



# RESEARCH AND EVALUATION OF THE SAFER TECHNOLOGY FOR WOMEN TRAINING AND THE SAFE CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

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## Executive Summary

### Information and Communication Technologies and Family and Domestic Violence

The growth of information and communication technologies has rapidly changed the ways in which people connect, and has created new opportunities to enhance the safety and social inclusion of women impacted by domestic and family violence. However, these new and diverse technologies also offer novel ways in which abuse can continue to be perpetrated against women<sup>1</sup>. Family and domestic violence practitioners almost universally have women who present at their agencies experiencing some form of technology-facilitated abuse, with smartphone and mobile technology the platform most commonly used to intimidate, harass, threaten, isolate and monitor women<sup>2</sup>. In the community, knowledge of how abuse can be perpetrated using technology and strategies to increase safety is generally low, including among workers in the sectors who support women at risk.

### Safe Connections

Launched in November 2014, Safe Connections seeks to address this issue by helping women and their children impacted by family and domestic violence to remain connected with their support networks and enhance their safety, social inclusion, and wellbeing. Delivered as a partnership between Telstra and WESNET, the national program involves the provision of a new smartphone, \$30 pre-paid credit, and information on the safe use of technology to women and children who have experienced family and domestic violence, sexual assault, and other forms of violence.

In March 2016, WESNET received funding from the Federal Government to support the expansion of Safe Connections so more frontline agencies could roll out the program. WESNET were also funded to deliver training, support and resources about technology-facilitated abuse and safety to capacity build frontline workers in the sector supporting women who experience family and domestic violence. This training equips workers to confidently engage in conversations about technology safety with women, develop tailored safety plans that deeply consider the impact of technology-facilitated abuse, and support women to stay safely connected.

Within the Safe Connections program, Telstra is responsible for providing the smartphones, SIM cards, \$30 pre-paid credit vouchers, and technology information. WESNET coordinate and administer Safe Connections and oversee the supply of phones to local agencies which are then distributed to women, and if necessary their children, experiencing family and domestic violence. WESNET also deliver the Safer Technology for Women training to frontline workers and ongoing support to capacity build the sector to respond more effectively to the expanding forms of technology-facilitated abuse. To further strengthen the sector, WESNET has delivered a two day Technology Safety Summit for the past two years. Telstra has been principal sponsor of the event for both years, and has committed to sponsoring the forthcoming third Technology Safety Summit.

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<sup>1</sup> Woodlock, D. (2016). The abuse of technology in domestic violence and stalking. *Violence Against Women*, 23(5), 584-602.  
doi:10.1177/1077801216646277

<sup>2</sup> Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, Women's Legal Services NSW and WESNET. (2015). ReCharge: Women's technology safety, legal resources, research and training. Retrieved from <http://www.smartsafe.org.au/sites/default/files/ReCharge-Womens-Technology-Safety-Report-2015.pdf>

## About this evaluation

In July 2017, WESNET commissioned Curtin University to undertake an independent evaluation of the Safe Connections program. The evaluation concluded in December 2017 and involved multiple surveys with frontline workers, interviews with 10 key stakeholders who represent WESNET, Telstra and lead and local agency partners, and interviews with 18 women who have received a smartphone and technology safety information and advice as part of the program. Relevant program administrative data was provided by WESNET which was collated and analysed, and a member of the research team also attended two Safer Technology for Women training sessions.

## Key findings

- As at the end of December 2017, a total of 5,787 Safe Connections phones had been distributed to women and their children impacted by family and domestic violence and 227 frontline agencies were involved in the delivery of the program.
- Since the program commenced, the monthly distribution of smartphones has been trending upward as more agencies are approved to participate in Safe Connections.
- Data indicates that the program has been effective in reaching women who are particularly marginalised and vulnerable, with almost half of the women who have received a Safe Connections smartphone and technology safety advice identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, as a refugee and/or from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background, or as having a disability.
- Between June 2016 and December 2017, a total of 1,871 frontline workers had participated in face-to-face Safer Technology for Women training delivered by WESNET technology safety experts. Frontline workers described encountering technology-facilitated abuse constantly in their work and generally did not feel well equipped to advise women in these situations. Given the increase in cases of technology-facilitated abuse and how it is used to compromise women's safety, there is an urgent need to upskill workers to effectively support women to stay safe and connected. As strategies of abuse and surveillance are increasingly being perpetrated, frontline workers were enthusiastic to participate in the training and eager to deliver the program.
- Frontline workers reported that the Safer Technology for Women training was comprehensive, highly relevant, and increased workers' knowledge of the different forms of technology-facilitated abuse; how to collect evidence and document abuse; practical strategies to improve the safety of women experiencing technology-facilitated abuse; and the resources available for women on technology safety. The training had a profound impact on their practice with workers reporting that they were more confident advising women with regard to technology-facilitated abuse and safety, and incorporated the learnings from the training into their safety planning.
- The capacity building of frontline workers flowed onto the women who described receiving useful technology safety advice and support from workers when they received their Safe Connections phone.
- Activating the smartphones was simple and straightforward, and workers appreciated having access to specialist knowledge, technical advice and support from WESNET.

## Conclusion

Safe Connections is an empowering program that is contributing to the safety of women who have experienced family and domestic violence. It supports women to remain connected to family, friends and services or to re-establish connections and relationships where they are socially isolated. Safe Connections was described as a “lifesaver” that offered women a sense of security, while creating opportunities for greater freedom and independence. Frontline workers and key stakeholders saw Safe Connections as filling an important gap in family and domestic violence responses, and emphasised that the continuation and expansion of the program was crucial to supporting women and their children impacted by violence to stay safely connected.

Overall, Safe Connections is an outstanding example of a multi-sectoral collaboration that is highly effective and much needed. Increased, ongoing funding and resourcing is recommended so that more agencies and frontline workers can deliver Safe Connections, and more women and their families can continue to benefit from the program. The following recommendations are made to further improve the Safe Connections program.

## Recommendations

### Safer Technology for Women training

- The development of basic, entry-level technology training for frontline workers not familiar with technology.
- Multiple, face-to-face “refresher” training sessions to enable frontline workers to keep pace with developments in technology and technology-facilitated abuse.
- The expansion of the training to include other devices beyond mobile phones.
- The inclusion of practical demonstrations or videos on how to safely set up the mobile phones that are used as part of the Safe Connections program.
- The inclusion of more case study scenarios in the training so participants can practise applying their knowledge.
- Increased opportunities for police, lawyers and others in the legal and justice sector who support women impacted by violence to participate in technology safety training.
- Targeted technology safety training specifically designed for women, children and young people who are impacted or are at risk of being impacted by family and domestic violence. This would contribute as a primary prevention strategy.

## Safe Connections

### For WESNET to consider

- Continued investment in the Safe Connections inventory and data collection systems to ensure the efficient distribution of phones as the program expands.
- Continued engagement with agencies that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from CALD backgrounds, and women with disabilities, and the development of targeted and customised technology safety resources and information for these women.
- Continued expansion of the program to agencies in rural, regional and remote locations.
- Increase direct capture of the experiences of women who have received a Safe Connections smartphone and technology safety advice to assess the impact of the program.

### **For Telstra to consider**

- Establishment of an alternative process for SIM activation in cases where the woman presents without sufficient identification.
- The provision of mobile phone credit on an ongoing basis in the form of a plan or regular pre-paid credit to ensure women who receive a Safe Connections phone can continue to remain safe and connected.
- Ensuring that all mobile phones provided as part of the program are reliable and of a high quality.

## Background

The Women's Services Network (WESNET) is a national women's peak advocacy body that works on behalf of women and children who are experiencing or have experienced family and domestic violence. WESNET has almost 350 members from across Australia, and represents a range of organisations and individuals including refuges, shelters, legal services, and housing and homelessness services. In 2011, the WESNET Safety Net Australia project was established to examine the intersection of technology and violence against women. The project was leveraged from the US-based National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) Safety Net project. WESNET has been the first organisation to successfully implement the program outside the USA.

As part of this initiative, WESNET work closely with communities and agencies to address how ongoing and emerging technology issues impact on the safety, privacy and accessibility rights of survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, and provide advocacy and policy advice to a range of government agencies and key decision makers. WESNET also deliver technology safety training to its members and others in the sector supporting survivors of domestic violence, as well as information and resources on how technology can be used strategically to increase safety and minimise risks of violence.

In November 2014, WESNET partnered with Telstra to launch the Telstra Safe Connections program. This program seeks to support women and their children impacted by family and domestic or sexual violence to remain safely connected with family, friends, agencies and society, and enhance social inclusion, safety and wellbeing. The Safe Connections program provides a new smartphone and \$30 pre-paid credit to women who have experienced family and domestic violence, sexual assault, and other forms of violence, and information on the safe use of technology in the form of a small, fold out information leaflet with basic information on how to use a phone. In the first phase of the program, women could access phones through WESNET member agencies that chose to participate in the program, and WESNET coordinated and managed the program with the assistance of a lead agency in each State/Territory across Australia.

In March 2016, WESNET received \$2.5 million, as part of the Federal Government's Women's Safety Package, to significantly expand the work that WESNET and Telstra had established under the Safe Connections program. Telstra also committed to providing mobile phones to meet the demand of the program. Under the grant, entitled *Safer Technology for Women*, WESNET continues to coordinate and administer the program providing the smartphones nationally through a wider range of partner agencies that support women impacted by domestic violence. WESNET is also funded to deliver training and resources about technology-facilitated abuse and safety to frontline workers. Research in the US and Australia in 2013 and 2015 had found that almost all of domestic and family violence frontline workers had clients experiencing some form of technology-facilitated abuse<sup>3</sup>. The training element of the program enables frontline workers to not only be able to recognise and identify when technology-facilitated abuse may be occurring for their clients, but also capacity builds them to confidently engage in conversations about technology-facilitated abuse with women, develop tailored safety plans and offer technology safety information and advice. The training is also designed to support women to remain on technology safely, as well as potentially gather evidence to hold their perpetrators accountable. In addition, for the past two years WESNET has hosted a two day Technology Safety Summit which brings together national and international experts on technology safety and violence against

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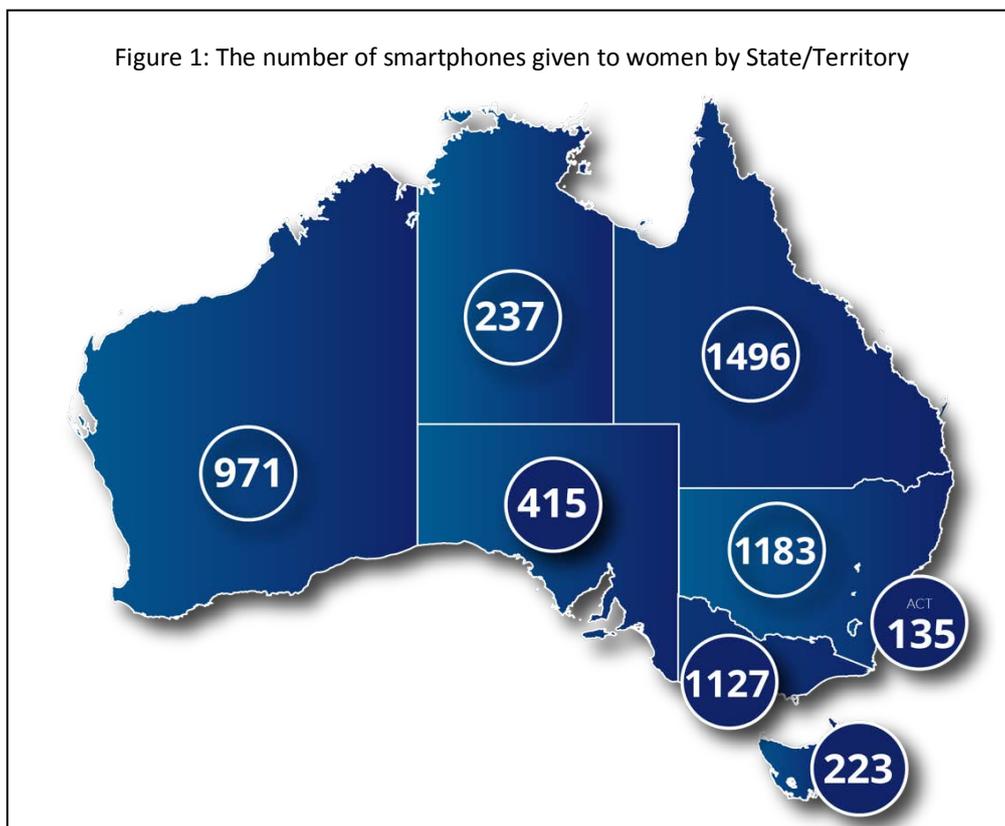
<sup>3</sup> Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, Women's Legal Services NSW and WESNET. (2015). ReCharge: Women's technology safety, legal resources, research and training. Retrieved from <http://www.smartsafe.org.au/sites/default/files/ReCharge-Womens-Technology-Safety-Report-2015.pdf>

