young people between 15 and 17 years old, and those in out-of-home care, were identified as cohorts that require particularly urgent attention. Recommendations include ensuring there are specialist FDV accommodation services and broadening the Leaving Violence Payment for young people aged between 15 and 17. Further, given the poor outcomes linked with out-of-home care, the Second Action Plan must recognise and explore alternatives that strengthen the relationship and parenting of the non-abusive parent/carer and the child/ren.

The sector strongly expressed that there are ready and willing practitioners that can fill specialist children and young people practitioner roles if funding is available.

Lived and living experience

Lived experience is critical to the design, implementation and evaluation of the Second Action Plan. We reiterate that the most useful voices are of living experience of the current service system. Equally important is that the front-line workers in the FDV specialist services should not be bypassed in their advocacy for the 'lived experience of clients'.⁸ Not only are specialist practitioners supporting victim-survivors all day every day, there is also 'lived experience in the workforce'.⁹ There is a need to recognise, resource and support the lived experience in the workforce, which should inform the development of a workforce development strategy, and explore the possibility of a peer network workforce. The UK's Domestic Violence Commissioner recently emphasised how important it is to include the Specialist DV sector at the table for their very current connection and the knowledge and expertise they have in understanding the dynamics and effects of FDV and in this specialist area of practice.

⁸ <https://safeandequal.org.au/resources/sources-of-lived-experience-in-the-family-violence-sector-issues-paper/>

⁹ <https://safeandequal.org.au/resources/sources-of-lived-experience-in-the-family-violence-sector-issues-paper/>

Priority 1. Improving support for victim survivors to leave violence safely and recover

There was strong support for this priority across both consultations and validation. The following recommendations reflect the strongly held views of our members that discrimination and inequality, including ableism, ageism and transphobia, intersect with gender inequality to create barriers for victim-survivors and perpetrators to engage in the FDV service system.

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
Legal system	1.1 We support the DFSV Commission's recommendation: <i>'Build on existing justice and family law reforms to strengthen safety, accountability, [accessibility] and recovery for individuals and families experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence.'</i>	Attorneys-General FCFCOA	1-2 years
	1.2 We support recommendations made by Women's Legal Services Australia: <i>The Australian Government should prioritise safety in family law proceedings, including by equipping and tasking the FCFCOA with:</i> • <i>Expanding Lighthouse to all registries, including in regional registries, and to property matters, and robustly evaluating and publicly reporting on its impact;</i> • <i>Improving the accessibility of the Family DOORS Triage Questionnaire and ensuring courts are equipped to undertake dynamic risk assessment across the life of a matter;</i> • <i>Expanding the Family Advocacy and Support Services for the Evatt List and ensuring it is available to all those who need it;</i> • <i>Supporting judicial officers to identify and respond to coercive control, including systems abuse, including through Harmful Proceedings Orders;</i> • <i>Making Indigenous Family Liaison Officers, Cultural Liaison Officers and Disability Liaison Officers available to those who need them;</i> • <i>Undertaking an audit to identify forms and procedures that could be simplified, easier to complete and offered in a greater range of languages;</i>	Attorneys-General FCFCOA	1-2 years

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
	- Improving the availability of information on the rights of parties, including access to interpreters, information sharing orders, online hearing options and parenting order enforcement; and - Providing further training and education for self-represented parties and the community on the 2024 and 2025 family law reforms.¹⁰		
	1.3 Legally protect counselling, clinical and case management notes to prevent weaponisation by perpetrators and their legal representatives, in line with Women's Legal Services Australia's recommendation: <i>The Australian, state and territory governments should work with key legal sector stakeholders to create a nationally consistent new category of legal privilege that incorporates social services professionals and that operates absolutely and applies in all settings.</i>¹¹	Attorneys-General FCFCOA	1-2 years
Survivors and services in regional, rural, remote and very remote areas	1.4 Strengthening community-led solutions and flexible, place-based approaches that recognise the diverse contexts and communities in which DFSV prevention, early intervention, response and recovery initiatives, services and programs are delivered.	Federal government, Commonwealth Grants Commission	1-2 years
	1.5 Ensure the Second Action Plan has a distinct focus and dedicated actions to address inequality in access to safety and support for women and children living in regional, rural, remote and very remote areas of Australia.	Federal government	12 months
	1.6 Allocation of funding should be based on overall and unmet demand, geographic complexity and additional service delivery costs of delivering services in regional, rural, remote and very remote areas, rather than density of population and a per capita basis.	Federal government	12 months

