

ACT AUDITOR–GENERAL'S **PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT**

Safer Families Levy

The ACT Audit Office acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of the ACT and recognises any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region.

The ACT Audit Office acknowledges and respects their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

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ISSN: 2204-700X (Print) ISSN: 2204-7018 (Online)

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Produced for the Office of the ACT Legislative Assembly by the ACT Audit Office.

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PA 23/08

The Acting Speaker
ACT Legislative Assembly
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Dear Mr Acting Speaker

I am pleased to forward to you a Performance Audit Report titled 'Safer Families Levy' for tabling in the Legislative Assembly pursuant to Subsection 17(5) of the *Auditor-General Act 1996*.

The audit has been conducted in accordance with the requirements of the *Auditor-General Act 1996* and relevant professional standards including *ASAE 3500 – Performance Engagements*.

Yours sincerely



Michael Harris
Auditor-General
22 November 2024

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Summary

The 2016–17 ACT Budget included \$21.42 million in funding for a four-year domestic and family violence package called the Safer Families package. The Safer Families package was partially funded by the Safer Families Levy. The levy is paid by ACT households through annual rates. The levy was originally \$30 per household but will increase to \$50 per household by 2024-25 (through annual \$5 increases from 2021-22). Over \$46 million has been raised from the levy since its inception through to 30 June 2024.

The Safer Families Levy was introduced to fund reforms known as Safer Families initiatives. Safer Families initiatives are intended to:

- address family violence issues in the ACT community; and
- provide support and awareness of domestic and family violence in the ACT community.

The audit considered the effectiveness of the management of the Safer Families Levy in funding activities to address domestic and family violence.



Conclusions

Planning and development of Safer Families initiatives

The planning and development of domestic and family violence initiatives to be funded through the Safer Families Levy is predominantly achieved through business cases approved by Cabinet through the annual ACT Budget process. The planning and development of domestic and family violence initiatives has been undermined by the lack of:

- a Territory-specific strategy for responding to domestic and family violence; and
- an up-to-date understanding of what the needs of the ACT are in responding to domestic and family violence.

Planning and development is also undermined by poor communication with the community and other stakeholders on how domestic and family violence initiatives are designed to respond to community needs, how they are funded and what their intended benefits are.

Performance monitoring

The DFSVO has not developed a performance monitoring strategy or evaluation framework to measure the outcomes and impacts of domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy.

Although there is an established practice of conducting external evaluations for Safer Families initiatives, not all initiatives had effective performance monitoring arrangements. Furthermore, the DFSVO does not effectively use existing monitoring and reporting arrangements to assess the performance of Safer Families initiatives.

Public reporting

Public reporting of the Safer Families Levy and its use in funding domestic and family violence initiatives is not transparent or effective in informing the community with respect to:

- how the levy is being used; or
- the performance of domestic and family violence initiatives, both individually and as a whole, in addressing domestic and family violence across the Territory.



Key findings

Planning and development of Safer Families initiatives

Paragraph

Principles for the funding of Safer Families initiatives

The purpose of the Safer Families Levy and associated domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the levy, was initially identified in the Safer Families Statement that was made when the Safer Families package was announced as part of the *2016-17 ACT Budget*. The Statement identified the purpose of the levy was to 'fund reforms that will address family violence'. When increases to the levy were announced as part of the *2021-22 ACT Budget*, additional purposes for the levy were identified as follows:

2.8

- 'to fund long-term system reform and service improvements';
- 'to enhance [ACT Government] responses to sexual violence';
- 'continue to fund critical frontline service delivery'; and
- 'enable the community to contribute to vital responses to domestic and family violence in a tangible way'.

At the time of announcing the Safer Families package, the ACT Government had a specific strategy for responding to domestic and family violence; the *ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Strategy 2011-2017*. In March 2018, following the nominal end of the 2011 Strategy, the ACT Government identified that the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (2010 National Plan) would represent its overarching strategy for its response to domestic and family violence. No other ACT-specific strategy has been implemented since then to provide a framework for the intent and purpose of the Safer Families Levy and associated domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the levy.

2.12

The ACT Government used the *Third Action Plan (2016-19)* and *Fourth Action Plan (2019-22)* under the 2010 National Plan to document its response to domestic and family violence. Initiatives reported under the *Third Action Plan (2016-19)* were brief in detail with respect to the activities and outcomes that were expected to be delivered during this time. It was also difficult to relate initiatives reported under the *Third Action Plan (2016-19)* to specific Safer Families initiatives identified through ACT Budget processes. The connection between the initiatives associated with the *Fourth Action Plan (2019-22)* and Safer Families initiatives identified through ACT Budget processes is more apparent, although detail on outcomes is often brief and not sufficiently specific. It is difficult to reconcile reporting of activity under the 2010 National Plan to ACT Budget information on the funding of domestic and family violence initiatives through the Safer Families Levy.

2.20

The *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (2022 National Plan) is a national strategy that seeks to ‘end gender-based violence in one generation’. The 2022 National Plan is supported by the *First Action Plan 2023-2027*, which is in turn supported by the *First Action Plan 2023-2027 Activities Addendum* (2023), which lists commitments from each jurisdiction against each of the ten actions. The nature and purpose of some ACT commitments in the *First Action Plan 2023-2027 Activities Addendum* (2023) is not clear. The description of the activities often lacks detail and linkages to relevant ACT Government information. It is also difficult to:

2.30

- understand the specific activities being completed under the *First Action Plan 2023-2027 Activities Addendum* (2023); and
- whether and how they relate to domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy.

In March 2024, the DFSVO released the *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy* as a consultation draft on the ACT Government’s YourSay platform. The purpose of the *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy* is to: demonstrate alignment with the 10-year outcomes set out in the 2022 National Plan’s Outcomes Framework; and outline the ACT’s activities ‘to support targeted and evidence-based investment’ to address domestic and family violence. While the strategy identifies that further actions that align with its priorities will be confirmed, the strategy contains high-level priorities and outcome statements that are briefly articulated and lack specific measures. The Strategy does not specifically identify:

2.37

- the link between the Safer Families Levy and the Strategy, and how the levy specifically supports the Strategy; or
- the relationship between the ACT Government’s commitments reported in the 2022 National Plan and the activities reported in the Strategy.

Processes for funding Safer Families initiatives

While the DFSVO advised community Budget submissions are used to inform the development of Safer Families initiatives, there is no formal process to call for, or discover, domestic and family violence initiatives to be funded through the Safer

2.52

Families Levy. There is a lack of system-wide evidence to demonstrate the contemporary needs of the community are being taken into account in responding to domestic and family violence. Stakeholders advised that more effective consultation from the DFSVO would assist in developing more informed and effective domestic and family violence initiatives to be funded through the levy.

In the absence of a Territory-specific strategy for the identification and development of domestic and family violence initiatives, the DFSVO has not developed and documented a process for decision-making on the use of the Safer Families Levy and the funding of domestic and family violence initiatives through the levy. The DFSVO has developed a draft set of strategic principles that are intended to help determine what initiatives could be funded from the levy, but these are yet to be fully implemented. The lack of formal and implemented arrangements to call for, discover and prioritise initiatives increases the risk that levy funds are poorly targeted and do not meet community needs. 2.57

From the commencement of the Safer Families Levy in 2016-17 until 2020-21, the majority of funding was applied to government-led Safer Families initiatives as opposed to community sector-led initiatives. This has changed since 2021-22 as more funding has been provided to the community sector. Despite the findings of previous reviews, which have criticised the ACT's domestic and family violence response as being largely crisis driven, funding for crisis services remains the largest priority for funding from the levy. Although total levy funding has increased, prevention and recovery services have not been prioritised and their funding proportion has not significantly changed since 2016-17. 2.68

Funding for Safer Families initiatives is most often sought through business cases submitted to Cabinet. Initiatives that have been funded through this process have included a sufficient level of research and assessment to demonstrate: the objectives of the initiative and how the initiative is expected to address community needs along with expected benefits; and the alignment of the initiative with the government's broader policy priorities. There was, however, a lack of consideration as to whether the proposed initiative would complement or duplicate activities under existing Safer Families initiatives. 2.79

Planning and development of the Family Safety Hub

The Family Safety Hub was a central commitment of the Safer Families package announced in the *2016-17 ACT Budget*. The intended role and function of the Family Safety Hub has changed over the years. The original intention was for it to be a central place for victims of domestic and family violence to receive integrated support from a range of ACT services. After a co-design process with community sector organisations, this changed to supporting and improving responses to domestic and family violence across the service system. The Family Safety Hub is now known as Innovative Pilot Projects and located within the DFSVO. The current role of the Innovative Pilot Projects function is to co-design, develop and test new ideas to meet the needs of those affected by domestic and family violence. 2.96

Performance monitoring

Performance monitoring and evaluation

The DFSVO has not developed a performance monitoring strategy or evaluation framework to monitor and measure the outcomes and impacts of domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy, either individually or collectively. There is, however, an intention that 'an evaluation framework and performance measurement plan will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders' for the purpose of the *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy*. In the absence of a performance monitoring strategy or evaluation framework, unique and ad hoc performance monitoring arrangements have been developed for each Safer Families initiative. This makes it difficult to assess the impact of the suite of Safer Families initiatives more broadly. 3.9

Performance monitoring for selected initiatives

A review of the performance monitoring arrangements in place for five Safer Families initiatives considered as part of the audit (additional resources for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre; Room4Change; Family Safety Hub - Family Violence Response for Children; Family Violence Safety Action Program; and Safer Families Collaboration Program) shows: 3.62

- **Outcomes and objectives:** there were defined outcomes and objectives for all the initiatives;
- **Performance indicators:** most of the initiatives (with the exception of the Family Violence Safety Action Program, had SMART performance indicators (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely) but the indicators were not supported by targets;
- **Performance reporting:** the regular and timely provision of performance reports was a feature of all the initiatives. Performance reports often conveyed a mix of qualitative and quantitative information, and sometimes provided information on the impact of activities; and
- **Monitoring and assurance:** there was adequate monitoring and assurance in place for all the initiatives. All initiatives had regular meetings to review performance.

Performance reporting for selected initiatives

A review of the performance monitoring and reporting arrangements in place for the five Safer Families initiatives as well as the Domestic and Family Violence Review, the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) Grants Program and the ACT Women's Safety Grants shows: 3.77

- two of the eight initiatives had been evaluated (Room4Change and the Family Violence Safety Action Program) while the evaluation for

another two initiatives (additional resources for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and the Family Safety Hub - Family Violence Response for Children) were underway. The lack of a common evaluation framework for Safer Families initiatives means that evaluative processes were specifically developed for each initiative. This makes an assessment of impact across the suite of Safer Families initiatives difficult;

- there is no evaluation strategy for the Innovative Pilot Projects function (formerly the Family Safety Hub) which runs pilot initiatives to trial new responses to domestic and family violence. The *draft Innovative Pilot Projects Operating Manual* identified an intention to use external evaluators to assess the pilot projects, but there is no further guidance or instruction on expectations for the evaluation and assessment of pilot projects against identified objectives. The draft Manual was developed in May 2023 but is yet to be finalised;
- performance reports that are received from funded recipients often have a mix of qualitative and quantitative information, and sometimes provide information on the impact of activities. However, there is a lack of evidence that the DFSVO has assessed the data provided through the report to determine;
 - whether performance of the initiative is improving; and
 - what the DFSVO can do to support broader impacts across Safer Families initiatives.

Measures to monitor the implementation of recommendations from the first Biennial Review of the Death Review are yet to be established. While a function for reviewing domestic and family violence deaths has been established, the powers to enhance impact of this function by tracking implementation of recommendations has not been implemented.

3.78

Public reporting

Budget and Annual reporting

The Community Services Directorate has one output related to the work of the DFSVO (Output 1.5: Safer Families), which is reported against as part of the Directorate's annual Statement of Performance. One Accountability Indicator is provided for this output 'Family Violence Statement presented to the ACT Legislative Assembly', which purports to '[measure] the Government's progress and achievements in addressing family and domestic violence'. The Accountability Indicator is an activity measure of public reporting and does not provide any insights on achievements associated with the Safer Families Levy.

4.14

Reporting under Output 1.5 in the Community Services Directorate's *2022-23 Annual Report* included short written descriptions of activities undertaken by the DFSVO during the year. Reporting was consistent with the approach undertaken for the *2021-22 Annual Report*. Much of the reporting is on activity rather than on impacts. While some metrics have been cited information such as experiences through the various programs and changes in attitudes and behaviour arising from the programs and other activities have not been reported. It is also difficult to understand from

4.20

annual report commentary whether performance expectations set in one reporting period have been met in the following period.

The *Annual Report Directions* require ACT Government agencies to report on community engagement and support initiatives, including funding provided through grants and sponsorship programs, and activities being undertaken for the purpose of the *ACT Agreement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (2019-2028)*. Community Services Directorate annual reports have included this information, as required. 4.30

Victim Support ACT has also reported on the Family Violence Safety Action Program through ACT Human Rights Commission annual reports. The program is intended to support victims at high risk of violence through increased collaboration between government and non-government agencies. It is partly funded through the Safer Families Levy. The ACT Human Rights Commission's *2022-23 Annual Report* provided some insights into program activity, along with some data to provide the public with information about the amount of collaboration between agencies to support and refer victims to the program. While Justice and Community Safety Directorate *2022-23 Annual Report* contains financial information about the Family Violence Safety Action Program, it does not disclose the program's funding sources. 4.35

The *ACT Budget Outlook* includes an Appendix with information on Safer Families initiatives. *Appendix H – Safer Families* is a key source of public reporting on Safer Families initiatives and the Safer Families Levy. The Appendix includes information on achievements in the prior year, priorities for the year ahead and longer-term priorities. The Appendix is in narrative form and consists predominantly of key highlights for the year, rather than a structured explanation of progress against planned activity. Appendices are not easily comparable between years and do not constructively demonstrate the performance of Safer Families initiatives. Financial information is included without introduction or explanation to make it accessible to a diverse range of users. 4.38

Other reporting

The annual Safer Families Statement is another key reporting mechanism on the implementation of Safer Families initiatives. It is delivered in the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. The 2023 statement provided a high-level report of a selection of grants, programs and policy and legislative reform work by ACT Government agencies. The 2023 statement was less structured than in previous years and did not provide information on planned, actual or future expected performance. 4.44

The first annual Sexual Assault Prevention and Response statement was delivered in August 2023. It focused predominantly on implementation activity arising from responding to the recommendations of the *Listen. Take Action to Prevent, Believe and Heal* report. It did not include planned performance information. Some high-level outcome statements were included but these are not sufficiently specific to determine the success of the initiatives. 4.45

Until March 2024, the Community Services Directorate had a Safer Families website which contained information on sources of assistance for people facing domestic and family violence. This website included a webpage titled “What is ACT Government doing?” and had a series of subpages on select ACT Government activities relating to domestic and family violence. Some of these activities are funded through the Safer Families Levy. The webpages did not clearly identify to the community what work was being supported by the levy or inform the community on the progress or performance of initiatives funded through the levy. The new ACT Government website has no easily accessible information available on Safer Families initiatives, performance or expenditure. 4.52

Public reporting of domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy does not easily facilitate community and stakeholder understanding of the use of the levy and performance of the Safer Families initiatives. While there is a suite of reporting that is available each year on Safer Families initiatives, the reporting is not comparable or consistent over time, such that it can assist users form a view on performance over time. Performance is often reported as a series of highlights, and it is not easily discernible to understand what activities are new or ongoing. The needs of stakeholders for progress reporting and transparency of levy expenditure are not being met by existing reporting. 4.56



Recommendations

Recommendation 1 ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy and Plan

In order to promote transparency and accountability in the funding of domestic and family violence initiatives through the Safer Families Levy, the Community Services Directorate should, as part of designing and implementing the ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy and Plan work with other ACT Government agencies to:

- a) establish clear and easily accessible communication products that regularly update the community on initiatives funded through the levy, including their purpose and intended outcomes;
- b) develop principles for funding initiatives under the levy and clearly communicate to the community services sector and broader community how these principles are being implemented; and
- c) establish clearly documented feedback mechanisms for the community services sector and broader community to inform the planning and design of initiatives funded through the levy.

Recommendation 2 Performance monitoring

The Community Services Directorate should:

- a) establish a common evaluation framework for initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy that takes account of the need to evaluate the impact of each initiative as well as its impact across the suite of Safer Families initiatives within the Safer Families package; and
- b) establish practices for regularly reporting on the performance of Safer Families initiatives to the Coordinator-General of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence.

Recommendation 3**Biennial reporting by the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review**

The Community Services Directorate should, as part of future biennial reports from the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Coordinator, establish processes to monitor and report on the implementation of the recommendations of past reports.

Recommendation 4**Safer Families Levy public reporting**

The Community Services Directorate should, in cooperation with the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate and in consultation with the community services sector:

- a) review the current approach to financial reporting of initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy to ensure there is comparable and informative reporting of how funds raised from the levy are used; and
- b) in conjunction with Recommendation 2(b), establish public performance reporting processes that show the planned and actual performance of initiatives along with analysis and explanation of any significant variations.

Agencies' responses

In accordance with subsection 18(2) of the *Auditor-General Act 1996*, the Community Services Directorate was provided with:

- a draft proposed report for comment. All comments were considered and required changes were reflected in the final proposed report; and
- a final proposed report for further comment. All comments were considered and required changes were reflected in the final report.

In accordance with subsection 18(3) of the *Auditor-General ACT 1996*, Victim Support ACT was also provided with extracts of the draft proposed report and final proposed report for comment. All comments were considered and required changes were reflected in the final proposed report.

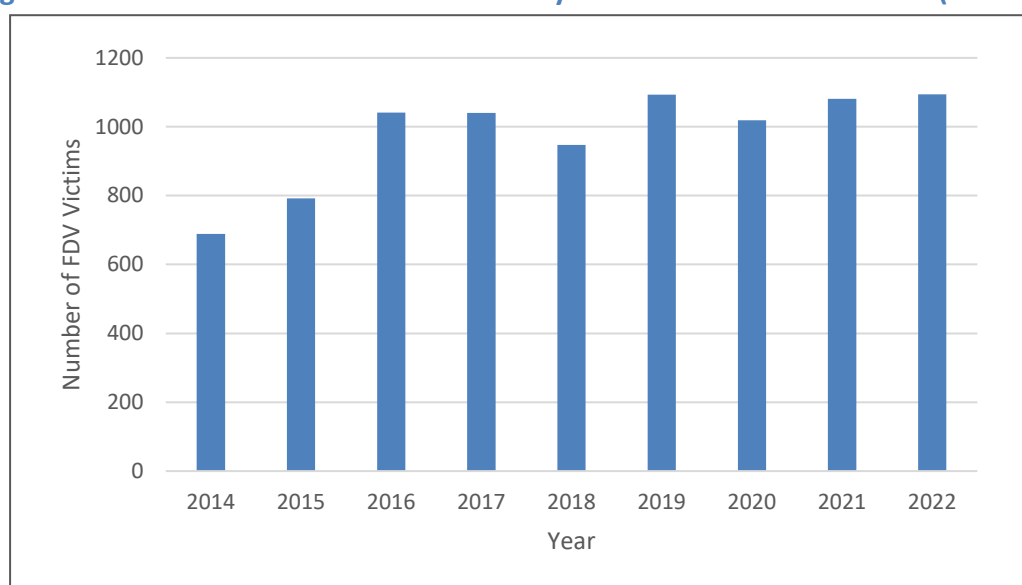
As part of the final proposed report process, agencies were invited to provide comments for inclusion in the final report in the Summary chapter. No comments were provided for inclusion in this Summary chapter.

1 Introduction

Domestic and family violence

- 1.1 Domestic and family violence refers to violence between family members and intimate partners. It includes physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse.¹ The effects of domestic and family violence can have lifelong impacts for victim-survivors.²
- 1.2 It is estimated that 3.8 million adults in Australia (20 percent) have experienced violence by a family member or intimate partner since the age of 15. This figure represents 27 percent of women and 12 percent of men. The highest proportion of violence against both women and men was from an intimate partner.³
- 1.3 Figure 1-1 shows the number of domestic and family violence victims in the ACT from 2014 to 2022, as reported to police.

Figure 1-1 Number of domestic and family violence victims in the ACT (2014 to 2022)



Source: ACT Audit Office, based on AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) (2024) [Family and Domestic Violence, FDV reported to police, Figure 3 – Number of Persons](#), AIHW website, accessed 14 November 2024.

¹ ACT Legislative Assembly (2016) [ACT Government Response to Family Violence \[PDF 247KB\]](#), ACT Legislative Assembly, accessed 11 April 2024.

² AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) (2024) [Family and Domestic Violence](#), AIHW website, accessed 11 April 2024.

³ ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) (2023) [Personal Safety, Australia, 2021-22 Financial Year](#), ABS website, accessed 11 April 2024.

- 1.4 In the ACT, domestic and family violence is one of the key drivers of demand for ACT Policing services. Demand for ACT Policing services is reflected in the number of incidents police attend, the complexity of the matters and the time it takes to resolve them. In 2022-23 there were 1412 family violence related assaults, which represented 44 percent of all assault related offences reported to ACT Policing.⁴
- 1.5 Research has shown that certain groups are more vulnerable to being victims of family violence, including women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, women from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, refugees, children, pregnant women, the LGBTIQ+ community, older people, and people with a disability.⁵

National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032

- 1.6 In 2022, the Australian, state and territory governments released the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032* (2022 National Plan). The Plan is intended to guide national actions towards ending violence against women and children. The Plan outlines approaches to ending domestic and family violence through four interconnected domains:
- **Prevention** – aims to stop violence from occurring in the first place by addressing the underlying drivers of violence and promoting respectful, nonviolent relationships.
 - **Early intervention** - involves identifying and supporting individuals or groups who are at risk of perpetrating or experiencing violence to stop the early signs of abuse from escalating and prevent violence from recurring.
 - **Crisis/Response** – addresses existing violence and prevents the reoccurrence of violence by holding perpetrators to account and supporting victim survivors to stay safe.
 - **Recovery** - supports the long-term recovery of victim-survivors.