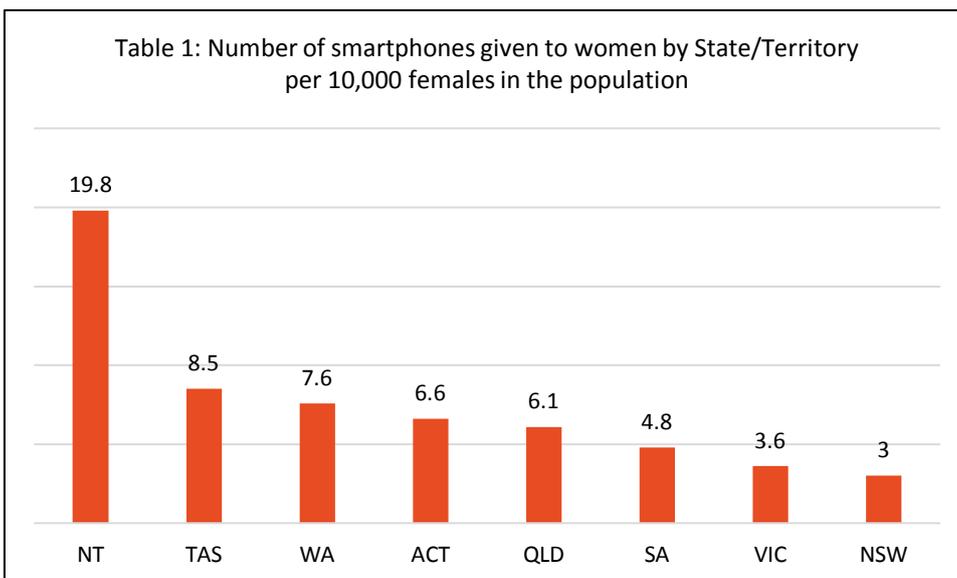
women. Telstra has been the principal sponsor of the event for both years, and has committed to sponsoring the forthcoming third Technology Safety Summit.

An evaluation of the Safe Connections was undertaken by KPMG in June 2016, which concluded that Safe Connections was contributing to a decrease in women’s vulnerability to violence, and the impact of violence on their lives. This is the second evaluation of the program.

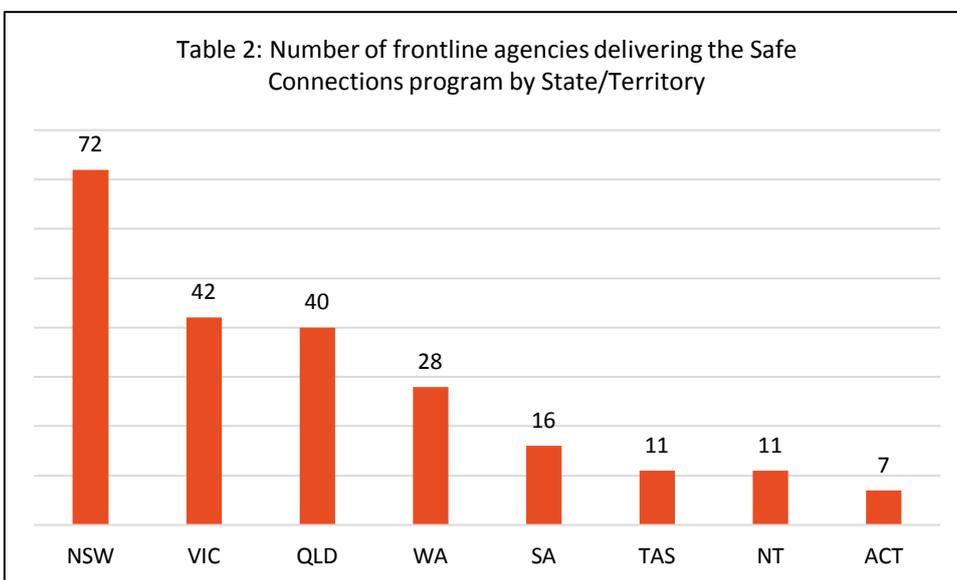
### Snapshot of the Safe Connections program

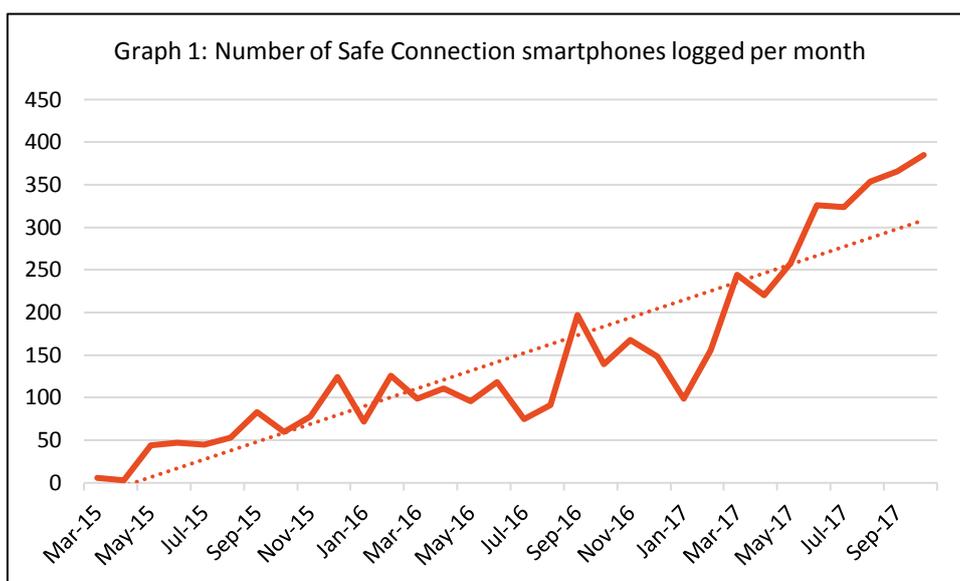
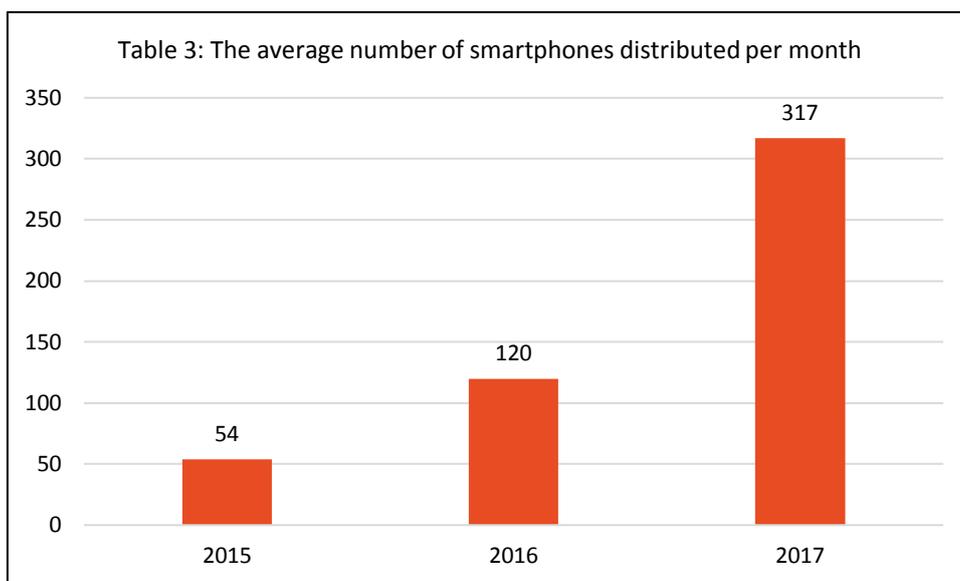
In this section we provide an overview of the Safe Connections program using data as at the 31st of December 2017. Over the life of the program, a total of 9,117 smartphones have been donated by Telstra, and 5,787 of these have been provided to women impacted by family and domestic violence (99.3%), sexual assault (6.3%), or both (5.7%). This data indicates that the intended target group (women who have experienced or are experiencing violence) are the beneficiaries of the Safe Connections program. Figure 1 shows the number of smartphones provided to women per State/Territory and Table 1 shows the number of smartphones by State/Territory per 10,000 females in the population.



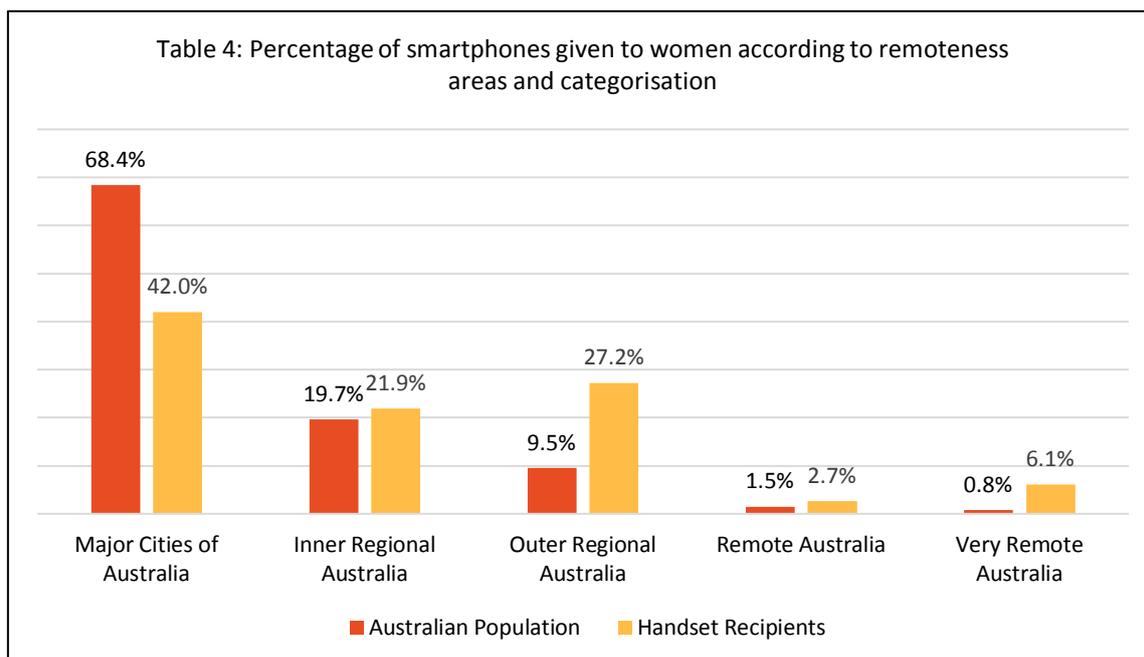


During 2017, the number of frontline agencies involved in the delivery of Safe Connections has more than doubled from 84 in April 2016 to 227 agencies (see Table 2) and the average number of smartphones given out per month increased considerably with 317 distributed per month in 2017 as compared to 120 phones in 2016 and 54 in 2015 (see Table 3). Since the program commenced, the monthly distribution of smartphones has been trending upward as more agencies are approved (see Graph 1).





