



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

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Inquiry into Domestic and Family Violence—Policy approaches and responses

Submission No. 22
ACT Government

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Deputy Chief Minister



Member for Ginninderra
Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development
Minister for Housing and Suburban Development
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence
Minister for Women
Minister for Sport and Recreation

Dr Andréa Cullen
Secretary, Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
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Dear Dr Cullen

I write to provide to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety the ACT Government's Submission to the Inquiry into Domestic and Family Violence – Policy approaches and responses (the Inquiry).

The submission to the Inquiry outlines current ACT Government initiatives, policies and responses to preventing and addressing domestic and family violence in the ACT.

In 2016, the ACT Government refocused its efforts to combat domestic and family violence with a comprehensive reform agenda. The \$23.5 million Safer Families package represents an unprecedented investment for the ACT and the first time that there has been such a dedicated, whole of government and across community commitment to address domestic and family violence.

Attached is the ACT Government Submission to the Inquiry. I look forward to an early indication of when the Committee is intending to hold hearings into this Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Yvette Berry MLA
Deputy Chief Minister

22 SEP 2017

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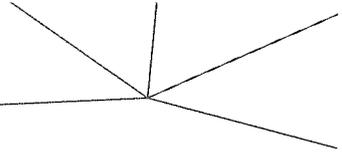
ACT
Government

ACT GOVERNMENT SUBMISSION

INQUIRY INTO DOMESTIC
AND FAMILY VIOLENCE—
POLICY APPROACHES AND
RESPONSES

ACT GOVERNMENT

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ANROWS	Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety
ATODA	Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT
CMA	Capital Metro Agency
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CYPS	Child and Youth Protection Services
DVPC	Domestic Violence Prevention Council
FVEIC	Family Violence Evidence in Chief
FVIP	Family Violence Intervention Program
JACS	Justice and Community Safety
NAHA	National Affordable Housing Agreement
NHHA	National Housing and Homelessness Agreement
NPA	National Partnership Agreement (on Legal Assistance Services)
NPAH	National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness
NDVO	National Domestic Violence Order
NOSPI	National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions
PBL	Positive Behaviours for Learning
RAST	Risk Assessment Screening Tool
TIS	Translation and Interpreter Service
TRUST	Trauma Understanding and Sensitive Teaching in Schools
YPOP	Young People's Outreach Program

ACT GOVERNMENT SUBMISSION

INQUIRY INTO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE—POLICY APPROACHES AND RESPONSES

INTRODUCTION

Domestic, family and sexual violence can have a devastating impact on individuals, families and communities. The ACT Government remains committed to the prevention of family violence, including domestic violence and sexual assault. Governments across Australia are united in their commitment to action and this reflects the growing intolerance for domestic and family violence in the community.

Family violence is a complex and challenging area of law, policy and service delivery. The ACT Government acknowledges the significant effort of people working in the family violence, child protection and service sector every day to support victims and families.

In 2016, the Government refocused its efforts to combat domestic and family violence with a comprehensive reform agenda. It is an agenda that seeks to engage the whole community in the response and ultimately in achieving zero tolerance to domestic and family violence in the ACT. This ambitious goal will take action and commitment from the whole community. It will need to be directly informed by the experience of victims of domestic and family violence and will require collaboration across the government, community and private sectors.

Three major reports on domestic and family violence were released in 2016, and provided a broad picture of the impact of domestic and family violence in the ACT and the barriers to improving crisis responses and prevention and early intervention. These were:

- > *Report of the Inquiry: Review into the system level responses to family violence in the ACT*¹ by Laurie Glanfield (the Glanfield Inquiry).
- > *Review of Domestic and Family Violence Deaths in the ACT*² from the Domestic Violence Prevention Council (the Death Review).
- > *Domestic Violence Service System Gap Analysis Project Final Report*³ (March 2016) prepared by the Community Services Directorate (the Gap Analysis).

¹ http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/883484/ACT-Government-Response_family_violence.pdf

² http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/864714/DVPC-Review-of-Domestic-and-Family-Violence-Deaths.pdf

³ http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/data/assets/word_doc/0009/864711/ACT-Domestic-Violence-Service-System-Final-Gap-Analysis-Report.DOCX

There were consistent themes across the reports that have shaped the reform agenda.

The *ACT Government Response to Family Violence*⁴ responded to all three reports and is the guiding document for the ACT's policy approaches and responses to domestic and family violence. The Response is built around five themes: leadership and cultural change, prevention and early intervention, information sharing, collaboration and integration, and transparency and accountability.

The Response highlighted priority actions for the ACT Government as part of the broader commitment to address family violence:

- > appointing the first, full-time Coordinator-General for Family Safety to lead change and provide accountability across the service system;
- > implementing a collaborative and integrated approach to services through a dedicated Family Safety Hub;
- > authorising information sharing and collaborative practices; and
- > developing a skilled and educated workforce, especially frontline staff, to respond to the needs of adults and children experiencing family violence.

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.

This is an unprecedented investment for the ACT and the first time that there has been such a dedicated, interconnected, whole of government and across community commitment to address domestic and family violence. Importantly, the commitment and reform program commits to a new model for integration across Government and with the community sector led by a dedicated Coordinator-General for Family Safety.

The focus of the *Safer Families* package is a more integrated response to individuals and families dealing with violence. It delivers initial investments to address the increase in reporting of domestic and family violence and demand for support across policing, prosecutions and crisis services. Over time it will cultivate a system that is more person and family centred and able to respond to the diverse needs across our community. It will build confidence so that more people seek help⁵ and greater capability for early intervention with families at risk of violence.

Change of this magnitude takes long term effort and an approach to implementation that is focused on learning from what works and what doesn't, refining and adapting and trying again.

This submission describes the key aspects of this new approach and ways in which it is improving the ACT's capacity to respond to and prevent domestic and family violence.

⁴ http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/883484/ACT-Government-Response_family_violence.pdf

⁵ Health Outcomes International (2014) *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022 – Evaluation Plan*.

TERMS OF REFERENCE (A)

THE ADEQUACY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF CURRENT POLICY APPROACHES AND RESPONSES IN PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IN THE ACT.

ACT PLANS, STRATEGIES AND REVIEWS

Plans and Strategies

ACT Strategy to Prevent Violence against Women and Children 2011-2017

The ACT Government has a long-standing commitment to reducing violence against women and their children. The *ACT Strategy to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children 2011-17* (ACT Strategy) is aligned with the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (National Plan) (see Terms of Reference (d)). It aims to:

- > reduce violence against women and children;
- > promote a non-discriminatory and anti-violence culture with equal and respectful relationships;
- > increase the proportion of women and children who feel safe both inside and outside their homes;
- > provide holistic responses through joined-up systems and services;
- > hold men who use violence to account and work to change their behaviour;
- > increase the number of women and children subjected to violence who engage with the criminal justice system; and
- > reduce the rates of homelessness for women and children subjected to violence.

