

Draft National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032

**Submission to the
Consultation Survey**

February 2022

Table of contents

Introduction	3
Background	3
Our Submission	4
5 – What family, domestic, and sexual violence services does your organisation provide?.....	4
6 – Where are your organisation’s services available?	4
7 – Where are your organisation’s face-to-face services available?.....	4
8 – Does your organisation target services to the following client groups?	4
9 – In regard to people working in organisations who provide services to people experiencing gendered violence, but are not a specialised family, domestic, and sexual violence service, what services do you offer?	4
11 – The draft National Plan includes a clear explanation of the prevalence, drivers, and different forms of gender-based violence in Australia.	5
12 – The draft National Plan meaningfully reflects issues highlighted through stakeholder consultations and the National Summit on Women’s Safety, including the experiences of victim-survivors.....	5
13 – The four Foundation Principles (gender equality, the diverse lived-experiences of victim-survivors are informing policies and solutions, Closing the Gap, and intersectionality) appropriately underpin the National Pillars and actions within the National Plan.	5
14 – The four National Pillars in the draft National Plan provide a holistic approach to identifying and responding to gender-based violence.	5
15 – The four National Pillars in the Draft National Plan reflect the family, domestic and sexual violence service system.....	6
16 – The Draft National Plan reflects the needs and experiences of women and children.	6
17 – The draft National Plan reflects the needs and experiences of diverse communities and individuals.....	6
18 – The draft National Plan supports building further evidence on what works for gender-based violence prevention, early intervention, response and recovery.....	6
19 – The draft indicators and outcome measures provide a strong framework for measuring progress towards the next National Plan goals.....	7
20 – What would you not change about the draft National Plan?	7
21 – What would you change about the draft National Plan?	7
22 – Is there any other feedback or additional information you wish to provide?.....	7
Appendix	8

Introduction

About the Local Government Association of South Australia

The Local Government Association of South Australia (LGASA) is the voice of local government in South Australia, representing all 68 councils across the state and the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara.

The South Australian Local Government Act 1999 recognises the LGASA as a public authority for the purpose of promoting and advancing the interests of local government. The LGASA is also recognised in and has prescribed functions in 29 other South Australian Acts of Parliament. The LGASA provides leadership, support, representation, and advocacy relevant to the needs of our member councils.

The LGASA is a strong advocate for policies that achieve better outcomes for councils and the communities they represent. Councils are a partner in government and part of the solution. Working together we can make positive contributions to the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Background

Family and domestic violence is a complex, serious and widespread problem in Australia, with enormous individual and community impacts and social costs. However, it is also ultimately preventable.¹

The economic costs of violence against women has been reported to be as high as \$21.7 billion each year, let alone the social costs relating social isolation, difficulties with education and employment opportunities and poverty.²

The breadth of services and community infrastructure delivered by councils allows an opportunity for activity to prevent violence against women and allow a gender lens to be applied across a wide range of council services and settings, such as health and community services, arts, sports and recreation, education and care settings and public spaces.

Local government is uniquely placed to support local organisations, whether that be through managing funding and reporting to providing facilities or promoting programs or brokering relationships. Our members understand that it takes many expert organisations and specialist skills to work in partnership in order to effect sustainable change.

Our members recognise that collaboration is vital to successful and meaningful work in the prevention of violence against women and their children. There are numerous examples how councils can lead, advocate, facilitate, partner or be an agent of change in this area.

The LGASA is aware that many South Australian councils have chosen to play an important advocacy role in addition to providing sources of information and referral for domestic and family violence victims.

Other support has included training front line staff to deal with sensitive situations, leadership and skill development programs for women, youth programs and providing information about external support programs. Several councils have also chosen to participate in primary preventative programs, promote

¹ <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/quick-facts/>

² Ayre, J, Lum On, M, Webster, K, Gourley, M & Moon, L 2016, Examination of the burden of disease of intimate partner violence against women in 2011: Final report, ANROWS, Sydney.

gender equality, and review their organisation's internal working culture to ensure it supports those experiencing domestic and family violence. The actions undertaken by individual councils are heavily influenced by financial and resource constraints.

