

FUNDING ACTION ON FAMILY VIOLENCE: WHAT WILL IT TAKE?

Already in 2015, more than 20 women have been killed allegedly as a result of domestic and family violence.

But right now critical family and domestic violence services across the country remain under-funded and are **forced to turn away at risk women and children** – despite the heightened risk faced by women during the time they try to leave an abusive relationship.

What's more, investment in primary prevention work – needed to stop violence before it starts – is piecemeal and inadequate.

To escape family and domestic violence, women need to know they've got somewhere safe to go. The only way to make sure that place exists is to fully fund all the services that work together to support those affected by this violence; to make sure their safety net is free from holes.

CRISIS LINES

SPECIALIST WOMEN'S SERVICES

FAMILY & RELATIONSHIP SERVICES

LEGAL ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

ACCOMODATION, HOUSING
& HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT

WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICES

SUPPORTING AT RISK
COMMUNITIES

MEN'S BEHAVIOUS CHANGE

PRIMARY PREVENTION

We asked family violence experts what federal funding is required if we're going to address this problem.

CRISIS LINES

Domestic and family violence crisis lines are a critical component of the family violence service network.

STATE CRISIS RESPONSE AGENCIES

State and Territory family violence crisis lines provide services to the most vulnerable women and children in Australia. The crisis lines are a gateway into the specialist family violence system in each state/territory, providing services such as: telephone crisis response, early intervention, telephone counselling, information and referrals. They also support women and their children who are in danger from a violent partner or family member with material aid, transport and emergency accommodation so they can be moved to a place of safety.

Funding for these services does not meet current demand, nor account for the projected increase in demand for services. Domestic and Family Violence Crisis Lines Australia expect that demand for family violence crisis services will grow by 40% in the 2015-16 financial year.

Crisis response agencies in the States and Territories receive limited funding from the federal government; and are funded at an estimated \$6 million per year by State and Territory Governments.

What is needed:

Domestic and Family Violence Crisis Lines of Australia Network are calling on the federal Government to match the \$6 million funding currently provided to crisis lines by State and Territory governments, and to allow for continuing increase in demand for services - to ensure women at risk can receive support and assistance regardless of their location.

1800 RESPECT COUNSELLING SERVICE

1800RESPECT is the national 24/7 phone counselling service for people affected by domestic and family violence and sexual assault in Australia.

1800RESPECT is currently funded by the federal Department of Social Services. Demand for the service far outweighs funded capacity. In 2014, 1800RESPECT responded to 54,853 contacts (over the phone, online and face-to-face); but 18,631 contacts went unanswered due to staffing limitations. That's a quarter of contacts. Demand for this service continues to increase.

For those affected by violence, making the decision to contact a support service like 1800RESPECT can be one of the first, and most difficult, steps towards safety and recovery. It can take days, weeks or months to make the decision to reach out to support services. To have that call then go unanswered can be devastating, and leave women and children in high-risk situations without support to achieve safety or navigate the process of separating from the offender.

What is needed:

The current funding deficit to ensure all calls to 1800RESPECT can be answered is estimated at between \$2.0 and \$2.8 million a year.

SPECIALIST WOMEN'S SERVICES

Specialist women's services need to be at the centre of any response to family violence.

They bring a critical, specialist understanding of the nature and dynamics of family and domestic violence; provide a safe space for women and children living with family violence; as well as providing a wide variety of programs, including: outreach, counselling, group therapy, financial support, and support to remain safely at home.

These services also have specialist, sophisticated skills in the assessment and management of risk, and work closely with

police and legal services to keep women and their children safe from further violence.

What is needed:

Funding for specialist agencies to meet the demand for services, so that women and their children can safely leave violent relationships without the risk of homelessness, have access to the support they need to recover from trauma and re-establish lives post-violence.

FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIP SERVICES

Family and relationship services provided by a broad range of organisations across Australia play an important role in preventing family violence before it occurs, as well as ensuring an effective response to support victims and work with perpetrators to change their behaviour when it does occur. These services are often the first channel that women and children use to try and access support when they are experiencing family violence.

But these services can't keep up with demand. Inadequate funding means there are limitations on services' ability to respond to need; and that waiting times for relationship services is high; which means that opportunities for early intervention in relationship issues (which can help prevent violence) often has to be delayed.