¹⁰ Women's Legal Services Australia (2026) *The Second Action Plan: Submission by Women's Legal Services Australia*, <https://wlsa.org.au/the-second-action-plan-submission-by-womens-legal-services-australia/>

¹¹ *ibid*

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
Survivors from migrant backgrounds	1.7 Ensure the Second Action Plan incorporates the key asks contained in the third Blueprint for Reform released by the National Advocacy Group for Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Violence	Federal government	1-2 years
Survivors with disability	1.8 In line with recommendations made by WWDA, the Second Action Plan must identify where current legal, policy and data definitions fail to recognise disability-specific violence and rectify	Federal government	12 months
	1.9 Work with FDV experts and disability experts to address structural drivers that invisibilise and escalate the risk of violence against people with disability.	Federal government	1-2 years
	1.10 We support recommendations made by Safe and Equal: <i>Family violence should be a key consideration in the new NDIS framework including:</i> • <i>the introduction of guidance for the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to responsively adjust NDIS plans for victim survivors</i> • <i>family violence capability building for disability services</i> • <i>an assessment of unintended consequences in the new framework for victim survivors of family violence</i>¹²	Federal government and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)	1-2 years
LGBTQIA+SB survivors	1.11 Invest in a national capability building program that supports the primary prevention sector to implement Changing with Pride at scale, including practical resources, tools, guidance, and structured peer learning opportunities to share emerging practice across the sector. This program should be developed with and for the LGBTQIA+ community. ¹³	Federal government	12 months
Economic abuse	1.12 We support Recommendation 1 of the Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee 2026 report for the Government to commit to a substantial increase in the base rates of JobSeeker and related working age payments. These payments include the Parenting Payment, Disability Support Pension, Carer Payment and Youth Allowance	DSS Finance	1-2 years

¹²Safe and Equal (2026), *Submission to Second Action Plan*, <https://safeandequal.org.au/2026/08/18/second-action-plan-submission/>.

¹³ Safe and Equal (2026), *Submission to Second Action Plan*, p.17.

<https://safeandequal.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Safe-and-Equal-Second-Action-Plan-Submission-August-2026.pdf>

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
Private businesses	1.13 Encourage private businesses to undertake education and training to address the drivers of gender-based violence, and refer victim-survivors to specialist services when they access family violence leave.	Federal government	5 years

Priority 2. Intervening earlier to stop violence across health, education and community services

In order to meaningfully improve FDV identification and response across adjacent sectors, it is essential to strengthen and build capacity of the specialist FDV sector and workforce. Alongside the need to resource specialist FDV services to provide advice, secondary consultation, training and advocacy, participants highlighted the need for key sectors to receive training on identifying the predominant aggressor to avoid mis-identification and the importance of the 2AP to retain a strong distinction between primary and early intervention. Early intervention referral pathways need to be strengthened, and there must be dedicated work done to improve pathways out of homelessness for victim-survivors. Participants also strongly expressed the need for adjacent services, such as legal, psychological, counselling, financial services, to be included as points for early intervention.

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
Improving FDV identification and response across adjacent sectors	2.1 Strengthen and resource specialist domestic and family violence services to train, support and provide secondary consultations to adjacent services supporting victim/survivors.	Federal and jurisdictional governments through tied grant agreement	12 months
	2.2 Educate and train police and child protection services, and intersecting sectors, such as mental health and AoD sectors on coercive control and on the predominant aggressor to avoid the misidentification of victim-survivors and perpetrators.	Federal government and jurisdictions	1-2 years
	2.3 Consider ways to better disseminate, and to make accessible, education and social media materials that can be tailored for use across different communities.	Federal government	12 months
	2.4 Retain the distinction between prevention and early intervention.	DSS and Federal government	12 months
Strengthen housing and pathways out of homelessness for survivors	2.5 Extend the Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) Crisis and Transitional Accommodation Program, including ongoing funding of \$40 million per year until 2036	Housing Australia	12 months

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
	2.6 Ensure rapid delivery of affordable, appropriate public and social housing in all jurisdictions including in rural, regional, remote and very remote areas. Pathways should be prioritised for victim/survivors in refuge and shelter accommodation to free up existing refuge and shelter spaces, and targeted at particular disadvantaged groups such as First Nations women and children, women and children from CALD backgrounds, women and/or children with disabilities and people who identify as LGBTIQ.	Federal and jurisdictions through multilateral agreement/tied grant	1-2 years
	2.7 Invest in additional and improved specialist refuge accommodation and long-term and transitional housing.	Federal government with jurisdictions	1-2 years
Clear and correct distinction between 'drivers' and 'reinforcing factors' in the 2AP	2.8 Ensure policy frameworks, and funding and implementation strategies focus on gendered drivers of gender based violence and that reinforcing factors such as AOD, mental health and gambling are clearly defined as such. This is in line with the Government policy Change the Story and related frameworks.	Federal government	12 months
Supporting referral pathways for early intervention	2.9 Resource effective integrated service delivery models, including early intervention points of access, that refer to specialist family violence services.	Federal government	1-2 years
	2.10 Ensure that early intervention focuses on children and young people to prevent potential future victimisation or perpetration.	Federal government	1-2 years