2016 ACT reviews into domestic and family violence

- 1.7 In 2015 and 2016, there were a number of tragic deaths in the ACT from domestic and family violence. In 2016, the ACT Government commissioned three reviews to examine the legislative framework, policy, practices and operations of ACT directorates and service providers that respond to domestic and family violence. The three reviews were:
- *Report of the Inquiry: Review into the system level responses to family violence in the ACT* by Mr Laurie Glanfield AM (Glanfield Inquiry);

⁴ ACT Policing (2023) [ACT Policing: Annual Report 2022-23](#), ACT Policing website, accessed on 11 April 2024.

⁵ Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety (2019) [Report on Inquiry into Domestic and Family Violence – Policy Approaches and Responses \[PDF 985KB\]](#), ACT Legislative Assembly, accessed 11 April 2024.

- *Review of Domestic and Family Violence Deaths in the ACT* by the Domestic Violence Prevention Council (Death Review); and
- *ACT Domestic Violence Service System Final Gap Analysis Report* by the Community Services Directorate (Gap Analysis).

Report of the Inquiry: Review into the system level responses to family violence in the ACT (Glanfield Inquiry)

1.8 The Glanfield Inquiry identified a need to achieve four key outcomes:

- creation of a collaborative and information sharing culture within the domestic and family violence sector that is focused on whole-of-family safety and early intervention;
- improved assessment, referral and case management processes for vulnerable families and children;
- improved quality of, and transparency in, Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) decision making and practices; and
- improved oversight of system responses and implementation of recommendations.

1.9 The Glanfield Inquiry noted that the ACT did not have a single integrated domestic and family violence sector but instead had domestic and family violence, child protection and family services that operated relatively independently of each other.

1.10 The Glanfield Inquiry made 31 recommendations under the themes of delivering better family outcomes, mandatory reporting, decision making, quality assurance and oversight, sharing information, and facilitating collaboration and integration.

1.11 One of the recommendations of the Glanfield Inquiry was that a Family Safety Hub be established to facilitate integrated and coordinated services to families experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, domestic and family violence and to ensure decision making is based on all the evidence available to the system.

Review of Domestic and Family Violence Deaths in the ACT (Death Review)

1.12 The Death Review, undertaken by the Domestic Violence Prevention Council, analysed domestic and family violence deaths in the ACT that occurred between 2000 and 2012. Twenty-eight recommendations for action were identified. Some of the key findings were that:

- there was a lack of understanding of what constitutes domestic and family violence and how an absence of physical violence in a relationship does not necessarily mean a lower risk of harm for the victim;

- many of the victims contacted service providers for matters unrelated to domestic and family violence and these contacts provide an opportunity for early intervention. There is a need for better awareness by these service providers about risk factors such as pregnancy, separation and new relationships; and
- information was often seen in isolation by service providers and information sharing was limited.

1.13 One of the recommendations of the Death Review was to establish a domestic and family violence death review mechanism to review all domestic and family violence homicides.

ACT Domestic Violence Service System Final Gap Analysis Report (Gap Analysis)

1.14 The Gap Analysis identified the steps required to bridge the gap between the current state and ideal state of an effective integrated response to domestic and family violence in the ACT. Consultation for the Gap Analysis included face-to-face consultations with key stakeholders, an online survey and three workshops.

1.15 Some of the findings of the Gap Analysis were that:

- additional funding is required to establish a dedicated, integrated Domestic Violence Unit for responding to domestic and family violence in the ACT;
- data on domestic and family violence would be strengthened if data collection was mandated and intimate partner violence distinguished from other forms of violence; and
- a single cross-government training framework for mainstream services would provide an improved response to women presenting at government services.

ACT Government response to 2016 reviews

1.16 The *ACT Government Response to Family Violence*, which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 7 June 2016, responded to these reviews. The response outlined a series of commitments under the following themes:

- leadership and cultural change;
- prevention and early intervention;
- information sharing;
- collaboration and integration; and
- transparency and accountability.

1.17 The *ACT Government Response to Family Violence* identified the following priority actions:

- appointment of a full-time Coordinator-General for Family Safety to lead change and provide accountability across the service system;
- implementation of a collaborative and integrated approach to services through a dedicated Family Safety Hub;
- development of a new legislative framework to authorise information sharing and collaborative practices; and
- development of a skilled and educated workforce, especially frontline staff, who would have responsibility for responding to the needs of adults and children experiencing domestic and family violence.

1.18 The *ACT Government Response to Family Violence* noted that the ACT Government's response to addressing domestic and family violence needed to shift from a crisis-driven and reactive approach to prevention and early intervention.

Safer Families initiatives

Safer Families package

1.19 The *2016–17 ACT Budget* included \$21.42 million in funding for a four-year domestic and family violence package called the Safer Families package. The Safer Families package was partially funded by the Safer Families Levy.

Safer Families Levy

1.20 The Safer Families Levy is paid by ACT households through annual rates. The levy was originally \$30 per household, but will increase to \$50 per household by 2024-25 (through annual \$5 increases from 2021-22). Over \$46 million has been raised from the Safer Families Levy since its inception through to 30 June 2024. The Community Services Directorate (CSD) advised of an intention to increase the levy to \$60 in 2025-26 and \$70 in 2026-27 and an expectation that \$49.401 million will be raised in the four years to 2027-28.

Safer Families initiatives

1.21 The Safer Families Levy was introduced to fund reforms known as Safer Families initiatives. Safer Families initiatives are intended to:

- address domestic and family violence issues in the ACT community; and
- provide support and awareness of domestic and family violence in the ACT community.

- 1.22 Various government and non-government domestic and family violence initiatives have been funded through the Safer Families Levy.
- 1.23 Funding is allocated to initiatives through the annual budget process. Information on the Safer Families initiatives that have been implemented since the commencement of the Levy, along with recipient details and funded activities, is included at Appendix A.

ACT Budget Outlooks

- 1.24 ACT Budget Outlooks include information on funding that domestic and family violence initiatives have received from the Safer Families Levy, as well as any other additional amounts supplied from appropriation or National Partnership funding. Safer Families initiatives are specifically identified in ACT Budget Outlooks.
- 1.25 CSD has one Accountability Indicator related to the Safer Families Levy, which is reported as part of its annual Statement of Performance:
- Family Violence Statement presented to the ACT Legislative Assembly; Target – one.

Roles and responsibilities

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office, Community Services Directorate

- 1.26 The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office (DFSVO) within the Community Services Directorate is led by the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Coordinator-General. The DFSVO:

... works in partnership with other ACT Government directorates, Australian Government departments, the community, service providers and the private sector to:

- increase understanding through research and collaboration;
 - improve the service system through domestic and sexual violence reforms;
 - identify and try new ideas through innovative service pilots; and
 - support accountability through consistent reporting and information sharing.⁶
- 1.27 Previously known as the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety, the DFSVO is responsible for leading the ACT Government's efforts to improve the Territory's response to domestic and family violence. The DFSVO makes recommendations to government on how Safer Families Levy funding should be used.

⁶ ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office (n.d.) [ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office](#), DFSVO website, accessed 13 November 2024.

- 1.28 The DFSVO's name and role changed in 2022 from the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety, following the ACT Government's response to the *Listen. Take Action to Prevent, Believe and Heal* report of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program's Steering Committee. Part (b) of Recommendation 24 of the report recommended the ACT Government:

... create (or combine) a single role in the ACT Government for the coordination of reforms at the level of Coordinator-General to ensure a sufficient level of responsibility and power to hold all directorates to account for reforms.

Domestic Violence Prevention Council

- 1.29 The Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC) is a ministerially appointed advisory council that provides strategic advice to the ACT Government on domestic and family violence. The DVPC has 13 members, including representatives from community organisations, the ACT Government, ACT Policing, courts and community members. The role of the DVPC is to:

- Advise the Minister on the ACT's response to domestic violence and family violence, including ways to continually improve the ACT's approach to prevention, early intervention, response and recovery;
- Identify gaps and opportunities for the ACT Government to improve the ACT's prevention of and response to domestic and family violence;
- Facilitate the exchange of information and collaboration and integration between other Ministerial advisory bodies, the ACT Government, ACT Policing, ACT Courts and community-based organisations providing services in relation to domestic violence and family violence;
- Provide an annual update to the Minister that:
 - reports on the progress of work undertaken by the DVPC; and
 - includes an annual work plan of the DVPC's proposed priorities and activities for the coming year for Ministerial review and endorsement.⁷

Government and community stakeholders

- 1.30 Other government agencies and community sector organisations also have a role in providing domestic and family violence services. The details of these, and other supporting organisations, are available at the ACT Government website: [Get help now - ACT Government](#).

⁷ ACT Government (2023) [Domestic Violence Prevention Council Terms of Reference 2023-25](#), ACT Government, accessed 14 November 2024.

ACT legislation

Family Violence Act 2016

1.31 The *Family Violence Act 2016* was introduced with a view to re-defining domestic and family violence and capturing a broader range of behaviours within the domestic and family violence context. The objects of the Act include:

- (a) to prevent and reduce family violence; and
- (b) to ensure the safety and protection of people, including children, who fear, experience or witness family violence; and
- (c) to encourage perpetrators of family violence to be accountable for their conduct.

1.32 In 2019, the ACT Government initiated a review of the *Family Violence Act 2016*. In response to this review, the ACT Government introduced the *Family Violence Legislation Amendment Bill 2022*.

1.33 The *Family Violence Legislation Amendment Bill 2022* seeks to:

- create an aggravated offence scheme that allows expanded penalties for certain offences when committed in the context of domestic and family violence;
- limit cross-examination on the contents of victim impact statements, including in other proceedings;
- insert certain new aggravated domestic and family violence offences into the schedule of disqualifying offences *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011*; and
- create a legislative requirement to review the *Family Violence Act 2016* every three years.

Domestic Violence Agencies Act 1986

1.34 The *Domestic Violence Agencies Act 1986* provides for the establishment of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council and the role of the Domestic and Family Violence Review Coordinator. The act outlines requirements for the operation of the Council and the activities of the Coordinator.

Audit objective and scope

Audit objective

1.35 The objective of this audit was to assess the effectiveness of the management of the Safer Families Levy in funding activities to address domestic and family violence.

Audit scope

- 1.36 The audit considered whether the Safer Families Levy is being managed effectively to address domestic and family violence.
- 1.37 This included consideration of whether monies received through the Safer Families Levy are being spent appropriately and in accordance with the policy objectives and intent of the Levy. In doing so, the audit considered processes established by the DFSVO to:
- recommend the funding of initiatives under the levy; and
 - monitor and evaluate the outputs and outcomes of initiatives funded under the levy.
- 1.38 The audit considered the activities of the DFSVO through a detailed examination of its role with respect to a selection of initiatives funded through the levy.

Funding of initiatives

- 1.39 The audit examined the processes established by the DFSVO for the funding of initiatives under the Safer Families Levy. This included consideration of the DFSVO's governance structures and processes for:
- the identification of initiatives that could be funded under the levy;
 - the evaluation and selection of initiatives; and
 - the review and approval of funding decisions.

Monitoring and evaluation activities

- 1.40 The audit examined the processes established by the DFSVO to monitor and evaluate initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy. This included consideration of:
- the framework, policies and procedures used by the DFSVO to monitor and evaluate the levy and its supported initiatives; and
 - performance reporting within government, to stakeholders and the public, of the progress and outcomes of the levy and its funded initiatives.

Spending in accordance with the intent of the levy

- 1.41 The audit considered whether funds received through the Safer Families Levy have been spent in accordance with the intent of the levy. This included consideration of the transparency and accuracy of publicly available information on expenditure on initiatives under the levy.

Domestic and family violence

- 1.42 The term ‘domestic and family violence’ is used for the purpose of the audit. This includes violence between family members, as well as violence between intimate partners and includes physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse.
- 1.43 Services to respond to domestic and family violence include prevention, early intervention, crisis and recovery. The design of the Family Safety Hub set an expectation that equal effort should be placed on each of these types of services.
- 1.44 The audit focused primarily on the activities of the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office, Community Services Directorate. Other entities contributed to the audit as needed in reviewing specific initiatives during audit fieldwork.

Out of scope

- 1.45 The audit did not consider whether:
- the intended outcomes of the Safer Families Levy have been met; or
 - the Safer Families Levy is effectively addressing domestic and family violence in the ACT.
- 1.46 The audit did not assess the service delivery arrangements for domestic and family violence services or their impact in preventing, intervening or responding to domestic and family violence cases.

Audit criteria, approach and method

Audit criteria

- 1.47 To form a conclusion against the objective, the following criteria were used:
- Criterion 1 - Are there effective processes to decide which initiatives should be funded under the Safer Families Levy?
 - Are there effective criteria and processes to consider and decide which initiatives should be funded?
 - Are there appropriate governance structures for the review and approval of decisions?
 - Criterion 2 - Is there effective monitoring of the Safer Families Levy and its initiatives?
 - Has an effective evaluation framework been established for the Safer Families Levy and its use of monies?
 - Is there continuous monitoring of the Safer Families Levy and its use of monies?

- Are the progress and outcomes of the Safer Families Levy made publicly available?
- Criterion 3 - Has expenditure from the Safer Families Levy been spent within the intent of the funding?
 - Does expenditure reflect the original intent of the Safer Families Levy?
 - Has expenditure on activities within each initiative been spent with the intent of the funding?
 - Is expenditure information made publicly available?

Audit approach and method

1.48 The audit approach and method consisted of:

- reviewing relevant documentation for the selection of Safer Families Levy initiatives including meeting minutes from committees and working groups and policies and procedures;
- reviewing relevant documentation for the monitoring of the Safer Families Levy including relevant reports, meeting minutes and financial and budget documents;
- reviewing relevant information and documentation associated with Safer Families Levy expenditure;
- interviews and discussions with key staff at the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office and other stakeholders as identified; and
- reviewing relevant literature and work undertaken on this subject by other jurisdictions to identify better practices.

Disclosure of deliberative information

1.49 Section 20 of the *Auditor-General Act 1996* (the Act) relates to the disclosure of 'deliberative information' in Audit Office reports. Section 20 provides that the Auditor-General may only include 'deliberative information' in a report:

- if the Auditor-General considers that it is in the 'public interest' to do so; and
- after consulting with the Chief Minister.

1.50 'Deliberative information' is defined in the Act as 'information that discloses a deliberation or decision of the Executive'.

Report references to Cabinet material

1.51 The audit report includes information from ACT Budget business cases provided to Cabinet.

Consultation with the Chief Minister

- 1.52 The Chief Minister was consulted regarding information to be included in the report. On 16 September 2024 the Chief Minister was provided with the extracts of the draft proposed report that included information provided to Cabinet.
- 1.53 On 2 October 2024 the Head of Service, in their capacity as Cabinet Secretary, provided feedback on the use of material related to a draft Cabinet Submission. Similar feedback was received from CSD and it was considered appropriate to amend the proposed report. The Head of Service otherwise advised that ‘there are no other specific matters that I wish to draw to your attention in relation to the use of deliberative information’.

Stakeholder consultation

- 1.54 The Audit Office met with the Victims of Crime Commissioner and representatives from the following community organisations:
- Domestic Violence Crisis Service;
 - Women's Health Matters;
 - YWCA Canberra;
 - Women's Legal Centre; and
 - ACTCOSS.
- 1.55 Representatives from these organisations who contributed to the audit are referred to collectively as ‘stakeholders’ in this report.

Assessment of selected Safer Families initiatives

- 1.56 A selection of eight Safer Families Levy initiatives were examined in more detail for planning and performance monitoring activities. One pilot under the Family Safety Hub (Innovative Pilot Projects) was also examined; the Family Violence Response for Children. A brief description of each of these initiatives is provided below.

Family Safety Hub (Innovative Pilot Projects)

- 1.57 The Family Safety Hub facilitates the development of new and innovative solutions aimed at addressing the needs of families impacted by domestic and family violence. The Family Safety Hub brings together people with lived experience, community organisations, crisis services and government to co-design, develop and test new ideas before allowing them to be scaled-up and merged into the existing service system. The Family Safety Hub was launched in May 2018 and, to date, has facilitated eight pilots:
- Health Justice Partnerships;

- Got Your Back;
- Financial Abuse Capacity;
- Solid Ground;
- Court Navigator Pilot;
- Creative and Digital Communication Services;
- Family Violence Response for Children; and
- Youth Sector Training.

1.58 In 2022, the title of the Family Safety Hub was changed to Innovative Pilot Projects to clarify that it is not a physical space.

1.59 Table 1-1 shows funding for the Family Safety Hub (Innovative Pilot Projects) through the Safer Families Levy and a description of the activities funded through the Family Safety Hub.

Table 1-1 Funding for the Family Safety Hub (Innovative Pilot Projects)

Safer Families initiative: Family Safety Hub (Innovative Pilot Projects)							
Activity: - Domestic Family Sexual Violence Office - FTE staffing funded for SOG A, SOG B, SOG C, ASO 4; - Domestic Violence Crisis Service to deliver the Court Navigator Program; - Doris Women's Refuge to fund the Children's Support Worker; - Women's Legal Centre to fund the Health Justice Partnership Pilot; - Chief Minister Treasury Economic Development Directorate - Frontline Worker Training; - Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate - Frontline Worker Training; - Justice and Community Safety Directorate - Frontline Worker Training; - Reason Group Contractors consultants to develop an evaluation framework to guide the evaluation of the Family Safety Hub's work; - Mentally Friendly Pty Ltd to co-design and undertake a discovery phase of the second Family Safety Hub Challenge; - Think Place to establish and design the Family Safety Hub; - A contracted individual to support the Family Safety Hub team to undertake data collection analysis of the pilot testing of the Health Justice Partnerships; - Health Justice Australia to provide advisory and support services to the Health Justice Partnerships Pilot; - Funding provided to Canberra Police Community Youth Club to fund the Solid Ground Pilot; University of Sydney - to evaluate the Children's Family Violence Pilot; - ARTD Pty Ltd - to review the Health Justice Partnership program; Social Ventures Australia Limited to review the Got Your Back program; - Friday the Collective - to build a website that provides easily accessible information, advice, and help for people experiencing or supporting others experiencing DFV in the ACT; - Shanti Works Consulting Group to consult on the system design of the Multi-Disciplinary Centre; - Care Australia to deliver a program to Build Capability of Community Sector Staff to Better Recognise and Respond to Financial Abuse; - Relationships Australia to deliver the Youth Sector Training; - Australian Childhood Foundation to deliver the Children's Family Violence Pilot; - Funding provided to Legal Aid ACT to deliver the Court Navigator Program.							
2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
-	455	1469	1534	1333	1591	1613	1739

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on expenditure reported in ACT Budget Outlooks 2016-17 to 2024-25.

Family Safety Hub - Family Violence Response for Children

1.60 The Family Violence Response for Children Pilot is one of the pilots facilitated through the Family Safety Hub. The Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF) co-designed and delivered a service for children aged 5 to 12 years who have experienced domestic and family violence. The service involves parallel therapeutic groupwork sessions for children and their mothers.

The sessions are used to assist in improving the parent-child bond and helping mothers support their children in their recovery. The Family Violence Response for Children Pilot has four terms per year. The first term of the pilot commenced in February 2023.

- 1.61 Table 1-2 shows funding for the Family Violence Response for Children Pilot through the Safer Families Levy.

Table 1-2 Funding for the Family Safety Hub - Family Violence Response for Children

Safer Families initiative: Family Safety Hub - Family Violence Response for Children							
2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
-	-	-	-	-	196		615

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on DFSVO data (refer to Appendix A).

Additional resources for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre

- 1.62 The Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC) is a not-for-profit organisation established in 1976 which provides services and programs to anyone affected by sexual violence. The Centre's services include crisis phone lines, information and referral, counselling and advocacy services. Additional funding for the Centre was part of the initial announcement of the Safer Families Levy in 2016 and it has received funding from the levy every year since.
- 1.63 Table 1-3 shows funding for the additional resources for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre through the Safer Families Levy.

Table 1-3 Funding for the additional resources for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre

Safer Families initiative: Additional resources for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre							
Activity: Funding provided to the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC) to fund additional resources within the CRCC; Crisis Intervention (Counselling and Education) services							
2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
100	103	105	108	111	114	117	120

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on expenditure reported in ACT Budget Outlooks 2016-17 to 2024-25.

Room4Change

- 1.64 Room4Change is a program run by the Domestic Violence Crisis Service (DVCS) and assists men who want to stop using violence and controlling behaviours and instead build healthy and respectful relationships. Room4Change was part of the initial announcement of the Safer Families Levy in 2016 and it has received funding from the levy every year since.
- 1.65 Table 1-4 shows funding for the Room4Change program through the Safer Families Levy.

Table 1-4 Funding for Room4Change

Safer Families initiative: Room4Change							
Activity: Funding provided to the Domestic Violence Crisis Service - to fund the Room4Change program; Funding provided to Domestic Violence Crisis Service to continue delivery of the Room4Change program							
2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
228	351	385	456	1209	1229	1251	1450

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on expenditure reported in ACT Budget Outlooks 2016-17 to 2024-25.

Domestic and Family Violence Review

1.66 The Death Review (May 2016) recommended that a legislative mechanism be provided for the Attorney-General to establish a domestic and family violence death review. The ACT's Domestic and Family Violence Review (DFVR) was established under the *Domestic Violence Agencies Act 1986* to collect information about domestic and family violence deaths, with a view to:

- identifying patterns and trends in relation to domestic and family violence;
- identifying areas for further research; and
- making recommendations about laws, policies, practices and services to prevent or reduce the likelihood of domestic and family violence.

1.67 The Safer Families Levy has been funding the DFVR through the 'Reducing the risk of deaths from family violence' initiative since 2019-20.