In 2013-14 reforms to the Department of Social Services' Families and Children Programme meant that specialised family and relationship services that had been federally funded no longer fitted within new granting guidelines. These changes effectively threatened the

continuance of funding for the 'Specialised Family Violence Services' that had helped 4,576 clients in 2012-13. Following an intense period of activity focusing the Minister for Social Services' attention on the significant gap the absence of the Specialist Family Violence Program would leave, Minister Morrison has continued funding for these services for a further two years. This decision has been welcomed by Family and Relationships Services Australia.

What is needed:

Demand currently outweighs availability of services and an increase in funding for these types of services is desperately needed. If the plans at COAG to run a multi-million dollar education awareness campaign are realised it will be critical Governments ensure there is adequate funding available to ensure those seeking to escape and/or deal with family violence issues are adequately supported.

LEGAL ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

For those fleeing family violence, access to free legal advice and assistance is critical.

There are four publicly funded legal assistance providers in Australia that provide free legal advice and assistance to vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community, including people experiencing family violence – Legal Aid Commissions, Community Legal Centres, Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services.

In recent years, legal assistance providers have faced significant funding cuts. Despite recent announcements reversing some of these federal funding cuts, the sector is still facing ongoing cuts and funding uncertainty, which have a major impact on their ability to provide assistance to people experiencing family violence.

Restrictions placed by the federal government on the use of federal funding to undertake law reform and policy have also hurt the ability of community legal assistance providers to undertake early intervention and prevention work that is needed to generate systemic change for victims of family violence, and to reduce demand for stretched frontline services.

Family violence work is estimated to make up a third of the work that community legal centres do across the country. There is significant unmet demand for legal assistance in Australia, including by people experiencing family violence. By way of example, in 2013/14, 84 Community Legal Centres across Australia that provide frontline legal assistance revealed that they had to turn away more than 150,000 people.

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Legal assistance services provide women with the information they need to escape an abusive relationship; assist them to navigate complex legal processes; and ensure women don't have to face court or their abuser without support. They also provide support during AVO processes, help secure injunctions for personal protection, support women to understand their rights to property access, assist with parenting order matters, and help clients navigate credit and debt related to relationship issues.

What is needed:

To help meet urgent demand for community legal assistance, including from people experiencing family violence, the federal government should implement the Productivity Commission's recommendation that \$200 million in additional funding per year be immediately injected into legal assistance services in Australia.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SPECIALIST SERVICES

A critical component of legal support is the provision of culturally safe and specialist legal services for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples – who experience violence at significantly higher rates than other Australians. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised as a result of family violence.

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Specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal assistance services are crucial because Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people experiencing family violence – predominantly women and children – are often reluctant to disclose violence or seek assistance from the police or mainstream legal services, for a range of complex reasons.

Those reasons include mistrust and fear due to a legacy of historic oppression perpetrated by governments and legal systems (including the Stolen Generation and land dispossession), and contemporary forms of marginalisation including high incarceration rates, devastating rates of deaths in custody and the high rates of child removal within Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander families – an issue inextricably linked with family violence.

Mainstream legal services cannot always offer the cultural setting in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel comfortable seeking help, nor are they aware of the complexity of kinship systems and community pressure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must navigate if they are to leave a violent relationship.

The Indigenous Legal Needs Project conducted across Australia between 2011-14 found that there is significant unmet legal assistance needs among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, especially in relation to family violence issues. Specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal assistance services are critical to addressing these needs – a conclusion backed by the Productivity Commission and Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales.

What is needed:

Significantly increased, long-term investment in specialist and culturally safe services to address the high level of demand for legal assistance for Aboriginal victims/survivors of family violence, and increased rates of family violence hospitalisation and reporting.

Specifically, reinstatement of the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Service Program's direct funding allocation, and an additional \$2 million funding per Family Violence Prevention Legal Service unit per annum to address geographical gaps in coverage and answer significant unmet legal need.

SPECIALIST WOMEN'S SERVICES

It is also vital to ensure that women experiencing family violence have access to specialist women's legal services and that such services are appropriately resourced. Crucially, specialist women's services have a thorough understanding of the nature and dynamics of domestic and family violence, including the intersecting and compounding forms of disadvantage and provide a safe space for women and children.

What is needed:

Dedicated long-term funding to specialist women's legal services to provide advice and assistance to women experiencing family violence.