Priority 3. Enhancing supports for children and young people who have experienced violence

Participants strongly supported a dedicated focus on children and young people in the 2AP, and in particular the need for urgent reforms in the family law system to improve safety and outcomes for children and young people. There were also calls for increased resourcing for specialist FDV services to provide tailored and dedicated support to children and young people, as well as strengthened standards and additional training for Child Protection responding to children and young people experiencing DFV.

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
Legal system	3.1 Recognise children as victim-survivors in their own right, with distinct safety, recovery and support and representation needs during legal proceedings. Build on and invest in existing justice and family law reforms to strengthen safety, accountability and recovery for children and young people. We endorse Women's Legal Services Australia's recommendation that the Australian Government should: • Task an appropriate body to investigate new approaches to family law parenting matters that centre the safety of victim-survivors, including children, and the rights of children to safety, culture, participation and access to therapeutic support, drawing on international models like multi-disciplinary, child advocacy centres. • Urgently explore options to improve children's engagement with the FCFCOA, including providing free therapeutic support that is confidential, non-reportable and not able to be subpoenaed, and ensuring that children are informed of court outcomes in a supported, therapeutic environment.¹⁴	Federal government	1-2 years
	3.2 In line with the recommendation made in <i>Australia's Youth Justice and Incarceration System report</i>: <i>The Australian Government prioritise therapeutic early intervention programs for children</i>	DSS	1-2 years

¹⁴ Women's Legal Services Australia (2026) *The Second Action Plan: Submission by Women's Legal Services Australia*, <https://wlsa.org.au/the-second-action-plan-submission-by-womens-legal-services-australia/>.

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
	<i>and young people who use violence in the home after being exposed to family violence, and who are at risk of entering the youth justice system. This should be considered within the context of the development of action plans under:</i> • <i>the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children</i> • <i>Our Ways, Strong Ways, Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence.</i> <i>Consistent with Priority Reform Two of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, First Nations peaks should be genuine partners in the development and implementation of these action plans, and direct funding to ACCOs where the sector supports such an approach.¹⁵</i>		
Capacity of the specialist FDV sector to support children and young people	3.3 Strengthen and resource the specialist domestic and family violence sector with dedicated core funding to employ specialist children’s workers including allied health workers that form part of a multidisciplinary team. Refuges, shelters and other specialist victim/survivor services should be prioritised for the allocation of these resources to ensure children have their own specialist practitioners and case plans.	Federal and jurisdictions through multilateral agreement/tied grant funding	1-2 years
	3.4 Begin systemic changes to ensure that children and young people who are survivors can receive specialist FDV support when the person using violence doesn’t provide consent.	Federal government	12 months
	3.5 Examine ways that children and young people can have safe cultural engagements with the perpetrator’s family or community that is child-led, risk assessed and managed and Aboriginal and Torres Strait community controlled. Safe cultural connections should support safe connections to kin, Country, culture, language and identity without facilitating unsafe contact with the perpetrator or others who may minimise or enable violence.	Federal government	12 months

¹⁵ Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee (2026) *Australia’s Youth Justice and Incarceration System*, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/YouthJustice2025/Report, pp.127-128.

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
	3.6 Ensure there are specialist family violence accommodation services for children and young people, and in particular unaccompanied young people aged 15-17 years old.	Federal government	1-2 years
Child Protection	3.7 Mandate that child protection agencies and independent children's lawyers undertake Safe and Together training.	Fed with St/Terr governments	12 months
	3.8 Establish national standards for child protection agencies when DFSV is present.	DSS and Child Protection	1-2 years
Leaving Violence Program	3.9 Amend the age-related eligibility criteria for the Leaving Violence Payment to include young people who are between 15 and 17 years old, and expand eligibility to include other forms of domestic and family violence (such as violence used by parents) rather than limiting criteria to intimate partner violence only.	Federal government	12 months

Priority 4. Strengthening efforts to prevent and respond to rising rates of sexual violence

While sexual violence occurs in FDV contexts, the consultations and validation did not concentrate on sexual violence to a large extent. There is broad agreement that Sexual Violence needs more focus and we strongly support the recommendations and work of NASASV and the sexual violence sector.