1.68 Table 1-5 shows funding for the Domestic and Family Violence Review through the Safer Families Levy.

Table 1-5 Funding for the Domestic and Family Violence Review

Safer Families initiative: Domestic and Family Violence Review							
Activity: Funding provided to the Domestic Family Sexual Violence Office - Community Services Directorate to fund the establishment of the Death Review Team in FY2019-20 and FTE staff for the Death Review team - 1 FTE SOGB and 0.5 FTE ASO5 in the following years							
2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
-	-	-	87	236	243	247	249

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on expenditure reported in ACT Budget Outlooks 2016-17 to 2024-25.

Family Violence Safety Action Program

1.69 The Family Violence Safety Action Program (FVSAP) brings together government and non-government agencies to increase victim-survivors' safety by enhancing perpetrator visibility and accountability across the system. The FVSAP was established in July 2020 and began

taking referrals in November 2020. The FVSAP adds value to existing efforts to respond to high-risk and complex cases of domestic and family violence.

- 1.70 Table 1-6 shows funding for the Family Violence Safety Action Program through the Safer Families Levy.

Table 1-6 Funding for the Family Violence Safety Action Program

Safer Families initiative: Family Violence Safety Action Program							
Activity: Funding provided to Victim Support ACT - Justice and Community Safety Directorate to deliver the Family Violence Safety Action Program; Funding provided to Domestic Violence Crisis Service to deliver the Family Violence Safety Action Program							
2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
-	-	-	-	-	249	1801	1830

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on expenditure reported in ACT Budget Outlooks 2016-17 to 2024-25.

ACT Women's Safety Grants

- 1.71 Since 2015-16, the ACT Government has been providing annual funding of \$100,000 to support ACT Women's Safety Grants. The grants aim to improve the status and lives of women and girls in the ACT by funding specific projects aligned with the program guidelines, which currently refer to the relevant National Plan. The grants are comprised of two streams: Participation Grants and Safety Grants. The Safer Families Levy has funded grants under the Safety Grants stream since 2021-22.
- 1.72 Table 1-7 shows funding for the ACT Women's Safety Grants through the Safer Families Levy and a description of the grants provided.

Table 1-7 Funding for the ACT Women's Safety Grants

Safer Families initiative: ACT Women's Safety Grants							
Activity: - ALO - Enlightened Women Incorporated - Safety through increased capability - car maintenance for women; - Roundabout Canberra Limited – Children's emergency relief package supporting women; - Tjilari Justice Aboriginal Corporation - Supporting our kids through family violence; - ACT Disability Aged & Carer Advocacy Service Limited - Women's voices project; - YWCA Canberra - ACT for Respect at Workplaces Women Centre for Health Matters - Working with parents and carers to help prevent gender-based violence; Maternal Health Matters - Respectful Maternity care - a video for Women and Health Professionals; - Tuggeranong Community Arts Association - Unity and Diversity Arts Program; - Apayi Charitable Organisation Inc - Community Conversations and Information Sessions around Family violence issues within the South Sudanese Equatoria Community; - Women's Legal Centre ACT & Region Inc - New edition and design - Women's Safety Card; Community Services Number 1 - When not saying No does not Mean Yes; - Mental Health for Mob Pty Ltd - Mental Health for Mob; Canberra Rape Crisis Centre Incorporated - Sexual Assault Prevention Education (SAPE) Young People; - Domestic Violence Crisis Service - Consult @ DVCS; - Tjilari Justice Aboriginal Corporation - Yarwun Ballan; - Beryl Women Incorporated - Women's Program							
2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
-	-	-	-	-	100	100	100

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on expenditure reported in ACT Budget Outlooks 2016-17 to 2024-25.

Safer Families Collaboration Program

1.73 The Safer Families Collaboration Program, which commenced in 2021, involves Domestic and Violence Crisis Service (DVCS) staff working alongside Child and Youth Protection Service (CYPS) staff for the purpose of building the capability of CYPS case workers to respond to incidents of domestic and family violence where a child is at risk. The Services Agreement (October 2021) states that one of the outcomes of the collaboration is to provide a coordinated and collaborative response to families who are subject to an appraisal or case management process due to domestic and family violence.

1.74 Table 1-8 shows funding for the Safer Families Collaboration Program through the Safer Families Levy.

Table 1-8 Funding for the Safer Families Collaboration Program

Safer Families initiative: Safer Families Collaboration Program							
Activity: Funding provided to the Domestic Violence Crisis Service to fund the DVCS Liaison Co-location service within Child Youth Protection Services; Training of CYF staff in the Safe and Together model							
2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
-	-	-	-	-	335	340	346

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on expenditure reported in ACT Budget Outlooks 2016-17 to 2024-25.

Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) Grants Program

1.75 The Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) Grants Program supports community sector organisations to enhance and expand their responses to domestic and family violence with a focus on the following categories:

- Sector Sustainability and Capability Building:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, workforce development, and community engagement; and
 - Mainstream and specialist services capability building partnerships;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence responses; and
- Innovative service responses, including with a focus on children and young people.

1.76 The FDSV Grants Program is included under the 'Domestic and Family Violence training and resources' initiative. Funding for these grants is through the *National Partnership Agreement to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*.

1.77 Table 1-9 shows funding for the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) Grants Program.

Table 1-9 Funding for the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Grants Program

Safer Families initiative: Domestic and Family Violence Training and Resources							
Activity: To allocate the remaining money from the National Partnership Agreement (Cth), the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office opened the Family Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) grants round. In addition to receiving the Commonwealth funds, various mainstream and specialist services were provided supplementary funding for domestic and family violence capability building.							
2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
-	-	-	-	-	-	563	97

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on expenditure reported in ACT Budget Outlooks 2016-17 to 2024-25.

Conduct of the audit

1.78 The audit was performed in accordance with *ASAE 3500 – Performance Engagements*. The audit adopted the policy and practice statements outlined in the Audit Office's *Performance*

Audit Methods and Practices (PAMPr) which is designed to comply with the requirements of the Auditor-General Act 1996 and ASAE 3500 – Performance Engagements.

- 1.79 In the conduct of this performance audit the ACT Audit Office complied with the independence and other relevant ethical requirements related to assurance engagements.

2 Planning and development of Safer Families initiatives

- 2.1 This chapter discusses the purpose of the Safer Families Levy, how its purpose has been articulated over the years, principles for the funding of domestic and family violence initiatives through the levy and processes for the funding of initiatives through the Levy. The chapter analyses data on the use of levy and the type and nature of domestic and family violence initiatives funded. The chapter also discusses the concept of the Family Safety Hub, which was a key feature of the Safer Families package at its inception, and how this has since evolved to become the Innovative Pilot Projects.

Summary



Conclusions

The planning and development of domestic and family violence initiatives to be funded through the Safer Families Levy is predominantly achieved through business cases approved by Cabinet through the annual ACT Budget process. The planning and development of domestic and family violence initiatives has been undermined by the lack of:

- a Territory-specific strategy for responding to domestic and family violence; and
- an up-to-date understanding of what the needs of the ACT are in responding to domestic and family violence.

Planning and development is also undermined by poor communication with the community and other stakeholders on how domestic and family violence initiatives are designed to respond to community needs, how they are funded and what their intended benefits are.



Key findings

Principles for the funding of Safer Families initiatives

Paragraph

The purpose of the Safer Families Levy and associated domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the levy, was initially identified in the Safer Families Statement that was made when the Safer Families package was announced as part of the *2016-17 ACT Budget*. The Statement identified the purpose of the levy was to 'fund reforms that will address family violence'. When increases to the levy were announced as part of the *2021-22 ACT Budget*, additional purposes for the levy were identified as follows:

2.8

- 'to fund long-term system reform and service improvements';

- ‘to enhance [ACT Government] responses to sexual violence’;
- ‘continue to fund critical frontline service delivery’; and
- ‘enable the community to contribute to vital responses to domestic and family violence in a tangible way’.

At the time of announcing the Safer Families package, the ACT Government had a specific strategy for responding to domestic and family violence; the *ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Strategy 2011-2017*. In March 2018, following the nominal end of the 2011 Strategy, the ACT Government identified that the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (2010 National Plan) would represent its overarching strategy for its response to domestic and family violence. No other ACT-specific strategy has been implemented since then to provide a framework for the intent and purpose of the Safer Families Levy and associated domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the levy. 2.12

The ACT Government used the *Third Action Plan (2016-19)* and *Fourth Action Plan (2019-22)* under the 2010 National Plan to document its response to domestic and family violence. Initiatives reported under the *Third Action Plan (2016-19)* were brief in detail with respect to the activities and outcomes that were expected to be delivered during this time. It was also difficult to relate initiatives reported under the *Third Action Plan (2016-19)* to specific Safer Families initiatives identified through ACT Budget processes. The connection between the initiatives associated with the *Fourth Action Plan (2019-22)* and Safer Families initiatives identified through ACT Budget processes is more apparent, although detail on outcomes is often brief and not sufficiently specific. It is difficult to reconcile reporting of activity under the 2010 National Plan to ACT Budget information on the funding of domestic and family violence initiatives through the Safer Families Levy. 2.20

The *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (2022 National Plan) is a national strategy that seeks to ‘end gender-based violence in one generation’. The 2022 National Plan is supported by the *First Action Plan 2023-2027*, which is in turn supported by the *First Action Plan 2023-2027 Activities Addendum* (2023), which lists commitments from each jurisdiction against each of the ten actions. The nature and purpose of some ACT commitments in the *First Action Plan 2023-2027 Activities Addendum* (2023) is not clear. The description of the activities often lacks detail and linkages to relevant ACT Government information. It is also difficult to: 2.30

- understand the specific activities being completed under the *First Action Plan 2023-2027 Activities Addendum* (2023); and
- whether and how they relate to domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy.

In March 2024, the DFSVO released the *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy* as a consultation draft on the ACT Government’s YourSay platform. The purpose of the *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy* is to: demonstrate alignment with the 10-year outcomes set out in the 2022 National Plan’s Outcomes Framework; and outline the ACT’s activities ‘to support targeted and evidence-based investment’ to address domestic and family violence. While the strategy identifies 2.37

that further actions that align with its priorities will be confirmed, the strategy contains high-level priorities and outcome statements that are briefly articulated and lack specific measures. The Strategy does not specifically identify:

- the link between the Safer Families Levy and the Strategy, and how the levy specifically supports the Strategy; or
- the relationship between the ACT Government's commitments reported in the 2022 National Plan and the activities reported in the Strategy.

Processes for funding Safer Families initiatives

While the DFSVO advised community Budget submissions are used to inform the development of Safer Families initiatives, there is no formal process to call for, or discover, domestic and family violence initiatives to be funded through the Safer Families Levy. There is a lack of system-wide evidence to demonstrate the contemporary needs of the community are being taken into account in responding to domestic and family violence. Stakeholders advised that more effective consultation from the DFSVO would assist in developing more informed and effective domestic and family violence initiatives to be funded through the levy. 2.52

In the absence of a Territory-specific strategy for the identification and development of domestic and family violence initiatives, the DFSVO has not developed and documented a process for decision-making on the use of the Safer Families Levy and the funding of domestic and family violence initiatives through the levy. The DFSVO has developed a draft set of strategic principles that are intended to help determine what initiatives could be funded from the levy, but these are yet to be fully implemented. The lack of formal and implemented arrangements to call for, discover and prioritise initiatives increases the risk that levy funds are poorly targeted and do not meet community needs. 2.57

From the commencement of the Safer Families Levy in 2016-17 until 2020-21, the majority of funding was applied to government-led Safer Families initiatives as opposed to community sector-led initiatives. This has changed since 2021-22 as more funding has been provided to the community sector. Despite the findings of previous reviews, which have criticised the ACT's domestic and family violence response as being largely crisis driven, funding for crisis services remains the largest priority for funding from the levy. Although total levy funding has increased, prevention and recovery services have not been prioritised and their funding proportion has not significantly changed since 2016-17. 2.68

Funding for Safer Families initiatives is most often sought through business cases submitted to Cabinet. Initiatives that have been funded through this process have included a sufficient level of research and assessment to demonstrate: the objectives of the initiative and how the initiative is expected to address community needs along with expected benefits; and the alignment of the initiative with the government's broader policy priorities. There was, however, a lack of consideration as to whether the proposed initiative would complement or duplicate activities under existing Safer Families initiatives. 2.79

Planning and development of the Family Safety Hub

The Family Safety Hub was a central commitment of the Safer Families package announced in the *2016-17 ACT Budget*. The intended role and function of the Family Safety Hub has changed over the years. The original intention was for it to be a central place for victims of domestic and family violence to receive integrated support from a range of ACT services. After a co-design process with community sector organisations, this changed to supporting and improving responses to domestic and family violence across the service system. The Family Safety Hub is now known as Innovative Pilot Projects and located within the DFSVO. The current role of the Innovative Pilot Projects function is to co-design, develop and test new ideas to meet the needs of those affected by domestic and family violence.

2.96

Principles for the funding of Safer Families initiatives

Purpose of the Safer Families Levy

Safer Families Statement (2016-17 ACT Budget)

- 2.2 The purpose of the Safer Families Levy, and associated Safer Families initiatives, was initially identified in the Safer Families Statement that was made when the Safer Families package was announced as part of the *2016-17 ACT Budget*:

Tragic deaths have forced us to re-focus on family violence in the ACT. The \$21.42 million Safer Families package in the 2016-17 ACT Budget will drive the next phase of reform in whole of government, community-backed response to family violence.

...

In this budget the ACT Government is making a very clear statement of values, and a very clear statement of priorities. The values we hold – of caring for those who are vulnerable, who need a helping hand, of saying that this is an area of our community where good governments should and must act – are enshrined in the support this budget provides to address family violence.

This is the why the ACT Government has introduced the Safer Families levy to fund reforms that will address family violence.⁸

- 2.3 The Safer Families Statement in the *2016-17 ACT Budget* identified a series of initiatives to fund 'the next phase of reform in the family violence service system'. The initiatives were identified as being related to the *ACT Government Response to Family Violence*, which was published by the Attorney-General in June 2016.

⁸ [Safer Families - Budget 2016-17 \(act.gov.au\)](https://www.act.gov.au/budget/2016-17)

2.4 The Safer Families Statement in the *2016-17 ACT Budget* also identified that the Safer Families package:

- represented the ACT Government's commitments to the Second Implementation Plan for the *ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Strategy 2011-2017*;
- was being implemented alongside other expenditure on social services in health, education and justice as outlined in the *2016-17 ACT Budget Social Inclusion Statement* to 'support a safer and more inclusive community for all'; and
- was intended to support work to address the community's needs for improving responses to domestic and family violence as highlighted in the Glanfield inquiry, the Death Review and the Community Services Directorate's Gap Analysis (March 2016).

2.5 The Safer Families Statement in the *2016-17 ACT Budget* also referred to legal reforms under the *Family Violence Legislation Amendment Bill 2022* that were to be tabled in the same week as the Safer Families package.

Response to the Inquiry into Domestic and Family Violence

2.6 In September 2017, the Minister for Women and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence responded to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety's Inquiry into Domestic and Family Violence. In their response, the Minister referred to the Safer Families Levy and its imposition on ACT households:

The Government's commitment to family safety will continue in the years ahead, with an investment of \$23.5 million over the four years from 2017-18. To support this investment in long term change, the Government introduced a Safer Families Levy on 1 July 2016. The \$30 per year levy is applied to all residential and rural properties.⁹

2021-22 ACT Budget

2.7 No further statement as to the purpose of the Safer Families Levy was given through the ACT Budget process until the *2021-22 ACT Budget*. As part of the *2021-22 ACT Budget*, the ACT Government announced an annual \$5 increase in the levy from 2021-22 to \$50 per household from 2024-25. For the *2021-22 ACT Budget*, the ACT Government elaborated further on the purpose of the levy and stated:

The ACT Government introduced the Safer Families Levy on 1 July 2016 to provide an ongoing revenue base to fund long-term system reform and service improvements in relation to domestic and family violence.

...

From 2021-22, the Government will increase the Safer Families Levy by \$5 per year over four years, taking the Levy from \$30 per household currently to \$50 per household in 2024-25. The

⁹ ACT Government (2017) [ACT Government Submission Inquiry into Domestic and Family Violence – Policy approaches and responses](#), ACT Government, accessed 13 November 2024.

increases in the Levy allow us to enhance our responses to sexual violence, as well as to continue to fund critical frontline service delivery and enable the community to contribute to vital responses to domestic and family violence in a tangible way.



2.8 The purpose of the Safer Families Levy and associated domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the levy, was initially identified in the Safer Families Statement that was made when the Safer Families package was announced as part of the *2016-17 ACT Budget*. The Statement identified the purpose of the levy was to ‘fund reforms that will address family violence’. When increases to the levy were announced as part of the *2021-22 ACT Budget*, additional purposes for the levy were identified as follows:

- ‘to fund long-term system reform and service improvements’;
- ‘to enhance [ACT Government] responses to sexual violence’;
- ‘continue to fund critical frontline service delivery’; and
- ‘enable the community to contribute to vital responses to domestic and family violence in a tangible way’.

Alignment with other commitments

ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Strategy 2011-2017

2.9 The *ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Strategy 2011-2017* (the 2011 Strategy) preceded the Safer Families package and was in its second phase between 2015 and 2017. In March 2018, almost two years after the Safer Families package was announced, the final report on the second implementation plan of the 2011 Strategy was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The report stated:

With the completion of the 2011-2017 Strategy, the ACT will now adopt the [*National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*] as its overarching strategy allowing clear alignment of ACT commitments with the National Plan. ACT activities and initiatives focused on addressing DFV, including the Safer Families Initiatives, will be captured in the reporting framework of the National Plan as well as through the annual Safer Families Ministerial Statement.

2.10 Shortly before the final report was published, the Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence reported to the Legislative Assembly that:

I believe adopting the National Plan as our overarching strategy will facilitate and guide our ongoing commitment to making a significant difference for women experiencing family violence in the ACT.

2.11 No other ACT-based strategy has been implemented to replace the 2011 Strategy and explain the expected purpose and intent of the Safer Families Levy and initiatives that continue to be reported and implemented through the ACT Budget after this time. (In March 2024, DFSVO released a consultation draft of an *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy*. Further information about this is in paragraph 2.37).



- 2.12 At the time of announcing the Safer Families package, the ACT Government had a specific strategy for responding to domestic and family violence; the *ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Strategy 2011-2017*. In March 2018, following the nominal end of the 2011 Strategy, the ACT Government identified that *the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (2010 National Plan) would represent its overarching strategy for its response to domestic and family violence. No other ACT-specific strategy has been implemented since then to provide a framework for the intent and purpose of the Safer Families Levy and associated domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the levy.

National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022

- 2.13 The ACT Government has reported Safer Families initiatives as commitments under a series of action plans of the 2010 National Plan including the:
- *Third Action Plan (2016-19); and*
 - *Fourth Action Plan (2019-22).*
- 2.14 The Safer Families initiatives the ACT Government has reported under each action plan are shown in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1 ACT Government initiatives under the 2010 National Plan

Third Action Plan initiatives	Fourth Action Plan initiatives
National Priority Area 1: Prevention and early intervention: Working With The Man	ACT Government Domestic and Family Violence Training Strategy
National Priority Area 3: Greater support and choice: Safer Families reforms	ACT Government Response to Domestic Violence Prevention Council Report from the Extraordinary Meeting 2018 on addressing the needs of children and young people impacted by family violence
National Priority Area 6: Keeping perpetrators accountable across all systems: Legislative reform	Additional Investment and Support for Domestic and Family Violence Women's Safety
	Co-design of family centred responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
	Domestic and Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management Framework
	Family Safety Hub
	Family Violence Death Review
	Health Justice Partnership
	Room4Change program
	Sexual Assault Prevention and Response
	Supporting Children and Young People Affected by Domestic and Family Violence

Source: ACT Audit Office, based on Department of Social Security, Third and Fourth Action Plans for the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 ([Reducing Violence | Department of Social Services, Australian Government \(dss.gov.au\)](#))

Comparison of information reported through 2010 National Plan and ACT Budget

2.15 Information reported for each initiative under the 2010 National Plan action plans (shown at Table 2-1) was compared with ACT Budget information to determine whether national reporting was accurate and materially correct. In most cases the initiatives reported under the *Third Action Plan (2016-19)* and *Fourth Action Plan (2019-22)* can be mapped to Safer Families initiatives identified in the ACT Budget. However, the descriptions of the 2010 National Plan initiatives do not always match those reported in the ACT Budget and this makes it difficult to understand how Safer Families initiatives are funded.

2.16 The three initiatives reported under the *Third Action Plan (2016-19)* were supported by a brief description of activities and intended achievements. However, it is difficult to relate these to specific Safer Families initiatives identified through ACT Budget processes. For example, 'National Priority Area 6: Keeping perpetrators accountable across all systems: Legislative reform' has the following activities:

- work closely with ANROWS to support the implementation of its Perpetrator Interventions Research Stream to improve perpetrator interventions;

- improve targeted perpetrator interventions, including police, courts, corrections, child protection, legal services and support, behaviour change programs, offender programs and clinical services;
- improve the quality and consistency of behaviour change programs throughout Australia;
- improve mechanisms to refer perpetrators to appropriate interventions early, based on individual risk factors; and
- progressively design, trial and evaluate innovative models of perpetrator interventions across community and correctional settings to understand what works for different groups.

2.17 It is not clear from these descriptions which Safer Families initiatives these activities are related to.

2.18 The connection between the initiatives associated with the *Fourth Action Plan (2019-22)* and Safer Families initiatives identified through ACT Budget processes is more apparent, because additional information is provided on the Australian Government Department of Social Security website. The Department of Social Security website for the *Fourth Action Plan (2019-22)* is also structured around standard headings to give the public more information on each initiative under the 2010 National Plan:

- What are we doing?
- What have we achieved so far?
- What is next?
- What difference will we make?

2.19 Public information on the *Fourth Action Plan (2019-22)* initiatives was last updated in October 2021. Each initiative has its own webpage, which includes sufficient detail to understand what activities are included. While each initiative is mapped to at least one of the twenty actions under the 2010 National Plan, the description of intended outcomes is brief and not sufficiently specific in all cases to understand what impacts there will be and when they can be expected. Further information on progress reporting for these initiatives through the 2010 National Plan is discussed in Chapter 4.