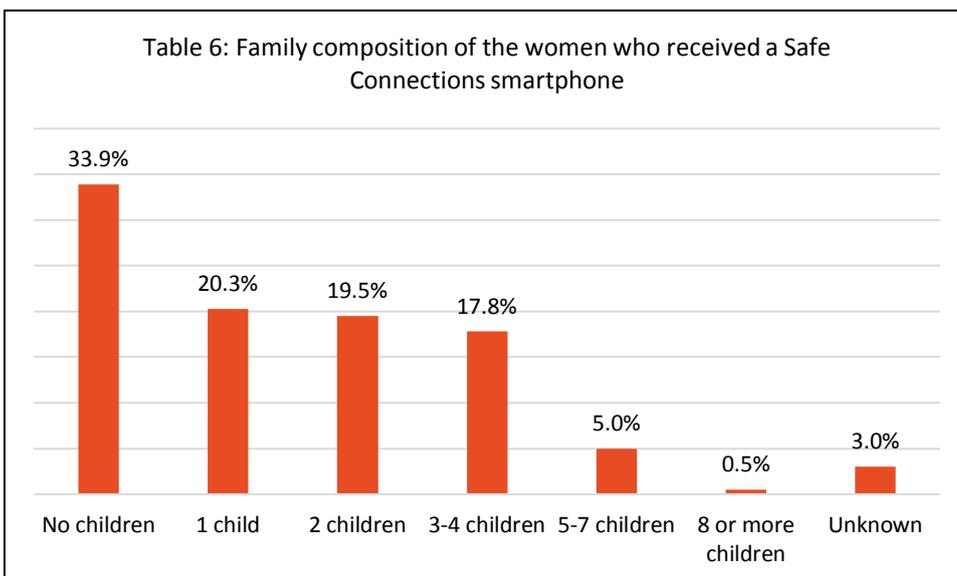
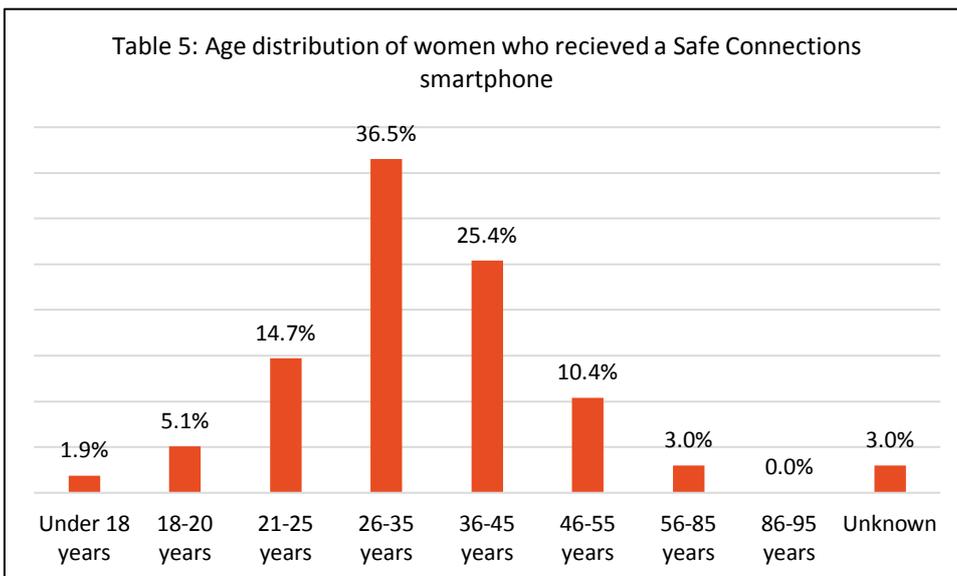
Safe Connections is committed to reaching reach women in geographically isolated locations across Australia. Table 4 shows mobile phone distribution according to the ABS distribution of the population across remoteness area and categorisation. This data indicates that there is a large number of women in rural and remote locations accessing the program. This is an important finding because the safety of women living in isolated and remote areas of Australia can be easily compromised due to distance and lack of access to services. For these women, a mobile phone does offer a lifeline.



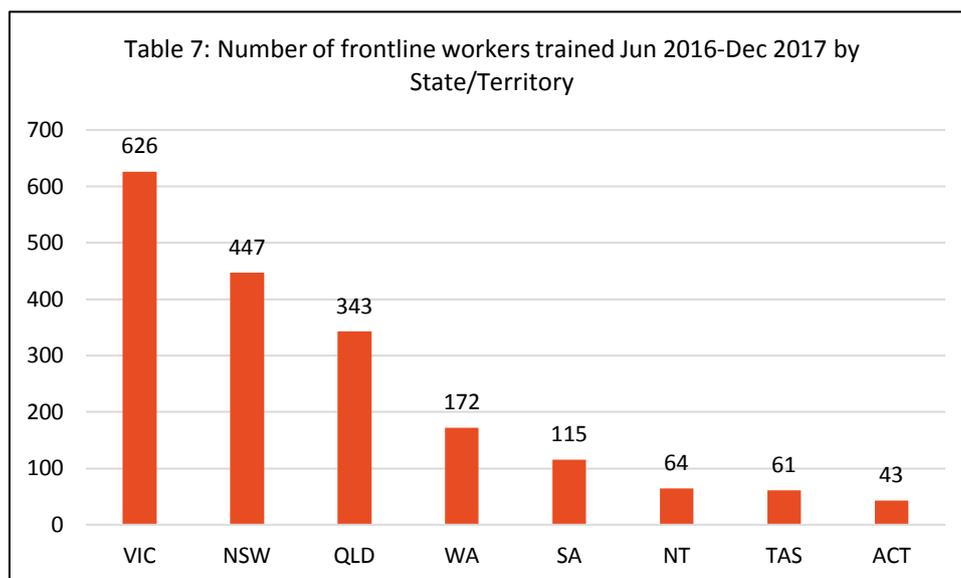
A key component of the Safe Connections program is supporting women from marginalised groups, including those from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and women with disabilities. Studies have shown that these women are significantly more likely to experience domestic and family violence, particularly women from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities, and therefore require targeted responses<sup>4</sup>. Of the 5,787 women who received a Safe Connections smartphone, almost half were from vulnerable sub-populations with 29% identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, 11% as an immigrant, refugee and/or as having a non-English speaking background, and 8% as having a disability. This data suggests that the Safe Connections program has been effective in reaching a diverse target group, including those deemed particularly vulnerable within our society. The majority of women who received a smartphone were aged 26-35 years old (see Table 5), and these figures reflect national statistics whereby women in this age group were most likely to experience intimate partner violence nationally<sup>5</sup>. Almost 34% of the women who received a Safe Connections phone had no children and approximately 40% had one or two children (see Table 6).

<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2016). *Recorded crime- Victims, Australia, 2015* (Cat. no. 4510.0). Retrieved from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4510.0>

<sup>5</sup> Cox, P. (2016). *Violence against women: Additional analysis of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey, 2012* (ANROWS Horizons: 01.01/2016 Rev. ed.). Sydney: ANROWS.



Since June 2016, 1,871 frontline workers who support women impacted by family and domestic violence participated in face-to-face Safer Technology for Women training delivered by WESNET technology safety experts (see Table 7). In addition, 908 frontline workers are registered on the Safe Connections portal ([www.phones.wesnet.org.au](http://www.phones.wesnet.org.au)) which offers online training and customised information and resources.



### Evolution of the program

Since it began in late 2014, the Safe Connections program has undergone many changes to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Safe Connections program. Together with support from Telstra, WESNET has implemented a revised smartphone distribution monitoring and reporting system to accurately locate phones across the network and proactively detect blockages after issues with distribution were identified in the June 2016 KPMG evaluation. Changes include the introduction of online payment via PayPal (for handset postage), Google Forms and scanners for tracking stock movements by lead agencies, and unique identification numbers for each local agency to reduce errors in allocation of inventory. WESNET continue to communicate with agencies about the inventory management system and are committed to improving and optimising this process as budget allows.

In the KPMG evaluation, it was noted by agencies that SIM card activation was challenging in instances where the woman presented without identification. This was particularly the case for women from remote regions, migrant and refugee communities, and also younger women. WESNET and Telstra are currently in the process of developing a response to this issue which will be implemented in early 2018. In 2018, WESNET and Telstra are also planning to update the technology information provided with the Safe Connections smartphones.

With regard to the Safer Technology for Women training, WESNET have responded to recommendations arising from KPMG's evaluation by implementing face-to-face training developed and delivered by two national trainers with expertise in both violence against women and technology safety in March 2017. Over time, the content of the training has been enhanced to include cloud functionality and its relevance to technology-facilitated abuse, information on useful and relevant apps, and a broad overview of evidence collection and admissibility. WESNET has developed over ten new handouts about a range of technology-facilitated abuse topics. For example, there are handouts which focus on the privacy and security of Android and Apple devices, and another specifically dedicated to Google settings (Google services are commonly used by Android smartphones). These resources are publically available on the website [www.techsafety.org.au](http://www.techsafety.org.au). In the coming year, WESNET are examining what customised, culturally and linguistically appropriate content

needs to be developed to ensure women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including those who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, are able to access the program.

Reflecting their commitment to continuously improve program efficiency and support frontline workers and women, WESNET have implemented a hotline number (1800 WESNET) and dedicated email address to provide program support and advice on technology-facilitated abuse. Between May 2016 and December 2017, the hotline number received 3,006 calls and this number is expected to increase overtime. In addition, WESNET have also launched a new website, [www.techsafety.org.au](http://www.techsafety.org.au), which provides up to date information and resources to women who are experiencing technology-facilitated domestic violence (including the handouts described above). Finally, WESNET have implemented processes which allow them to capture data on program satisfaction via the collection of case studies by frontline workers which are logged on the Safe Connections portal, and online snapshot surveys which provide updates on program performance and identify emerging issues. Overall, WESNET and Telstra are to be commended for their flexibility and responsiveness in the delivery of Safe Connections.

## The Research

### Research aim and objectives

The aim of this research was to evaluate the Safer Technology for Women training and the Safe Connections program. The research commenced in July 2017 and concluded in December 2017. The research objectives were collaboratively developed with WESNET and were as follows:

1. To document how the Safer Technology for Women training and Safe Connections Program has evolved over the life of the project.
2. To identify the benefits and impact of the Safe Connections program, opportunities for improvement, and/or take up of recommendations since the first evaluation.
3. To assess the impact of the Safe Connections program on the lives of the women who receive the Safe Connections phones, including the customer experience of getting and activating the phones.
4. To identify key areas of learning and development for frontline workers from the Safer Technology for Women training and aspects of practice which have been changed, modified and/or strengthened as a result of the training and access to resources to promote safe connections for service users.
5. To document the strengths of the Safer Technology for Women training and knowledge and areas for future development or expansion.
6. To document trends about the use of the resources to promote safe connections and how this could be further enhanced in the future.

### Research design

The evaluation methods were developed in partnership with WESNET, and a mixed methods approach was utilised with data collected from three participant groups:

- **Women** who have received a smartphone and technology safety information and advice as part of the Safe Connections program.
- **Frontline workers** who have completed the Safer Technology for Women training and are involved in the delivery of the Safe Connections program. These workers represented a variety of agencies including specialist women's services (domestic and family violence and sexual assault), homelessness

services, community legal services, family support services, and specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD services.

- **Key stakeholders** who deliver the Safe Connections program (including the training and resources) from WESNET, Telstra and lead and local agencies.

Key stakeholders and women participated in a semi-structured telephone interview. Frontline workers who completed the Safer Technology for Women training were invited to complete a pre-training survey, a post-training survey, and a survey at two months follow-up. In addition to this, a member of the research team participated in two Safer Technology for Women training sessions delivered in Perth to collect observational data. Relevant program administrative data was also provided by WESNET which was collated and analysed by the research team.

## Participants

Eighteen women who received a Safe Connections smartphone participated in a semi-structured telephone interview in November-December 2017, of which five were from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background. The majority of women were located in Victoria (n=9), with the remaining nine women in Western Australia (n=3), Queensland (n=3), New South Wales (n=2) and the Australian Capital Territory (n=1).

A total of 234 frontline workers who participated in the Safer Technology for Women training in August and September 2017 completed the pre-training survey. Immediately following training, 227 frontline workers returned post-training surveys. Approximately two months after completing the Safer Technology for Women training, frontline workers were invited to participate in a follow-up survey. Two hundred and fourteen frontline workers completed or partially completed<sup>6</sup> the follow-up survey, of which 91 participated in training delivered between March and July 2017, and 123 completed the training in August-November 2017. Sixty four percent of these frontline workers reported completing the 'Level 2 training: Smartphones and safety' (n=108), 15% completed customised WESNET technology safety training (n=25), and 21% were unsure/other (n=35).

Ten key stakeholders representing WESNET (n=4), Telstra (n=1), and lead agencies (n=5) participated in a semi-structured telephone interview in November-December 2017. Reflecting the national reach of the program, stakeholders were located in Victoria (n=5), Western Australia (n=2), New South Wales (n=1), South Australia (n=1), and Tasmania (n=1).

## Procedure

Ethical approval for this research was obtained from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HRE2017-0533).

In August and September 2017, WESNET emailed frontline agencies who were scheduled to participate in the Safer Technology for Women training a link to the online pre-training survey (see Appendix A) and a copy of the information statement. Hard copies of this survey were also available at the sessions. This survey focused on how the issue of technology-facilitated abuse had come to their attention in their work, their current knowledge, and their hopes for the training. At the end of these training sessions, WESNET training facilitators invited workers to complete a post-training survey (see Appendix B) which explored the impact of the training on their knowledge of technology-facilitated abuse and strategies to ensure safety, strengths of the training, and opportunities for improvement. These surveys were scanned and emailed to the research team by

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<sup>6</sup> Please note that because frontline workers did not respond to all questions in the follow-up survey there will be instances where the total number of responses is less than 214 responses.