Our Submission

The LGASA welcomes the opportunity to provide responses to the survey collating feedback on the *draft National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032*. This submission provides more detailed responses to each of the questions asked where required.

Questions one to four and ten of the survey required basic information about the LGA.

5 – What family, domestic, and sexual violence services does your organisation provide?

The LGASA is an advocate for South Australian (SA) councils, who in turn provide a range of community services and can be a first point of contact for those experiencing family and domestic violence and can aid in connecting victims with specialised services. Many councils also provide workplace support programs.

6 – Where are your organisation's services available?

South Australia

7 – Where are your organisation's face-to-face services available?

- Very remote
- Remote
- Outer regional
- Inner regional
- Major cities
- Online
- Telephone

8 – Does your organisation target services to the following client groups?

The LGASA provides advocacy and assistance to its member councils. Many local councils provide services to their diverse local communities.

9 – In regard to people working in organisations who provide services to people experiencing gendered violence, but are not a specialised family, domestic, and sexual violence service, what services do you offer?

The LGASA supports SA councils in the services they provide to their local communities and works with both the State and Federal Government to do so when required. Local councils themselves may offer a wide range of services or support services, including but not limited to, housing and homelessness, disability, child and family services, aged care, employment support, community services.

11 – The draft National Plan includes a clear explanation of the prevalence, drivers, and different forms of gender-based violence in Australia.

The explanations of the different types of gender-based violence in the draft National Plan are clear. The draft National Plan does not however, explain how drivers of gender-based violence will be addressed.

For example, gender inequality is a contributor to domestic violence and is highlighted as a foundational principle, but no explanation is given to how the draft National Plan intends to improve gender equality beyond education around respect and attitudes. The prevention pillar is by-stander and victim focused without acknowledging the systemic economic contributors. Economic security is only addressed in relation to recovery from and legal costs of a victim from domestic violence not.

12 – The draft National Plan meaningfully reflects issues highlighted through stakeholder consultations and the National Summit on Women’s Safety, including the experiences of victim-survivors.

The draft National Plan does not reflect previous recommendations from local government associations, including MAV and ALGA. These submissions called for a greater acknowledgement of and funding for local government as a key community facing organisation.

Local communities would greatly benefit from a dedicated Domestic Violence Prevention Officer position located in each State and Territory local government association. This position, funded jointly by state and federal governments, will enable the associations to support their local councils in increasing community education around domestic violence as well as assisting in early intervention.

The role of local government should be included in the National Plan in line with Our Watch’s *Prevention toolkit for local government*.

13 – The four Foundation Principles (gender equality, the diverse lived-experiences of victim-survivors are informing policies and solutions, Closing the Gap, and intersectionality) appropriately underpin the National Pillars and actions within the National Plan.

The LGASA supports the approach but suggests that the National Plan requires a Foundation Principle which addresses the lack of resources and workforce needed to address the significant gaps in services in prevention, early intervention and inequality.

The gaps in this area fall unfairly on community providers and local government. Funding and resources must be allocated to local government to acknowledge and support their crucial role within the community.

14 – The four National Pillars in the draft National Plan provide a holistic approach to identifying and responding to gender-based violence.

The four National Pillars require a stronger focus on how they will be achieved, including in terms of roles and responsibilities of each level of government and sector stakeholders. The National Plan should make more reference to the different prevention strategies needed between the general population and high-risk populations within the community.

The roles and responsibilities of each level of government need to be more clearly defined.

15 – The four National Pillars in the Draft National Plan reflect the family, domestic and sexual violence service system.

The Pillars do not name the specific services sectors which are the foundation to end family, domestic and sexual violence. The National Plan should identify where the gaps in these services are and how they will be rectified through funding/collaboration with other sectors. This should include:

- Prioritisation of the ‘Housing First’ model
- Housing affordability/availability in capital cities and the regions
- Investment in drug rehabilitation services
- Legislated domestic violence leave
- Funding of support services for children and pets
- Funding for implementation of Our Watch’s *Prevention Toolkit for Local Government*
- Ensuring adequate primary healthcare services in regional Australia – see https://www.aph.gov.au/sitecore/content/Home/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/PrimaryHealthServices.