2.20 The ACT Government used the *Third Action Plan (2016-19)* and *Fourth Action Plan (2019-22)* under the 2010 National Plan to document its response to domestic and family violence. Initiatives reported under the *Third Action Plan (2016-19)* were brief in detail with respect to the activities and outcomes that were expected to be delivered during this time. It was also difficult to relate initiatives reported under the *Third Action Plan (2016-19)* to specific Safer Families initiatives identified through ACT Budget processes. The connection between the initiatives associated with the *Fourth Action Plan (2019-22)* and Safer Families initiatives identified through ACT Budget processes is more apparent, although detail on outcomes is

often brief and not sufficiently specific. It is difficult to reconcile reporting of activity under the 2010 National Plan to ACT Budget information on the funding of domestic and family violence initiatives through the Safer Families Levy.

The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032

2.21 The *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (2022 National Plan) is a national strategy that seeks to ‘end gender-based violence in one generation’. It focuses on actions and initiatives to address domestic and family violence across four domains:

- prevention;
- early intervention;
- response; and
- recovery and healing.

2.22 The 2022 National Plan is supported by a five-year action plan; the *First Action Plan 2023-2027*. The 2022 National Plan is also supported by the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025*.

2.23 The *First Action Plan 2023-2027* identifies ten actions that relate to the four domains to address domestic and family violence. These actions relate to:

- gender equality and addressing the drivers of domestic and family violence;
- evidence, data and evaluation;
- workforce capability and capacity;
- long-term recovery, health and well-being for victim-survivors;
- accountability for perpetrators of violence;
- preventing and addressing sexual violence and harassment;
- meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- meeting the needs of children and young people;
- better support for victim-survivors through the police and justice systems; and
- housing support.

2.24 The *First Action Plan 2023-2027* is supported by the *First Action Plan 2023-2027 Activities Addendum* (2023). This addendum lists commitments from each jurisdiction against each of the ten actions.

2.25 The Territory has listed 29 commitments across the ten actions for the purpose of the *First Action Plan 2023-2027 Activities Addendum* (2023). Many of these actions are interrelated

and it is difficult to understand the totality of the ACT Government's response to domestic and family violence from this document. The activities within the addendum can be classified as falling into three broad categories:

- Safer Families initiatives, such as the Family Violence Safety Action Program, Health Justice Partnerships or implementing the Domestic and Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management Framework;
- related policy activity by ACT Government agencies, such as law reform and homelessness responses; and
- implementation activity for complementary strategies and plans, such as responding to the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Steering Committee's final report *Listen. Take Action to Prevent, Believe and Heal*, and implementing the *ACT Women's Plan 2016-26*.

2.26 The nature and purpose of some ACT commitments in the *First Action Plan 2023-2027 Activities Addendum* (2023) is not clear. For example, a commitment to 'invest in strategic and coordinated sector capability building to drive more integrated and consistent understanding of and responses to family, domestic and sexual violence to stop violence escalating early' lacks detail. A commitment is also included to 'enforce the *Crimes (Consent) Amendment Bill 2022*'. Enforcing the law is a fundamental task of government and not indicative of any specific action to improve responses to domestic and family violence.

2.27 Unlike the information contained in the *Fourth Action Plan (2019-22)* of the 2010 National Plan, it is difficult to:

- understand the specific activities being completed under the *First Action Plan 2023-2027 Activities Addendum* (2023); and
- whether and how they relate to domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy.

2.28 The description of the activities often lacks detail and linkages to relevant ACT Government information. While the *First Action Plan 2023-2027* includes intended outcomes for each high-level action at a national level, there is no information that shows the intended outcomes for each Territory activity. There is also no separate public information available on ACT Government websites that show this information. It is difficult for the community to understand from these documents what action is being taken by the ACT Government in relation to domestic and family violence.

2.29 As at May 2024, no progress information is publicly available on the implementation of activities under the *First Action Plan 2023-2027*.



2.30 The *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (2022 National Plan) is a national strategy that seeks to 'end gender-based violence in one generation'. The

2022 National Plan is supported by the *First Action Plan 2023-2027*, which is in turn supported by the *First Action Plan 2023-2027 Activities Addendum (2023)*, which lists commitments from each jurisdiction against each of the ten actions. The nature and purpose of some ACT commitments in the *First Action Plan 2023-2027 Activities Addendum (2023)* is not clear. The description of the activities often lacks detail and linkages to relevant ACT Government information. It is also difficult to:

- understand the specific activities being completed under the *First Action Plan 2023-2027 Activities Addendum (2023)*; and
- whether and how they relate to domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy.

ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy (2024)

2.31 In March 2024, the DFSVO released the *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy* as a consultation draft on the ACT Government's YourSay platform. It was released with an easy read edition to allow people from diverse backgrounds to understand the strategy and encourage them to make contributions. The document aligns with the 2022 National Plan's four domains of prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery and healing.

2.32 The purpose of the *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy* is to:

- demonstrate alignment with the 10-year outcomes set out in the 2022 National Plan's Outcomes Framework; and
- outline the ACT's activities 'to support targeted and evidence-based investment' to address domestic and family violence.

2.33 The *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy* outlines what the ACT Government is doing to address domestic and family violence. The strategy identifies high-level priorities and outcome statements. Noting the strategy identifies that the DFSVO will 'work with the ACT community to identify actions that align with the strategy', its priorities and outcome statements are briefly articulated and lack specific measures. While the strategy identifies a series of eight principles which 'provide a framework for decision-making when considering new and existing initiatives to address domestic, family and sexual violence', it does not specifically identify:

- the link between the Safer Families Levy and the strategy, and how the levy specifically supports the strategy;
- accountability mechanisms for the public to understand how and when initiatives are planned and implemented; or
- reporting mechanisms to find out more about implementation progress.

- 2.34 The *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy* identifies that an evaluation framework and performance measurement plan will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders.
- 2.35 The *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy* identifies that it should be considered alongside the 2022 National Plan. As discussed in paragraph 2.30, the commitments reported by the ACT Government through the 2022 National Plan are difficult to:
- understand; and
 - relate to specific activities of domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy.
- 2.36 The strategy does little to improve the understandability of the ACT Government's commitments reported in the 2022 National Plan and their relationship with the activities reported in the strategy.
-  2.37 In March 2024, the DFSVO released the *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy* as a consultation draft on the ACT Government's YourSay platform. The purpose of the *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy* is to: demonstrate alignment with the 10-year outcomes set out in the 2022 National Plan's Outcomes Framework; and outline the ACT's activities 'to support targeted and evidence-based investment' to address domestic and family violence. While the strategy identifies that further actions that align with its priorities will be confirmed, the strategy contains high-level priorities and outcome statements that are briefly articulated and lack specific measures. The Strategy does not specifically identify:
- the link between the Safer Families Levy and the Strategy, and how the levy specifically supports the Strategy; or
 - the relationship between the ACT Government's commitments reported in the 2022 National Plan and the activities reported in the Strategy.

Processes for funding Safer Families initiatives

- 2.38 The DFSVO has the primary role of consulting and coordinating across government and the community sector and providing advice to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence on the use of the Safer Families Levy and development of Safer Families initiatives.

Consultation on the identification of potential Safer Families initiatives

- 2.39 The DFSVO does not have a formal process to call for, or discover, domestic and family violence initiatives to be funded through the Safer Families Levy. The DFSVO advised that it

has regular informal discussions with community sector organisations and regular meetings with these organisations' chief executives to discuss emerging themes. The DFSVO advised it uses this input to have further discussions with the Minister about potential future initiatives.

Community Budget submissions

- 2.40 The DFSVO advised that community Budget submissions are a means by which the community can advocate for initiatives. The ACT Government has a website called YourSay Conversations (<https://yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/>) which invites submissions from the community.
- 2.41 Two publicly available community Budget submissions have been provided specifically in relation to the Safer Families Levy and the funding of domestic and family violence initiatives through the levy. Both submissions were from YWCA; one in 2023-24 and one in 2022-23. The DFSVO advised that community budget submissions from a range of community sector organisations have been considered to guide funding recommendations to the ACT Government.

Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC) meetings

- 2.42 The DFSVO advised that it discusses initiatives during Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC) meetings. The DVPC is a statutory council established by legislation to provide advice to government to improve responses to domestic and family violence. Secretariat support is provided by the DFSVO.
- 2.43 In 2018, the DVPC published a report on the needs of children and young people impacted by domestic and family violence.
- 2.44 The DVPC was reformed in 2022 to improve its capacity to provide strategic guidance and identify systemic gaps in the ACT's response to domestic and family violence. The DVPC has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group, which provides advice on improving responses to domestic and family violence in the ACT's First Nations communities.

Community needs for responding to domestic and family violence

- 2.45 There is a lack of evidence to demonstrate the contemporary needs of the community are being taken into account in responding to domestic and family violence.
- 2.46 The Community Services Directorate undertook a gap analysis in 2016 with respect to the ACT domestic and family violence service system. The analysis used research, service mapping, consultation with stakeholders and staff from the community sector, and client feedback from victims, women and local research. No similar systemic gap analysis has been

done since this time to confirm whether needs are being met or have changed, and how this should inform funding priorities.

- 2.47 The Glanfield Inquiry and the 2016 Gap Analysis identified that the ACT service system was, at the time:

... fragmented, crisis driven, has limited responses for children experiencing domestic violence and is not holding perpetrators to account or providing adequate options and incentives to change their violent behaviour.¹⁰

- 2.48 The *Family Safety Hub Design Report* (January 2018), which was commissioned by the Community Services Directorate as part of a co-design activity with the community sector, also endorsed this view.

Community sector feedback

- 2.49 The Audit Office consulted with community sector stakeholders to ascertain their views on opportunities for participating in the development of Safer Families initiatives. Stakeholders advised that, from their perspective, there is limited consultation from the DFSVO with community organisations to discuss and understand current issues in the sector. From their perspective, more effective consultation would assist in developing more informed and effective domestic and family violence initiatives to be funded through the Safer Families Levy.

- 2.50 In response to the draft proposed report, CSD advised that the DFSVO has a contemporary understanding of needs in the ACT through a variety of mechanisms including:

- active review of community Budget submissions;
- projects and consultations aimed at seeking community input and views; and
- relationship managers' regular meetings with funded services.

- 2.51 CSD acknowledged that there is always room for improvement and that the DFSVO may not have effectively communicated its understanding to the community sector.



- 2.52 While the DFSVO advised community Budget submissions are used to inform the development of Safer Families initiatives, there is no formal process to call for, or discover, domestic and family violence initiatives to be funded through the Safer Families Levy. There is a lack of system-wide evidence to demonstrate the contemporary needs of the community are being taken into account in responding to domestic and family violence. Stakeholders advised that more effective consultation from the DFSVO would assist in

¹⁰ L. Glanfield (April 2016), *Report of the Inquiry: Review into the system level responses to family violence in the ACT*, p.97

developing more informed and effective domestic and family violence initiatives to be funded through the levy.

Funding principles for Safer Families initiatives

- 2.53 In the absence of a Territory-specific strategy for the identification and development of domestic and family violence initiatives (refer to paragraph 2.11), the DFSVO has not developed and documented a process for decision-making on the use of the Safer Families Levy and its funding of domestic and family violence initiatives.
- 2.54 In 2022 the DFSVO developed a draft set of strategic principles, which were intended to help determine what initiatives could be funded from the Safer Families Levy. The draft principles were developed in consultation with the Treasury and were approved by the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. The principles were not implemented in full at the time of the advice. The draft principles documented the purposes of levy funding which included:
- partially offsetting the funding required to prevent, reduce and respond to all forms of domestic and family violence, including sexual violence which occurs in the context of domestic and family violence;
 - aligning with the needs and priorities in the ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy (this strategy has not yet been implemented);
 - maintaining capacity and support for development and testing of innovative reforms and new responses to domestic and family violence by both government and non-government agencies; and
 - supporting whole-of-system and multi-agency responses.

DFSVO analysis of Safer Families initiatives against the six strategic principles

- 2.55 In December 2022, the DFSVO analysed the initiatives being funded through the Safer Families Levy against the draft principles. As a result of this analysis, the DFSVO recommended to the Chief Minister and the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, that ten initiatives at a value of \$13,787,000 (funding over the period 2022-23 to 2025-26) be transitioned from being funded through the levy to being funded through consolidated revenue in the *2023-24 ACT Budget* in order to release funding for other initiatives. The Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence agreed to seek formal endorsement of the transition. CSD advised that the 2024-25 ACT Budget transitioned funding of all non-frontline government staff resourcing out of the Safer Families Levy to increase available funding from the levy by \$6,944,000 across 2024-25 to 2027-28. The remaining transitions are yet to occur.
- 2.56 The DFSVO has not established an ongoing process to collectively review the portfolio of domestic and family violence initiatives to determine whether they continue to support the

purpose of the Safer Families Levy. The DFSVO advised of an intention, starting with the 2024-25 ACT Budget, for Budget submissions relating to domestic, family and sexual violence initiatives to be accompanied by mapping and analysis of current initiatives.



- 2.57 In the absence of a Territory-specific strategy for the identification and development of domestic and family violence initiatives, the DFSVO has not developed and documented a process for decision-making on the use of the Safer Families Levy and the funding of domestic and family violence initiatives through the levy. The DFSVO has developed a draft set of strategic principles that are intended to help determine what initiatives could be funded from the levy, but these are yet to be fully implemented. The lack of formal and implemented arrangements to call for, discover and prioritise initiatives increases the risk that levy funds are poorly targeted and do not meet community needs.

Analysis of Safer Families initiative funding

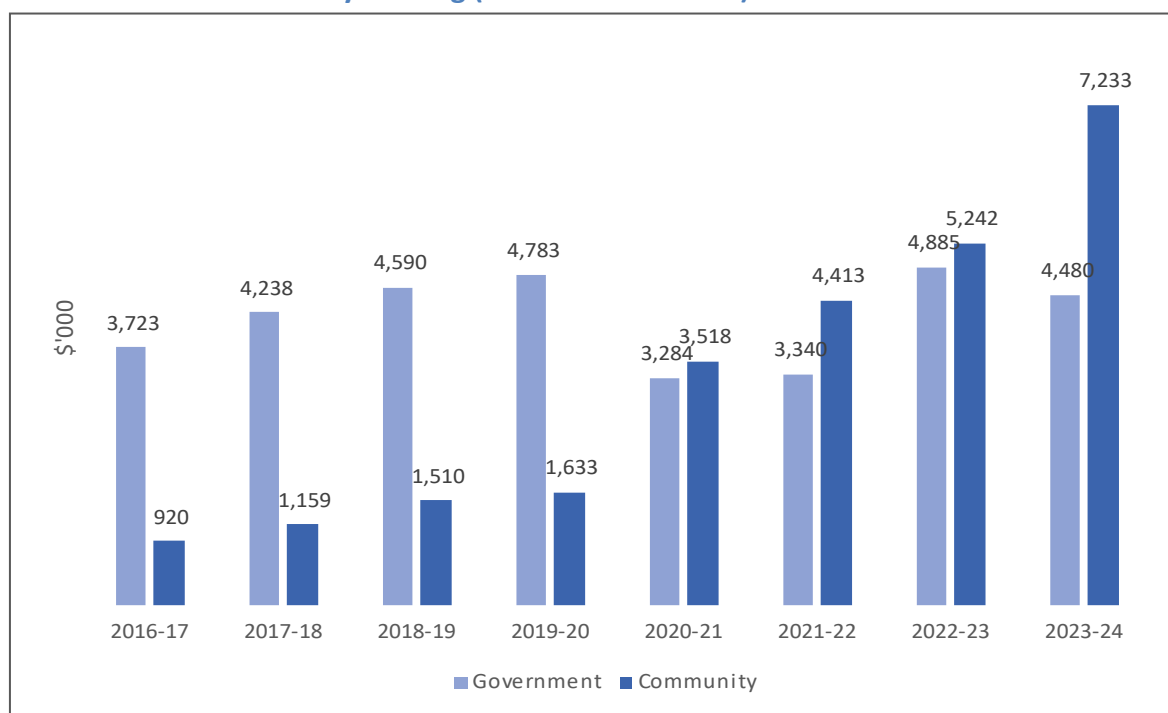
Full or partial funding

- 2.58 The Safer Families Levy has been used to fully fund some domestic and family violence initiatives, while other initiatives have been partially funded through the levy. Those initiatives that are partially funded by the levy are either funded by consolidated revenue or supported by Commonwealth funding.
- 2.59 Appendix 1 includes information on the source of funding that has been reported in ACT Budget Outlooks. Of the 40 Safer Families initiatives reported:
- seventeen have been reported as being fully funded through the levy;
 - eleven have been reported as being partially funded by the levy; and
 - the source of funding for a further 12 initiatives was not reported in the ACT Budget Outlooks when they were implemented.

Government or non-government activity

- 2.60 The Audit Office considered the domestic and family violence initiatives that have been supported by the Safer Families Levy and considered whether they have related to government or non-government activity. The resulting analysis is shown at Figure 2-1. The analysis shows the total amount of funding for the domestic and family violence initiatives from all sources.

Figure 2-1 Comparison of government and non-government recipients of Safer Families Levy funding (2016-17 to 2023-24)



Source: ACT Audit Office based on DFSVO data (Appendix A).

2.61 A review of domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy between 2016-17 and 2023-24 shows:

- most of the domestic and family violence initiatives have been government activity. Total funding of \$33.323 million (from all sources) has been applied to government activity, compared to \$25.628 million to non-government activity;
- in the four years to 2019-20 government activity received significantly more funding than non-government activity. \$17.334 million was applied to government activity compared to \$5.222 million to non-government activity; and
- in the four years to 2023-24 non-government activity has received more funding than government activity. \$20.406 million was applied to non-government activity compared to \$15.989 million that was applied to government activity.

Nature of initiatives funded

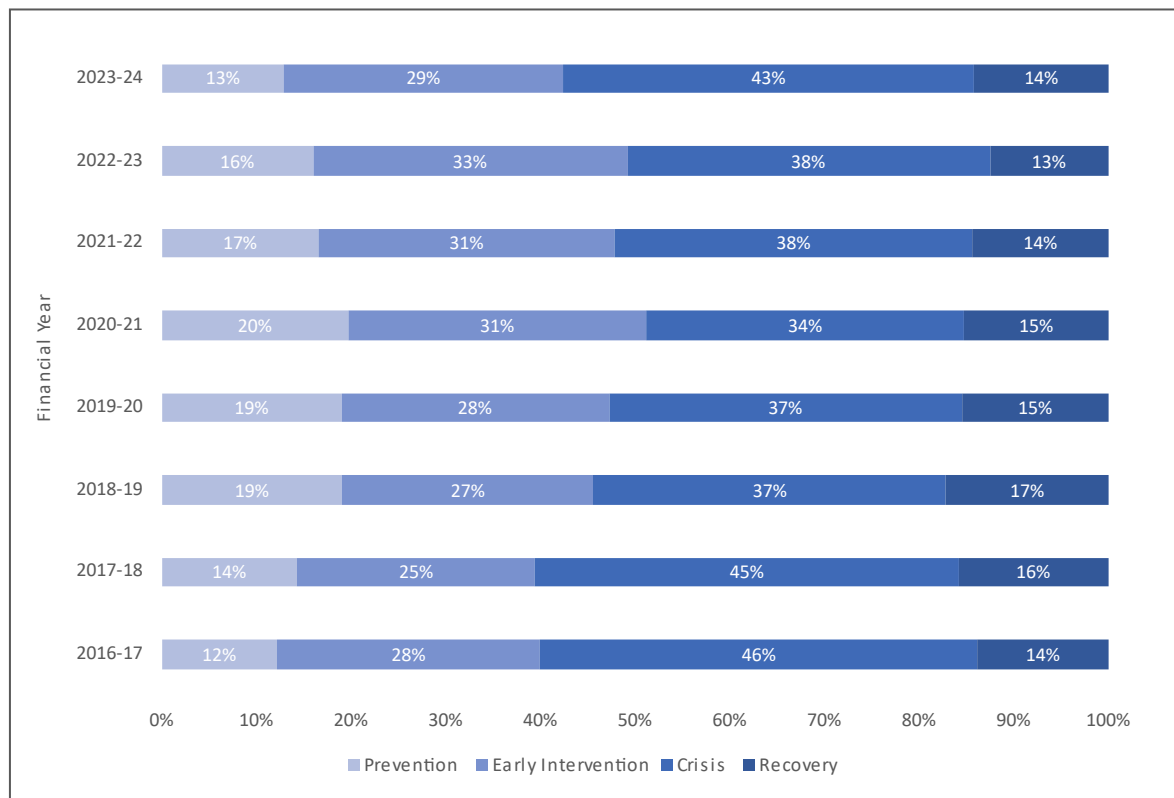
2.62 The Audit Office examined domestic and family violence initiatives that have been funded from the Safer Families Levy since 2016-17 and worked with the DFSVO to classify each initiative against the four categories of activity relating to domestic and family violence (note that some initiatives were classified against more than one category):

- prevention;
- early intervention;

- crisis; or
- recovery.

2.63 These categories are reflective of the four domains of the 2022 National Plan. The results of this analysis are shown in Figure 2-2.

Figure 2-2 Categorisation of Safer Families Levy funding by response type (2016-17 to 2023-24)



Source: ACT Audit Office analysis, based on categorisation by the DFSVO.