WESNET for analysis. Approximately two months after completing the Safer Technology for Women training, frontline workers listed on WESNET's database were emailed a link to the follow-up survey (see Appendix C). This survey focused on the impact of the training on their day-to-day practice and their experience of the Safe Connections program more broadly, including barriers to implementation, strengths and opportunities for improvement. The research team then collated and analysed these responses.

In November 2017, WESNET emailed agencies who delivered the Safe Connections program inviting them to advertise the research and evaluation using a flyer. Agencies were also provided with the information statement, consent form and interview questions (see Appendix D) to share with women who accessed the program. Women who were interested in participating in the research signed the consent form which was then scanned and emailed (usually by the agency) to the research team. A member of the research team then made contact with the woman to arrange a time for the telephone interview to be conducted at a safe and private location. Interviews with the women focused on the process of obtaining and setting up the Safe Connections smartphone (including the technology safety advice offered by frontline workers and support from Telstra), the impact of having the smartphone, ways in which the Safe Connections program could be improved, and overall satisfaction. Depending on the preferences of the woman, the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, or detailed notes were taken. Each woman received a \$25 Coles Myer voucher as an acknowledgement of their participation.

Finally, WESNET nominated ten key stakeholders involved in the delivery of the Safe Connections program (including the training and resources) to participate in a semi-structured telephone interview (see Appendix E). These interviews focused on both the Safer Technology for Women training and the Safe Connections program, including issues associated with the implementation of the program, its impact, and opportunities for improvement. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, or detailed notes were taken.

## Analysis

Qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews and open-ended survey questions were analysed using thematic analysis<sup>7</sup>. A coding frame which reflected the research objectives was developed to guide analysis. First, interview transcripts/survey responses were read and re-read individually, and initial impressions, codes and ideas were noted under each theme of the coding frame. Next, the research team compared and collated the codes under each theme. Themes were then collectively reworked to ensure that each had sufficient supporting data and cohered meaningfully. Quotations were selected from the transcripts to support themes. Participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity.

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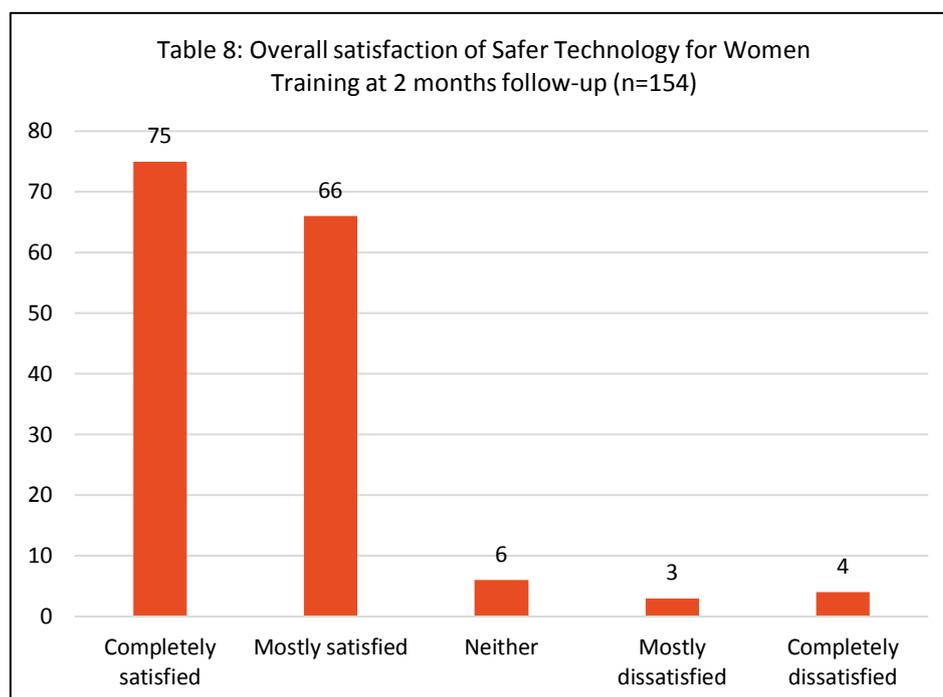
<sup>7</sup> Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.  
doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oac

## Findings: Safer Technology for Women Training

In this section, we present the findings of the pre-, post-, and follow-up surveys which were completed by frontline workers who participated in the Safer Technology for Women training and our semi-structured telephone interviews with ten key stakeholders.

### Frontline Workers

Overall, satisfaction with the Safer Technology for Women training was high (see Table 8), with approximately 99% of workers (n=226) reporting that they would recommend the training to others in the sector.



### Experiences prior to participating in the Safer Technology for Women training

Almost all of the frontline workers who participated in the Safer Technology for Women training indicated that technology-facilitated abuse had already come to their attention in their work with women, with some workers recognising the co-occurring nature of technology-facilitated abuse and other forms of violence:

Domestic and family violence has often been facilitated through technology. Perpetrators use this as a forum to continue to harass, threaten, and stalk their victims. Our clients regularly report encountering these incidents, and lots of breaches to DFV Protection Orders occur in this way.

Technology safety issues were described as presenting “all the time”, and workers explained that their clients regularly report:

- Receiving abusive and threatening messages and phone calls.
- Being stalked and tracked by the perpetrator using GPS apps installed on their phone, location services, and information posted online: “Perpetrators using information posted on social media

websites to trace the women's whereabouts". Some workers reported instances where the perpetrator located the woman at their refuge.

- Hacking social media, online banking and email accounts.
- Non-consensual image sharing online: ". . . filming sexual activity without consent. Uploading to internet film/pics without consent. Revenge pornography, blackmailing over photos".
- The perpetrator removing or physically destroying the woman's phone.

Frontline workers commented that women's understanding of technology-facilitated abuse and how to stay safe was generally low: "I have found that women don't realize that their partners can track their whereabouts from their phone". As a response to technology-facilitated abuse, workers explained that women will often choose not to use their phone or other forms of technology (for example, an iPad or computer), which limits their access to support.

Overall, frontline workers indicated that they were enthusiastic to participate in the Safer Technology for Women training as their awareness of technology safety was low and they wanted to become more confident in advising their clients. They were eager to learn about practical strategies to improve women's safety, ways to collect evidence and document abuse, and the resources available to women.

### **Strengths of the Safer Technology for Women training**

Workers described the training as highly relevant, "comprehensive", "current", and "aimed at an appropriate level of pre-existing knowledge". The focus on practical strategies to support the safety of women was seen as a strength of the training: "Very eye opening- practical and informative". Overall, workers were very satisfied with the training facilitators who were described as being knowledgeable, confident, enthusiastic, and approachable: "Facilitator was accessible and easy to talk to and ask questions". Frontline workers appreciated that facilitators tailored the information to suit the unique needs of the audience and also felt that they benefitted from having the training delivered by a facilitator who had specialist knowledge of both family and domestic violence and technology safety: "It was excellent to have specialist training, very useful" and "I could listen to the trainer all day, she was fantastic. Full of knowledge and advice and no question was ever a silly question".

### **Opportunities for strengthening the Safer Technology for Women training**

Workers stressed that the training was needed and should be expanded to raise "community awareness" of technology-facilitated abuse more broadly and how to remain safe: "Public awareness campaign for individuals to take more responsibility for their own use of technology and the possible implications [that] misuse can cause". Frontline workers felt that the training should be offered to other groups including children and young people, women, and the police:

. . . increased upskilling for police and more access to the technologies that are available to help gather evidence against perpetrators, at the moment it's up to the woman to do all the gathering of evidence which is exhausting and difficult. It would be great if there was more of a focus on supporting women to gather evidence.

With regard to the training specifically, the most common feedback was that the training sessions needed to be longer, or multiple sessions needed to be offered: "More detail. Training could be longer- it felt very rushed" and "Lengthen time of presentation to absorb all the info as it was a lot to take in". This was particularly the case for frontline workers who were not familiar with technology: "Maybe a full day training for those who are not tech savvy". It was also suggested by a number of participants that follow-up training

sessions were needed to consolidate learning and keep frontline workers up to date with developments in technology-facilitated abuse: “Regular updates that are in line with the advances in technology”.

Frontline workers suggested that the training could be enhanced by including more practical demonstrations or videos on how to safely set up the smartphones that are used as part of the Safe Connections program: “If we could use the actual phones we hand out to clients to learn more specific strategies” and:

Some hands on demonstrations, where participants can get out their phones and be guided through the processes to safe-proof a phone would be good, i.e. turning off locations. When workers have learnt these skills proficiently, we would be much more confident when teaching our clients these skills.

Workers also reflected that they would like there to be more case studies/real life scenarios to practise applying the knowledge and skills they had learnt in the training session. With regard to the content included in the training, some frontline workers explained that they would like more information on the safe use of social media and the legal requirements and laws pertaining to technology-facilitated abuse.

### **Impact of the training on practice**

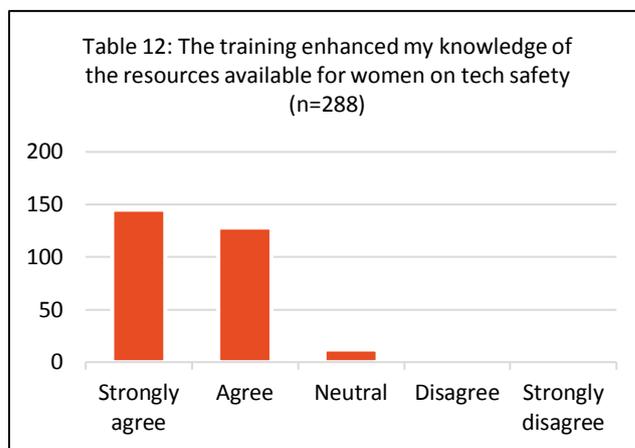
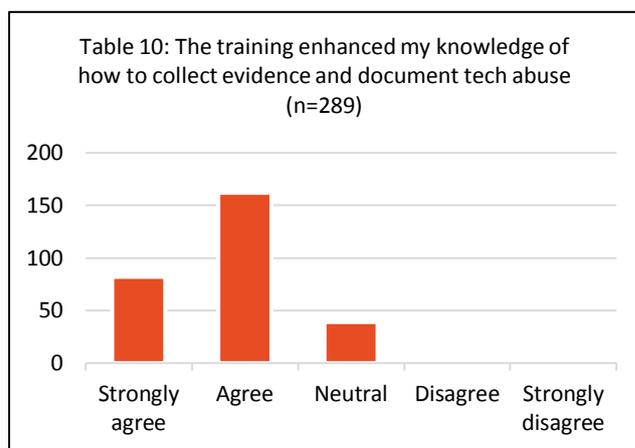
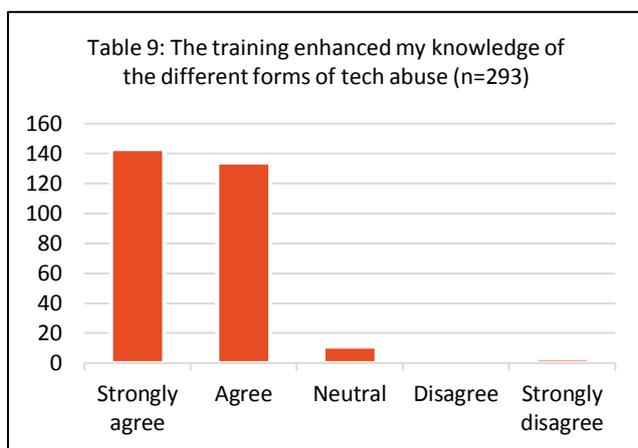
The Safer Technology for Women training is having an impact on workers practice. Immediately post-training, approximately 98% of frontline workers (n=224) said that they felt more confident in advising clients on how to address phone-facilitated abuse after participating in the Safer Technology for Women training: “I have more knowledge regarding what specific questions to ask to tease out more information about the problem”. One worker said that the take home message from training was to “Remember three key points- what does he know, where does the information live, what does he have access to?”. Frontline workers reported increases in their knowledge of the different forms of technology-facilitated abuse; how to collect evidence and document abuse; practical strategies to improve the safety of women experiencing technology-facilitated abuse; and the resources available for women on technology safety (see Tables 9 to 12).

At two months follow-up, 86% of workers (n=132) agreed that the training had influenced their day-to-day practice with women. 114 participants provided written responses outlining the ways in which the training had impacted their practice. Participating in the training increased workers awareness of technology-facilitated abuse and strategies to ensure safety: “I have a greater awareness of the types and ways of tracking and locating a person. I use the training to educate clients further about these concerns”. Workers reported feeling more confident advising women: “I have felt more confident to provide support to women around their safety in their engagement with technology when experiencing DV/FV due to having up to date and extended information and training”. The skills and strategies taught at the training were useful to workers and they were able to apply these in their safety planning with women: “In a practical sense, I can show client’s safety tips when using their phones etc. Some of the tips I was not aware of before I attended this training so that was very useful” and “I have sent a few women to the website for safety tips. I have also felt more confident helping women work out what the perpetrator may have access to”.