16 – The Draft National Plan reflects the needs and experiences of women and children.

Without seeing the action plans or targets, it is difficult to respond to this question. The draft National Plan does not include clear and specific actions which will address the needs and experiences of women and children.

There is no commitment in the Plan to working with children or young people. Local government’s role in delivering services to children and young people such as through libraries, playgroups, youth groups can be a conduit for this type of work if adequately resourced.

17 – The draft National Plan reflects the needs and experiences of diverse communities and individuals.

While the draft National Plan identifies some groups of women and the need to understand the specific challenges they face (for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, LGBTIQ+ and people with disabilities), it does not provide enough focus on women and children in regional areas.

Regional SA medical and health services are significantly under-resourced therefore council services are likely be the first point of call for victims of family, domestic and sexual violence without having the support of health adequate health services or their own resources to respond.

LGASA also note that Our Watch has released *Changing the Landscape: A national resource to prevent violence against women and girls with disabilities* since the release of the draft National Plan. The insights from this piece of work should be incorporated.

18 – The draft National Plan supports building further evidence on what works for gender-based violence prevention, early intervention, response and recovery.

The LGASA supports the improvements in data collection outlined in the draft National Plan. The ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is also a gap.

The draft National Plan requires more work to support nationally consistent locally contextualised data, particularly at the local government area level. This would assist with planning, monitoring and implementation of programs and services at the local level.

19 – The draft indicators and outcome measures provide a strong framework for measuring progress towards the next National Plan goals.

While the four areas are outlined well in the Outcomes Framework, they require further development to allow for monitoring and evaluation of short- and medium-term outcomes. This would then better enable the measurement of progress along the way.

20 – What would you not change about the draft National Plan?

The LGASA supports the intent of the Plan and agrees that there needs to be an understanding of gender-based violence and that the four pillars are sound.

21 – What would you change about the draft National Plan?

The Foundation Principle need to change to include workforce and resourcing. They should acknowledge the need to ensure the service sector, community organisations and local government is well resourced as key responders to family, domestic and sexual violence.

Refer to other parts of this submission.

22 – Is there any other feedback or additional information you wish to provide?

The draft National plan does not acknowledge the role of local government as the tier of government which sits closest too and has the most interactions with the community. The draft National Plan also fails to acknowledge existing resources such as Our Watch's *Local Government Domestic Violence Prevention Toolkit*.

Our Watch's toolkit is an evidence-based and accessible resource for councils to take a leading role in prevention of family and domestic violence in their communities. One key challenge, however, for local governments, is that many do not have the funding or resources to implement or promote the toolkit.

A dedicated Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Officer should therefore be funded jointly by state and federal governments as part of the National Plan and located within each State and Territory Association representing local government including the LGASA. This position can assist councils to implement the toolkits in their local communities and undertake important primary prevention work.

A funded position such as this would have significant reach across each state and territory with communities experiencing significant benefits. Local government is a partner in government and being closest to communities, can leverage state and federal monies further.

This position should have a minimum five-year funding period in line with the first stage of the National Plan and be reviewed when the National Plan is reviewed for a potential second five-year funding commitment.

The LGASA suggest that the following resource be considered:

Evaluation of the role of local government in preventing violence against women, NOUS Group June 2017

Appendix

LGASA, 2020, Inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence,
<https://www.lga.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0026/720359/ECM_710997_v9_Inquiry-into-Family,-domestic-and-sexual-violence-LGA-Submission-1.pdf>.

Our Watch, 2022, Our Watch, viewed 24 February 2022 <<https://www.ourwatch.org.au/>>.

Our Watch, 2022, Prevention toolkit for local government, viewed 24 February 2022 <<https://www.ourwatch.org.au/>>.



148 Frome St
Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 2693
Adelaide SA 5001

T (08) 8224 2000

E lgasa@lga.sa.gov.au

www.lga.sa.gov.au