The ACT Strategy has been progressed through implementation plans, with the Second Implementation Plan currently nearing completion. Delivery of the ACT Strategy will be finalised at the end of 2017. The focus will continue in future years through the ACT's commitments under the National Plan's Third Action Plan (Third Action Plan). This will reduce duplication of reporting requirements, allowing the ACT to focus more attention on supporting the initiatives that were identified in the Safer Families package.

ACT Women's Plan 2016-26 and the First Action Plan

The Government recognises that gender equality is at the core of the problem of violence against women, including domestic and family violence and it is at the heart of the solution. The primary policy framework for gender equality is the ACT Women's Plan 2016-26 (Women's Plan). It sets out the ACT Government's ongoing commitment to work in partnership with non-government organisations, business and the broader community towards gender equality for all ACT Women. It outlines priority areas for action and a structure for how work will be progressed to enhance the economic status, social inclusion, safety and wellbeing of ACT women, particularly groups of women subject to multiple layers of discrimination.

The Women's Plan is being implemented through a series of three year action plans. The focus areas of the First Action Plan 2017-19 are equity and wellbeing, and physical and mental health. Moving forward, subsequent actions plans will focus on housing and homelessness, safety, economic security and leadership.

Policy and Practice Reviews

A number of community and government initiatives provided the catalyst for the ACT Government to re-frame the approach to domestic and family violence in 2015-16.

In April 2015, the Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC) held an Extraordinary Meeting that was attended by members of the community, the Legislative Assembly and the ACT Public Service. Following the Extraordinary Meeting, the DVPC released a report outlining a number of recommendations, and the ACT Government released a response to that report in August 2015. Concurrently, the DVPC prepared the *Review of Domestic and Family Violence Deaths in the ACT*⁶, released in April 2016 and the ACT Government commenced a review into service system gaps in the ACT, which was informed by a literature review of international best practice. That review resulted in the *Domestic Violence Service System Gap Analysis Project Final Report*⁷ being released in March 2016.

Additionally, on 22 February 2016 Laurie Glanfield was engaged to review system level responses to family violence in the ACT following a series of tragic family violence-related deaths. This inquiry resulted in the *Report of the Inquiry: Review into the system level responses to family violence in the ACT*⁸ published in April 2016.

In June 2016, the ACT Government released the ACT Government Response to Family Violence, which responded to all the reports and outlined a new, comprehensive approach to domestic and family violence in the ACT.

ACT APPROACHES AND RESPONSES TO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

The Government is progressing a multi-pronged approach to respond to domestic and family violence in the ACT through the ACT Government Response to Family Violence and the Safer Families package. The Safer Families package was funded in 2016-17 and was expanded in 2017-18. The Government Response presented two transformational shifts in the way that domestic and family violence is managed in the ACT.

The first shift is to a legislative framework that provides much stronger protections for victims of domestic and family violence through the *Family Violence Act 2016* and the *Reportable Conduct and Information Sharing Legislation Amendment Act 2016*. Together, these amendments broadened the definition of what constitutes domestic and family violence, and when information should be shared about violent incidences involving children.

The second shift is to create a dedicated Coordinator-General for Family Safety (Coordinator-General). The first full-time Coordinator-General commenced on 31 October 2016. The creation of this role demonstrates the Government's commitment to reform in its response to domestic and family violence. The Coordinator-General will be responsible for embedding a whole of government approach and changing the way Government works with non-government services and the Canberra community.

The following sections outline the ACT approach in more detail within the following categories:

- pPrevention and early intervention

⁶ http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/864714/DVPC-Review-of-Domestic-and-Family-Violence-Deaths.pdf

⁷ http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/data/assets/word_doc/0009/864711/ACT-Domestic-Violence-Service-System-Final-Gap-Analysis-Report.DOCX

⁸ http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/883484/ACT-Government-Response_family_violence.pdf

- perpetrator programs or interventions
- crisis and post-crisis response
- cultural change and system improvements

The following sections describe the full response in each area, and are not limited to the new initiatives specifically funded under Safer Families. The ACT Government and the community sector are delivering a range of other programs to address domestic and family violence and some important initiatives have been in place for a number of years.

While initiatives are classified into prevention, early intervention or crisis response, it should be noted that one initiative may have multiple outcomes. For example, an initiative to train health professionals to better recognise and respond to people experiencing domestic and family violence might fall into the categories of early intervention, crisis response and cultural change. Early intervention would occur if a health professional identified a woman who is at risk of experiencing violence, however, it would be a crisis response if the women presented to the health professional having been assaulted. Cultural change stems from increased awareness and identification of domestic and family violence, which is facilitated through training the health professional.

Prevention and early intervention

Prevention

Gender equality and community awareness

Promoting gender equality and raising community awareness of the importance of the issue underpins the ACT's approach to prevention of violence against women, including domestic, family and sexual violence. This aligns with the best international evidence, described in the OurWatch report below.

Prevention work is ultimately about attitudinal and cultural change, which means it is long-term and intergenerational. It also requires a multi-faceted approach to effect change across all parts of our community.

Gender inequality and violence against women

“Research has found that factors associated with gender inequality are the most consistent predictors of violence against women, and explain its gendered patterns.

These factors are termed the gendered drivers of violence against women. They should always be considered together with other forms of social discrimination and disadvantage.

The gendered drivers arise from gender discriminatory institutional, social and economic structures, social and cultural norms, and organisational, community, family and relationship practices that together create environments in which women and men are not considered equal, and violence against women is tolerated and even condoned.

Within this context, the following particular expressions of gender inequality have been shown in the international evidence to be most consistently associated with higher levels of violence against women: condoning of violence against women; men’s control of decision-making and limits to women’s independence; rigid gender roles and identities; male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women.”⁹

As part of the ACT strategy to promote gender equality, the Office for Women is working to embed gender analysis in ACT Government decision-making processes. This will ensure that there is a specific assessment of the impact of policy on women across all areas of ACT Government activity. Under the *First Action Plan 2017-19* of the *ACT Women’s Plan 2016-2026*, the Government has committed to researching and developing Gender Impact Statements for use across Directorates. This will be complemented by a review of past training modules on Gender Impact Statements to develop recommendations for implementation.

To engage the community more broadly in a conversation about gender equality and ending violence against women, the ACT Government supports the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. This is an international campaign seeking to galvanise action to end violence against women and girls. It runs from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day, to highlight that violence against women is a human rights abuse.

In 2016, the ACT Government participated in the 16 Days campaign, including through a social media campaign and other community activities. High profile champions of gender equality provided support to the campaign and messages distributed through social media. In 2017, the ACT Government will again participate in the campaign.