As a result of the training, frontline workers explained that they were now having more formalised and targeted conversations with women about technology safety, and it was more strongly incorporated into safety planning: “I have been able to apply this training in my safety planning and discussions about technology abuse and domestic violence” and “Tech safety is more entrenched in safety planning now”. Workers described drawing upon what they had learnt in the Safer Technology for Women training when giving women phones as part of the Safe Connections program: “[when] we give the phones out to women, and we also discuss safety with smart phones if they are keeping their original phones” and another: “All workers seek to

enhance victim safety. The provision of a phone and information on safe use of technology has enhanced safety and [is an] opportunity to address risk for many victims”.

Family and domestic violence interventions or responses delivered by workers without relevant training and a nuanced understanding of gendered violence and abuse may inadvertently increase the risks for women. For example, changing a password to an email account so that the perpetrator can no longer access the account as a ‘safety measure’ may result in an escalation of violence as the perpetrator attempts to regain power and control. It is crucial that when frontline workers provide women with their new smartphone and technology safety advice that this is done in a careful and informed way that takes into consideration the unique needs of the woman and the perpetrator’s level of risk and pattern of abuse.



## Key Stakeholders

### Strengths of the Safer Technology for Women training and impact

Technology-facilitated abuse was described by key stakeholders as being a pervasive (“universal”) and evolving issue, and the Safer Technology for Women training was seen to be filling an important gap in the knowledge of workers who support women who have experienced family and domestic violence: “I just see this project as being critical for the ongoing learning of domestic violence practitioners” (Manager, family support service). Overall, the training was described as being well-received, and was seen as having a crucial role in raising

awareness of technology-facilitated abuse, and equipping workers with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop tailored safety plans with women: “the training I think really heightened . . . our awareness of our own gaps in our own knowledge” (Manager, family violence counselling service) and “For me just personally, I found the training really helpful in understanding some of the complexity of what's happening with technology for women and the way it's been abused” (Manager, family support service). The training was described as being practical, well-facilitated, and useful to all workers regardless of their level of technology literacy: “The staff have various degrees of interest and knowledge of technology. The training increases their skills, no matter where they are at, increasing their awareness of the risks of technology and increasing their ability to use technology” (Manager, specialist domestic violence service).

A key strength of the Safer Technology for Women training was that it is delivered by an organisation that specialises in family and domestic violence, meaning that it was more “relevant” to the needs of workers and unlike any other ‘tech training’ offered in the sector. Key stakeholders from WESNET explained that the training was “domestic violence-centred” which was “surprising” for some workers, who expected the focus to be solely on technology. WESNET key stakeholders emphasised that technology safety training needed to be “tailored” to the sector and encourage workers to consider the perpetrator pattern of abuse, and the individual circumstances and unique needs of each woman, otherwise strategies intended to increase the safety of women could inadvertently place them at greater risk:

Technology safety is not a checklist approach. Some strategies that may work for some women may not be right for another woman who knows the patterns of her abuser and may know that a particular strategy . . . may lead to escalation in her particular circumstances (WESNET representative).

The training was described as being “pro-technology” in that it focused on the “positive potential of technology” to enhance safety, promote social inclusion and empower women, rather than simply advising women to disconnect from technology.

### **Challenges and opportunities for strengthening the Safer Technology for Women training**

Key stakeholders were very satisfied with the Safer Technology for Women training and felt that it was vital that the program receive ongoing funding so that it could continue to expand and reach more frontline workers. The most common feedback was that workers required multiple training sessions (“refresher classes”) to keep pace with the developments in technology and the evolving strategies used by perpetrators to abuse women; training could not be a ‘one off’ exercise: “. . . this is an area that changes rapidly, acknowledging devices and ways of misusing devices changes all the time. So having up to date and regular training is vitally important” (Policy Officer, domestic and family violence service). Although WESNET offers online training modules and resources, more in-person training was seen as preferable.

Other opportunities for strengthening the Safer Technology for Women training identified by key stakeholders included the expansion of the training content beyond smart phones to encompass other devices:

It would be great to have some extra resourcing to develop training about all types of tech . . . the ‘Internet of Things’ and smart devices and smart cars . . . the emerging smart home and because the smartphone is a connective device, the idea of ‘safety’ really extends to all services and devices to which a phone could be connected . . . there’s many types of tech that could be used as a tactic of abuse and we are hearing that come through in some of the support calls that we’re getting (WESNET representative).

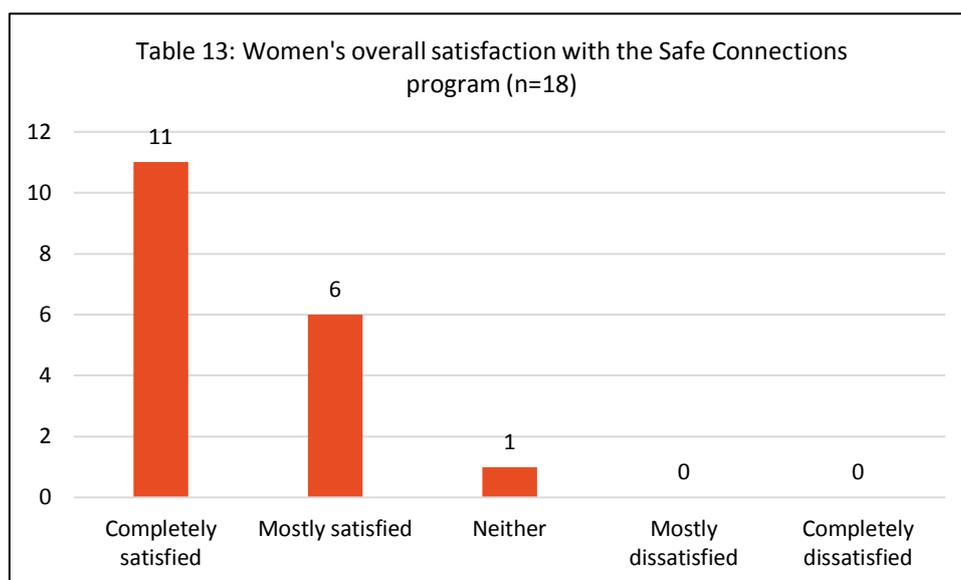
Stakeholders identified that it would be useful to have the training (or an iteration of it) available to women, children and young people, the police, lawyers and others in the justice system.

## Findings: The Safe Connections Program

In this section, we present the findings of our semi-structured telephone interviews with 18 women who received a smartphone and technology safety advice and support as part of the Safe Connections program and ten key stakeholders. We also include data from 214 frontline workers who completed the online follow-up survey about their experiences delivering the Safe Connections program.

### Women

Overall, the 18 women who were interviewed were satisfied with the Safe Connections program (see Table 13). Having access to a new smartphone and receiving technology safety advice made them feel safe and valued, and allowed them to remain connected to family, friends, support services and other agencies. The impact of the program on the women is described in greater detail below.



### Reasons for needing a Safe Connections phone

The women interviewed described their reasons for needing a new phone and most reported experiencing multiple forms of technology-facilitated abuse. Most commonly, women explained that their existing phone was compromised and was being used by the perpetrator to track their location (n=7) and/or was found to have spyware installed (n=3):

I've got a restraining order against my ex-partner. He actually located me in the shopping centre. I've moved like five different times . . . He forced me to go home with him. He's knocked me out before . . . assaulted me and he actually took my phone and broke it. So I couldn't call the police or anything (Suzie, WA).

Some women said that after leaving the relationship, they continued to be harassed and abused via constant messaging and phone calls (n=4):

The ex-partner was making lots of phone calls and so was his girlfriend and they were making threats and all sorts of things. Leaving horrible messages . . . I needed a new number that was going to be a safe number (Sophie, NSW).

Other women had their phone physically destroyed (n=3), were unable to afford a new phone due to financial hardship (n=3), or fled the relationship without their phone (n=1):

. . . When we left, we weren't able to take my phone. We thought we had it on us but we didn't and now he's kept my phone and . . . everything he took . . . He took everything in the bank accounts. So we just came with a bag to the refuge (Rachel, WA).

Experiences of having email, social media and bank accounts hacked were common (n=6), and some women reported being impersonated online by the perpetrator (n=2). Two of the women interviewed reported experiencing complex and protracted technology-facilitated abuse which extended beyond their mobile to encompass elaborate and sophisticated monitoring of their other devices (i.e. desktop computers, laptops, tablets), home and car using hidden cameras and listening devices. The technology used by their children was also compromised. In both of these instances, the perpetrator was employed as an IT specialist.

When the security order was done in the house, the police officer that came through said he had never seen such an elaborate set-up to keep one woman prisoner. There were twelve cameras in the house monitoring me. There were cameras in my car and he was tracing my phone – my son's phone, the car . . . I mean, there was something like two kilometres' worth of these net cables through the house, in the roof and twelve terabytes of storage devices. Twelve routers in the house and so that there was no part of the property that wasn't covered by Wi-Fi. Which sounds wonderful, but it meant there was nowhere on the property I could go without . . . if I turned on or used a device, he could capture the IP address . . . I was trapped for a long, long time (Gemma, VIC).

These women described not being believed and being labelled as “paranoid” when they sought help from the police and other services. In both instances, the perpetrator was not able to be prosecuted for the technology-facilitated abuse because he was the owner of the house: “. . . because his name is on the deeds, prosecuting that becomes very difficult, even though he doesn't live in the house and our children are you know, in their early teens and early 20's” (Carla, VIC). These experiences left the women feeling frustrated with the judicial system, vulnerable and fearful to use technology long after they left the abusive relationship.

All of the women expressed that they were extremely grateful to receive a new phone as part of the Safe Connections program: “I didn't expect to get a phone. So it was a great surprise especially at the time and I'm very grateful and thankful for your service and all the other assistance” (Ashlee, VIC).

### **Experience of activating the Safe Connections phone and technology safety support**

In this section we report on women's experiences of activating their Safe Connections phone, including the technology safety advice and support they received from frontline workers<sup>8</sup>. Of the 18 women interviewed, ten activated their Safe Connections phone themselves, two had their children activate the phone, and six

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<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that as the women were in a crisis situation at the time they received their Safe Connections phone, many had difficulties recalling their experience of the activation process and could only provide limited information about their experiences. For example, one of the women was in hospital recovering after being assaulted by her partner and had her Safe Connections phone activated at her bedside by a social worker.

were given a phone that was already activated by a worker (this was particularly the case for women who were from a CALD background): “They set it all up and everything because I'm not really good at that sort of stuff” (Sophie, NSW). The majority of women explained that the process of activating their Safe Connections phone was simple and “straightforward” and they did this online by using the phone and following the prompts: “I just click on the text message from Telstra. So it goes to the website that – what I needed to do to activate it. Which is very safe time and very quick and easy” (Lee, woman from a CALD background, ACT). One woman explained that she found the process of activating her phone long and difficult as she needed to set up a new email address given her previous one was compromised.

The information and instructions provided in the Safe Connections package were described as being comprehensive, yet simple to understand, and women were satisfied:

I thought it was pretty easy. It was just a matter of opening the box and charging it up and ringing up Telstra and getting the thing connected in my name . . . There are instructions on the package, but I've set up phones before, so I found it pretty easy myself personally. But if I hadn't known what to do, it would have been pretty easy to do. The instructions are there (Margot, VIC).

And: “. . . there were all these little brochures inside the phone about the security settings and how to . . . keep it a safe phone and all that. So yeah, it was pretty good” (Lindsay, NSW).

The women were asked about the technology safety advice and support they received from the worker who provided them with the Safe Connections phone. One woman, who was living in a shelter at the time of the research interview, explained that it was her worker who first alerted her to the possibility that she was experiencing technology-facilitated abuse. Her phone was constantly “mucking up”, losing battery, and accepting messages and phone calls from her ex-partners number even though it was blocked. Her worker suspected that spyware may have been installed on her phone and arranged for her to receive a new Safe Connections smartphone. This example highlights that awareness of the ways in which abuse can be perpetuated using technology is generally low, and the importance of capacity building workers in the sector so that they can provide technology safety education and support to women.

Overall, women were satisfied with the technology safety support and advice they received from workers which generally included information about not sharing their new phone number with others, turning off location settings, and being wary of the information disclosed on social media: “They advised me to not have my location on. Not to post what area I am around on my Facebook or anything like that” (Suzie, WA). The significance of this specific advice for women, particularly during a time of crisis and trauma, is important to optimise their safety and minimise their risk in relation to technology-facilitated abuse, surveillance and exploitation. Women’s awareness of such safety strategies will vary, however, even for those who are knowledgeable it may be overlooked when in crisis. It is likely that without this technology safety advice and support the women’s safety would continue to be compromised.