2.64 To move the ACT's domestic and family violence service system from crisis response to a more balanced system, it could be expected that priority would be given to the domains of prevention, early intervention and recovery. Despite being in place for eight years (to 2023-24) Safer Families Levy funding continues to be primarily allocated to crisis services. A review of Safer Families Levy funding shows, since 2016-17:

- between 12 percent and 20 percent of annual funding has been allocated to prevention services. In 2023-24, 13 percent was allocated;
- between 25 percent and 33 percent of annual funding has been allocated to early intervention services. In 2023-24, 29 percent was allocated;
- between 13 percent and 17 percent of annual funding has been allocated to recovery services. In 2023-24, 14 percent was allocated; and

- between 34 percent and 46 percent of annual funding has been allocated to crisis services. In 2023-24, 43 percent was allocated.
- 2.65 It should be noted that Safer Families initiatives can be categorised across multiple response types and it is not readily apparent what proportion of the funding for the initiative should be allocated to each response type. For the purpose of this analysis the funding for each initiative is counted in full against each of the relevant response types.
- 2.66 CSD advised that recent research recommends that governments expand their approach to prevention to use all parts of the domestic and family violence service system more effectively and highlights the importance of funding response services as part of prevention.
- 2.67 In response to the draft proposed report CSD noted:
- ... that there was an increase in demand, complexity and pressure on crisis services following the COVID-19 pandemic. It is well documented that domestic and family violence incidents increase during and after a major emergency/crisis, and consequently, additional funding for crisis services was necessary to meet a surge in demand for crisis services.
-  2.68 From the commencement of the Safer Families Levy in 2016-17 until 2020-21, the majority of funding was applied to government-led Safer Families initiatives as opposed to community sector-led initiatives. This has changed since 2021-22 as more funding has been provided to the community sector. Despite the findings of previous reviews, which have criticised the ACT's domestic and family violence response as being largely crisis driven, funding for crisis services remains the largest priority for funding from the levy. Although total levy funding has increased, prevention and recovery services have not been prioritised and their funding proportion has not significantly changed since 2016-17.

Funding approval for Safer Families initiatives

- 2.69 Funding approval for Safer Families initiatives is most often sought through business cases provided to Cabinet. Business cases have been used to both:
- initially establish an initiative; and
 - seek additional funding for an initiative in later years.
- 2.70 The business cases for six domestic and family violence initiatives that were funded from the Safer Families Levy were analysed for the purpose of the audit. These initiatives were established through two main sources:
- the 2016 Safer Families package or the *ACT Government Response to Family Violence 2016*; or
 - initial funding through national agreements with the Australian Government such as the 2010 National Plan and the *National Partnership on COVID-19 Domestic and Family Violence Responses*.

2.71 The initiatives examined were:

- funded as part of the 2016 Safer Families package or the *ACT Government Response to Family Violence 2016*:
 - additional resources for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre
 - Room4Change
 - Family Safety Hub
 - Reducing the risk of deaths from family violence
- previously funded under national agreements with the Australian Government:
 - Family Violence Safety Action Plan
 - Safer Families Collaboration Program

2.72 Further information on the initiatives reviewed by the Audit Office can be found in paragraphs 1.51 to 1.72.

Business cases

2.73 The business cases demonstrated a level of research to support funding for the initiative. They followed a standard template which provided a description of the initiative and information on the:

- cost of the initiative;
- objectives of the initiative and how the initiative is expected to address community needs along with expected benefits;
- alignment of the initiative with the government's broader policy priorities;
- potential options for implementing the initiative; and
- implementation and communication considerations.

2.74 While there was an acceptable level of research and assessment processes to support funding for the initiatives, there was a lack of consideration of whether the proposed initiatives would complement or duplicate activities under existing Safer Families initiatives.

Grants program funding

2.75 Two initiatives involve grants programs:

- the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) Grants Program; and
- the ACT Women's Safety Grants.

2.76 The Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) Grants Program was funded under the *Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence National Partnership Agreement 2021-23*. ACT Women's Safety Grants are funded through the Safer Families Levy. Both programs are

supported by grants guidelines, and an assessment process with funding recommendations approved by the Community Services Directorate.

2.77 Applications for funding from the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) Grants Program have been assessed against a number of selection criteria including whether the projects align with the funding categories, whether the projects are innovative and evidence-informed and whether the project will demonstrate a focus on intersectional needs. Applications for ACT Women's Safety Grants have been assessed against the funding criteria in the program guidelines. The funding criteria state that the projects should advance the priorities of the *Fourth Action Plan 2019-2022* under the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022*.

2.78 For both initiatives, the assessments of the applicants did not take into consideration whether the projects would complement or duplicate activities under existing Safer Families initiatives.



2.79 Funding for Safer Families initiatives is most often sought through business cases submitted to Cabinet. Initiatives that have been funded through this process have included a sufficient level of research and assessment to demonstrate: the objectives of the initiative and how the initiative is expected to address community needs along with expected benefits; and the alignment of the initiative with the government's broader policy priorities. There was, however, a lack of consideration as to whether the proposed initiative would complement or duplicate activities under existing Safer Families initiatives.

Planning and development of the Family Safety Hub

Initial role and function of the Family Safety Hub

2.80 The Family Safety Hub has been a central feature of Safer Families initiatives since the Safer Families package was announced as part of the *2016-17 ACT Budget*.

2.81 The concept of the Family Safety Hub came from the Glanfield Inquiry in 2016. The inquiry recommended that a Family Safety Hub be established to ensure integrated and coordinated services are provided to families experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, domestic and family violence. The Family Safety Hub was intended to have a central intake process so that victims would only need to tell their story once. A lead agency, such as Health, Education, Community Services, or a non-government service provider was expected to take on the role of case coordination.

2.82 The Glanfield Inquiry recommended the Family Safety Hub:

- be co-located with other human services; and

- comprise representatives from relevant human services directorates, the domestic and family violence and child protection sectors, and police.

Changes to the role and function of the Family Safety Hub

2.83 The intended role and function of the Family Safety Hub has changed over time. The changing nature of the Family Safety Hub has been documented in a series of business cases and reviews.

ACT Government Response to Family Violence 2016

2.84 The *ACT Government Response to Family Violence 2016* identified that the Family Safety Hub would provide the following services:

- needs identification and assessment;
- safety risk assessments;
- referral pathways to appropriate services;
- case management and co-ordination; and
- information management and sharing.

2017-18 ACT Budget business case

2.85 A business case prepared for the purpose of the *2017-18 ACT Budget* proposed that the Family Safety Hub not be a physical hub. Instead, it was proposed that the Family Safety Hub would link existing services and supports in the ACT around domestic and family violence to enable people to only need to tell their story once and to receive integrated support from the beginning to end from ACT government and community services.

2018-19 ACT Budget business case

2.86 A business case prepared for the purpose of the *2018-19 ACT Budget* proposed that the Family Safety Hub be named the Family Safety Innovation Hub (FSIH). Evidence generated through a co-design process found that traditional case management would not improve outcomes for victims on the scale required and would not be adequate for diverse groups who are difficult to reach through existing services. The business case instead proposed that the Family Safety Innovation Hub be used to design and test new, integrated responses for families experiencing domestic and family violence.

Family Safety Hub Design Report (January 2018)

2.87 Representatives from ACT Government agencies and non-government organisations worked together as part of a co-design process to define the role and function of the Family Safety Hub. The results of this work were documented in the *Family Safety Hub Design Report (January 2018)*. The report identified that a Family Safety Hub Steering Committee

would advise the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence on priorities and opportunities for the Family Safety Hub. However, the Family Safety Hub Steering Committee was never created.

Brief to the Minister (May 2023)

2.88 A subsequent brief to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence on 17 May 2023 advised that the Family Safety Hub Steering Committee was not required. The brief also stated that the DFSVO had updated its governance structures since 2018 and this included:

- updating the Domestic Violence Prevention Council; and
- establishing the Domestic and Family Violence Roundtable and the Family Violence Intervention Program Coordinating Committee.

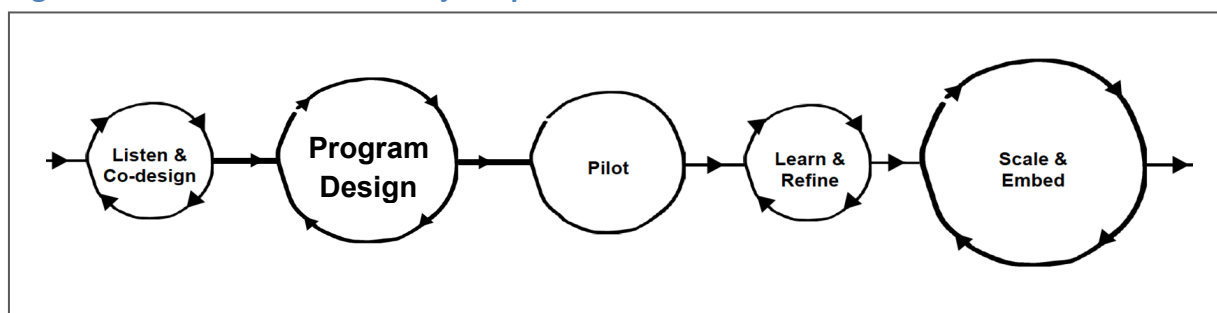
2022 name change

2.89 In 2022 the title of the Family Safety Hub was changed to Innovative Pilot Projects. The purpose of the name change was to clarify that it is not a physical space for victim-survivors to attend and is instead a mechanism to conduct pilots to determine whether initiatives should be considered for funding under the levy.

Current approach to the Family Safety Hub (Innovative Pilot Projects)

2.90 In May 2023, CSD produced an *Innovative Pilot Projects Operating Manual* for the Innovative Pilot Projects function of the DFSVO. The operating manual was endorsed by the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence in August 2023.

2.91 The *Innovative Pilot Projects Operating Manual* states that pilots are to be chosen based on key insights from experiences of victim-survivors, research and key reports, sector insights and service gaps, learnings from currently funded pilots and projects, local and national trends, and strategic drivers. The operating manual describes the process that is expected to be used to design and implement solutions aimed at addressing domestic and family violence in the ACT. The process involves five stages: listen and co-design; program design; pilot; learn and refine; and scale and embed (refer to Figure 2-3).

Figure 2-3 Innovative Pilot Projects process

Source: ACT Government, *Innovative Pilot Projects Operating Manual*, May 2023.

2.92 The *Innovative Pilot Projects Operating Manual* describes four objectives for the pilot initiatives:

- creates new or improved pathways to safety that better meet the needs of the community;
- promotes integration and cohesion across the service and support system;
- builds capability across the system; and
- fosters shared understanding of domestic and family violence and its impacts.

Community understanding of the Family Safety Hub

2.93 Feedback from some organisations was that the name of the Family Safety Hub was confusing to the community as it implied that it was a physical space which people can visit (consistent with the original intent and purpose of the Family Safety Hub).

2.94 Feedback from some organisations suggested that the original concept of the Family Safety Hub, where people have a central place for support, would have been beneficial even if it had been delivered through a digital medium.

2.95 The Budget Outlooks for the *ACT Budget* over recent years provide limited details of the changes to the Family Safety Hub. The *2018-19 ACT Budget Outlook* identified that the Government was thinking differently about the role of the Family Safety Hub due to the insights gathered from the co-design approach and the Family Safety Hub would drive system change using a 'try, test and learn' approach. The 2019-20 and 2020-21 ACT Budget Outlooks provide details of the pilots which have gone through the Family Safety Hub.



2.96 The Family Safety Hub was a central commitment of the Safer Families package announced in the *2016-17 ACT Budget*. The intended role and function of the Family Safety Hub has changed over the years. The original intention was for it to be a central place for victims of domestic and family violence to receive integrated support from a range of ACT services. After a co-design process with community sector organisations, this changed to supporting and improving responses to domestic and family violence across the service system. The

Family Safety Hub is now known as Innovative Pilot Projects and located within the DFSVO. The current role of the Innovative Pilot Projects function is to co-design, develop and test new ideas to meet the needs of those affected by domestic and family violence.



Recommendation 1

ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy and Plan

In order to promote transparency and accountability in the funding of domestic and family violence initiatives through the Safer Families Levy, the Community Services Directorate should, as part of designing and implementing the ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy and Plan work with other ACT Government agencies to:

- a) establish clear and easily accessible communication products that regularly update the community on initiatives funded through the levy, including their purpose and intended outcomes;
- b) develop principles for funding initiatives under the levy and clearly communicate to the community services sector and broader community how these principles are being implemented; and
- c) establish clearly documented feedback mechanisms for the community services sector and broader community to inform the planning and design of initiatives funded through the levy.

3 Performance monitoring

- 3.1 This chapter considers the DFSVO's activities for monitoring the performance of domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy.

Summary



Conclusions

The DFSVO has not developed a performance monitoring strategy or evaluation framework to measure the outcomes and impacts of domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy.

Although there is an established practice of conducting external evaluations for Safer Families initiatives, not all initiatives had effective performance monitoring arrangements. Furthermore, the DFSVO does not effectively use existing monitoring and reporting arrangements to assess the performance of Safer Families initiatives.



Key findings

Performance monitoring and evaluation

Paragraph

The DFSVO has not developed a performance monitoring strategy or evaluation framework to monitor and measure the outcomes and impacts of domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy, either individually or collectively. There is, however, an intention that 'an evaluation framework and performance measurement plan will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders' for the purpose of the *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy*. In the absence of a performance monitoring strategy or evaluation framework, unique and ad hoc performance monitoring arrangements have been developed for each Safer Families initiative. This makes it difficult to assess the impact of the suite of Safer Families initiatives more broadly.

3.9

Performance monitoring for selected initiatives

A review of the performance monitoring arrangements in place for five Safer Families initiatives considered as part of the audit (additional resources for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre; Room4Change; Family Safety Hub - Family Violence Response for Children; Family Violence Safety Action Program; and Safer Families Collaboration Program) shows:

3.62

- **Outcomes and objectives:** there were defined outcomes and objectives for all the initiatives;

- **Performance indicators:** most of the initiatives (with the exception of the Family Violence Safety Action Program, had SMART performance indicators (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely) but the indicators were not supported by targets;
- **Performance reporting:** the regular and timely provision of performance reports was a feature of all the initiatives. Performance reports often conveyed a mix of qualitative and quantitative information, and sometimes provided information on the impact of activities; and
- **Monitoring and assurance:** there was adequate monitoring and assurance in place for all the initiatives. All initiatives had regular meetings to review performance.

Performance reporting for selected initiatives

A review of the performance monitoring and reporting arrangements in place for the five Safer Families initiatives as well as the Domestic and Family Violence Review, the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) Grants Program and the ACT Women's Safety Grants shows:

3.77

- two of the eight initiatives had been evaluated (Room4Change and the Family Violence Safety Action Program) while the evaluation for another two initiatives (additional resources for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and the Family Safety Hub - Family Violence Response for Children) were underway. The lack of a common evaluation framework for Safer Families initiatives means that evaluative processes were specifically developed for each initiative. This makes an assessment of impact across the suite of Safer Families initiatives difficult;
- there is no evaluation strategy for the Innovative Pilot Projects function (formerly the Family Safety Hub) which runs pilot initiatives to trial new responses to domestic and family violence. The *draft Innovative Pilot Projects Operating Manual* identified an intention to use external evaluators to assess the pilot projects, but there is no further guidance or instruction on expectations for the evaluation and assessment of pilot projects against identified objectives. The draft Manual was developed in May 2023 but is yet to be finalised;
- performance reports that are received from funded recipients often have a mix of qualitative and quantitative information, and sometimes provide information on the impact of activities. However, there is a lack of evidence that the DFSVO has assessed the data provided through the report to determine;
 - whether performance of the initiative is improving; and
 - what the DFVSO can do to support broader impacts across Safer Families initiatives.

Measures to monitor the implementation of recommendations from the first Biennial Review of the Death Review are yet to be established. While a function for reviewing domestic and family violence deaths has been established, the powers to

3.78

enhance impact of this function by tracking implementation of recommendations has not been implemented.

Performance monitoring and evaluation

- 3.2 The *ACT Performance and Accountability Framework* (February 2020) highlights the importance of collecting data to monitor the performance of government programs:

Data is collected over time so that performance can be monitored to answer the following questions:

- Has performance changed over time?
- If so, by how much?
- In which direction?¹¹

Proposed evaluation framework

- 3.3 The DFSVO has not developed a performance monitoring strategy or evaluation framework to monitor and measure the outcomes and impacts of domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy, either individually or collectively.

- 3.4 There is, however, an intention to develop a performance monitoring strategy for the purpose of the *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy*. In March 2024, the *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy* consultation draft identified that:

An evaluation framework and performance measurement plan will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders.

- 3.5 In the absence of a performance monitoring strategy or evaluation framework, unique and ad hoc performance monitoring arrangements have been developed for each Safer Families initiative. These are discussed throughout this chapter.

Evaluation of Innovative Pilot Projects

- 3.6 In May 2023, the DFSVO developed a draft *Innovative Pilot Projects Operating Manual*. The manual has not been finalised and remains in draft. The purpose of the manual is to:

... [articulate] how the ACT Government will conduct its operations to design, deliver and evaluate innovative pilot projects that respond to domestic and family violence.

¹¹ Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (2020), *ACT Performance and Accountability Framework*, p.52

3.7 The draft *Innovative Pilot Projects Operating Manual* documented the changes to the Family Safety Hub operating model that occurred in 2018. The draft *Innovative Pilot Projects Operating Manual* identified an intention to use external evaluators to assess the pilot projects. Four objectives for the pilots were identified in the manual, as follows:

- creates new or improved pathways to safety that better meet the needs of the community;
- promotes integration and cohesion across the service and support system;
- builds capability across the system; and
- fosters shared understanding of domestic, family and sexual violence and its impacts.

3.8 There is, however, no further guidance or instruction on expectations for the evaluation and assessment of pilot projects against the identified objectives.



3.9 The DFSVO has not developed a performance monitoring strategy or evaluation framework to monitor and measure the outcomes and impacts of domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy, either individually or collectively. There is, however, an intention that ‘an evaluation framework and performance measurement plan will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders’ for the purpose of the *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy*. In the absence of a performance monitoring strategy or evaluation framework, unique and ad hoc performance monitoring arrangements have been developed for each Safer Families initiative. This makes it difficult to assess the impact of the suite of Safer Families initiatives more broadly.

Performance monitoring for selected initiatives

3.10 The Audit Office considered the performance monitoring arrangements in place until July 2023 for the following Safer Families initiatives considered as part of the audit:

- additional resources for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre;
- Room4Change;
- Family Safety Hub - Family Violence Response for Children¹²;
- Family Violence Safety Action Program; and
- Safer Families Collaboration Program.

¹² As discussed in paragraphs 3.6 to 3.8, there is no overall evaluation framework for the Innovative Pilot Projects function. Unique and ad hoc performance monitoring arrangements have been developed for each of the individual pilot projects.

Additional resources for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre

- 3.11 The Safer Families Levy contributed \$758,000 for additional resources for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre initiative from 2016-17 to 2022-23. The Canberra Rape Crisis Centre also received Safer Families Levy-offset funding through other Safer Families initiatives.

Outcomes and objectives

- 3.12 The Canberra Rape Crisis Centre has a Service Funding Agreement (dated 28 June 2016) which requires the Centre to *inter alia* provide the following activities, which are described in the Agreement as Outputs:

- professional counselling in individual and group sessions to ‘assist Service Users to assess their circumstances and relationships as well as to make choices, decisions and plans for the future’;
- capacity building in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities ‘to respond to issues of sexual violence in the community and build worker capacity’;
- community education and training about the causes, effects and responses to sexual violence against individuals in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; and
- representation, systemic advocacy, input into government policy and attendance at public forums for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

Performance indicators

- 3.13 The Service Funding Agreement identifies a series of quantitative and qualitative performance indicators. They are a mix of activity, output and outcome measures and are supported by outcome and output statements in the agreement. The performance indicators are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely (SMART) but are not supported by associated targets. Examples of the quantitative performance indicators include:

- the number of crisis call outs and crisis appointments;
- the number of counselling and support sessions; and
- the percentage of service users who are assisted to secure stable accommodation.

- 3.14 Examples of the qualitative performance indicators include:

- ‘qualitative evidence that Service User needs are being met in each of the specified output areas [crisis intervention, community education, telephone counselling, counselling and support] (including the use of case studies where appropriate)’; and

- ‘evidence to demonstrate that it [the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre] has in place, and regularly reviews, policies and procedures to guide all aspects of Service delivery’.

Performance reporting

- 3.15 The Service Funding Agreement requires the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre to submit performance reports to the Community Services Directorate (CSD) on a half yearly basis. The reports are required to address the outputs and performance indicators specified in the Service Funding Agreement.
- 3.16 The performance reports include the results of performance against the qualitative and quantitative indicators listed in the Service Funding Agreement as well as reporting on broader sector outcomes. The performance reports are detailed and include case studies. Representatives from CSD and the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre meet each year to review the agreement and the performance of the services.

Monitoring and assurance

- 3.17 Representatives from CSD’s Homelessness Services Team conduct half-yearly service visits with the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre. The visits are documented through service visit records, which document the meetings between the Homelessness Services Team and the centre. Discussion has typically focused on the centre’s reporting against the qualitative and quantitative performance indicators of the Service Funding Agreement. Factors and issues which have affected the centre’s performance have also been discussed.
- 3.18 The Homelessness Services Team provides bi-annual feedback letters to the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre that:
- provide a summary of the Centre’s performance; and
 - identify whether contractual obligations have been met.
- 3.19 A review was conducted by Social Ventures Australia Consulting of the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and the Domestic Violence Crisis Service. As part of scoping and planning for the review, external evaluators conducted some stakeholder interviews to form themes and review questions to guide the evaluation. This included examining how performance indicators are used and interpreted, and which indicators matter most to victim-survivors for service delivery. The review was completed in May 2024.

Room4Change

- 3.20 The Safer Families Levy provided \$5,109,000 for the Room4Change program from 2016-17 to 2022-23.

Outcomes and objectives

- 3.21 The Domestic Violence and Crisis Service has a Service Funding Agreement (dated 20 December 2016) that sets performance expectations for the Room4Change program. The Service Funding Agreement specifies the activities, outputs and outcomes for the provision of 'a domestic violence prevention program through a residential program that will reduce the likelihood of men using domestic and family violence (DFV), to enable women and children the choice to remain in the family home, and to improve the safety and wellbeing for all'.
- 3.22 The outputs described in the Service Funding Agreement are for the program to provide:
- support services through therapeutic program, case management support, counselling, parenting support, group work living skills training, outreach support and referrals; and
 - tenancy/property management for up to 9 properties used to accommodate up to 18 to 20 men.