Community-led prevention

Gender equality is not something that will be achieved by government action alone. The Government provides a range of grants, awards, leadership programs and scholarships to support community leadership on gender equality. These include:

- > ACT Women’s Awards;
- > ACT Violence Prevention Awards;
- > ACT Women’s Safety Grants;

⁹ Our Watch, Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia.

- > Audrey Fagan Young Women's Enrichment Grants;
- > Audrey Fagan Leadership Program; and
- > Audrey Fagan Churchill Fellowship.

Since 2015-16, through the Women's Safety Grants, the Government has been supporting community-led projects to advance the priorities of the *ACT Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children Strategy 2011-17*. Organisations can apply for funding of up to \$15,000 to support their projects. In 2016-17, \$100,000 was available.

Examples of activities funded through this program include:

- > the production of pamphlets and workshops in the Chinese language in the area of the prevention of violence against women and children;
- > lunch time educational sessions within the construction, building and automotive industries in the Canberra region with the aim of preventing domestic and family violence;
- > a project targeted towards children and young people to develop skills in communication, problem solving and relationship building with the aim of preventing domestic and family violence;
- > support for the participation of year nine and ten students in the YWCA leadership program 'She Leads High Conference' to empower young women to take on leadership and decision making roles;
- > the development of two videos featuring women, children and men from a diverse range of backgrounds and sectors of the Canberra community that explain why it matters how we speak about intimate partner and family violence;
- > a prevention of intimate partner and sexual violence in LGBTIQ communities project utilising a bystander approach to prevention; and
- > a project to provide online training for workers in the disability sector to understand the nature and effect of violence on women with disabilities, how to identify if women may be victims of violence, as well as how to assist them to improve the safety of women with disabilities in group accommodation settings and the wider community.

School-based prevention

The Education Directorate aims to ensure that approaches to the primary prevention of domestic and family violence occur at all levels within schools—including the universal (school-wide), selected (class or group) and targeted (small group or individual) levels. A primary prevention approach in schools aims to effect long term cultural change, through educating children and young people to: build attitudes, norms and behaviour that do not accept violence; understand the drivers of violence; and be equipped with skills that assist them to form healthy and respectful relationships. Teachers are in a privileged position in their work with students as, in many cases, they have established and positive relationships with their students.

In 2015 and 2016, the ACT Government provided funding to each ACT public school to develop and embed social and emotional learning programs in their schools. Social and Emotional Learning approaches enable students to acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to manage their emotions and relationships. The Directorate's Safe and Supportive Schools Policy (2016) requires schools to teach SEL approaches.

The Federal Government is currently designing resources for respectful relationships education for all schools to use across Australia. ACT has contributed to this work and other National work in this area and will focus on supporting schools in this content area. This will include assisting schools to understand

respectful relationships education and developing their knowledge regarding available high quality curriculum resources to facilitate a whole school approach.

Earlier intervention

Early intervention with families

There are a range of programs and services for families in need of support across the ACT. Two new innovative family-centred pilots are showing promise in providing a family-centred early intervention response to domestic and family violence.

The ACT Government has committed \$2.7 million over three years for the pilot of Room4Change, an innovative residential behaviour change program for men who use or are at risk of using violence, being delivered by the Domestic Violence Crisis Service. The funding includes \$228,000 in program funds and \$1.8 million for housing stock. The model provides a support to the whole family and fundamental element of this pilot is support to assist women and children to stay in the family home where it is safe to do so.

Men participate in the program for up to six months, including a 20-week behaviour change program. These men may stay in Room4Change accommodation or reside within their own homes. Rehabilitation involves intensive case coordination, case management, group work, individual counselling, development of living skills and referral. The case management and support services commenced on 1 April 2017 and the residential component commenced on 9 May 2017. As at 30 June 2017, 14 men were participating in the program with seven accommodated in the dedicated residential component. Ten women and 11 children were being supported through the program. When fully operational, Room4Change will provide services for up to 20 men in nine properties, while also supporting a minimum of 12 families to stay at home at any one time.

There will be regular reporting on the number of families supported by the program. An independent research organisation will assist Domestic Violence Crisis Service to develop the evaluation framework and outcomes measures, with an evaluation due by June 2019.

Another innovative, family-centred approach is being tested through the Justice Reinvestment Trial. In 2015 the ACT Government committed to co-designing a Justice Reinvestment Trial to deliver a family-focused approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in contact with the justice system. The co-design process involved consultation with government, the community sector, academia and people with lived experience of the justice system. The overwhelming message from this process was to focus the trial on children who have a family member in contact with the justice system and to respond to the whole family. The ACT Government has directed \$850,000 from the Confiscated Assets Trust Fund to support the trial. A key priority for the trial will be to examine how the services and supports delivered can impact on the incidence of domestic and family violence. The trial will also deliver additional resources to Aboriginal-run organisations, the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and ACT Policing.

The ACT Government has also provided funding to Winnunga Nimmityjah Health Service to deliver an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Safety Program. The project includes the development of a policy and safety plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children in the ACT. The project will be used as a platform to raise awareness of safety matters within the community, provide education, and refer clients into appropriate internal and external services.

Early intervention with children

A key platform for early intervention with children in the ACT is the Child and Family Centres. These centres are ACT Government service providers that aim to:

- > positively influence the developmental pathways and life trajectory of children;
- > build capacity and resilience of families to support their children; and
- > strengthen the linkages and connections of families to supportive communities.

Child and Family Centres are accessible to all families with young children. Child and Family Centres support families to access the services they need, including referral to specialist services. Children and families are supported through a tailored service offer to meet family need through individual, group and outreach approaches. This can lead to ongoing, one-to-one support with a child and family worker.

The Education Directorate is also building the knowledge and capacity of frontline staff to respond to the individual needs of students through a range of professional learning. Compulsory child protection training which includes information about domestic and family violence and responses to students and the impacts of complex trauma on a children's development is an example of this work.

Key elements from the 2015-16 Trauma Understanding and Sensitive Teaching in Schools (TRUST) pilot in Canberra Public Schools are being implemented as part of the Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) project. TRUST was initiated in 2014 and aims to assist schools to increase their skills base in building relationships, creating safe and supportive environments and utilising positive responses to behaviour; increasing children's educational engagement and social and emotional wellbeing. Combining key TRUST elements with PBL allows more schools to participate in applying TRUST principles. Currently, 25 Canberra Public Schools have started their PBL journey.

Outside of government-led approaches, the Domestic Violence Crisis Service runs the Young People's Outreach Program (YPOP). The YPOP is an early intervention program that aims to assist children and their families known to Domestic Violence Crisis Service who have been affected by or are living with domestic and family violence.