One woman, however, was dissatisfied with the activation process and explained that she was left to do this on her own, did not receive the phone credit, and was not provided with any technology safety advice. This woman did not feel that she could ask for assistance because she did not want to seem “ungrateful”:

I was grateful for the technology and just the fact that someone would give me a phone and I would never have followed that up [not receiving phone credit] or pursued that because I didn't want to be seen as ungrateful. The same with the reading of the information. The lady just said, ‘Can you just

sign this . . . ' like 'here's the pack, ra-ra-ra'. And I think because . . . I was feeling very displaced, you know? It was hard for me to ask her anything as well.

This woman, who had experienced highly sophisticated technology-facilitated abuse, decided to contact WESNET directly where she received exemplary, one-on-one technology safety support and advice. The follow-up support provided by WESNET illuminated for this woman the true extent of the technology-facilitated abuse (which included spyware and email monitoring systems) and highlighted for her the importance of technology safety advice when women receive their new mobile phone: "The people that are providing the safe technology absolutely need to communicate to the end-user how to keep themselves safe". WESNET also provided this woman with information on relevant legislation and advocacy, including writing reports to Victim Services, which gave her a greater sense of power and control:

She's [WESNET employee] empowered me with this. I didn't know anything about this . . . I think that her understanding too of the cycle of domestic violence and knowing how I view things and having someone that appreciates that. . . she seems to have a unique understanding of the trauma that I've lived through and that I am working through. Because it's not something that's done and dusted . . . she validates what I'm saying.

Finally, one woman explained that her worker was not familiar with the phone model and was not able to provide much support with regard to how to operate it. These examples highlight the importance of workers having a deep understanding of the impact of domestic violence, risk and safety, and also of technology.

### **Impact of having a Safe Connections phone and technology safety support**

Overwhelmingly, the women interviewed felt that the Safe Connections program had had a positive impact on their lives and they were very satisfied with the program: "It has thrown me a lifeline" (Meg, QLD) and "I feel like I can actually finally hopefully get my life back on track" (Lindsay, NSW). Most of the women explained that due to their financial situation, they would not have been able to afford a new phone if it were not for the Safe Connections program, and would have continued to feel vulnerable and unsafe:

It was useful because I didn't have the money to go out and purchase another phone . . . to be able to . . . still be able to get in contact with whoever I needed to and the fact that I didn't have to spend money that I didn't have on trying to purchase a phone and at that time . . . when you're trying to run and hide the last thing you're thinking about is trying to get a phone and get it all organised (Charlotte, VIC).

The above comments highlight that the Safe Connections program reduces the burden on women to access safe communications during crisis. The convenience of workers in the family and domestic violence sector having ready-to-use mobile phones available onsite when the woman needs it, in addition to the phone being available for free, is a strength of the program.

Having a new smartphone combined with empowering technology safety information allowed the women to feel safe and a sense of relief: "I can sleep better knowing that he isn't tracking me" (Anna, VIC). It is important to note that the Safe Connections phones are only safe because a specially trained frontline worker has supported the woman to set up the phone to maximise privacy and security settings, and technology safety information and strategies have been provided. For example, prior to accessing the Safe Connections program, one woman explained that she was tracked on her mobile phone by her abusive ex-partner daily: "He used to find out every day . . . where I was and who I was with or where I was . . . it was just unbearable" (Danielle, VIC). Since having a new Safe Connections mobile phone *and* the necessary technology safety support and

education to adjust her privacy and security settings, she has not been located by her ex-partner and has a greater sense of freedom and security. Without the technology safety advice, it is possible that the woman would have continued to be located by her ex-partner and at risk of further violence.

Having access to a safe mobile phone enabled the women to remain connected with friends, family, and formal support services:

[After leaving the relationship] I wasn't even able to contact my family for a few days or even my boss. No one knew where I was and they had to do welfare checks because they were quite concerned - because they'd known what was going on previously. So when I got the phone it was just - it was an absolute lifesaver. It was just an absolute lifesaver and I cried and I couldn't begin to thank [the refuge]. It was just a connection to . . . the people that I loved the most and that were important to me and to be able to phone them to let them know that we were OK and we were in a safe place. So it was just - it was wonderful (Rachel, WA).

The Safe Connections phone allowed women to re-establish relationships with family members they had previously been isolated from while in the abusive relationship: "He used to isolate [me] from my kids and didn't let me talk to them, and so I can just relax and start talking to my kids properly, so that's been good" (Kelly, QLD). Having the Safe Connections phone also meant that the women could contact the police or other supports quickly should they need to: "I can be in contact with my family and just knowing . . . if my ex does rock up, I know I can get on to the police straight away" (Margot, VIC) and "It's been really handy if I'm out somewhere and I'm needing the refuge to come and pick me up or I feel scared or anything. I can let the refuge know what's happening and if they're able to come and get me" (Suzie, WA).

Women appreciated being able to use their Safe Connections phone flexibly to suit their needs: ". . . everyone's circumstances are different and everyone's needs are different and the implementation of how the phone is used should be a bit fluid" (Carla, VIC). For example, many women gave the phone to their children to allow them to communicate safely with their father, which was often court ordered. For one woman, the Safe Connections phone meant that her and her children were not "tied to a landline" when they called her ex-husband each night, which made them feel safer:

. . . Landlines are very easy to trace. I mean he has found us over and over again. Whereas now that we have a Safe Connections phone, it's only turned on for the duration of the call and the call's made in the car. Once we hang up, we move . . . [it] gives us that added layer of sort of anonymity and manoeuvrability (Gemma, VIC).

Women felt safer and less isolated due to their Safe Connections phone. However, the continuing feelings of fear and high levels of risk posed by the perpetrators highlight the importance of a strong system of family and domestic violence responses being in place of which Safe Connections is an important component.

I haven't been followed . . . I still look over my shoulder, but it hasn't been as bad . . . at the moment he's gone very quiet . . . no-one has seen him around . . . he's basically gone into hiding and I'm afraid that when he comes out of hiding, that he's going to come out looking for vengeance. That's the kind of person he is (Danielle, VIC).

And another woman:

He always said that he would do thirty years for murder. That he would kill me before anyone else would have me or kill anyone else that I was with. So they're not words that I take lightly . . . So you

know, I take - life's precious, so I take every day as it comes and I do have my wits about me . . . I just do what I've got to do to get through every day (Charlotte, VIC).

These examples also highlight the long shadow cast by domestic violence and the necessity of family and domestic violence systems being proactive in the surveillance of perpetrators to increase safety.

### **Opportunities for strengthening the Safe Connections program**

The majority of women were completely satisfied with the Safe Connections program and of the 18 women interviewed, eight had no suggestions for how the program might be improved. The most common feedback was that the \$30 phone credit was insufficient (n=5), with these women explaining that when they left the abusive relationship they needed to make many phone calls with family and friends, lawyers, the police, and support services, and the credit provided with the phone did not last long. One woman said that due to her financial situation, she was unable to recharge her Safe Connections phone and only uses it for “incoming calls” (Faye, woman from a CALD background, QLD). Women suggested that phone credit needed to be provided on an ongoing basis.

Three women were not satisfied with the quality of their Safe Connections phone<sup>9</sup>, which was an older model and slower to operate than their previous phone. One of these women said her Safe Connections phone was faulty and was replaced with another which was only marginally better:

The phone was difficult to use. [Worker] and I and a few other people did try to do a few things with it . . . [I] couldn't hear with the sound. So now I don't use the phone now at all because I can't answer it and I can't hear it ring . . . the phone wasn't a very good phone. So the idea behind it was a good idea, but the phone, not a very good phone (Charlotte, VIC).

This woman went on to stress the importance of Safe Connections phones being easy to use and reliable given the high risk situations these women are in: “We don't have time to have trial and error . . . we need to know that the phone works and this is how it works”. Another woman who experienced extensive technology-facilitated abuse by her ex-husband who was an IT specialist was concerned about the security of Android phones, and suggested that these phone could potentially place women at greater risk. For these reasons, she felt that a simple, easy to use “burner” phone may be a better option: “. . . If you're not going to upgrade every woman to [a] Blackberry or an Apple, you're actually better off without a smartphone. You're actually better off with just a simple [phone] that does text and talk” (Gemma, VIC). This woman also suggested that services activate the Safe Connections phone in advance using their Wi-Fi so it can be done in a safe, secure way.

With regard to activating the phone, one woman drew attention to the need for workers to consider that women may have been so controlled by their partner that they have been prevented from accessing any technology, or may have had very limited access, so they should not assume that women will know how to use the device:

. . . if you haven't been exposed to all of the features and functions and the understanding of the phone, because you're not being allowed to, because you've been in a domestic situation where that's not allowed, the basics really matter . . . The people that are providing the safe technology absolutely need to communicate to the end-user how to keep themselves safe- not just ask someone to read

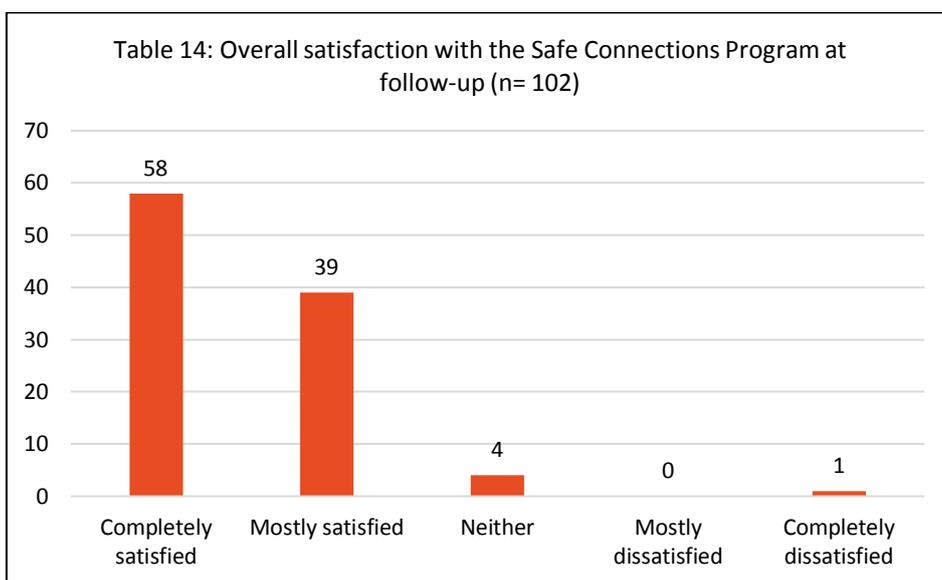
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<sup>9</sup> We note that in the early stages of the program roll out there was an issue with supply of phones which meant Telstra provided approximately 800 older model phones to meet this demand. We suspect that the poorer quality phones were from this batch.

something. . . I'm also saying that you can't assume that the person receiving the phone is going to understand how to use it. Not just safely, but use it full-stop (Carla, VIC).

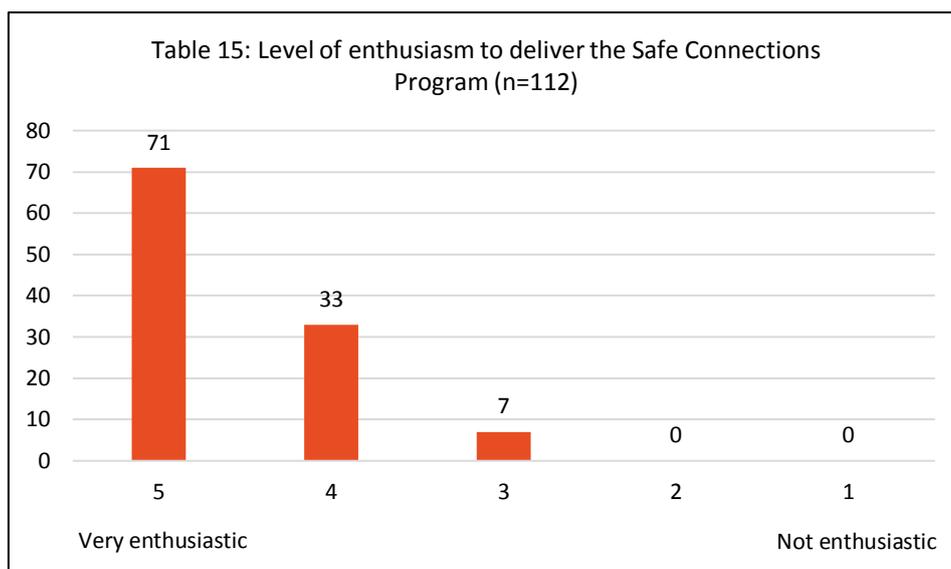
### Frontline Workers

Overall, frontline workers were satisfied with the Safe Connections program (see Table 14) and applauded Telstra and WESNET for the initiative. Safe Connections was seen as filling an important gap in supporting women who have experienced technology-facilitated abuse and family and domestic violence: “There would be a gap in our support options if Safe Connections failed to continue” and “Without this program, we would have many clients without phones, more isolated, unsafe”. All frontline workers (n=102) felt it was very important that the Safe Connections program continue.