Outcomes and indicators

- 3.23 The Service Funding Agreement includes a mix of output and outcome indicators that are either quantitative or qualitative in nature. The performance indicators are SMART but are not supported by associated targets. Examples of the quantitative performance indicators in the Agreement are:
- the total number of men supported through the residential therapeutic program;
 - the number of men who did not finish the program;
 - the number of men provided with post-accommodation/outreach support;
 - accommodation status for each man at exit from program;
 - the number of women and children supported through the program; and
 - the total number of people supported by the program.
- 3.24 Examples of the qualitative performance indicators in the Agreement are:
- 'qualitative evidence that Service Users needs are being met in each of the specified Output areas and that a range of mechanisms are in place to receive Service Users feedback'; and
 - 'qualitative evidence that Service Users needs are being met in each of the specified Output areas to maintain or improve connections with their families and communities, and maintain or improve their education, training, or employment participation where appropriate'.

Performance reporting

- 3.25 The Service Funding Agreement requires the DVCS to submit six-monthly performance reports that include reporting against the performance indicators. The reports that have been provided have included detailed case studies and responses to qualitative performance indicators in the agreement.

Monitoring and assurance

- 3.26 Representatives from the DVCS and CSD meet each six months to review performance against outputs.
- 3.27 The DVCS has also contracted a subject-matter expert in criminal justice evaluation from the Australian National University (ANU) to undertake the evaluation of the Room4Change program. A reference group has been established to provide oversight of the evaluation. The evaluation had three overarching questions:
- Was the Room4Change program successful in achieving its goal of promoting safety for women and their children?
 - Did the Room4Change program impact men's behaviour so that the incidence of future violence is likely to have been prevented or minimised?
 - What factors, if any, limited the capacity of the Room4Change program to achieve its objectives, or what factors might have mediated the impact of the Room4Change program on both the clients and their families?
- 3.28 A final evaluation report was produced in 2021. The evaluation identified the strengths of the program as well as areas in need of further refinement and improvement. The evaluation noted inherent difficulties with providing quantitative measurement of the program's impact on recidivism due to the inability to track reoffending through data available through the justice system. It also found evidence of behavioural changes to increase the likelihood of fewer and less severe incidents of family abuse.

Family Safety Hub - Family Violence Response for Children (Children's Pilot)

- 3.29 The Safer Families Levy provided \$512,302 for the Family Violence Response for Children project, also known as the Children's Pilot.

Outcomes and objectives

- 3.30 The Australian Childhood Foundation has a Service Funding Agreement (dated 23 June 2022) that sets performance expectations for the Family Violence Response for Children project. The purpose of the project is for the Australian Childhood Foundation to 'co-design and deliver a service for children aged 5 to 12 years who have experienced domestic and family violence'.

- 3.31 The Service Funding Agreement describes the objective of the service to be designed and the scope of the services. The delivery of the services is described with reference to phases.

Performance indicators

- 3.32 The Service Funding Agreement identifies four key performance indicators:
- co-design of service;
 - meetings;
 - provision of service for the hours determined in consultation with the Territory; and
 - provision of required reports to the Territory.
- 3.33 The performance indicators are specific and measurable, albeit focused on activity relating to implementing the pilot in partnership with the Territory. The Service Funding Agreement specifies the minimum standards, targets and frequency of measurement of the performance indicators.

Performance reporting

- 3.34 The Service Funding Agreement requires the Australian Childhood Foundation to report progress data four times each year. The data to be provided for the purpose of reporting includes demographic data, referral data, service issues, highlights and outcomes, feedback and the number of working with vulnerable people checks of employees.

Monitoring and assurance

- 3.35 The DFSVO and the Australian Childhood Foundation have monthly meetings where the progress of the Family Violence Response for Children project is discussed. These meetings are documented through meeting minutes.
- 3.36 There were low participant numbers during the first term of the pilot. The DFSVO held meetings with the Australian Childhood Foundation to discuss the reasons for this and to discuss ways to improve participant numbers. Participant numbers subsequently improved. A variation was put in place in August 2023 to extend the pilot and evaluation.
- 3.37 In December 2022, the DFSVO engaged the University of Sydney to conduct an external evaluation of the Children's Family Violence Response project. The evaluation was intended to inform future expenditure and the development of the pilot into a program by assessing:
- design and development of the pilot against its objectives;
 - outcomes that were achieved for clients, particularly for children;

- gaps, strengths and areas of opportunity within the ACT's domestic and family violence and human services sectors, systems and services to embed the program and support its long-term sustainability; and
- the overall effectiveness of the service.

3.38 The University of Sydney provided preliminary findings in August 2023 and identified opportunities for improvement, for example: increase sector engagement; clarification of service user base and function of the group; and incorporation of local First Nations and CALD engagement and perspectives.

Family Violence Safety Action Program (FVSAP)

3.39 The Safer Families Levy provided \$2,050,000 for the Family Violence Safety Action Program from 2021-22 to 2022-23.

Outcomes and objectives

3.40 The DFSVO has developed two deeds to support the delivery of the Family Violence Safety Action Program:

- a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Victims of Crime Commissioner (VOCC) on 5 May 2023; and
- a deed of grant with the DVCS on 10 October 2022.

3.41 The memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Victims of Crime Commissioner seeks to set out:

... the agreed roles and responsibilities between the Victims of Crime Commissioner (VOCC) and the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Coordinator-General Office (DFSVO) for delivering the Family Violence Safety Action Program (FVSAP).

3.42 The memorandum of understanding (MOU) outlines funding arrangements for ten staff and states the Victims of Crime Commissioner:

... is responsible for ensuring the effective delivery of the FVSAP, which aims to improve the safety of victim survivors by:

- a. collecting and sharing information to identify and assess the risk of harm that a Domestic and/or Family Violence (DFV) perpetrator poses to victim survivors, including children and young people
- b. improving perpetrator visibility and accountability in government and non-government responses to DFV
- c. increasing service accountability to victim survivor safety through collaborative action planning and service delivery

d. improving understanding across government and non-government agencies of the dynamics of DFV, victim survivor safety and perpetrator accountability

e. Utilising frameworks including Duluth, strength-based practice and Safe and Together

3.43 The memorandum of understanding (MOU) states:

... the DFSVO is to hold responsibility for strategic direction of FVSAP in relation to the wider DFSV service system and reporting publicly as part of Coordinator-General obligations. DFSVO is to oversee contract with DVCS as an additional provider contributing to the delivery of the FVSAP.

3.44 The memorandum of understanding (MOU) notes that it is 'a statement of intent and does not create legal obligations between the parties'.

3.45 The deed of grant with the DVCS is to:

... recruit 2 x full time Senior Case Coordinators (SCC) and a Program Support Manager.

Performance indicators

3.46 Neither the MOU or deed of grant specified any performance indicators or targets.

Performance reporting

3.47 The MOU requires the Victims of Crime Commissioner 'to provide six monthly reporting on program data, referrals received and actioned, partnering agencies and case studies'. The reporting 'is to include data related to victim-survivors, perpetrators, children, and young people and areas of intersectionality such as culture, gender, age, disability, and visa status'.

3.48 The deed of grant with the DVCS requires the provision of an annual financial acquittal statement of the funding and requires the DVCS to notify the Territory when staff are recruited to, or vacate, the case coordinator roles.

3.49 The deed of grant with DVCS requires reporting on quantitative and qualitative performance indicators. One requirement of the deed is to provide the number of clients and the demographics of the clients which the DVCS FVSAP case managers have worked with. A second requirement is to provide reporting of two de-identified case studies highlighting the impact of the FVSAP for client safety outcomes.

3.50 DVCS provided progress reports for the July to December 2022 and January to June 2023 reporting periods. Detailed information is provided in the report and includes program activities, systemic trends noticed by case workers, activity data and case studies.

Monitoring and assurance

- 3.51 The MOU requires the DFSVO and the Victims of Crime Commissioner to meet at least once annually to ‘formally discuss the Program, including outcomes and emerging trends’. A meeting was held on 5th May 2023 with Victims Support ACT and the DFSVO.
- 3.52 The ACT Government commissioned Stopping Family Violence (SFV) to undertake an evaluation of the Family Violence Safety Action Program while it was a pilot project. Stopping Family Violence provided a report with its program logic and evaluation framework and the findings from its 2021 evaluation of the first six months of the Program. Some of the findings included:
- the Program was incorporating appropriate strategies in its response to high-risk domestic and family violence in the ACT;
 - the Program was adding value to existing efforts to respond to high-risk and complex cases of domestic and family violence; and
 - the Program was supporting collaboration between government and non-government agencies that have traditionally not collaborated on domestic and family violence responses.
- 3.53 The report recommended that the Family Violence Safety Action Program continue in its current state, albeit with a number of modifications including:
- an MOU be developed for participating agencies;
 - operational guidelines be developed in collaboration with Victim Support ACT and the DFSVO;
 - Victims Support ACT further support preparation and facilitation of collaborative meetings; and
 - implement team-based reflective practice opportunities for Pilot Case Managers and Pilot Coordinators.

Safer Families Collaboration Program

- 3.54 The Safer Families Levy provided \$675,000 for the Safer Families Collaboration Program from 2021-22 to 2022-23.

Outcomes and objectives

- 3.55 A short form contract was executed between CSD and the Domestic Violence Crisis Service (DVCS) on 3 September 2019 for the Safer Families Collaboration Program. The contract required DVCS to assist the Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) by, among other things:

- assisting CYPS staff ‘in attending home visits with CYPS during child protection appraisals and case management activities ... where domestic violence and family violence has been identified as a key risk’;
- ‘[providing] expert Family and Domestic Violence advice and support to CYPS in delivering child protection and youth justice services to the ACT community’; and
- ‘[increasing] the capability of CYPS to respond to families impacted by Family and Domestic Violence’; and
- ‘[providing] a culturally responsive service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients’.

3.56 DVCS was to provide the services by providing two staff members for the duration of the program who were to be based and co-located with CYPS staff.

Performance indicators

3.57 The contract did not specify any performance indicators. The contract did, however, require DVCS to negotiate with CYPS on the outcome measures to be used for the purpose of an evaluation.

3.58 Subsequent quarterly review documentation included reporting against performance indicators. These performance indicators are SMART, but there are no associated targets. Examples of the performance indicators include:

- number of requests for consultation from CYPS, including the team from which the referral originated;
- number of consultations requested in relation to a new or existing case; and
- number of joint home visits undertaken with CYPS.

Performance reporting

3.59 The contract required the DVCS to cooperate with CYPS in the evaluation of the program and provide information on the program’s effectiveness and impact. DVCS’ performance is reviewed on a quarterly basis and the results are documented against performance indicators.

Monitoring and assurance

3.60 The contract required DVCS to participate in meetings to monitor and review the provision of the services. There are regular contract review meetings with staff from DVCS and CYPS where the quarterly performance reporting is discussed. These meetings are documented in meeting minutes.

3.61 The quarterly reporting also contained data such as the number of joint home visits undertaken with CYPS and the number of referrals made to alternate services by DVCS. Despite the availability of this data, CSD has not used it to assess and monitor performance of the program.



3.62 A review of the performance monitoring arrangements in place for five Safer Families initiatives considered as part of the audit (additional resources for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre; Room4Change; Family Safety Hub - Family Violence Response for Children; Family Violence Safety Action Program; and Safer Families Collaboration Program) shows:

- **Outcomes and objectives:** there were defined outcomes and objectives for all the initiatives;
- **Performance indicators:** most of the initiatives (with the exception of the Family Violence Safety Action Program, had SMART performance indicators (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely) but the indicators were not supported by targets;
- **Performance reporting:** the regular and timely provision of performance reports was a feature of all the initiatives. Performance reports often conveyed a mix of qualitative and quantitative information, and sometimes provided information on the impact of activities; and
- **Monitoring and assurance:** there was adequate monitoring and assurance in place for all the initiatives. All initiatives had regular meetings to review performance.

Performance reporting for selected initiatives

3.63 Performance reporting arrangements were considered for three initiatives:

- the Domestic and Family Violence Review;
- the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) Grants Program; and
- the ACT Women's Safety Grants.

3.64 Consideration was given to whether the DFSVO had reported on the impact of these initiatives.

Domestic and Family Violence Review

3.65 The Safer Families Levy provided \$813,000 for the Domestic and Family Violence Review between 2019-20 and 2022-23.

3.66 The first Biennial Report of the Domestic and Family Violence Review for the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence was produced in October 2023 by the DFSVO. It resulted from legislative amendments to the *Domestic Violence Agencies Act 1986*

to establish the Death and Family Violence Review Coordinator (performed by the Coordinator-General of the DFSVO) to undertake reviews of domestic and family violence deaths. It mirrors functions in other Australian jurisdictions under the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Review Network.

- 3.67 The first Biennial Report provided statistical data on all deaths currently on the domestic and family violence incident register from 2000-2022. The report provided:
- a snapshot of all the deaths; and
 - an in-depth review of a sample of 12 family homicides.
- 3.68 The report made 12 recommendations that were directed to all government agencies, ACT Policing, the courts and the community. The first Biennial Report stated that the recommendations were intended to inform work currently being undertaken by the ACT Government as part of its ongoing commitment to prevent and respond to domestic and family violence.
- 3.69 The *Domestic Violence Agencies Act 1986* requires the Minister to table the report in the Assembly and report to the review coordinator on 'any action the Minister has taken, or will take in relation to the matters raised in the report'. The report was tabled in the Assembly in February 2024, and the Minister wrote to the Coordinator-General to confirm a government response would be tabled in the second quarter of 2024.
- 3.70 An important feature of public transparency and accountability for recommendations made to government are processes to monitor their implementation. The first Biennial Report and the *Domestic Violence Agencies Act 1986* are silent on arrangements to monitor implementation of recommendations, although the Biennial Report did identify one of the areas for law reform in the *Domestic Violence Agencies Act 1986* as 'introducing a requirement for agencies that are subject to a recommendation of the DFVR Coordinator to report on progress, to support accountability'.

Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) Grants Program

- 3.71 Deeds of grants have been established for recipients of Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Grants. The deeds of grants require the recipients to provide a complete and detailed record and explanation of the progress of the funded activity. The recipients are also required to provide CSD with progress activity reports, including client and activity related information, to support CSD's reporting responsibilities through the *National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence 2021-23*. Grant recipients are required to submit the reports on 31 August 2023, 31 May 2024 and within 30 days of 30 September 2024.

3.72 The progress activity reports have been provided by the grant recipients as required. They provide service-level data, qualitative descriptions of the impact and use of the funding, and training information. CSD has not used these reports to:

- monitor and report more broadly on the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Grants Program; or
- assess the performance of the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Grants Program and its impacts and achievements.

ACT Women's Safety Grants

3.73 The Safer Families Levy provided \$192,000 for the ACT Women's Safety Grants in 2021-22 and 2022-23.

3.74 The ACT Women's Safety Grants are managed by a grants team in the Inclusion Division in CSD. Grant recipients for this program receive letters of offer for small grants of up to \$20,000.

3.75 It is a requirement of the ACT Women's Safety Grants that recipients provide acquittal reports on the use of the funding. The acquittal reports contained information such as:

- a description of activities during the reporting period;
- outcomes of the project;
- how the grant supported the objectives and priorities of the ACT Women's Plan; and
- how the funds were spent.

3.76 CSD has not used the acquittal reports to:

- monitor and report more broadly on the ACT Women's Safety Grants; or
- assess the performance of the ACT Women's Safety Grants and their impacts and achievements.



3.77 A review of the performance monitoring and reporting arrangements in place for the five Safer Families initiatives as well as the Domestic and Family Violence Review, the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) Grants Program and the ACT Women's Safety Grants shows:

- two of the eight initiatives had been evaluated (Room4Change and the Family Violence Safety Action Program) while the evaluation for another two initiatives (additional resources for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and the Family Safety Hub - Family Violence Response for Children) were underway. The lack of a common evaluation framework for Safer Families initiatives means that evaluative processes were specifically developed for each initiative. This makes an assessment of impact across the suite of Safer Families initiatives difficult;

- there is no evaluation strategy for the Innovative Pilot Projects function (formerly the Family Safety Hub) which runs pilot initiatives to trial new responses to domestic and family violence. The *draft Innovative Pilot Projects Operating Manual* identified an intention to use external evaluators to assess the pilot projects, but there is no further guidance or instruction on expectations for the evaluation and assessment of pilot projects against identified objectives. The draft Manual was developed in May 2023 but is yet to be finalised;
- performance reports that are received from funded recipients often have a mix of qualitative and quantitative information, and sometimes provide information on the impact of activities. However, there is a lack of evidence that the DFSVO has assessed the data provided through the report to determine;
 - whether performance of the initiative is improving; and
 - what the DFVSO can do to support broader impacts across Safer Families initiatives.



3.78 Measures to monitor the implementation of recommendations from the first Biennial Review of the Death Review are yet to be established. While a function for reviewing domestic and family violence deaths has been established, the powers to enhance impact of this function by tracking implementation of recommendations has not been implemented.



Recommendation 2

Performance monitoring

The Community Services Directorate should:

- establish a common evaluation framework for initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy that takes account of the need to evaluate the impact of each initiative as well as its impact across the suite of Safer Families initiatives within the Safer Families package; and
- establish practices for regularly reporting on the performance of Safer Families initiatives to the Coordinator-General of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence.



Recommendation 3

Biennial reporting by the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review

The Community Services Directorate should, as part of future biennial reports from the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Coordinator, establish processes to monitor and report on the implementation of the recommendations of past reports.

4 Public reporting

- 4.1 This chapter considers the public reporting of information on domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy.

Summary



Conclusions

Public reporting of the Safer Families Levy and its use in funding domestic and family violence initiatives is not transparent or effective in informing the community with respect to:

- how the levy is being used; or
- the performance of domestic and family violence initiatives, both individually and as a whole, in addressing domestic and family violence across the Territory.



Key findings

Budget and Annual reporting

Paragraph

The Community Services Directorate has one output related to the work of the DFSVO (Output 1.5: Safer Families), which is reported against as part of the Directorate's annual Statement of Performance. One Accountability Indicator is provided for this output 'Family Violence Statement presented to the ACT Legislative Assembly', which purports to '[measure] the Government's progress and achievements in addressing family and domestic violence'. The Accountability Indicator is an activity measure of public reporting and does not provide any insights on achievements associated with the Safer Families Levy.

4.14

Reporting under Output 1.5 in the Community Services Directorate's *2022-23 Annual Report* included short written descriptions of activities undertaken by the DFSVO during the year. Reporting was consistent with the approach undertaken for the *2021-22 Annual Report*. Much of the reporting is on activity rather than on impacts. While some metrics have been cited information such as experiences through the various programs and changes in attitudes and behaviour arising from the programs and other activities have not been reported. It is also difficult to understand from annual report commentary whether performance expectations set in one reporting period have been met in the following period.

4.20

The *Annual Report Directions* require ACT Government agencies to report on community engagement and support initiatives, including funding provided through grants and sponsorship programs, and activities being undertaken for the purpose of the *ACT Agreement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (2019-2028)*.

4.30

Community Services Directorate annual reports have included this information, as required.

Victim Support ACT has also reported on the Family Violence Safety Action Program through ACT Human Rights Commission annual reports. The program is intended to support victims at high risk of violence through increased collaboration between government and non-government agencies. It is partly funded through the Safer Families Levy. The ACT Human Rights Commission's *2022-23 Annual Report* provided some insights into program activity, along with some data to provide the public with information about the amount of collaboration between agencies to support and refer victims to the program. While Justice and Community Safety Directorate *2022-23 Annual Report* contains financial information about the Family Violence Safety Action Program, it does not disclose the program's funding sources. 4.35

The *ACT Budget Outlook* includes an Appendix with information on Safer Families initiatives. *Appendix H – Safer Families* is a key source of public reporting on Safer Families initiatives and the Safer Families Levy. The Appendix includes information on achievements in the prior year, priorities for the year ahead and longer-term priorities. The Appendix is in narrative form and consists predominantly of key highlights for the year, rather than a structured explanation of progress against planned activity. Appendices are not easily comparable between years and do not constructively demonstrate the performance of Safer Families initiatives. Financial information is included without introduction or explanation to make it accessible to a diverse range of users. 4.38

Other reporting

The annual Safer Families Statement is another key reporting mechanism on the implementation of Safer Families initiatives. It is delivered in the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. The 2023 statement provided a high-level report of a selection of grants, programs and policy and legislative reform work by ACT Government agencies. The 2023 statement was less structured than in previous years and did not provide information on planned, actual or future expected performance. 4.44

The first annual Sexual Assault Prevention and Response statement was delivered in August 2023. It focused predominantly on implementation activity arising from responding to the recommendations of the *Listen. Take Action to Prevent, Believe and Heal* report. It did not include planned performance information. Some high-level outcome statements were included but these are not sufficiently specific to determine the success of the initiatives. 4.45

Until March 2024, the Community Services Directorate had a Safer Families website which contained information on sources of assistance for people facing domestic and family violence. This website included a webpage titled "What is ACT Government doing?" and had a series of subpages on select ACT Government activities relating to domestic and family violence. Some of these activities are funded through the Safer Families Levy. The webpages did not clearly identify to the community what work was being supported by the levy or inform the community on the progress or 4.52

performance of initiatives funded through the levy. The new ACT Government website has no easily accessible information available on Safer Families initiatives, performance or expenditure.