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
Dedicated focus and investment in understandings, preventing and responding to sexual violence	4.1 Sexual violence receive dedicated focus and resourcing under the Second Action Plan including: • Data collection framework on type, context and prevalence of sexual violence across Australia • Dedicated and sustainable funding for specialist sexual assault services	DSS	12 months
Supporting the peak body	4.2 The National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence (NASASV) should receive dedicated and ongoing funding to support the essential role of the peak body.	DSS	12 months
Supporting the specialist sexual assault sector workforce	4.3 The specialist sexual assault sector must be resourced to develop a dedicated and comprehensive national workforce development strategy for the specialist sexual assault workforce.	DSS	1-2 years
	4.4 Resource the specialist sexual assault sector to address sexual violence experience by older people.	NASASV	1-2 years
	4.5 Resource specialist services to improve workforce capability and systems to identify and respond to sexual violence in various settings, including aged care and disability services.	NASASV	1-2 years
	4.6 We support Safe and Equal's recommendation for the Government to commit to ongoing funding for the implementation of the National Respectful Relationships	Departments of Education	1-2 years

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
	Education Framework, with a nationally coordinated approach in school settings across Australia. This should include workforce development for educators, parent and carer engagement and evaluation. ¹⁶		

¹⁶ Safe and Equal (2026), *Submission to Second Action Plan*, <https://safeandequal.org.au/2026/08/18/second-action-plan-submission/>.

Priority 5. Preventing, responding to and countering online harms

Participants welcomed that the National Cabinet identified addressing online harms as a standalone priority. In particular, participants highlighted the relationship between tech-facilitated gender-based violence and sexual violence (priority four), and an increase in sexual violence and other forms of violence, including non-fatal strangulation, and its relationship with the digital world, such as violent pornography. The relationship between online harm and sexual violence is articulated in the [submission](#) by the Loddon Consortium for Gender Equality and Violence Prevention. Their submission also points to the need to respond to misogyny, the manosphere and backlash against gender equality. This highlights the blurriness between online and offline harm, and the necessity of Government leadership to address tech-facilitated GBV, bridge tech policy with a gender-based violence lens and strengthen the specialist FDV workforce to respond to tech-facilitated abuse in the context of domestic and family violence.

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
Building a TFA-ready Specialist FDV Workforce: Capability Frameworks and Practice Guidance	5.1 Wesnet is resourced to establish national practice guidelines for responses to TFA, and a workforce capability framework for specialist FDV services that integrates with existing State and Territory practice frameworks and the national risk assessment and management framework.	Wesnet DSS	1-2 years
Continue resourcing effective programs that address TFA in the context of FDV	5.2 The Federal Government continues to fund Wesnet's <i>Safe Connections (Safer Technology for Women)</i> program beyond 2027 as part of the Second Action Plan and expand the program to address unmet demand.	DSS	12 months
	5.3 The Federal Government continues to fund the <i>Keeping Women Safe in their Homes</i> program beyond 2027 as part of the Second Action Plan.	DSS	12 months
Address inconsistent and poor quality private security services undertaking	5.4 At a minimum, develop national guidelines for specialist domestic and family violence response services that outline their roles and responsibilities, including an integrated practice response to identifying and responding to TFA. The guidelines would be integrated into existing national and State and Territory frameworks, and	Wesnet to be funded by DSS	1-2 years

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
technology sweeps and digital safety audits in FDV response	include tools to support practitioners to assess when to use and how to evaluate the suitability of private security services.		
	5.5 At a minimum, the national guidelines for an integrated TFA response for domestic and family violence specialist services is implemented and underpinned by a workforce development and quality assurance program developed for and by the specialist FDV sector.	Wesnet to be funded by DSS	1-2 years
	5.6 Implement a National Coordinating body that oversees and regulates private security services to deliver consistent, trauma-informed, culturally responsive and technically competent FDV responses. The body should include specialist FDV services, police, governments and the legal sector with three key roles: (a) advise specialist FDV services about the strengths and trustworthiness of services, (b) hold private security services accountable, and (c) continue ongoing discussions about managing the private security sector. There could be an opportunity to establish a FDV-specific, industry-led code of practice that defines minimum technical, ethical, and trauma-informed standards for private security services, and to support certification and registration through a public provider register.	Federal government to convene a TFGBV national coordinating body including Wesnet & eSafety	3-5 years
Embedding lived and living experience of TFGBV	5.7 Establish and manage a TFGBV lived and living experience panel to inform practice and policy responses to FDV and GBV.	DSS to fund Wesnet as the NFP expert on TFGBV	12 months
National coordination and response of tech-facilitated abuse in the	5.8 Establish a cross-agency TFGBV Regulatory Task Force coordinated by the Prime Minister and Cabinet to lead three pillars of effort (a) Strengthen enforcement of existing regulations to address TFGBV; (b) Coordinate law reform efforts across agencies to close gaps in protections; and (c) Convene cross-sector fusion cells between government, industry, specialist FDV services and peak bodies, including Wesnet.	Federal government to convene a TFGBV regulatory taskforce	12 months