Perpetrator programs or interventions

The *Third Action Plan 2016-19* of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022* has a focus on perpetrator interventions. It is the first plan to focus on holding perpetrators accountable and encouraging behaviour change. The ACT's approach to working with men who use violence is guided by this framework. The ACT's *Family Violence Act 2016* and other reforms to police and justice system responses to perpetrators, discussed in more detail in the next section, provide a strong framework for increasing perpetrator accountability in the ACT.

Under the Third Action Plan, the ACT has committed to implementing key performance indicators against the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions (NOSPI) and participating in national work to develop an approach to report against these indicators annually to drive further improvements. The ACT is currently preparing to provide data for the development of the NOSPI Benchmark Report. This report will be available in 2018.

The ACT's innovative Room4Change program, detailed above, is a key piece of work funded under *Safer Families* supporting this national priority to support behaviour change among men who use violence. The

pilot and its evaluation will provide a good foundation for future work with men who use violence against their families.

ACT Corrective Services facilitates offence-specific programs designed to assist offenders to address the causes of their offending behaviour. These programs include the Domestic Abuse Program, Cognitive Self Change Program, Anger Management Program, Harm Minimisation Alcohol and Other Drug Program, Violence Intervention Program and various sex offender programs. 'Being a Man and a Dad' is a Marymead program co-facilitated by ACT Corrective Services. It is designed for men in custody with parenting roles, with a focus on managing strong emotions in a positive way to build resilient and healthy relationships with their partners and children.

ACT Corrective Services has also developed and adopted a revised Management of Domestic and Family Violence Offenders policy. This policy supports the assessment and appropriate referral of offenders to the Domestic Abuse Program, including by ensuring assessments and referrals align with the NOSPI standards.

In the community, the Working with the Man program, a program of EveryMan Australia is a behaviour change program for men who use domestic and family violence and includes counselling, group work, and case management. EveryMan is working with the Community Services Directorate over the next six months to ensure that outcomes reporting indicators are consistent with key focus areas of the *Safer Families* package.

Workforce capability

Enhancing capability within ACT Government Directorates

ACT Government Directorates and agencies have begun updating policies and manuals to ensure frontline staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to domestic and family violence matters.

To date, this includes the below initiatives:

- > the Community Services Directorate has revised its Domestic and Family Violence Policy Manual for Housing and Community Services. The Directorate is also making improvements to procedures and practice guidelines for Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS), including through the Family Violence Guide for CYPS staff. This guide draws heavily on the work by the Victorian Government and aligns with the domestic and family violence training that has been implemented within CYPS;
- > In the Health Directorate, the perinatal mental health service has introduced domestic and family violence screening, which includes four questions regarding domestic and family violence. These questions and client responses are documented in the clients' full assessment records. The intention is to expand this screening to all Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) services.
- > CAMHS staff have attended Domestic Family Violence training and CAMHS have included online domestic and family violence training as standard for new staff.
- > the Education Directorate updated its Mandatory Reporting Guideline to include a specific module on family violence. Annual training for mandatory reporters was launched in time for the 2016 school year;
- > Transport Canberra and City Services is developing a prevention of violence against women and children policy statement for the Capital Metro Agency (CMA) and distributing this to all CMA staff;
- > ACT Corrective Services is providing a range of training to Community Corrections and Offender Services staff, including courses on family violence offenders and working with sex offenders;

- > the Restorative Justice Unit is developing staff expertise in dealing with domestic and family violence. Staff have received training from Domestic Violence Crisis Service and 1800RESPECT; and
- > ACT Policing launched the Family Violence Coordination Unit to ensure officers implemented best practice policies and procedures when responding to domestic and family violence.

Training for frontline workers to identify and respond to domestic and family violence

Police and crisis services are not always the first point of contact in a domestic or family violence situation. The Glanfield Inquiry, the Death Review, the Gap Analysis and the report of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council all identified the need for training of frontline workers.

To support early identification and intervention, the ACT Government has committed \$770,000 of funding over three years for improved professional awareness and expertise around domestic and family violence for ACT Government frontline staff, primarily key staff in health, education, community services and justice sectors.

The Coordinator-General for Family Safety is leading work across government to design a common approach for training of frontline workers that is sufficiently flexible to meet the diverse needs across Government. As part of the consultation process, the Office for the Coordinator-General for Family Safety has had discussions with ACT Government frontline worker areas that have a strong need for domestic and family violence training. The Office for the Coordinator-General for Family Safety has also identified existing domestic and family violence training programs and sought feedback on these to determine a best practice approach for ACT Government frontline workers. Further, where an existing domestic and family violence training program meets or exceeds the proposed learning outcomes, the Office for the Coordinator-General for Family Safety will work towards complementing rather than replacing these. For example, the domestic and family violence training delivered to Child and Youth Protection workers is more intensive and specifically focussed on domestic and family violence from the perspective of the child or young person.

Frontline worker training will be evaluated with measures developed to assess the reach and effectiveness of the training.

In the community sector, the Capital Health Network is working in partnership with the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and the ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service, with support from DDCS Lawyers, to deliver training to General Practitioners, Allied Health Professionals and other primary health care providers. The training aims to equip health service providers with the knowledge and skills to screen and respond effectively to disclosures of domestic and family violence.

Family violence capability in specialist drug and alcohol treatment services

While alcohol can increase the frequency or severity of violence, on its own it does not explain the gendered dynamics of violence against women. Rather than looking at alcohol as a factor in isolation, we need to understand it in relation to social norms and practices that condone or support violence against women, in particular those relating to masculinity and men's peer group behaviour.

The ACT Government allocated \$2 million in funding in the 2016-17 Budget to provide more effective responses to people who use alcohol or other drugs in harmful ways and who are experiencing, or at risk of using, family violence. This initiative will increase the capacity of specialist drug treatment services to deliver programs and training that integrate best practice in addressing family violence. In October 2016, ACT Health underwent a procurement process for the design of a pilot program which will recognise the complex relationship between family violence and alcohol and other drug use, and seek to enhance opportunities for early intervention with victims and perpetrators of family violence.

The Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA) was selected as a result of the procurement process and a pilot project is now in the design phase. The pilot project will develop infrastructure and a framework to build capacity within the alcohol and other drugs sector to deliver programs that integrate best practice in family violence prevention. Specifically, ATODA will:

- engage and liaise with alcohol and other drugs specialist treatment and support services and other key stakeholders (including through the DFV sector) to scope the existing capacity and needs around integrating domestic and family violence into routine alcohol and other drugs practice;
- design a three year pilot project that will facilitate the development of both collective capacity around domestic and family violence across all services in the alcohol and other drugs sector and specific and targeted clinical domestic and family violence capacity within individual services;
- develop an evaluation plan and recruit an external evaluation team to monitor and measure the program's implementation and impact;
- recruit a clinician with specialist alcohol and other drugs and domestic and family violence expertise to provide expert advice on the project design and implementation; and
- develop a tool on domestic and family violence capabilities that can be re-administered at regular intervals to assess increased capacity.