FAMILY DISPUTE RESOLUTION

A 2012 evaluation of a federally-funded pilot of legally assisted and supported family dispute resolution in family violence cases found that where family dispute resolution is handled carefully, the process can be safe and empower parents to make appropriate arrangements for their children. Funding for this pilot has since ceased.

The pilot made significant inroads to addressing multi-disciplinary practice issues in this area. The federal government should commit to developing practice guidelines and roll this model out across the network of family violence support services to increase options for separating families experiencing family violence.

What is needed:

Family & Relationship Services Australia recommend the Attorney-General's Department provide \$5 million of funding to legally assisted and supported family dispute resolution in family violence cases.

ACCOMMODATION, HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT

HOMELESSNESS

Domestic violence is the single biggest driver of homelessness for Australian women and children, at 23% of people accessing Specialist Homelessness Services.

Specialist Homeless Services are essential for ensuring the ongoing safety of women who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing violence within the home. They also support women who do not have access to alternative accommodation options, who are more likely to remain in violent relationships, and therefore be exposed to an increased risk of violence.

In 2013-14, every night 423 people were turned away from homelessness agencies. Many of these people are experiencing domestic violence.

These include a diverse range of services that provide specialist support for women and children who are experiencing homelessness as a result of domestic and family violence.

In March 2015 the federal government announced it will provide \$230 million to extend the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness for 2 years to 30 June 2017, with priority given to frontline services focusing on women and children experiencing domestic and family violence. This announcement relies on state and territory governments matching federal funding dollar for dollar. Additionally, it was not indexed to keep up with the costs of providing the services.

In 2013-14, every night 423 people were turned away from homelessness agencies. Many of these people are experiencing domestic violence.

What is needed:

Funding for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness and the National Affordable Housing Agreement need to be maintained and indexed in line with CPI and employment costs for specialist domestic violence workers.

Homelessness Australia are also calling for replacement 4-5 year long agreements to be developed over the next two years to meet the cost of providing homelessness services, particularly to women and children experiencing homelessness, or lack of affordable housing, as a result of escaping domestic violence.

The National Affordable Housing Agreement and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness provide vital federal, and state and territory, government funding for the more than 1,500 specialist homeless services across the country.

REFUGES

Most women's refuges are a specific form of Specialist Homelessness Service. In crisis situations when women and children cannot safely stay in their homes, refuges provide a safe physical space for them to escape violence and receive support.

Right now too many women are having to be turned away from specialist services, leaving them at risk of having to return to a violent situation or remain in another unsafe environment.

Women are having to be turned away from specialist services, leaving them at risk

Most refuges receive funding from the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness and the National Affordable Housing Agreement – which is funded jointly by the federal government and the state and territory governments.

What is needed:

Additional funding to ensure no one is turned away from refuges; and that all refuge services have a staff member on site or on call 24/7.

HOUSING

Right now, women and children who have been pushed out of their own homes by domestic and family violence are often required to navigate lengthy and fragmented processes to access safe and affordable housing (both rental and purchase) – moving between accommodations that lack security of tenure or a sense of safety.

This lack of stability can impact directly on their ability to escape violence.

The lack of affordable and available housing in Australia limits exit pathways from crisis accommodation for women and children leaving violence.

The lack of affordable rental and purchase accommodation is compounded by the lengthy waiting list for public housing, with 154,566 currently waiting for public housing.

What is needed:

A strategy to address violence against women cannot be entirely successful in an environment of lack of access to affordable housing. Therefore the current Review of the Federation White Paper process, with a particular focus on housing and homelessness, must maintain the Federal Government's leadership in this area of policy - to coordinate and oversee successful and effective solutions to Australia's broken housing system, including public and other forms of social housing.

Homelessness Australia are also calling for the taxation settings on negative gearing and capital gains tax to be reformed.

WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Women's Health Services play a critical role.

Women's Health Services play a critical role in both preventing violence from happening and supporting women who are experiencing violence – including by referral to appropriate crisis support and accommodation assistance.

Primary health services, such as women's health centres and GPs, are one of the key accessible pathways to safety for many women – with 1 in 5 women affected by family violence first disclosing this to their GP.

of the National Partnership Agreement on Preventative Health have meant cuts to important primary prevention health programs around the country.