### Experiences of delivering the Safe Connections program

Overwhelming frontline workers were enthusiastic about delivering the Safe Connections program (see Table 15) and 94% (n=98) felt well equipped to do so. One hundred and four frontline workers provided written responses where the majority agreed that the in-person training and information and resources provided on the online portal was comprehensive and positioned them well to roll out Safe Connections at their agency. In addition, many commented that they felt well supported by WESNET and knew that they could make contact if they had any issues or queries: “It is good to have the back up and knowledge that our agency can speak with qualified personnel from WESNET if required”.



Overall, frontline workers agreed that the Safe Connections program was easy to implement, however, a few specific barriers were identified. Most commonly, workers reported that many women do not have the identification necessary to activate their Safe Connections phone: “Unable to register without ID, when in fact DV may have resulted in the clients’ ID being withheld as a form of control”. This was particularly an issue in remote communities:

A majority of our women come from remote Aboriginal communities and have very little forms of ID and very few will have a drivers licence. We have had to use staff ID in many cases to set up phones which then creates issues for the staff member having numerous phone accounts through Telstra. The Medicare ID does not work.

Another related challenge identified by workers was activating the Safe Connections smartphones online using the Telstra website, with some workers explaining that it was easier to call WESNET or Telstra, or visit a Telstra store: “I found it hard to sign up clients that weren't part of Telstra already- we needed to attend a Telstra shop. This has become practice- to set up the WESNET phones we go in store”. A few frontline workers explained that some Telstra staff members do not appear to be well-versed in the program: “Some case managers have experienced issues when registering the phones with Telstra. Telstra staff [are] unfamiliar with the Safe Connections program - internal communication needs to be addressed”.

### Impact of the Safe Connections program

As mentioned previously, frontline workers felt that the Safe Connections program played a crucial role in supporting women who had experienced family and domestic violence and technology-facilitated abuse, and felt that it was important the program continued: “If we can save a life, it is worth keeping the program going” and “Without this program, we would have many clients without phones, more isolated, unsafe”.

Workers reflected that receiving a Safe Connections phone encouraged women to first access, and then remain engaged with, support services: “Often, accessing the mobile phone is the carrot to engagement with the support service”. A Safe Connections phone was seen as providing women “peace of mind” and was critical to safety planning and supporting their ability to stay connected: “Women in situations of family violence are regularly isolated from their community without the means to contact support agencies or seek safety in times

of crisis. This program enhances the opportunity for women to have safe communication options". Workers commented that when women receive their phone they are often overwhelmed with gratitude and feel valued and cared for: "Women need to feel safe and secure in their own environment, this program helps them to feel as though there is someone who cares and will help if and when needed" and "The phones have allowed women to feel a sense of freedom and self-worth". The Safe Connections program was described as "empowering women against their predators" and enabling them to regain "control back in their lives".

### **Opportunities for strengthening the Safe Connections program**

The majority of frontline workers who completed the follow-up survey were very satisfied with the Safe Connections program and wanted to see it continue to be funded and expanded. The most common area identified for improvement was the activation process which requires women to have identification. In addition, workers also suggested that the Safe Connections phones could already be activated and ready to use when the agency receives them. A number of frontline workers emphasised the importance of Safe Connections phones being modern and reliable: "better quality phones . . . quite a few of our clients needed a brand new main phone, but the quality of free phone meant that they ended up only using it as a back-up"<sup>10</sup>. Finally, some workers commented that the program needed to be more widely promoted and accessible to women outside of metropolitan areas: "More promotion of the program to regional areas in the Northern Territory" and "Increased availability across rural and remote regions".

## **Key Stakeholders**

### **Strengths of the Safe Connections program and impact**

Key stakeholders felt that the Safe Connections program was vitally important in supporting women and their children, and was a positive example of multi-sector collaboration. In particular, Telstra's leadership and commitment to provide mobile phones as part of the program was applauded by key stakeholders who felt that this sent a powerful message to survivors that they had the support of the wider community. One Manager of a family support service explained:

It might be the first person that believed them . . . I think that's [a] critical thing. That this person believes in me enough to hand me a smartphone . . . and this person's told me how to keep myself safe and 'Oh my God, they believe me and they want to help me'.

And another:

We think it's an absolute credit to WESNET and Telstra. We think it's a great partnership and it's certainly enhanced safety for a lot of clients in our program across the state . . . It acknowledges the issue of family violence and that clients do matter or victims do matter as do their families and their children (Manager, family violence counselling service).

Stakeholders explained that the sector was enthusiastic about the program and committed to its delivery, which was aided by having the WESNET team available at their "fingertips" to provide specialist support and advice: "[to] have that immediate specific advice . . . Anything around you know, 'We think she's being tracked. What should we be looking at on her laptop?' That is absolutely crucial because that is really hard to get locally" (Policy Officer, domestic and family violence services). Another strength of the program identified by

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<sup>10</sup> Again, we suspect these poorer quality phones were from a batch that was distributed to agencies early in the program to meet demand.

key stakeholders was that it was applied flexibly (for example, children can access a Safe Connections phone) and had “reach”, servicing women in regional and remote areas: “the phones are going to the right places and I think that is a real strength of the program” (Telstra representative).

Key stakeholders stressed that the Safe Connections program was much more than the provision of material aid (a mobile phone and credit) to a women in crisis, and emphasised the importance of the capacity-building and training aspect of the program, which ensured that women receiving a Safe Connections phone also got the technology advice necessary to stay safe and connected: “. . . it's not just a 'handout the telephone' program . . . it's actually part of very well thought through safety planning exercise” (Executive Officer, women’s legal service). A representative from WESNET illustrated the importance of technology safety advice and support being provided to women in this example:

We’ve had feedback come in to us about women who have moved location several times in order to escape abuse and have been found again and again and again and it’s not until they’ve received a device in combination with support to develop a technology safety strategy [that] they have been able to . . . break that cycle [by] keeping their location secure.

### **Challenges and opportunities for strengthening the Safe Connections program**

All key stakeholders agreed that the Safe Connections was crucial to supporting women and reiterated that secure, ongoing funding was needed so that the program could continue to grow to include more agencies throughout Australia.

An issue identified by a number of stakeholders was ensuring the supply of smartphones to frontline agencies to meet demand. WESNET representatives explained that frontline agencies were under-resourced and time poor, making manually logging phones challenging, which then had implications for the supply of stock. Stakeholders suggested that further funding would enable WESNET to enhance and streamline their inventory and data collection systems making the distribution of smartphones smoother:

. . . As the program grows, and the program is growing year on year, logistics have become more complicated. Guaranteed funding for a period of time going forward, could allow the investment in a more sophisticated inventory system. This would reduce the admin burden for both WESNET and the frontline agencies and improve oversight over the pipeline (Telstra representative).

A further issue identified by key stakeholders was the high turnover of workers in frontline agencies, which also impacts on the delivery of the program: “we sort of are constantly trying to educate our frontline services about the implementation of the program and just simple administrative processes and procedures that while they may seem minor, are really essential for the smooth running of the program” (WESNET representative). Again, additional funding to streamline administrative processes and reduce the burden on new frontline workers would address this issue.

## Conclusion

As described by the frontline workers and key stakeholders who participated in this evaluative research, technology-facilitated abuse is highly prevalent and an area requiring urgent attention in the sector. Echoing the findings of this evaluation, almost all of the 546 domestic violence practitioners surveyed in a 2015 National study reported that they had women present at their services who had experienced technology-facilitated stalking and abuse, highlighting the almost complete overlap between domestic violence and technology-facilitated abuse<sup>11</sup>. This survey reported that mobile phones, particularly smart phones which have the ability to connect to social media, emails and online banking, are most commonly used by perpetrators to abuse, control and humiliate women. Within the community, knowledge of how technology can be used to perpetrate abuse is generally low. This is also the case for frontline workers in the family and domestic violence sector who support women and their children directly impacted by this issue. The Safe Connections program fills an important gap in family and domestic violence responses by providing women with a phone coupled with relevant technology safety advice, and capacity building the sector to respond more effectively to technology-facilitated abuse. Given there are currently no other programs addressing these issues, the continuation and expansion of the Safe Connections program is considered crucial.

Overwhelmingly, the women who received a Safe Connections phone and technology safety advice expressed that it had a profound impact on their lives by supporting them to stay connected and safe. The women were deeply grateful for the phone and the support and said that it helped them to feel empowered and valued. If it were not for the Safe Connections program, the women explained that they would have continued to be isolated and vulnerable; it was a “lifesaver”. The positive impact of the program was reiterated by frontline workers and key stakeholders. After participating in the Safer Technology for Women training, frontline workers had an increased awareness and understanding of technology-facilitated abuse and felt more confident in advising women and supporting them to use technology safely. The training influenced their day-to-day practice, and workers were now having more formalised and targeted conversations with women about technology safety and incorporating this more strongly into their safety planning. The specialist nature of the training, which was delivered by experts in both family and domestic violence *and* technology, meant that it was highly relevant to them and the issues they encountered in their practice.

Given the increase in cases of technology-facilitated abuse, frontline workers were enthusiastic to deliver Safe Connections, and with the training and support provided by WESNET felt well equipped to do so. The “tailored” and “specialised” nature of the technology training undertaken by agencies flowed on to the women who accessed the Safe Connections program who reported receiving useful technology safety advice and support to set up their phone from workers. Activating the Safe Connections smartphones was simple and straightforward, and the technical advice and support provided to agencies by WESNET was seen as invaluable.

This evaluation has highlighted that the Safe Connections program is about much more than providing mobile phones to women in crisis. The technology safety training is crucial to upskilling the family and domestic violence sector to respond effectively to technology-facilitated abuse which it is encountering exponentially. The importance of providing material aid in the form of a mobile phone and credit to women together with a carefully considered and nuanced safety plan which includes technology safety advice and support cannot be

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<sup>11</sup> Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, Women’s Legal Services NSW and WESNET. (2015). ReCharge: Women’s technology safety, legal resources, research and training. Retrieved from <http://www.smartsafe.org.au/sites/default/files/ReCharge-Womens-Technology-Safety-Report-2015.pdf>

overstated. In summary, Safe Connections is a shining example of multi-sector collaboration that is having a real impact on the lives of women and their children who have experienced family and domestic violence. Increased, ongoing funding and resourcing is recommended so that more agencies and frontline workers can deliver Safe Connections and more women can continue to benefit from the program.

## Recommendations

The following suggestions are made in the spirit of improving an already impressive program that is experienced by women, frontline agencies and key stakeholders as highly effective and much needed. The recommendations are premised on the assumption that the forms and extent of technology-facilitated abuse will continue to increase and that a specialised program such as Safe Connections will need to continually evolve to keep pace with these changes. The significance of the program is that it is located at the intersection of three aspects: family and domestic violence expertise requiring a knowledge of perpetrator actions; technology expertise; and the practically important provision of a phone to women whose resources are often depleted as part of the perpetrator's tactics and which also provides the vehicle to engage the women in technology safety practices and evidence collection.

### Safer Technology for Women training

Overall, frontline workers were very satisfied with the specialist technology safety training provided by WESNET and had a thirst for more, preferably face-to-face, training. Many of the suggestions below are beyond the mandate of the Safe Connections program, but nevertheless highlight the need and enthusiasm for technology safety training in the family and domestic violence sector.

#### *Content of the training*

- In order to maximise the impact of the Safer Technology from Women training, frontline workers must first have a rudimentary understanding of technology. Basic, entry-level technology training is suggested for frontline workers who are not familiar with technology.
- It is recommended that multiple, face-to-face “refresher” training sessions be offered to frontline workers to support them to keep pace with developments in technology and technology-facilitated abuse.
- The growth of information and communication technologies offers new and diverse ways in which abuse can continue to be perpetrated against women. Two women in this evaluation experienced complex technology-facilitated abuse which extended beyond their mobile to encompass elaborate and sophisticated monitoring of their other devices, home and car. Key stakeholders and frontline workers also expressed concerns at the growing pervasiveness of technology and potential for abuse (“there's a full gamut of technologies that can be misused and smartphones are just one”). To enhance the relevance and effectiveness of the Safe Connections program, it is recommended that more advanced training be offered that encompasses other devices beyond mobile phones, including the ‘internet of things’.