On 24 May 2017, ATODA hosted a symposium on *Promoting Safety and Prioritising Domestic and Family Violence in the ACT Alcohol and Other Drug Sector* at the National Museum of Australia. The symposium brought ACT alcohol and other drugs sector workers, consumers, researchers and policy makers together and build linkages with domestic and family violence service providers and stakeholders.

An environmental scan was also conducted into domestic and family violence capacity building projects with the alcohol and other drugs sector and other health settings in Australia and overseas and tools related to domestic and family violence assessment, screening, referrals and policies.

A pilot training package has been implemented on alcohol and other drugs information, screening and brief interventions in early April 2017 with a domestic and family violence service provider (Domestic Violence Crisis Service). The training was favourably evaluated by participants. Available training and providers for alcohol and other drugs and domestic and family violence in the ACT and other Australian jurisdictions has been mapped.

ATODA will submit the report for the design of the multi-year pilot project to ACT Health by December 2017. This report will include advice regarding implementation and future funding allocation.

Crisis and post-crisis response

Policing and justice system responses

Legislative changes

The *Family Violence Act 2016* commenced on 1 May 2017. The Act implements 22 recommendations made by the Australian and New South Wales Law Reform Commissions in their report *Family Violence – a National Legal Response* (the *National Legal Response*).

The Family Violence Act expanded the definition of family violence to include economic abuse, sexual abuse and emotional or psychological abuse and behaviours that are threatening, coercive or controlling. The Act includes a number of specific examples of emotional or psychological abuse including:

- > stopping the family member from visiting or having contact with family and friends; and
- > stopping a family member from engaging in cultural or spiritual practices.

The Family Violence Act made a number of important changes to the process for obtaining a family violence order. For example, the Family Violence Act contains an express provision conferring on courts a power to make a protection order on their own initiative at any stage of a criminal proceeding.

The Act contains the provisions that relate to the National Domestic Violence Order scheme (the NDVO scheme), which was agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). The NDVO scheme will help domestic violence orders to be recognised across all states and territories and improve information sharing on a national level with the aim of improving safety for women and children escaping domestic violence. The proposed national commencement date for the NDVO scheme is 25 November 2017.

To support the changes made to legislation and to offer more streamlined services for people in crisis needing legal responses, the *National Legal Response* implementation included the introduction of new registry procedures, major modifications to the Integrated Courts Management System, development of new template orders and other court documents and updating of information products.

Major reforms that improve access to financial assistance for victims of family violence were also enacted. The *Victims of Crime (Financial Assistance) Act 2016* replaced the *Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Act 1983*. The Victims of Crime Commissioner is the decision maker for the new scheme, which is delivered alongside the Victims Services Scheme. Victims of family violence are now eligible to access immediate needs payments up to \$10,000 for non-violent domestic and family violence offences including property damage and contravention of family violence orders. Where a victim has not reported domestic or family violence to police, but they have reported to support agencies and/or professionals, there is scope to access certain payments as a 'special reporting'. Immediate needs and economic loss payments cover expenses such as personal security installations, emergency relocations, medical expenses, psychological support and loss of earnings. During the first year of operation (2016-2017), 22 per cent of applications were made by victims of domestic or family violence.

Changes were also made to the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*. The changes include clarification that the significant hardship provisions of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* may be used to terminate a fixed term residential tenancy agreement where a protected person is living on the premises with the respondent to a Family Violence Order.

The *Reportable Conduct and Information Sharing Legislation Amendment Act 2016* commenced in August 2016, making changes to allow better information sharing about children and introducing the Reportable Conduct Scheme. This is discussed further below.

Stronger police support for family violence victims

Addressing family and domestic and family violence within the community is a high priority for ACT Policing. In 2015, the Family Violence Coordination Unit was established to coordinate the ACT Policing frontline response to domestic and family violence and ensure that it is timely, consistent and comprehensive. The Family Violence Coordination Unit enhances the pro-intervention policy of ACT Policing and develops strategies to reduce risk and ensure offenders are held accountable.

In the 2016-17 Budget, the ACT Government committed to providing a further \$1.18 million of funding over four years to ACT Policing to new Family Violence Order Liaison Officers within the Family Violence Coordination Unit to assist victims of domestic and family violence by applying for a Family Violence Order on their behalf. In December 2016, a direct referral process was established whereby the courts can refer

applicants to the Family Violence Order Liaison Officers when it is considered necessary to address reports of ongoing victimisation and criminality.

ACT Policing members commenced referring applicants for Family Violence Orders to the Family Violence Order Liaison Officers on 1 May 2017, in line with the new provisions under the *Family Violence Act 2016*. Since then, there has been a significant increase in referrals for assistance, confirming the importance of this initiative. Between 1 May and 31 July 2017, Family Violence Order Liaison Officers assisted 123 victims through the Family Violence Order process. As of mid-August 2017, ACT Policing Family Violence Order Liaison Officers have applied for three Family Violence Orders on behalf of victims. These matters are the first use of this legislation and are all currently before the court. Family Violence Order Liaison Officers have received positive feedback from the victims they assist.

Statistical data provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that the number of domestic and family violence related assaults in the ACT recorded by police between 1 January and 31 December 2016 rose to 240 victims per 100,000 persons (a 33 per cent increase from the year prior). The increased victimisation rate between 2015 and 2016 could be driven by a range of factors, including the enhanced police response in the ACT.

Improved access to legal assistance and court support

The ACT Government is helping improve access to legal services for victims of domestic and family violence through providing an additional \$1,214,000 in funding over four years to Legal Aid to increase its capacity to represent victims of family violence. This work includes providing family violence victims with expert legal advice and representation in dispute resolution and litigation involving the alleged perpetrator. Without Legal Aid support, these victims would generally go unassisted. Through this funding Legal Aid assisted an additional 141 victims during 2016-17. The outcomes of this initiative will be measured through annual monitoring of Legal Aid's capacity to represent victims of family violence and the number of victims assisted.

The ACT's Women's Legal Centre's federally-funded Domestic Violence Program, launched in November 2016, provides legal advice and representation to women experiencing violence. It aims to provide holistic support across women's experience from crisis (support for family violence and protection orders) through to post crisis and recovery (negotiate custody arrangements for children, division of property and representation at the Family Court). The program was funded as a pilot service under the Commonwealth Government Women's Safety Package and the funding was recently extended to 30 June 2019.