Federal Department of Health funding streams are currently under review, with organisations whose funding agreements were due to end on 30 June 2015 being extended 6 months while that review is completed.

1 in 5 women affected by family violence first disclose this to their GP

Changes to preventative health funding arrangements in the 2014-15 budget (including de-funding of the Australian National Preventative Health Agency) and the termination

What is needed:

Health Grants administered by the federal Department of Health need to provide adequate funding to enable specialist women's health services to provide vital health care services for women and children – including in the prevention and early intervention in family violence.

Any changes to the Health Flexible Funds over the next 3 years need to ensure women's health sector responses to incidences of family violence and prevention are not compromised.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES EXPERIENCING MULTIPLE FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND DISADVANTAGE:

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SPECIALIST SERVICES

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women report higher levels of physical violence during their lifetime than women who are not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

They are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised as a result of family-violence related assault than other Australian women.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARENTING AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family safety programs help to prevent or minimise family violence by encouraging local community involvement in identifying, developing and implementing family violence initiatives.

Specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family and relationship services that had previously been administered by the Department of Social Services under its Indigenous Programmes, have been shifted to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet under the current federal government.

Programme guidelines no longer contain an allocation dedicated to family functioning and violence – a move providers are concerned will lead to an end of funding for Indigenous family safety work.

Programme guidelines no longer contain an allocation dedicated to family functioning and violence

An evaluation of the Indigenous Family Safety program by the Australian National Audit Office recommended continued program effort in this area, and an extension of the term of the funding agreements.

What is needed:

Family and Relationship Services Australia is calling for the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to re-instate multi-year funding that was previously available for Indigenous parenting and family safety programs, namely the Communities for Children Indigenous Parenting (\$6.0 million), Indigenous Family Safety (\$2.3 million) and Indigenous parenting (\$3.9 million) programs.

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities may have their experience of family violence compounded by lack of familial and social support networks and isolation, communication difficulties, limited access to services and consequences or fear of consequences for their migration status.

But gaps in knowledge and data collection in this area directly impact on the appropriateness of policy and associated processes designed to prevent violence or provide support to victims.

Nationwide research into the prevalence of violence against women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and support systems available to them is a vital first step to addressing this issue.

What is needed:

Increased quantitative research around domestic and family violence issues within culturally and linguistically diverse communities by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Limited access to interpreters and the lack of specialist and culturally sensitive women's health and domestic violence services discourages migrant and refugee women from seeking support and reporting incidents of violence.

According to research by the Australian Institute of Criminology, women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities who sought assistance for family and domestic violence reported a negative experience with the services.

What is needed:

To ensure a holistic approach and appropriate service and support provision; the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia are calling for the Department of Social Services to fund a feasibility study into the establishment of a national specialist service provision for victims of family violence from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

WOMEN WITH A DISABILITY

Women with disabilities are twice as likely to experience domestic/family violence as non-disabled women, and are likely to experience this violence over a longer period of time and suffer more injuries as a result. Yet policies, programs and services for women with disabilities experiencing violence do not exist, are extremely limited, or exclusionary.

Further, violence perpetrated by caregivers against women and girls with disabilities in institutions and other service settings are rarely recognised within domestic violence response frameworks.

Women with disabilities are twice as likely to experience domestic/family violence

For many women with disabilities in Australia, identification and recognition that violence perpetrated against them is a violation of their rights and a crime remains a significant issue. They may have difficulties in recognising, defining and describing the violence; have limited awareness of strategies to prevent and manage it; and lack the confidence or the resources to seek help and support. Many women with disabilities end up trapped in violent and abusive relationships and environments simply because they have no other choice.

What is needed:

Investment in training and support programs to build the capacity of women with disabilities to identify and seek support regarding domestic and family violence.

Women with disabilities who are subject to domestic or family violence face significant barriers to accessing service support and help.

Most family violence services are not equipped to support women with disabilities; and most disability services are not equipped to deal with women experiencing domestic or family violence.

What is needed:

Investment in training and capacity building to ensure family violence services and disability services are able to respond to the needs of women with disabilities and are able to deliver outreach and response work in institutional and other service settings.

Core to tackling the rates of violence against women with disabilities is the ability and capacity of specialist networks and services led by and working with women with disabilities.

Currently these services are vastly under-resourced.