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
context of domestic and family violence			
Bridge the gap between tech policy and gender-based violence policy	5.9 The Federal Government amend and implement the Digital Duty of Care to include a gender-based violence lens. See also: Rec 29 Wesnet 2AP submission, and Rec 42 Thematic Report.	DITRDCA	12 months
	5.10 The Digital Duty of Care requires that development of Codes is informed by lived experience and consultations with the DFSV Commissioner and specialist FDV sector.	DITRDCA	12 months
	5.11 New Class 1 definitions and thresholds in the Unlawful Material Codes should clearly focus on illegal and seriously harmful material and directly correspond to the Criminal Code where appropriate. Sexually explicit material that includes violent and seriously injurious practices, such as strangulation, should sit under Class 1.	AGDs	12 months
	5.12 Develop and deliver comprehensive national education about consent and harms around strangulation.	Depts of Education, in consultation with experts and peak bodies	12 months
	5.13 The Federal Government to implement AI policies with a gender-based violence lens.	PM&C Office of AI	12 months
	5.14 The Federal Government to implement the recommendations pertaining to AI oversight and regulation, and AI and women's employment outlined by Working with Women Alliance.	PM&C Office of AI	12 months

Priority 6. Targeting people at risk of using violence and holding perpetrators to account

Participants in the validation consultation highlighted several key areas of focus for 2AP to hold people using violence to account. These include the need to initiate targeted audits into how DFSV perpetrators are weaponising government systems to further harm victim-survivors, work to educate young people and particularly young boys to prevent radicalisation through the manosphere, ensuring appropriate support for victim-survivors when working with perpetrators to ensure interventions are accountable to those at risk and being harmed, and work to ensure the quality and integrity of men's behaviour change programs.

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
Weaponisation of systems by people using violence	6.1 The Federal government to initiate targeted audits into how DFSV perpetrators are weaponising government systems, particularly the family law and other legal systems and the child support system. We refer you to Women's Legal Services Australia's recommendations 2 and 3 for more detail to support this recommendation. ¹⁷	Federal government, FSFCOA, Services Australia	12 months
Radicalisation of boys and young men into the manosphere	6.2 Educate boys, (particularly those who are in the younger age brackets) about the harms of the manosphere and pornography.	Depts of Education, in consultation with experts and peak bodies	12 months
Strengthening access to and quality of programs in general and ensuring cultural safety that does not	6.3 Explore the development of national or state-based triage systems for perpetrators to access Men's Behaviour Change programs.	Federal government	1-2 years

¹⁷ Women's Legal Services Australia (2026) *The Second Action Plan: Submission by Women's Legal Services Australia*, <https://wlsa.org.au/the-second-action-plan-submission-by-womens-legal-services-australia/>, p.7.

Area of focus	Recommendation	Who	By when
compromise victim/survivor safety and perpetrator accountability.	6.4 Increase investment in locally adapted and culturally safe responses for people using violence that reflect the needs, cultures and service systems of different communities whilst still prioritising victim/survivor safety and perpetrator accountability.	Federal government	1-2 years
	6.5 Build the evidence base around perpetrator intervention services, particularly for members of diverse communities	Federal government	1-2 years
	6.6 Expand local community and organisational capacity to work effectively and safely with adults using violence by providing increased access to training, resources and tools that are locally adapted and culturally safe	State Govts	1-2 years
	6.7 Flexible, community-wide resourcing to support innovative, whole-of-community, place-based tailored FDV responses	State Govts	1-2 years
Ensuring appropriate support for victim/survivors when working with people who use violence.	6.8 Ensure that funding of Men's Behaviour Change Programs mandates family safety (victim/survivor) contact work and that it is required, reportable, measured and integrated into working with Men's Behaviour Change Programs.	Federal government	1-2 years
	6.9 Ensure that Men's Behaviour Change Programs mandate appropriate referrals and trauma-informed therapeutic support for children or young people.	State Govts	1-2 years
Quality and integrity of Men's Behaviour Change Programs	6.10 Educate and train services working with perpetrators on the gendered drivers of gender-based violence.	Federal government	1-2 years