It is essential for the administration of justice that courts and tribunals receive accurate interpretation of any evidence or material presented to them in languages other than English, including sign language. The ACT Government recognises this and has committed to providing \$1,223,000 over four years to support translation and interpreter services (TIS) for people accessing the ACT Law Courts and Tribunal and specialist ACT family violence services, including community legal centres, for domestic and family violence matters. Eligible organisations will be reimbursed for relevant 2016-17 TIS costs and, from 2017-18, have been provided government funded direct access to TIS services for domestic and family violence matters.

The Government also provides funding to the Court Advocacy Program which is a criminal and civil court advocacy service for people who have experienced domestic and family violence.

Justice system coordination

The Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP) has been ongoing since 1998 and is a multi-agency model focused on responding to family violence incidents that come to police attention and proceed to prosecution.

The FVIP partner agencies are:

- > Australian Federal Police (ACT Policing);
- > Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions;
- > ACT Magistrates' Court;
- > ACT Corrective Services;
- > ACT Health;
- > Legal Aid ACT;
- > Canberra Rape Crisis Centre;
- > Domestic Violence Crisis Service;
- > Children, Youth and Families, Community Services Directorate;
- > Policy and Regulatory Division, Justice and Community Safety Directorate; and
- > The Office of the Victims of Crime Coordinator.

The Family Violence Intervention Program is made up of two core initiatives – a coordinating committee and weekly case tracking meeting program. The FVIP Coordinating Committee works to identify and implement reforms across agencies in the ACT to meet the objectives of the FVIP. This committee is represented by senior staff from key partner agencies. The Victims of Crime Commissioner performs the role of Chair of the Coordinating Committee and Victim Support ACT provides secretariat support. FVIP case tracking is a weekly interagency meeting that seeks to provide coordinated responses to family violence matters that come to the attention of police and proceed to prosecution.

In 2012, the ACT Family Violence Intervention Program Review was undertaken in order to describe the effectiveness of the program including its governance arrangements. The review showed that throughout its operation, FVIP agencies have implemented a range of practices to improve the criminal justice system response to family violence. The review also found that the breadth of services provided by FVIP agencies contributes to the perceived safety and protection of victims of family violence, and that FVIP is effective in establishing relationships between agencies and ensuring they work cooperatively.

Stronger criminal justice responses

On 4 May 2016, the Family Violence Evidence in Chief (FVEIC) provisions commenced. The provisions allow police records of interview to be admitted as evidence in chief for family violence and all sexual offences. These laws recognise the vulnerability and impediments faced by victims when criminal prosecutions are undertaken in a family violence matter. The legislation has enabled ACT Policing to gather the best evidence as soon as practicable after the alleged family violence offence has occurred. The ACT is only the second Australian jurisdiction to implement this important reform. Analysis with regard to the effectiveness of FVEIC is underway.

Criminal justice responses also have been strengthened through an injection of \$1.36 m over four years to enable the Director of Public Prosecutions to improve its ability to respond to criminal matters related to domestic and family violence.

Crisis support

Support for women and children to leave violence

The ACT Government's funding for women's homelessness accommodation services is a critical part of the crisis support for women and children leaving violence. In 2016-2017, ACT Government funding for women's homelessness accommodation services was \$4.5 million. All women's homelessness services are domestic and family violence inclusive with two services, Beryl and Doris, specialising in accommodation and case management to women and children escaping domestic and family violence.

Research from the 'Staying at Home' project managed by the Domestic Violence Crisis Service identified a need in the ACT for interventions that assist women who required additional housing-related support but do not meet the criteria for being accepted into a domestic violence specialist accommodation service or outreach support. The ACT Government has dedicated \$315,000 in funding over four years to assist people with their immediate needs through practical financial assistance to establish a private rental tenancy after fleeing violence to help create stability, independence and avoid homelessness.

The funding is being delivered through a pilot program which is now underway. Under the pilot, applicants who are eligible for the Housing ACT Rental Bonds Loan Scheme and are affected by domestic and family violence are able to apply for a one-off grant of up to \$2,000. The grant can be used to assist with the removal and storage costs, buying furniture and whitegoods, the cost of connecting utilities and services and paying up to four weeks advance rent. These applicants also receive fast-tracked access to an interest-free loan of up to 90 per cent of their rental bond under the existing Housing ACT Rental Bonds Loan Scheme.

Since the pilot commenced, the ACT Government has approved grants to four eligible people. The take-up for the program is less than anticipated and, as a result, a planned evaluation and review of the program has been brought forward to the second-half of 2017. The review will examine the reasons for the low access rates and identify recommended program changes to help ensure that women and children escaping domestic and family violence are able to access required supports. The review will also explore options to partner with additional service providers and, if appropriate, broaden the referral pathways.

In order to help women to access the supports available to them, the Women's Information Service is a free and confidential information and referral service provided by the Office for Women to support women in our community. The Women's Information Officer routinely provides information and referrals to women who have or are experiencing domestic and family violence.

Additional resources for crisis services

The ACT has a range of services and supports for victims of domestic and family violence and sexual assault. Most of these services and programs experienced significant increase in demand in the five years prior to the ACT Government delivering the *ACT Government Response to Family Violence*. For instance, the Domestic Violence Crisis Service reported a significant increase in emergency call outs and in crisis support telephone sessions and emergency accommodation placements between 2011 and 2014-15. The Canberra Rape Crisis Centre also reported an increase in demand across all areas of service provision between 2011 and 2014-15.

To support the vital work these services provide to people affected by family violence, the ACT Government committed \$830,000 to Domestic Violence Crisis Service and \$416,000 to Canberra Rape Crisis Centre over a four-year period, in addition to their baseline annual funding.

The additional funding is assisting Domestic Violence Crisis Service to meet the increased demand to support victims of domestic and family violence in the ACT, including through enhancing Domestic Violence Crisis Service's capacity to provide 24/7 telephone and outreach supports, information, counselling, advocacy and practical safety supports. The additional funding provided to Canberra Rape Crisis Centre is helping to meet increased demand from victims of sexual assault in the ACT.

From July 2016-June 2017, Domestic Violence Crisis Service:

- > made crisis intervention visits to 1,367 families;
- > made information, personal support, and other visits to 246 families;
- > received 24,975 calls for telephone support and crisis counselling, and made 26,972 outgoing calls; and
- > provided 886 nights of emergency accommodation.

From July 2016-June 2017, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre's crisis intervention, counselling and education service:

- > supported 7,947 individuals;
- > responded to call outs from police and/or forensic service to support 470 victims reporting sexual assault;
- > provided 320 crisis appointments;
- > provided 5,818 counselling support sessions;
- > provided 23,934 telephone counselling support/crisis interventions; and
- > delivered 65 community education and training sessions.

The Community Services Directorate is currently working with Domestic Violence Crisis Service and Canberra Rape Crisis Centre to develop a set of consistent outcomes, including indicators intended to measure the impact of this additional funding.