- Frontline workers expressed that they would like more practical demonstrations in training sessions or videos on how to safely set up the smartphones that are used as part of the Safe Connections program. While this would undoubtedly be useful to workers, it is important to note each mobile device is different and as the technology rapidly evolves device-specific material will become obsolete. For these reasons, it is recommended that any material developed is sufficiently broad that it remains relevant in the longer term. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that each woman's situation is unique and requires a similarly tailored response from frontline workers. An overly prescriptive, 'check-list' approach to setting up a woman's mobile for her safe use may have the unintended consequence of placing the woman at greater risk if the strategies used are not appropriate to her needs.
- Finally, workers requested that more case studies/real life scenarios be incorporated into the Safer Technology for Women training so that they could practise applying the knowledge and skills they learnt in the session.

### *Training audience*

- It is recommended that there is more targeted opportunities for police, lawyers, and others in the legal and justice sector who support women impacted by violence to participate in the Safer Technology for Women training so that they can develop a deeper awareness and understanding of technology-facilitated abuse, its impacts and safety strategies.
- As a primary prevention strategy, it is recommended that technology safety training designed specifically for women, children and young people be delivered to reduce their risk of being impacted by technology-facilitated abuse.

## **Safe Connections**

### **For WESNET to consider:**

#### *Program efficiency*

- The delivery of Safe Connections requires considerable investment from agencies in terms of staff time and resourcing (i.e. for postage of handsets) and most agencies in the sector are already under pressure. Some frontline workers and key stakeholders identified issues in logging phones and ensuring adequate supply. It is crucial that as the Safe Connections program grows the inventory and data collection systems remain as efficient as possible. It is recommended that additional funding be sourced so WESNET and Telstra can continue to enhance and streamline these processes.
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women are over-represented as victims of family and domestic violence<sup>12</sup> and it is well established that women from CALD communities who have been impacted by family and domestic violence experience added complexities around access to culturally appropriate services, social isolation and shame and stigma<sup>13</sup>. Frontline workers and key stakeholders in this study emphasised that ongoing engagement with agencies that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

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<sup>12</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2016). *Recorded crime- Victims, Australia, 2015* (Cat. no. 4510.0). Retrieved from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4510.0>

<sup>13</sup> Phillips, J., & Vandenbroek, P. (2014). Domestic, family and sexual violence in Australia: An overview of the issues. Retrieved from [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/ViolenceAust](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/ViolenceAust)

and CALD women is essential to the delivery of Safe Connections. It was also suggested that technology safety resources and information that is targeted and customised to suit women in these populations is developed. Further, we note that women with disabilities are more likely to experience family and domestic violence and also require targeted and accessible information and support.

- The safety of women living in rural, regional and remote areas of Australia can be easily compromised due to distance and lack of access to services. Having access to a mobile phone and technology safety advice offers a lifeline to these women who would otherwise be isolated. The continued expansion of the Safe Connections program into rural, regional and remote areas is recommended.

### *Measuring the impact of the program on women*

- It is important that the experiences of women who have received a mobile phone are captured to accurately assess the impact of Safe Connections, and also to provide end-user feedback on opportunities for strengthening the program. It is well established that engaging women who have experienced family and domestic violence in program evaluation or research is challenging for a number of reasons. For example, the woman may only have a brief, one-time interaction with workers while they are in crisis and then have no further contact with the agency, or in situations where the woman has ongoing contact with the agency and is no longer in crisis, workers may be reluctant to invite the woman to participate due to concerns around compromising her comfort and safety<sup>14</sup>. Further, women may not feel comfortable giving negative feedback if the person asking the questions is also delivering the program, which impacts on the integrity of the evaluation. To address these issues and create more opportunities for women to share their experiences of the program, it is suggested that women are contacted by Telstra via text to their Safe Connections phone approximately 3 months after activation and invited to complete a short, online survey about their experiences of the program and its impact.

### **For Telstra to consider:**

#### *Program efficiency*

- Frontline workers identified difficulties activating the Safe Connections phones in cases where the woman did not have identification. It is recommended that Telstra and WESNET work together for Telstra to establish alternative processes for SIM activation where identification is not available.

#### *Pre-paid credit and smartphones*

- Within the literature, it is estimated that 80 to 90% of women seeking support from domestic and family violence services have experienced financial abuse<sup>15</sup> which undermines their economic security long after leaving the abusive relationship. Women in this evaluation explained that due to financial hardship it was difficult to purchase credit for their new Safe Connections phone. The Telstra 'Pre-Paid Recharge Card Program' provides eligible domestic violence and homelessness agencies with \$30 pre-paid credit vouchers to distribute to their clients. Although information about this program is provided

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<sup>14</sup> Sullivan, C. M. (2011). Evaluating domestic violence support service programs: Waste of time, necessary evil, or opportunity for growth? *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 16*(4), 354-360, doi:10.1016/j.avb.2011.04.008

<sup>15</sup> Cameron, P. (2014). *Relationship problems and money: Women talk about financial abuse*. West Melbourne: WIRE Women's Information.

to the frontline agencies that deliver Safe Connections, it is possible that the initiative may require further promotion. It would also be important to advise women that they can contact the agency that provided their Safe Connections phone if they require additional phone credit. An alternative suggestion is the provision of mobile phone credit on an ongoing basis in the form of a plan to ensure women who receive a Safe Connections phone can continue to remain safe and connected.

- Given the particular vulnerabilities of the women who receive a Safe Connections phone, it is crucial that all mobile phones provided as part of the program are of a high quality, easy to use and reliable.

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## Appendix A

### Pre-training Survey

Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey prior to undertaking the Safer Technology for Women training delivered by WESNET. There are 4 questions in this survey and it is expected to take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. We appreciate your participation in our research.

Before commencing the survey, please read the statement below and check the box to indicate your consent.

- I have received information regarding this research and had an opportunity to ask questions. I believe I understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of my involvement in this project and I voluntarily consent to take part.

1. What type of organisation do you represent? (tick one)

- Specialist women's service (domestic and family violence/ sexual assault)  
 Specialist women's service (other)  
 Homelessness service  
 Community legal service  
 Family support service  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. In what ways have tech safety issues already come to your attention in your work with women?

3. On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate your knowledge of the following:

- a) The different forms of tech abuse (i.e. destroying or limiting access, harassment, monitoring and surveillance)

1 No knowledge	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Very knowledgeable
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- b) How to collect evidence and document abuse

1 No knowledge	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Very knowledgeable
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- c) Practical strategies to improve the safety of women experiencing tech abuse

1 No knowledge	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Very knowledgeable
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- d) Resources available for women on tech safety

1 No knowledge	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Very knowledgeable
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4. What would you specifically like to learn about in this training session?

## Appendix B

### Post-training survey

Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey on your experiences of the Safer Technology for Women training delivered by WESNET. There are 10 questions in this questionnaire and it is expected to take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. We appreciate your participation in our research.

Before commencing the survey, please read the statement below and check the box to indicate your consent.

- I have received information regarding this research and had an opportunity to ask questions. I believe I understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of my involvement in this project and I voluntarily consent to take part.

1. What type of organisation do you represent? (tick one)

- Specialist women's service (domestic and family violence/ sexual assault)
- Specialist women's service (other)
- Homelessness service
- Community legal service
- Family support service
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Now that you have completed the training, please rate the following statements.

The training enhanced my knowledge of:

a) The different forms of tech abuse (i.e. destroying or limiting access, harassment, monitoring and surveillance).

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

b) How to collect evidence and document

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

c) Practical strategies to improve the safety of women experiencing tech abuse

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

d) Resources available for women on tech safety

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

Strongly disagree

3. The training will be useful to me in my work:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. After this training do you feel more confident to advise clients on how to address phone-facilitated abuse?

- Yes
- No

5. Would you recommend this training to others in the sector?

- Yes
- No

6. What was the best thing about this training?

7. What other topics (if any) would you like to see included in the training?

8. Can you suggest any other ways the training could be improved?

9. What is one thing that you will do differently now that you have completed this training?

10. Overall, how satisfied were you with the training?

- Completely satisfied
- Mostly satisfied
- Neither satisfactory nor unsatisfactory
- Mostly unsatisfied
- Completely unsatisfied

## Appendix C

### Follow-up survey

I have read the information regarding this research. I believe I understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of my involvement in this project and voluntarily consent to take part.

I understand that this project has been approved by Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee and will be carried out in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

Do you agree with the above statement?

- Yes (proceed to survey)
- No (survey will end for participants who select this option)

1. When did you participate in the training on technology abuse delivered by WESNET? MM/YY
2. What training did you attend?
  - Level 2 training: Smartphones and safety
  - Customised technology safety training from WESNET
  - Unsure/ Other
3. What type of organisation do you represent? (tick one)
  - Specialist women's service (domestic and family violence/ sexual assault)
  - Specialist women's service (other)
  - Homelessness service
  - Community legal service
  - Family support service
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Has the training influenced your day-to-day practice with women? Y/N
  - Please explain your answer
5. Overall, how satisfied were you with the training? (5=completely satisfied, 4= mostly satisfied, 3= neither satisfactory nor unsatisfactory, 2= mostly unsatisfied, 1= completely unsatisfied)
6. Can you suggest any ways that the training might be improved?
7. Looking forward, do you have any suggestions about areas that need further development for women's safe use of technology?

The next 10 questions refer to the Safe Connections program more broadly:

8. Is your agency delivering in Safe Connections program? Y/N (the survey will end here for participants who select N).
9. How would you rate the level of enthusiasm in your agency to roll out the Safe Connections program? (1= not enthusiastic and 5= very enthusiastic)
  - Please explain your answer.
10. Were there any teething problems that emerged in the implementation of the Safe Connections program that you would like us to be aware of?

11. Overall, do you feel equipped as an agency to deliver the Safe Connections program? Y/N
  - Please explain your answer.
12. Were there any specific barriers to delivering the Safe Connections program?
13. What do you see as the benefits of the Safe Connections program?
14. Can you suggest any ways in which the Safe Connections program might be improved?
15. How important do you think it is for the Safe Connections program to continue? (1=not important and 5= very important)
  - Please explain your answer.
16. Overall, how satisfied are you with the Safe Connections program?
  - Completely satisfied
  - Mostly satisfied
  - Neither satisfactory nor unsatisfactory
  - Mostly unsatisfied
  - Completely unsatisfied
17. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

## Appendix D

### Interview Questions for Women

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview about your experience of the Safe Connections program. Your views and experiences are important as they provide key insights into this new program. There are 11 questions in this interview, and these focus on the process of getting the phone and setting it up, the impact of having the phone on your life, and how the Safe Connections program could be improved. We appreciate you giving us your time to talk these through together.

1. When did you get your Safe Connections phone?
2. Can you tell me about how you came to need a Safe Connections phone?
3. What was the process like for obtaining and setting up the Safe Connections phone for your safe use?
4. How did you find the process of activating your phone? (this can be done by following the prompts on the phone, online, by calling Telstra, or by visiting a Telstra store)
5. Were staff at [agency name] able to answer your questions about the smart phone and all of its features? (i.e. email, social media)
6. Were staff at [agency name] able to offer you advice about tech safety generally? (i.e. location tracking etc.)
7. In what ways has having the phone been useful to you?
8. What impact has having the phone had on you and your family?
9. Can you suggest any ways that the Safe Connections program might be improved?
10. Overall, how satisfied are you with the Safe Connections program?
  - Completely satisfied
  - Mostly satisfied
  - Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied
  - Mostly unsatisfied
  - Completely unsatisfied
11. Is there anything else you would like to add?

## Appendix E

### Interview Questions for Key Stakeholders

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview about the Safer Technology for Women training and the Safe Connections program. Your views and experiences are important as they provide key insights into this new and innovative program.

The first three questions refer to the Safer Technology for Women training (i.e. service providers attending training delivered by WESNET on tech abuse and strategies to improve the safety of women experiencing tech abuse):

1. In what ways is the Safer Technology for Women training filling a gap in practitioner's knowledge and practice?
2. Can you suggest any ways that the training could be improved?
3. Looking forward, do you have any suggestions about areas that need further development for women's safe use of technology that could be included in future training?

The next four questions refer to the Safe Connections program more broadly (i.e. the distribution of smart phones to women and supporting them to use technology safely):

4. What are the strengths of the Safe Connections program?
5. What are the barriers and challenges that the Safe Connections program has faced? How have these challenges been addressed?
6. Can you suggest any ways that the Safe Connections program could be improved?
7. What are you envisioning for the Safe Connections program into the future?
8. Finally, is there anything else you would like to add about the Safer Technology for Women training or the Safe Connections program?