

Response to the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission Yearly Report to Parliament

The release of the inaugural Yearly Report to Parliament tracking progress of the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children is an important tool for accountability.

Micaela Cronin, Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner has undertaken crucial work to increase awareness of the complexities, intersections and solutions to ending gender-based violence across all Australian Governments and the community.

The Commission has centred the voices of lived experience in all work, establishing high standards for deep listening and co-design and shows the strength in meaningful consultations. The Yearly Report also acknowledges the deep expertise of the frontline, specialist domestic and family violence workforce alongside the challenges they experience in relation to resourcing and burnout, and points to the need for a national strategy to build the capability of the workforce.

As the report notes, existing specialist domestic and family violence services need an immediate uplift of funding to meet demand for services. Despite the horrific number of women and children murdered this year, despite national outrage and rallies across the country, despite the declaration of a national emergency, calls for increased frontline funding haven't yet been heard, and services are forced to turn people away.

Until all frontline, specialist domestic and family violence services are adequately and sustainably funded, we will not see meaningful progress against the national plan or a future without gendered-based violence. Given that the States and Territories are required to do much of the heavy lifting in implementing the National Plan improved structures to ensure flow-through of resources is required.

As members of the National Alliance of DV Specialist Services representing over 300 specialist domestic and family violence service providers across the country, we call on the Prime Minister to commit to funding the solutions to ending gender-based violence and implement the following:

- A long-term National Partnership Agreement between state and federal governments to ensure ongoing and sustainable funding for all specialist family violence services across the country, with special consideration given to those with high demand in rural, regional and remote areas
- A substantial investment in frontline specialist sexual assault services to meet increasing demand and allow diversification of programs, including working with schools and other local organisations to address and respond to sexual violence.
- A comprehensive National Workforce Strategy including a robust First Nations Workforce Strategy that ensures strong and sustainable specialist domestic and family violence and sexual assault sectors nationwide, including in regional and remote areas. The strategy would recognise the separate requirements of each sector, consistently build sector skills and capabilities, address remuneration, enhance professional development, and support workforce health and wellbeing.
- Increased input from specialist domestic and family violence experts to the National Partnership Agreements on housing and homelessness and the forthcoming National Housing and Homelessness Plan, to reflect the reality that women and children escaping violence comprise the majority of people seeking housing and homelessness support across Australia.
- Stronger investment in First Nations specialist domestic, family and sexual violence services to support community-led responses to violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children, who are disproportionately impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence.

This report has shown that solutions require brave and accountable governments at all levels. Following a horrific toll of senseless domestic and family violence driven murders already in 2024, the

Commonwealth Government must be accountable to driving change and funding these six asks as a matter of urgency.

Signed:



SAFE + EQUAL