Under the specialist homelessness services budget, the ACT Government also provides up to \$75,000 per year for the Domestic Violence Christmas program. The program runs from mid December to 30 January to address the seasonal increase in family and domestic and family violence over the Christmas period. The program provides crisis hotel accommodation and case management and support to transition to longer term accommodation.

Support services for ACTPS employees experiencing domestic and family violence

The ACTPS Family Violence Toolkit is designed to provide awareness-raising and support materials for employees, managers and human resources practitioners to support employees who are experiencing domestic and family violence. The Toolkit builds on Leave for Domestic Violence Purposes which was included in the ACT Public Service enterprise agreements from 2013 to meet the national best practice entitlement of up to 20 days/shifts paid leave in a calendar year.

The ACT Government will use the Human Resource Directors Council and other mechanisms, including existing Staff Surveys (which do not require self-identification), to understand the usage of the leave arrangements and the effectiveness of the Toolkit and leave provisions. In addition, the ACT Government will regularly provide positive Whole of Service messaging through communication networks to encourage staff who may be experiencing domestic and family violence to seek appropriate assistance and to utilise the available leave provisions.

Post-crisis support

The ACT Government provides annual funding to Domestic Violence Crisis Service to run domestic violence support group programs. In 2016-17, this included three programs:

- > Stepping Forward - the program facilitates women's connection to services, through exercise, guest speakers and conversation;
- > Moving On - the program is a closed group for women to get together for creative personal growth opportunities; and
- > Growing Strong - the program works to build mother-child relationships and promote healing after domestic and family violence.

Domestic Violence Crisis Service also uses other sources of funding to run additional support group programs, such as school holiday picnics.

The Tara Costigan Foundation established a free caseworker service to support victims as they rebuild their lives and break the cycle of violence. In addition to the \$20,000 funded through the Safer Families package, a further \$20,000 of this was funded from the Confiscated Assets Trust Fund.

The ACT Women's Return to Work Program provides grants of up to \$1,000 to support women returning to the workforce following time off for caring responsibilities. The money supports them to attend courses, pay childcare, purchase clothing to attend interviews, undertake education and training, and pay for transport equipment, computers and text books directly related to returning to work. This program helps women who have past or present experience of domestic and family violence, and certain eligibility criteria may be waived in these circumstances.

A range of community-based post-crisis supports are also being explored by the Women's Centre for Health Matters—these are discussed under Terms of Reference E.

Cultural change and system improvements

Full-time Coordinator-General for Family Safety and a dedicated Safer Families team

A central reform of the Government Response was the appointment of the ACT's first full-time Coordinator-General for Family Safety. The Coordinator-General role provides the leadership needed for a whole of government approach to preventing domestic and family violence. The Coordinator-General is supported by a Safer Families team, with in-posted officers from other Directorates, including Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development, Health and Community Services. Key priorities for the Coordinator-General are to work with community and government partners to ensure services provided are appropriate, to lead the necessary change to embed an information sharing culture, to promote collaboration, to focus on key outcomes and to report to the Government on achievements.

On 1 July 2017, the role of the Coordinator-General and the Safer Families team moved from the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to the Community Services Directorate to provide a more robust alignment with service delivery and community service providers. The Coordinator-General has continued to work closely with all directorates to ensure a whole of government response in the work towards addressing and preventing domestic and family violence in the ACT community.

The Coordinator-General and Safer Families team have led key strategic and service development initiatives, including:

- > a co-design process to inform the development of a Family Safety Hub;

- > the release of an Issues Paper: Information Sharing to Improve the Response to domestic and family violence in the ACT in September 2016 and a community consultation process;
- > a scoping exercise to inform domestic and family violence risk assessment practices; and
- > research and consultation across government to inform the introduction of domestic and family violence training to frontline workers.

The Glanfield Inquiry, the Death Review and the Gap Analysis all identify information sharing between domestic and family violence agencies as a critical mechanism for ensuring the safety of victims and an area for significant reform in the ACT service system. On 8 September 2016, the then Attorney-General released an Issues Paper: *Information Sharing to Improve the Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the ACT*¹⁰.

The Issues Paper outlined the current information sharing arrangements in the ACT, and explored the privacy issues facing the domestic and family violence sector. The Coordinator-General led an extensive community consultation and information process which has provided the ACT Government with valuable insights into the cultural and legislative barriers for effective information sharing. This includes a clear message that a change in culture and practice is at least as important as improving the legislative framework. Information sharing is being actively considered through the co-design of the Family Safety Hub and this process has also revealed the need to be specific about what information we want to share, and for what purpose, before an effective legislative response can be developed. These insights will inform the next phase of work for the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety in this complex and vital area.

The Death Review recommended strengthening the domestic and family violence risk assessment and management capability of ACT service providers. This is supported by the survey results presented in the Gap Analysis that found that 44 per cent of respondents reported never completing domestic and family violence risk assessment. The Office of the Coordinator-General has explored options for strengthening risk assessment capability, including the use of tools in other jurisdictions. This work will be further developed as part of the Family Safety Hub pilot discussed below.

Piloting a Family Safety Hub

The Government committed to co-designing a Family Safety Hub in recognition of the importance of service integration and the need for a focal point in the ACT service system for domestic and family violence response. The commitment to co-design was critical and ensures that the design of the Hub is informed by the experiences of people with lived experience of violence and the frontline services who work with them.

The Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety is working with government and community sector service providers to co-design the Family Safety Hub. The principles established to guide the co-design process are that it will:

- > be directly informed by the experiences of people affected by domestic and family violence and the frontline staff working to support them;
- > give priority to groups of people who are most vulnerable to domestic and family violence and those who are hardest to reach with existing services;
- > focus on improving the early intervention, pre-crisis and non-justice responses to domestic and family violence;

¹⁰ <http://www.justice.act.gov.au/news/view/1720/title/information-sharing-to-improve-the>

- > explore how existing services and government investment can be better integrated to meet the needs of people affected by domestic and family violence; and
- > recognise that those affected by domestic and family violence will seek help through services they trust, and those trusted services need to be central to an integrated response.

The co-design of the Family Safety Hub began with a user insights phase, where consultations with services and service users was undertaken to understand the needs of families experiencing domestic and family violence. Under the second principle, five priority cohorts of people were established for the users insights research—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families, culturally and linguistically diverse women and families, women with disability, LGBTIQ people and young men with lived experience of violence in their own families. More than 50 frontline workers and more than 20 people with lived experience of domestic and family violence provided input through interviews and focus groups during this phase.