What is needed:

An injection of long-term sustainable funding into representative and specialist organisations like Women with Disabilities Australia to inform and shape strategies for supporting women and girls with disabilities.

MEN'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Working with men who use violent and controlling behaviour is critical to prevent and minimise harm.

Working with men who use violent and controlling behaviour is critical to prevent and minimise the harm of male family violence.

Men's behaviour change programs work towards the safety and well-being of women and children by attempting to engage men who use violence on a transformative journey towards non-violence.

*Behaviour change programs work towards the **safety** and **well-being** of women and children*

To help address men's violence against women in Australia; there is an opportunity and need for the federal government to invest in strengthening the ability of men's behaviour change program providers to work with men as fathers, by funding a second stage program for men who have completed a men's behaviour change program to assist them to become safer fathers.

What is needed:

\$3 million per year additional investment to assist men who have completed a first stage men's behaviour change program to become safer fathers.

A range of agencies have an important role to play in ensuring perpetrator accountability for family and domestic violence, but aren't yet supported to work effectively in this space.

What is needed:

\$1 million of investment in a series of national perpetrator accountability summits for police, corrections, courts, child protection and health service providers to meet (each drawing representatives from each Australian state and territory, and inviting relevant experts from overseas) to share best practice in how each of these sectors can work towards perpetrator accountability.

Men's behaviour change work is complex and challenging, and needs an accreditation system to ensure agencies delivering the service are working in line with best practice. Right now, Australia has no accreditation system for community-based domestic violence perpetrator programs; an unusual situation for such a complex health and human services area.

What is needed:

\$4.5 million over 3 years to develop a national accreditation system for men's behaviour change programs.

PRIMARY PREVENTION

Strategies to prevent violence before it occurs.

Primary prevention focuses on strategies to prevent violence before it occurs – a critical component of a whole of system approach to reducing and stopping violence against women and their children. It involves challenging the deeply ingrained attitudes, social norms and power inequalities that give rise to men's violence against women; and engaging the institutions that reinforce, allow or do not challenge these norms, inequalities and attitudes to make change.

Under the National Action Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, the federal government have shown a positive focus on prevention work, including through the funding of a number of organisations with a specific mandate on primary prevention, Our Watch, and a number of primary prevention programs such as: The Line campaign, a National Media Engagement Project, and Sports Engagement Program. In 2014 the federal government announced an allocation of more than \$100 million over four years to support the Second Action Plan (the second of four stages of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children).

Primary prevention work can take years, if not a generation, to achieve – therefore the length of funding, and amount of funding allocated for initiatives must take this into account.

What is needed:

Long-term, sustainable funding for all programs and initiatives included in the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022. Right now many primary prevention activities are only being implemented in specific locations, and are due to cease at the end of 2015.

What are the key components of an expanded primary prevention strategy?

A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Primary prevention of violence against women is a relatively new field. Various efforts are being made across a range of sectors to change the attitudes, environments and power inequalities that support and enable such violence. But much of this work happens on a small scale or in isolation from other projects.

While such activity may produce results for program participants, achieving change at the population level is impossible without a more coordinated and long-term approach.

What is needed:

Governments, non-government organisations, researchers and practitioners need a shared and up-to-date understanding of what works to prevent violence against women and an agreed, coordinated way forward to end it. Under the Second Action Plan, a National Framework to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children is being developed by Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth. Due for release in August 2015, the Framework will provide a world-first national, evidence-based 'road map' for prevention, and should be used to guide future federal and state/territory government policy and funding.

EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTIONS

Gender stereotypes and violence-supportive attitudes start to be formed early in life. To promote equality and respectful relationships and prevent violence against women later in life, initiatives to support parents, early childhood professionals and teachers to understand how they can shape positive attitudes in young children are important.

What is needed:

Review existing programs and initiatives, such as Baby Makes 3, and determine those that have the capacity to build the leadership and readiness of local governments, community services, MCH nurses and others who support parents and young children.

Additional funding to expand the Respectful Relationships Education in Schools project to all states and territories through the national education curriculum.

Allocate long-term sustainable funding for evidence-based, primary prevention programs and initiatives in the National Plan for Prevention Violence Against Women and their Children.

For the past five years, The Line campaign has been engaging young people to help them to understand the dimensions of healthy and respectful relationships. This is an evidence-based, primary prevention social marketing campaign that was initiated under the National Plan.