Public reporting of domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy does not easily facilitate community and stakeholder understanding of the use of the levy and performance of the Safer Families initiatives. While there is a suite of reporting that is available each year on Safer Families initiatives, the reporting is not comparable or consistent over time, such that it can assist users form a view on performance over time. Performance is often reported as a series of highlights, and it is not easily discernible to understand what activities are new or ongoing. The needs of stakeholders for progress reporting and transparency of levy expenditure are not being met by existing reporting. 4.56

Features of sound performance reporting

4.2 *Strengthening Performance and Accountability: A Framework for the ACT Government* (the Performance and Accountability Framework) (February 2020) provides guidance to ACT Government agencies with respect to accessible and efficient performance reporting. The Performance and Accountability Framework identifies the key features of accessible performance reporting as:

- clear and concise presentation of information;
- timely reporting of performance;
- use of a range of different and emerging media to communicate effectively; and
- development of more user-friendly information for reporting purposes.

4.3 The Performance and Accountability Framework identifies the key features of efficient performance reporting as:

- consolidation of existing performance indicators and criteria, rather than an expansion of the range of indicators;
- a focus on strategic reporting, rather than reporting everything;
- consolidated public reporting, rather than creation of new arrangements; and
- regular review of reporting requirements to consolidate and reprioritise effort.

4.4 The ACT Audit Office's *Insights on Performance Reporting* (June 2023) refers to the Performance and Accountability Framework and similarly identifies four key features of effective performance reporting:

- informative;
- fair and balanced;

- timely; and
- comparable and consistent.

Sources of public reporting

4.5 According to the Community Services Directorate website a key role of the DFSVO is to:

... support accountability through consistent reporting and information sharing.¹³

4.6 The ACT Budget's Safer Families Statement identifies four authoritative sources of information for public reporting of domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy:

The achievements of the Safer Families initiatives are reported in budget papers, directorate annual reports and through the annual Safer Families statement and the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response statement by the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. Outcomes and achievements will continue to be reported through these mechanisms.

Budget and Annual reporting

Community Services Directorate annual reporting

Statement of Performance (Accountability Indicator) reporting

4.7 The Performance and Accountability Framework provides the following guidance on annual reporting through Accountability Indicators:

Accountability indicators measure the agency's effectiveness and efficiency in delivering its outputs and may be measures of outcomes, outputs or inputs.

...

Accountability indicators ... must be appropriately measurable to quantify achievement.

4.8 The Community Services Directorate has one output related to the work of the DFSVO (Output 1.5: Safer Families), which is reported against as part of the Directorate's annual Statement of Performance. The description for this output is reported in the Statement of Performance as:

The Office of the Coordinator General for Family Safety provides strategic leadership, coordination, policy analysis and innovation expertise to drive cultural change and system reform, and to build whole-of-Government and whole-of-community capability to address domestic and family violence.

¹³ [ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office - ACT Government](#)

- 4.9 One Accountability Indicator is provided for this output, as shown in Table 4-1. The Statement of Performance states:

This indicator measures the Government's progress and achievements in addressing family and domestic violence.

Table 4-1 Accountability indicator reporting in Community Services Directorate 2022-23 Annual Report

Measure	2022-23 Targets	2022-23 Results
Accountability indicator		
a. Family Violence Statement presented to the ACT Legislative Assembly	1	1

Source: Community Services Directorate, 2022-23 Annual Report, p. 416

- 4.10 The Accountability Indicator is accompanied by the following explanation:

The Statement of Performance should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

...

This indicator measures the Government's progress and achievements in addressing family and domestic violence. The full Statement can be found in the weekly Hansard between page 1,454 and 1,458

<https://www.hansard.act.gov.au/hansard/10th-assembly/2023/PDF/20230601.pdf>

- 4.11 The Accountability Indicator is an activity measure of public reporting and does not provide any insights on achievements associated with the Safer Families Levy.
- 4.12 The explanation also requires the reader to refer to a separate Family Violence Statement to find information about the performance of Safer Families initiatives. However, the reference to Hansard contains a broken link to the online Hansard. Further analysis of the Family Violence Statement and the extent to which it reports progress and achievements in addressing domestic and family violence is at paragraph 4.39.
- 4.13 There are no other Accountability Indicators relevant to the oversight or implementation of domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy.
-  4.14 The Community Services Directorate has one output related to the work of the DFSVO (Output 1.5: Safer Families), which is reported against as part of the Directorate's annual Statement of Performance. One Accountability Indicator is provided for this output 'Family Violence Statement presented to the ACT Legislative Assembly', which purports to '[measure] the Government's progress and achievements in addressing family and domestic violence'. The Accountability Indicator is an activity measure of public reporting and does not provide any insights on achievements associated with the Safer Families Levy.

Performance reporting

- 4.15 Reporting under Output 1.5 in the *2022-23 Annual Report* included short written descriptions of activities undertaken by the DFSVO during the year. Reporting was also similar in structure and presentation to reporting for the output in the *2021-22 Annual Report*. Key activities that were reported on included:
- the implementation of recommendations from the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Steering Committee's report *Listen. Take Action to Prevent, Believe and Heal* (the SAPRP Report) and the *We Don't Shoot Our Wounded* report (2009);
 - the implementation of national initiatives under the *Multilateral Agreement for the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence National Partnership Agreement 2021-27* and the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*;
 - continued funding of a range of programs including:
 - the Room4Change program;
 - the Family Violence Safety Action Program;
 - the Health Justice Partnerships program; and
 - family violence training.
 - the funding and piloting of new programs to respond to domestic and family violence; and
 - procurement of a data system for the ACT Domestic and Family Violence Death Review.
- 4.16 Much of the reporting is on activity rather than impacts. For example, the number of recommendations being worked on from the SAPRP Report, the continued funding of a series of programs and the conduct of grant funding rounds has been reported on, rather than the expected and actual impacts from these activities. While some metrics have been cited (e.g. the number of people supported through the Room4Change program) information such as experiences through the various programs and changes in attitudes and behaviour arising from the programs and other activities have not been reported.
- 4.17 The *2022-23 Annual Report* was reviewed to identify how planned performance for the Safer Families output was initially identified in the *2021-22 Annual Report* and subsequently reported against in the *2022-23 Annual Report*, with a view to determining if report users could understand the planned and actual performance for Safer Families initiatives. The *2021-22 Annual Report* identified planned performance activity in 2022-23 for seven different activities. Planned performance for six of the seven activities was identified, but no commentary was given for a planned activity to develop a domestic and family violence information sharing scheme. Planned activity for 2022-23 that was identified in the *2021-22 Annual Report* lacked specificity around the timing of the activity and the expected impacts of this work. This is also a feature of planned activity for 2023-24, as identified in the *2022-23 Annual Report*, where a list of activity is presented without any discussion of expected impacts.

- 4.18 The *2022-23 Annual Report* included an additional six activities that were not identified as planned activity in the *2021-22 Annual Report*.
- 4.19 Accordingly, it is difficult to understand from annual report commentary whether performance expectations set in one reporting period have been met in the following period. Analysis of whether performance varied from expectations can be useful to determine whether changes in approach or additional data is needed.
-  4.20 Reporting under Output 1.5 in the Community Services Directorate's *2022-23 Annual Report* included short written descriptions of activities undertaken by the DFSVO during the year. Reporting was consistent with the approach undertaken for the *2021-22 Annual Report*. Much of the reporting is on activity rather than on impacts. While some metrics have been cited information such as experiences through the various programs and changes in attitudes and behaviour arising from the programs and other activities have not been reported. It is also difficult to understand from annual report commentary whether performance expectations set in one reporting period have been met in the following period.

Grants and Sponsorship reporting

- 4.21 The *Annual Report Directions* require ACT Government agencies to report on community engagement and support initiatives, including funding provided through grants and sponsorship programs:

For the community support initiatives, reporting entities must provide descriptive information on the grants/assistance/sponsorship programs provided during the financial year. For each grants program, reporting entities must provide information on the recipient, project title, project purpose (summary) and amount of the grant.

ACT Women's Safety Grants

- 4.22 As discussed at paragraphs 3.73 to 3.76, CSD has provided grants to organisations through the ACT Women's Safety Grants initiative. These grants have been funded as a discrete initiative by the Safer Families Levy since 2021-22. Prior to this they were funded by two sources:
- the Confiscated Assets Trust under the *Confiscation of Criminal Assets Act 2003*; or
 - the budget of the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office, which is also supported by the Safer Families Levy.
- 4.23 The *2022-23 Annual Report* included a list of ACT Women's Safety Grants recipients for 2022-23. A brief description of the purpose of each project that was funded was included along with details of the recipient, the term of the grant and its amount. A brief description of each project was given, along with a link to the Community Services Directorate website, which provided brief additional detail on what each project is expected to deliver.

Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Grant Program

- 4.24 A similar approach to reporting was followed for the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Grant Program, which is managed by the DFSVO. It is noted, however, that this program is funded through Commonwealth funding sources, and does not include funding from the Safer Families Levy.

Recurrent grant funding

- 4.25 Recurrent grant funding managed by the DFSVO was also reported. A brief project purpose description was included for each project along with details of the recipient, the term of the grant and its amount. There is no information on the expected impacts of the project. Some of the projects reported do receive funding from the Safer Families Levy, but this was not clearly identified in the annual report.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reporting

- 4.26 The *Annual Report Directions* require ACT Government agencies to report on activities being undertaken for the purpose of the *ACT Agreement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs* (2019-2028):

Reporting entities must report annual progress under the ACT Agreement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (2019-2028) including programs, projects and/or initiatives that benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the ACT. This information should highlight areas where government programs and policies are making a positive difference to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the ACT.

- 4.27 The DFSVO provides information for reporting in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander section of the Community Services Directorate annual report. For the *2022-23 Annual Report*, this included information on the work of the Domestic Violence and Prevention Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group. The DFSVO reported that the Reference Group advised it on:

- the provision of dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander funding under the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Grants Program; and
- the implementation of Recommendation 4 of the *We Don't Shoot Our Wounded* report for services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have experienced domestic and family violence.

- 4.28 However, the extent to which this advice was considered and implemented, along with the impact on program design was not reported.

- 4.29 Reporting also included work undertaken in response to the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response report to develop a consultation plan for culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.



- 4.30 The *Annual Report Directions* require ACT Government agencies to report on community engagement and support initiatives, including funding provided through grants and sponsorship programs, and activities being undertaken for the purpose of the *ACT Agreement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (2019-2028)*. Community Services Directorate annual reports have included this information, as required.

Victim Support ACT annual reports

- 4.31 Victim Support ACT has also reported on the Family Violence Safety Action Program through ACT Human Rights Commission annual reports. The Family Violence Safety Action Program provides case management and support for individuals and families at high risk of violence (refer to paragraphs 3.39 to 3.53). The Victims of Crime Commissioner reported on their activities to support victims of domestic and family violence through the program in the ACT Human Rights Commission's *2022-23 Annual Report*. Reporting included information on:
- the history of the program;
 - intended benefits of the program;
 - case studies, as well as stakeholder and client feedback; and
 - measures of activity and sources of program referrals to provide an indication of cross-agency collaboration to refer clients to the program.
- 4.32 No performance targets have been identified for the Family Violence Safety Action Program. Victim Support ACT does have an Accountability Indicator related to the timeliness of actioning referrals received by the VOCC and Victim Support ACT to support victims of crime, but this is not relevant to the program, because the program has different referral arrangements for reports of domestic and family violence than for other criminal matters referred to the agency.
- 4.33 The Family Violence Safety Action Program is partly funded by the Safer Families Levy. This was disclosed when the program was funded as a budget initiative in the *2022-23 ACT Budget*. The Justice and Community Safety Directorate *2022-23 Annual Report* includes financial information about the Family Violence Safety Action Program, but does not disclose the program's funding sources.
- 4.34 In response to extracts of the draft proposed report, Victim Support ACT advised that:
- Victim Support ACT was not aware of the extent to which the funding was wholly or partly sourced from the Family Safety Levy. The HRC does not report in its Annual Report on its finances, this is done through the Annual Report of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate. ... The HRC suggests the administrator of the Levy is the agency to report on its allocation. Provided the HRC is made aware by the DFSVO that the Program is funded wholly or partly from the Family Safety Levy, the HRC would acknowledge this in its Annual Report.



- 4.35 Victim Support ACT has also reported on the Family Violence Safety Action Program through ACT Human Rights Commission annual reports. The program is intended to support victims at high risk of violence through increased collaboration between government and non-government agencies. It is partly funded through the Safer Families Levy. The ACT Human Rights Commission's *2022-23 Annual Report* provided some insights into program activity, along with some data to provide the public with information about the amount of collaboration between agencies to support and refer victims to the program. While Justice and Community Safety Directorate *2022-23 Annual Report* contains financial information about the Family Violence Safety Action Program, it does not disclose the program's funding sources.

Budget Outlook reporting

2023-24 Budget Outlook – Safer Families Appendix H

- 4.36 *Appendix H – Safer Families* of the *2023-24 ACT Budget Outlook* provides information on Safer Families initiatives. It includes both historical reporting on achievements and information on future priorities. The structure of the Appendix has remained relatively consistent since the first Appendix was published in the *2017-18 ACT Budget Outlook*. The Appendix includes the following information:

- background information and context about the Safer Families Levy;
- achievements in the prior year (2022-23);
- priorities for the year ahead (2023-24);
- longer-term priorities;
- financial data including:
 - a listing of Safer Families initiatives funded for the prior year (2022-23), along with budgeted and estimated actual expenditure for the year (Table H.1);
 - a listing of Safer Families initiatives in the *2023-24 ACT Budget* across the forward estimates (Table H.2). This shows estimated funding for each initiative for the next four years (2023-24 to 2026-27). At an aggregate level across the initiatives, it also shows the breakdown of funding according to source; the Safer Families Levy, Commonwealth funding from the National Partnership and consolidated revenue.
 - additional funding of initiatives from consolidated revenue (Table H.3). This is additional funding for Safer Families initiatives and other work oversights by the DFSVO.

- 4.37 The Audit Office reviewed *Appendix H – Safer Families* of the *2023-24 ACT Budget Outlook* and found:

- the Appendix is in narrative form and consists predominantly of key highlights for the year, rather than a structured explanation of progress against planned activity.

Commentary for what was achieved in 2022-23 does not clearly state what progress was made against the planned activity identified in Appendix H in the *2022-23 ACT Budget Outlook*. It also does not clearly state whether there were any changes to priorities. This is despite the financial data reported alongside this text in Table H.2 of the statement noting three initiatives having reprofiled funding from 2022-23 to 2023-24 for a total of \$1.156 million or approximately 13 per cent of the amount of Levy raised in 2023-24.

- priorities identified for 2023-24 lack performance targets or metrics that would assist in assessing achievements in future years. Many activities are identified as simply being continued.
- opening commentary of Appendix H discusses how Safer Families Levy funding is planned to be used with reference to high-level priorities for initiatives. The opening commentary and associated description change from year to year with little explanation and consists mainly of unstructured descriptions of highlights for the year ahead.
- Tables H.1, H.2, and H.3, which show financial data about Safer Families initiatives, is included in Appendix H without any commentary or analysis to inform users. These tables discuss the funding of Safer Families initiatives in different ways:
 - Table H.1, which shows Safer Families initiatives funded for the prior year (2022-23), shows the total budgeted and estimated actual expenditure for the year for each initiative, but only shows an aggregated amount of Safer Families Levy funding for the initiatives (which is less than the total budgeted and estimated outcome for the initiatives because of other sources of funding);
 - Table H.2, which shows estimated funding for Safer Families initiatives over the next four years (2023-24 to 2026-27), shows aggregated amounts of Safer Families Levy funding, Commonwealth funding and consolidated revenue funding for all the initiatives; and
 - Table H.3 shows additional consolidated revenue funding for Safer Families and other related initiatives such as implementing the ACT Government's response to the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Steering Committee's final report. The table shows aggregated amounts of Commonwealth funding and consolidated revenue funding for all the initiatives.



4.38 The *ACT Budget Outlook* includes an Appendix with information on Safer Families initiatives. *Appendix H – Safer Families* is a key source of public reporting on Safer Families initiatives and the Safer Families Levy. The Appendix includes information on achievements in the prior year, priorities for the year ahead and longer-term priorities. The Appendix is in narrative form and consists predominantly of key highlights for the year, rather than a structured explanation of progress against planned activity. Appendices are not easily comparable between years and do not constructively demonstrate the performance of Safer Families initiatives. Financial information is included without introduction or explanation to make it accessible to a diverse range of users.

Other reporting

Annual ministerial statements

Annual Safer Families Statement

4.39 The Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence provides an annual Safer Families Statement to the Legislative Assembly. The most recent was delivered in June 2023. It consists of reporting on a series of highlighted activities for the preceding year.

4.40 A review of the June 2023 statement shows the Minister reported on:

- grants activity;
- continuing or new programs; and
- policy and legislative reform.

4.41 Unlike in previous years, the June 2023 statement did not include structured headings to highlight key themes of work. It was a largely unstructured description of highlights. The June 2023 statement did not include any performance information. In previous ministerial statements there was reporting of performance information, but this was predominantly activity-based program information such as client numbers. The June 2023 statement did not include reporting on:

- planned performance for future years; or
- reporting of actual performance against planned performance.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program Annual Statement

4.42 In August 2023, the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence delivered the first Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program Annual statement. The Statement was predominantly focused on actions to implement the recommendations of the *Listen. Take Action to Prevent, Believe and Heal* report. The 2023 Annual Statement provided information on:

- awarding of funding for initiatives in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 ACT Budget;
- law reform;
- consultation activity;
- establishment of the Multidisciplinary Centre for sexual violence; (outcome)
- review of crisis services;
- Sexual Assault (Police) Review and associated police responses to sexual violence; and
- evaluation of the ACT Restorative Justice Unit.

4.43 The Annual Statement did not include performance information, but it did include information on a small number of high-level expected outcomes for initiatives in the statement. These expected outcomes are not sufficiently detailed to determine the success of initiatives in the future.



4.44 The annual Safer Families Statement is another key reporting mechanism on the implementation of Safer Families initiatives. It is delivered in the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. The 2023 statement provided a high-level report of a selection of grants, programs and policy and legislative reform work by ACT Government agencies. The 2023 statement was less structured than in previous years and did not provide information on planned, actual or future expected performance.



4.45 The first annual Sexual Assault Prevention and Response statement was delivered in August 2023. It focused predominantly on implementation activity arising from responding to the recommendations of the *Listen. Take Action to Prevent, Believe and Heal* report. It did not include planned performance information. Some high-level outcome statements were included but these are not sufficiently specific to determine the success of the initiatives.

Safer Families website

4.46 A further source of public reporting is via ACT Government webpages. Until March 2024, the *Safer Families* website¹⁴ was a page on the Community Services Directorate's website. The webpage was removed and restructured as part of the refresh of the ACT Government website.

4.47 Prior to this, it contained information on sources of assistance for people facing domestic and family violence along with links to service providers, information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and stories from people affected by domestic and family violence. A sub-page on the *Safer Families* website was titled "What is ACT Government doing?" This page included information on:

- the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office and the Coordinator-General;
- the Domestic Violence Prevention Council;
- the ACT Domestic and Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management Framework;
- various resources and publications;
- Family Domestic and Sexual Violence Grants; and
- the ACT Domestic and Family Violence Death Review.

¹⁴ [Domestic and Family Violence Support - Community Services \(act.gov.au\)](https://act.gov.au/domestic-and-family-violence-support-community-services)

- 4.48 Some of these pages were related to work funded by the Safer Families Levy. For example, the ACT Domestic and Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management Framework was an initiative funded through the levy to develop a framework for service practitioners who work with victims of domestic and family violence. The ACT Domestic and Family Violence Death Review webpage included the first biennial report of the ACT Domestic and Family Violence Review and was tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly in February 2024. However, neither of these activities acknowledge the support of the Safer Families Levy.
- 4.49 The Resources and Publications page of the *Safer Families* website included information on reviews and publications related to domestic and family violence in the ACT, including reports from the Domestic Violence Prevention Council. No information was given on this webpage about activity, progress or performance of initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy. There are no links to the relevant part of the ACT Budget, the ministerial statement or relevant directorate annual reports.
- 4.50 The *Safer Families* website and its sub-pages did not make any other reference to the Safer Families Levy and associated activities. No performance or progress information for initiatives funded by the levy was able to be clearly identified from this website.
- 4.51 The new ACT Government website has removed much of this information and now focuses on the role of the DFSVO, links to domestic and family violence services, the Domestic Violence Prevention Council and relevant ACT Government publications and reviews. No information on Safer Families initiatives, performance or expenditure is easily accessible from this website.
-  4.52 Until March 2024, the Community Services Directorate had a Safer Families website which contained information on sources of assistance for people facing domestic and family violence. This website included a webpage titled “What is ACT Government doing?” and had a series of subpages on select ACT Government activities relating to domestic and family violence. Some of these activities are funded through the Safer Families Levy. The webpages did not clearly identify to the community what work was being supported by the levy or inform the community on the progress or performance of initiatives funded through the levy. The new ACT Government website has no easily accessible information available on Safer Families initiatives, performance or expenditure.

Public reporting for domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy

- 4.53 The review of public reporting of domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy highlight the following issues:

- despite the role of the levy being to provide community support and to raise awareness of domestic violence in the ACT community, there is no single source of truth that provides easily accessible information on:
 - how the levy is spent;
 - what performance is expected or observed from Safer Families initiatives; and
 - where the public can receive more information on these activities;
- the structure of information reported through ACT Budget Outlooks reinforces the need for the community to refer to multiple documents and does not encourage reporting that faithfully represents agency performance;
- while there is a suite of reporting that is available each year on Safer Families initiatives, this reporting is not comparable or consistent over time, such that it can assist users form a view on performance over time;
- performance is often reported as a series of highlights, and it is not easy to discern what activities are new or ongoing; and
- expenditure reporting does not clearly indicate which sectors (e.g. community or government) or organisations have received funding through the Safer Families Levy or from Safer Families initiatives. Information from DFSVO data that helps to satisfy this need is included at Appendix A of this report.

Stakeholder views on public reporting of the Safer Families Levy

4.54 The Audit Office sought the views of community organisations on the quality of public reporting on the Safer Families Levy. Stakeholders advised:

- the Safer Families Statement in the ACT Budget Outlook is difficult to understand – both in terms of financial reporting as well as the details of specific Safer Families initiatives;
- the reasons for funding some initiatives are unclear from publicly reported information; and
- information on the performance of initiatives is lacking. The details of the implementation of the Family Safety Hub were a common area where there was a lack of understanding and there was a desire for better communication on this initiative.

4.55 Stakeholders advised that public reporting did not inform an understanding of the progress and outcomes of Safer Families initiatives.



4.56 Public reporting of domestic and family violence initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy does not easily facilitate community and stakeholder understanding of the use of the levy and performance of the Safer Families initiatives. While there is a suite of reporting that is available each year on Safer Families initiatives, the reporting is not comparable or consistent over time, such that it can assist users form a view on

performance over time. Performance is often reported as a series of highlights, and it is not easily discernible to understand what activities are new or ongoing. The needs of stakeholders for progress reporting and transparency of levy expenditure are not being met by existing reporting.



Recommendation 4

Safer Families Levy public reporting

The Community Services Directorate should, in cooperation with the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate and in consultation with the community services sector:

- a) review the current approach to financial reporting of initiatives funded through the Safer Families Levy to ensure there is comparable and informative reporting of how funds raised from the levy are used; and
- b) in conjunction with Recommendation 2(b), establish public performance reporting processes that show the planned and actual performance of initiatives along with analysis and explanation of any significant variations.

Appendix A: Safer Families initiatives expenditure data

Table A-1 provides information on the Safer Families initiatives that have been implemented since the commencement of the levy, along with recipient details and funded activities. Rows with bold figures are estimated outcome amounts reported in ACT Budget Outlooks 2016-17 – 2024-25. The ACT Budget Outlooks report estimated outcome amounts for the Safer Families Levy initiatives. These are estimated figures as the Budget Outlooks are produced prior to the end of the financial year. Rows below these are amounts disclosed by the relevant directorates. The totals of the figures disclosed by the directorates may differ from the Budget Outlook figures due to issues such as rollovers and top-ups.

The column titled 'Funding from the levy' reports whether a Safer Families initiative received support from the levy. The key is as follows: F – Fully supported by the levy, P – Partially supported by the levy (also received support from consolidated revenue or National Partnership funding), N – no levy support received, NR – extent of levy support not reported in the Budget Outlook.

Table A-1 Safer Families initiative funding

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
More support for families and inclusion – Delivering the Family Safety Hub	F	Totals in Budget Outlook			455	1469	1534	1333	1591	1613	1739
		Domestic Family Sexual Violence Office - FTE staffing funded for SOG A, SOG B, SOG C, ASO 4	DFSVO		243	731	1034	705	698	691	672
		Domestic Violence Crisis Service to deliver the Court Navigator Program	Domestic Violence Crisis Service						82	211	42

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
		Doris Women's Refuge to fund the Children's Support Worker	Doris Women's Refuge							60	
		Women's Legal Centre to fund the Health Justice Partnership Pilot	Women's Legal Centre				250	264	342		
		Chief Minister Treasury Economic Development Directorate - Frontline Worker Training	Chief Minister Treasury Economic Development Directorate			27					
		Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate - Frontline Worker Training	Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate			31					
		Justice and Community Safety Directorate - Frontline Worker Training	Justice and Community Safety Directorate			125					
		Reason Group Contractors consultants to develop an evaluation framework to guide the evaluation of the Family Safety Hub's work.	Reason Group Contractors		177	178					
		Mentally Friendly Pty Ltd to co-design and undertake a	Mentally Friendly Pty Ltd			86					

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
		discovery phase of the second Family Safety Hub Challenge.									
		Think Place to establish and design the Family Safety Hub	Think Place		35	79					
		A contracted individual to support the Family Safety Hub team to undertake data collection analysis of the pilot testing of the Health Justice Partnerships	Individual contractor			26					
		Health Justice Australia to provide advisory and support services to the Health Justice Partnerships Pilot.	Health Justice Australia			66					
		Funding provided to Canberra Police Community Youth Club to fund the Solid Ground Pilot.	Canberra Police Community Youth Club							100	278
		University of Sydney - to evaluate the Children's Family Violence Pilot	University of Sydney							91	
		ARTD Pty Ltd - to review the Health Justice Partnership program.	ARTD Pty Ltd							54	15

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
		Social Ventures Australia Limited to review the Got Your Back program	Social Ventures Australia Limited							22	
		Friday the Collective - to build a website that provides easily accessible information, advice, and help for people experiencing or supporting others experiencing DFV in the ACT	Friday the Collective							72	
		Shanti Works Consulting Group to consult on the system design of the Multi-Disciplinary Centre	Shanti Works Consulting Group						3		
		Care Australia to deliver a program to Build Capability of Community Sector Staff to Better Recognise and Respond to Financial Abuse	Care Australia						60		
		Relationships Australia to deliver the Youth Sector Training	Relationships Australia						210		
		Australian Childhood Foundation to deliver the Children's Family Violence Pilot	Australian Childhood Foundation						196		615

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
		Funding provided to Legal Aid ACT to deliver the Court Navigator Program	Legal Aid ACT			120	250	364		312	62
		WWILD to provide training to DFSV sector workers in supporting people with intellectual and cognitive disabilities	WWILD								55
Additional resources for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre	NR	Totals in Budget Outlook		100	103	105	108	111	114	117	120
		Funding provided to the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC) to fund additional resources within the CRCC; Crisis Intervention (Counselling and Education) service	CRCC	100	103	105	108	111	114	117	120
Additional resources for the Domestic Violence Crisis Service	NR	Totals in Budget Outlook		200	205	210	215	220	226	232	238
		Funding provided to Domestic Violence Crisis Service to meet growing demand for a range of services, including telephone and outreach support, information, advocacy, safety support and assistance with civil and criminal court processes.	DVCS	200	205	210	215	220	226	232	238

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
Early assistance for families at risk of violence (Room4Change)	NR	Totals in Budget Outlook		228	351	385					
		Funding provided to the Domestic Violence Crisis Service - to fund the Room4Change program	DVCS	228	351	385					
Continuing the delivery of the Room4Change program	F	Totals in Budget Outlook					456	1209	1229	1251	1450
		Funding provided to Domestic Violence Crisis Service to continue delivery of the Room4Change program.	DVCS				456	1209	1229	1251	1450
Enhancing access to justice for non-English speakers	P	Totals in Budget Outlook		39	85	94	100	100	100	100	100
		Funding provided to support the provision of translating and interpreting services for the ACT Law Courts and Tribunal as well as for specialist ACT family violence services.	ACT Law Courts and Tribunal	39	85	94	100	100	100	100	100
Safer families team	F	Totals in Budget Outlook		873	1030	909	746	765	784	804	824
		Funding provided to the Domestic Family Sexual Violence Office - Community Services Directorate for FTE staffing of the Safer Families Team. This specifically goes towards, 1 FTE Coordinator-	DFSVO	873	1030	909	746	765	784	804	824

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
		General, 1 FTE ASO4, 1 FTE ASO6 and 1 FTE SOGA.									
Reducing the risk of deaths from family violence	F	Totals in Budget Outlook					87	236	243	247	249
		Funding provided to the Domestic Family Sexual Violence Office - Community Services Directorate to fund the establishment of the Death Review Team in FY2019-20 and FTE staff for the Death Review team - 1 FTE SOGB and 0.5 FTE ASO5 in the following years.	DFSVO				87	236	243	247	249
Delivering family-centred responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families impacted by family violence	F	Totals in Budget Outlook					100	160			
		Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Office - Community Services Directorate to develop family-centred responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families impacted by family violence and to deliver further actions responding to the We Don't Shoot Our Wounded and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Forum: Domestic and Family Violence reports	DFSVO				100	160			

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
Strengthening domestic and family violence responses for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community	P	Totals in Budget Outlook							146	306	
		Domestic Family Sexual Violence Office - Community Services Directorate to fund 1 SOGC FTE identified position to support the delivery of the recommendations from the We Don't Shoot Our Wounded and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Forum: Domestic and Family Violence reports and to remunerate members of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Expert Reference Group	DFSVO						146		
		Funding provided to Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Office (CSD) to fund family violence training to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers or community and a Women's Service to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children impacted by family violence	DFSVO							306	

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
Support for women and children to leave violence	F	Totals in Budget Outlook		30	85	100	100	103	226	232	238
		Funding provided to Housing ACT - Community Services Directorate to fund the Safer Families Assistance Grants	Housing ACT	4	26	168	276	218	202	312	
Training in domestic violence for frontline workers	F	Totals in Budget Outlook				415	692	1000			
		YWCA - deliver the DFV Training	YWCA Canberra				7	4			
		Women's Legal Centre - facilitate and deliver DFV Training	Women's Legal Centre				38	62			
		Domestic Violence Crisis Service - facilitate and deliver the DFV Training	Domestic Violence Crisis Service			38	49	202			
		University of New South Wales - develop the evaluation framework for the DFV Training	University of New South Wales					55			
		An individual contractor for the graphic design the module of the frontline training	Individual contractor			17	14				
		An individual contractor for the design of the E-Learn DFV training modules	Individual contractor					16			

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
		An individual contractor to deliver DFV foundation training	Individual contractor				7				
		Spring Green Consulting consultants to develop a capability framework, implementation plan, outcomes framework and evaluation plan for the DFV Training	Spring Green Consulting				5				
		Quality and Quantitative Research to provide project advice and deliver community/stakeholder workshops	Quality and Quantitative Research				21				
		Funding distributed directly to ACT Government Directorates to deliver family violence training to frontline staff responding to incidents of family violence across all areas of government, including health, education, community services and justice.	Community Services Directorate, Chief Minister Treasury Economic Development Directorate, Justice and Community Safety Directorate, Education			360	551	661			

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
Training ACT Government frontline workers to respond to family violence	F	Totals in Budget Outlook Funding distributed to ACT Government Directorates to deliver family violence training to ACT public servants.	Directorate, Health Directorate, Environmental Planning Sustainable Development Directorate, and the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate								
			Chief Minister Treasury Economic Development Directorate, Justice and Community Safety Directorate, Education Directorate, Health Directorate, Environmental Planning Sustainable						572	567	
									572	365	

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
			Development Directorate, and the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate								
		Funding provided to University of New South Wales to evaluate the ACT Government Domestic and Family Violence Training Strategy	University of New South Wales							42	
		Domestic Family Sexual Violence Office - Community Services Directorate - contracted to the YWCA deliver the ACT Government Domestic and Family Violence Training	DFSVO							160	
Integrated Family Safety Information Sharing and Risk Assessment	F	Totals in Budget Outlook						180	83	84	
		Domestic Violence Crisis Service to support the Family Violence Safety Action Pilot	Domestic Violence Crisis Service					110			
		Victims of Crime - Justice and Community Safety Directorate - Family Violence Safety Action Pilot	Victims of Crime					70			

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
		Funding provided to Domestic Family Sexual Violence Office - Community Services Directorate to fund a Specialist DFV Advisor	DFSVO						83	84	
Strengthening Sexual Assault Prevention and Response	P	Totals in Budget Outlook							80	20	20
		Funding provided to Domestic Family Sexual Violence Office (DFSVO) - Community Services Directorate to provide remuneration to victim-survivors who participated in DFSVO's consultations	DFSVO						80	20	20
Family Violence Safety Action Program	P	Totals in Budget Outlook							249	1801	1830
		Funding provided to Victim Support ACT - Justice and Community Safety Directorate to deliver the Family Violence Safety Action Program	Victim Support ACT							1490	1508
		Funding provided to Domestic Violence Crisis Service to deliver the Family Violence Safety Action Program	Domestic Violence Crisis Service						249	311	322

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
Critical domestic and family violence support in health and community settings	P	Totals in Budget Outlook							940	974	981
		Funding provided to Legal Aid ACT - Justice and Community Safety Directorate to deliver the Health Justice Partnerships	Legal Aid ACT						432	433	398
		Funding provided to Women's Legal Centre to deliver the Health Justice Partnerships	Women's Legal Centre						448	541	583
		Consultant and other	Consultant and other						60		
Safer Families Collaboration Program	F	Totals in Budget Outlook							335	340	346
		Funding provided to the Domestic Violence Crisis Service to fund the DVCS Liaison Co-location service within Child Youth Protection Services	Domestic Violence Crisis Service						275	280	302
		Safe and Together Training - CYF	ACT Child and Youth Protection Services						60	60	44
Frontline domestic violence and rape crisis services	F	Totals in Budget Outlook							759	458	465
		Funding provided to the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre to fund the Crisis	Canberra Rape Crisis Centre						433	283	287

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
		Intervention, Counselling and Education service									
		Domestic Violence Crisis Service to address sustained demand of the services	Domestic Violence Crisis Service						326	175	178
ACT Women's Safety Grants	F	Totals in Budget Outlook							100	100	100
		ALO - Enlightened Women Incorporated - Safety through increased capability - car maintenance for women	ALO - Enlightened Women Incorporated						3		
		Roundabout Canberra Limited – Children's emergency relief package supporting women	Roundabout Canberra Limited						12		
		Tjilari Justice Aboriginal Corporation - Supporting our kids through family violence	Tjilari Justice Aboriginal Corporation						5		
		ACT Disability Aged & Carer Advocacy Service Limited - Women's voices project	ACT Disability Aged & Carer Advocacy Service Limited						20		
		YWCA Canberra - ACT for Respect at Workplaces	YWCA Canberra						20		
		Women Centre for Health Matters - Working with parents and carers to help	Women Centre for Health Matters						20		

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
		prevent gender-based violence									
		Maternal Health Matters - Respectful Maternity care - a video for Women and Health Professionals	Maternal Health Matters						10		
		Tuggeranong Community Arts Association - Unity and Diversity Arts Program	Tuggeranong Community Arts Association						10		
		Apayi Charitable Organisation Inc - Community Conversations and Information Sessions around Family violence issues within the South Sudanese Equatoria Community	Apayi Charitable Organisation Inc							15	
		Women's Legal Centre ACT & Region Inc - New edition and design - Women's Safety Card	Women's Legal Centre ACT & Region Inc							3	
		Community Services Number 1 - When not saying No does not Mean Yes	Community Services #1							15	
		Mental Health for Mob Pty Ltd - Mental Health for Mob	Mental Health for Mob Pty Ltd							20	
		Canberra Rape Crisis Centre Incorporated - Sexual Assault	Canberra Rape Crisis Centre							20	

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
		Prevention Education (SAPE) Young People									
		Domestic Violence Crisis Service - Consult @ DVCS	Domestic Violence Crisis Service							13	
		Tjilari Justice Aboriginal Corporation - Yarwun Ballan	Tjilari Justice Aboriginal Corporation							1	
		Beryl Women Incorporated - Women's Program	Beryl Women Incorporated							5	
		Women Centre for Health Matters	Women Centre for Health Matters								20
		Spirit Hive	Spirit Hive								15
		ALO – Enlightening Women Incorporated	ALO – Enlightening Women Incorporated								13
		Beseda the Czechlovak Australian Association of Canberra and Region, Inc.	Beseda the Czechlovak Australian Association of Canberra and Region, Inc.								3
		YMCA Canberra	YMCA Canberra								20

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
		Domestic Violence Crisis Services	Domestic Violence Crisis Services								30
Data System to support Death Review	F	Totals in Budget Outlook								200	
		Domestic Family Sexual Violence Office - Community Services Directorate to fund the Death Review Database	DFSVO							200	
Providing support to people escaping domestic and family violence	F	Totals in Budget Outlook								310	310
		Funding provided to the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre to meet increases in demand	Canberra Rape Crisis Centre							155	155
		Funding provided to the Domestic Violence Crisis Service to meet increases in demand	Domestic Violence Crisis Service							155	155
Implementing community-led family violence responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	P	Totals in Budget Outlook								106	471
		Funding provided to Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Office (CSD) to fund a family violence training to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers or community and a Women's Service to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait	DFSVO							106	471

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
		Islander women and children impacted by family violence									
Domestic and Family Violence Training and Resources	P	Totals in Budget Outlook To allocate the remaining money from the National Partnership Agreement (Cth), the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office opened the Family Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) grants round. In addition to receiving the Commonwealth funds, various mainstream and specialist services were provided supplementary funding for domestic and family violence capability building.	Queanbeyan Multilingual Centre Menslink Canberra Rape Crisis Centre Women's Legal Centre Legal Aid ACT Catholic Care Domestic Violence Crisis Service Beryl Women's Inc Toora Women's Inc Karralika Programs Incorporated							563	97
										17	
										20	
										30	
										6	
										16	
										175	
										80	
										6	
										58	
										28	

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
			Whispers Softball Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Group							25	
			Canberra Police Community Youth Club							15	
			Everyman Australia Incorporated							25	
			Yedding Mura Aboriginal Corporation							25	
			Doris Women's Refuge							3	
			Helping ACT							2	
			Racial and Religious Discrimination Legal Inc							1	
			Waterwombats Aquatic Disability Services							16	

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
Supporting new parents experiencing domestic and family violence	NR		Sisters in Spirit Aboriginal Corporation							25	
			Searms Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation							25	
			Youth Coalition of the ACT								97
			David Mandel and Associates								17
			Totals in Budget Outlook					739			
Extending the Family Safety Hub legal services pilot	F	Funding provided to Legal Aid to deliver the Health Justice Partnership Program	Legal Aid ACT					369			
		Funding provided to Women's Legal Centre to deliver the Health Justice Partnership Program	Women's Legal Centre					370			
		Totals in Budget Outlook					300				
		Funding provided to Women's Legal Centre to support the full evaluation of the service and build system capability of	Women's Legal Centre				150				

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
		the Health Justice Partnership Pilot									
		Funding provided to Legal Aid to support the full evaluation of the service and build system capability of the Health Justice Partnership Pilot	Legal Aid ACT				150				
Enhanced child protection case management and coordination	NR	Totals in Budget Outlook		863	642	481	360				
		Children Youth and Families to enhance quality assurance of child protection services through an Independent Case Analysis Team	Independent case analysis team	863	642	481	360				
Implementation of the Joint Australian Law Reform Commission and NSW Law Reform Commission Report on Family Violence	NR	Totals in Budget Outlook		383	358	358	242				
		Funding provided to the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to support the first stage of the ACT Government's implementation of the recommendations arising from the Australian Law Reform Commission and NSW Law Reform Commission joint report, Family Violence - A National Legal Response	Justice and Community Safety Directorate	383	358	358	242				

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
Improved access to Legal Aid	P	Totals in Budget Outlook		313	296	300	305				
		Funding provided to Legal Aid ACT for 2 FTE to increase the Legal Aid ACT's ability to provide legal assistance to victims of domestic and family violence who cannot afford the cost of private legal representation	Legal Aid ACT	313	296	300	305				
Reportable conduct scheme for employees	NR	Totals in Budget Outlook		473	897	288	293				
		C/w Commonwealth Ombudsman (ACT) to develop a reportable conduct scheme to improve oversight of organisations responding to allegations of child abuse	C/w Ombudsman (ACT)	473	897	288	293				
Stronger criminal justice responses	NR	Totals in Budget Outlook		355	366	318	235				
		Funding provided to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) - Justice and Community Safety Directorate to fund 2 prosecutors to enhance DPP to institute and conduct prosecutions of alleged domestic and family violence perpetrators	Director of Public Prosecutions	355	366	318	235				

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
Stronger police support for family violence victims	P	Totals in Budget Outlook		281	295	300	304				
		Funding provided to the ACT Policing - Justice and Community Safety Directorate for 2 x Family Violence First Nations Liaison Officers to allow a culturally sensitive perspective to be applied to investigations involving First Nations people	ACT Policing	281	295	300	304				
		Totals in Budget Outlook		292	208	500	142				
Support and referral through specialist drug and alcohol treatment services	NR	Increasing the capacity of specialist drug treatment services to deliver programs that integrate best practice in addressing family violence	ATODA	292	208		63	188			
			Leeienn Health Consultants Pty Ltd			200					
			Toora Women's Inc					10			
			Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services Ltd					333			
Integrated case management	F	Totals in Budget Outlook		74							
		Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Office to develop	DFSVO	74							

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
		and implement a centralised and integrated case management and case coordination unit for victims of family violence in the ACT, whose needs are often diverse and complex									
Trauma Understanding and Sensitive Teaching (TRUST) Project	N (Existing ED resources)	Totals in Budget Outlook		60	80						
		Funding provided to the Australian National University to deliver the Trauma Understanding and Sensitive Teaching (TRUST) Project	Australian National University	60	80						
Contribution to the Tara Costigan Foundation	P	Totals in Budget Outlook		40							
		Funding provided to the Tara Costigan Foundation to contribute to the provision of a free domestic and family violence caseworker service	Tara Costigan Foundation	40							
Improving information sharing for government and service delivery agencies	NR	Totals in Budget Outlook		15							
		Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Office to increase the awareness of government and non-government service delivery agencies regarding information sharing	DFSVO	15							

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
Risk assessment tool	NR	Totals in Budget Outlook		50							
		Funding provided to the Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Office to develop a common risk assessment tool that will assist ACT Government agencies and services providers to identify those at risk of domestic and family violence	DFSVO	50							
Health Justice Partnership	F	Totals in Budget Outlook									112
			Women's Legal Centre								112
Further investment into frontline domestic, family and sexual violence services	P	Totals in Budget Outlook									2,663
			Housing ACT– Safer Family Grant Reimbursement								130
			Doris Women's Refuge Inc								150
			Queanbeyan Multilingual Centre Inc								417
			YWCA Canberra								341

Safer Families initiative	Funding from the levy	Activity	Recipient	2016 -17 (\$'000)	2017 -18 (\$'000)	2018 -19 (\$'000)	2019 -20 (\$'000)	2020 -21 (\$'000)	2021 -22 (\$'000)	2022 -23 (\$'000)	2023 -24 (\$'000)
			Domestic Violence Crisis Service								770
			Toora Women Inc								350
			Canberra Rape Crisis Centre								505

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