What is needed:

Continued and expanded funding for 'The Line campaign' to specifically focus on engaging high risk target audiences.

Pornography and porn-inspired culture is being shown to have a significant impact on young people's attitudes towards sex and relationships, their expectations of sexual partners, and their attitudes towards women.

In Australia, ground-breaking research and primary prevention approaches are being undertaken by the Reality and Risk project to build an understanding in young people about shared human dignity and respect in sexual relationships.

What is needed:

Funding to embed the Reality and Risk project's education resources into the national schools curriculum.

Long-term, sustainable funding for evidence-based, primary prevention programs and initiatives in the National Plan.

ENGAGING WITH MEDIA REPORTING OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN

The media have an important role to play in helping shape attitudes, perceptions and knowledge that give rise to, minimise or excuse violence against women and their children.

The National Media Engagement Project is engaging media to increase quality reporting of violence against women and their children and building awareness of the impacts of gender stereotyping and inequality.

What is needed:

Continued National Plan funding for the National Media Engagement Project being undertaken by Our Watch, at \$1.5 million per year over 5 years.

PREVENTION INITIATIVES TAILORED TO COMMUNITIES EXPERIENCING MULTIPLE FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND DISADVANTAGE

Right now very few primary prevention approaches focus on preventing violence towards especially marginalised and vulnerable groups of women and children.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 34 times more likely to end up in hospital because of a family violence related assault than other Australian women. But currently there are no national primary prevention programs, services or campaigns specifically for Indigenous people.

What is needed:

Funding is urgently required to conduct a review of existing local/regional initiatives; conduct community consultations and implement a collaborative and evidence-based strategy to prevent violence against Indigenous women, implemented as the next step under the National Framework.

Australia is a culturally and linguistically diverse society. Nearly one in two of us are first or second generation Australians, and nearly one in five speak a language other than English at home. Violence against women and their children occurs across the whole of Australian society and is not restricted to any one group. All women and children, regardless of cultural identity, ethnicity, religion or language, have the right to live without the fear or reality of violence.

Women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities can face specific challenges. In addition to gender discrimination, they can experience discrimination on the basis of skin colour, religious affiliation, ethnic origin and

other identity characteristics such as dress codes, and experience additional barriers that make it difficult for them to leave violent relationships.

What is needed:

Funding to review and expand learnings from current short-term prevention initiatives with cultural and linguistically diverse communities (such as those coordinated by Our Watch and White Ribbon), to allow national reach.

Also key to preventing and addressing domestic violence in culturally and linguistically diverse communities are grassroots community-run programs designed to change these community attitudes.

What is needed:

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia is calling on the Department of Social Services to resource grassroots community-run projects designed to promote gender equality and challenge beliefs that accept violence in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

There remains a significant lack of awareness and understanding of the extent, nature, incidence and impact of gendered disability violence at the individual, community, service provider, and criminal justice system levels, along with the violence prevention public policy environment.

What is needed:

Long-term sustainable funding is required to design and implement collaborative and evidence-based strategies focused on preventing violence against women and girls with disabilities.

WOMEN'S EQUALITY

Gender inequality is at the core of the violence against women problem, and achieving gender equality is the heart of the solution.

Right now the gender pay gap is at a record high, and women remain under-represented in key decision-making roles across government and business sectors.

What is needed:

A greater focus on addressing gender inequality. For example;

- Ensuring gender equality and prevention of violence against women and their children is a standard agenda item for the Council of Australian Governments, with an annual report outlining progress on gender equality and prevention of violence against women and their children.
- Expanding the role of and funding for the Workplace Gender Equality Agency to include small businesses, community and recreation sectors, and include a focus on women's safety.
- Ensuring all Australian Public Service departments and agencies have workplace policies and meaningful targets that foster gender equality.
- Implementing policies and legislation to address women's economic inequality.

RESEARCH

Bringing together international research and nationwide experience on what works to prevent violence is an important component of primary prevention work.

What is needed:

Adequate funding to ensure all new prevention programs – and existing initiatives that show promise – are evaluated, and for ongoing research into the interactions between the social, institutional and relational factors that contribute to violence against women.

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FAIR

AGENDA

What will it take? is an initiative of community campaigning organisation Fair Agenda.