A detailed user insights report found that:

- > a fragmented service system prevents the delivery of long-term, joined-up, holistic responses to women and families experiencing domestic and family violence;
- > some people experiencing domestic and family violence, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD women and families, are seeking non-legal responses and options to end violence that do not involve separation;
- > a more systematic response is required for children in families experiencing violence;
- > some women are incredibly isolated, with barriers to help-seeking including disability, language, physical isolation and normalisation/lack of understanding of domestic and family violence. The health system is an important intervention point for this group;
- > while making perpetrators accountable for their use of violence is critical, there are currently insufficient options to support men who use violence to change their behaviour; and
- > while domestic and family violence is predominately perpetrated by men against women and children, there needs to be options for LGBTIQ people who experience domestic and family violence to access support.

The co-design process is currently in the intensive design phase. A core design team of government and non-government members have participated in six workshops to drive the design and development of the Hub. Following conclusion of the design phase, final proposals concerning the Hub model will be provided to the Government for consideration.

It is intended that the Family Safety Hub model will be tested through a pilot that will provide an opportunity to refine the model. The pilot will test a series of interventions to promote holistic, integrated responses to domestic and family violence and enhance the capacity of mainstream service providers to understand and respond to domestic and family violence. The insights gathered through the co-design process highlight a series of issues that cannot all be resolved by the Hub or, indeed, within the current system. These insights will be used as a platform to guide future system reform.

Better protections for children

Evidence before the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission) has shown systematic failure across Australia by employers, organisations and institutions to protect children and young people, and to follow up on allegations of child abuse by their employees. In response to this, the ACT Government has committed \$1,336,000 in funding to improve oversight of how organisations with a high level of responsibility for children respond to allegations of child abuse.

Following the passage of the *Reportable Conduct and Information Sharing Legislation Amendment Act 2016* in the Legislative Assembly in August 2016, the Reportable Conduct Scheme commenced in the Territory on 1 July 2017. The scheme is an employment-based child protection measure designed to ensure that allegations of abuse and certain criminal convictions are identified, reported and acted on appropriately.

Under the scheme, certain organisations that provide services for children need to notify the ACT Ombudsman of allegations that an employee has engaged in conduct that results in ill treatment, neglect or psychological harm to a child. This includes misconduct of a sexual nature or if the employee has committed criminal offences involving a child. The ACT Ombudsman has the powers to independently oversee, monitor and report on an organisation's investigation of allegations or convictions to provide assurance to the community that investigations into allegations of abuse by employees are independently reviewed.

Since 1 July 2017, the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate has been actively monitoring the implementation of the Reportable Conduct Scheme and how it supports organisations to appropriately respond to allegations of reportable conduct. The Royal Commission is due to hand down its final report in December 2017, and it is anticipated that a range of the recommendations made will affect the operation and adoption of reportable conduct schemes in Australia. If required, any changes to the ACT Reportable Conduct Scheme to address the recommendations of the Royal Commission will be considered early in 2018.

In recognition of the complex intersection between family violence and child protection the Safer Families package included commitments to strengthen quality assurance in Child Youth Protection Services (CYPS). Under *Safer Families* CYPS established a case analysis team to undertake case analysis and provide independent advice on individual cases at key decision making points. The Case Analysis Team has two key objectives:

- > the provision of independent analysis of individual cases at key decision making points; and
- > the identification of practice issues, knowledge gaps and good practice to inform training priorities and improvement of new policies and procedures.

The reviews provide an in-depth, point in time analysis of a child or young person's situation. Through a cumulative harm lens, the team develop an enduring chronology for each child or young person, explore the child or young person's history of trauma and provide quality assurance on decision making as well as guidance to caseworkers and team leaders. The Case Analysis team focuses on open cases as part of a specific cohort review and individual cases as requested by members of the management team.

In order to further enhance responses to children at risk, the Child and Youth Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee (the Committee) was also established as a part of the *Safer Families* reforms. The initiative responds to findings from the Glanfield Inquiry that identified the need for improvements in transparency and accountability.

The Committee is an independent advisory forum to strengthen the quality of child protection policy and practice in the ACT and foster ongoing improvement of the child protection system. The Committee supports the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth and the Director-General to drive a culture of practice improvement to ensure better outcomes for children whose safety is at risk from abuse and neglect. It creates linkages with the work of other relevant bodies, such as the ACT Children and Young People Death Review Committee, the Domestic Violence Prevention Council, the Office of the Family Safety Coordinator-General and the Child and Youth Services Council.

The Committee has agreed that the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth in the ACT child and youth protection system is unacceptable and that these children and young people will form a particular focus of the work of the Committee. A key priority is the examination of the factors that exist as challenges for supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, their families and the community.

TERMS OF REFERENCE (B)

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACT GOVERNMENT'S 2016-17 FUNDING COMMITMENTS TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IN THE ACT, AND IN PARTICULAR HOW OUTCOMES ARE BEING MEASURED

Measuring impact and outcomes will be central to improving the prevention and response to domestic and family violence in the ACT. The Centre for Social Impact identifies a number of benefits to impact and outcome measurement¹¹. The primary reason is that it tells us whether, across government, community and private sector efforts, we are really making a difference. It also provides a mechanism for accountability and the opportunities for increasing efficiency. Across Government and the service system, effective outcome measurement can help create a culture of learning and innovation, promote professional development, improve transparency and trust and underpin the sustainability of services and organisations.

However, in complex areas of social policy and service delivery, measuring outcomes can be challenging in a number of ways:

- > Good data is a prerequisite for good outcomes measurement and for cross-cutting issues like family violence, the capacity to connect up data across services and systems. We know that in many areas we have data gaps or inconsistent collection methodologies or definitions which create barriers to integration of data;
- > Timeframes are long for some important outcomes. Changing community attitudes about domestic and family violence is an intergenerational project. Even changes for individuals or families affected by violence will need to be measured over years.
- > Some outcomes are hard to measure quantitatively, and often these are the ones that matter most to the people we are trying to help—safety, resilience and sustainability are important goals but may look different for different people and families.
- > Attribution or causation is hard to establish. Identifying the contribution particular policies or interventions make to outcomes can be difficult, even impossible, where there are complex relationships between services, interventions and the external environment.

To enable effective outcome measurement and evaluation of the impacts of the Safer Families agenda, the Government is working on a number of fronts concurrently.

Firstly improving consistency and collection of data across the service and justice systems to support more effective monitoring and evaluation. The Community Services Directorate has been implementing a Common Dataset across funded services to ensure a consistent approach to collection of minimum critical

¹¹ http://www.csi.edu.au/media/uploads/CSI_The_Compass.pdf

data. This effort will be supplemented by the work of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council which provided a report in April 2017 on its Domestic and Family Violence Data Collection project. The report raises important issues about the current limitations around the collection and management of domestic and family violence data in the ACT. Aligned with the Common Dataset approach, and advice from the DVPC, the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety is exploring options for a consistent definition of domestic and family violence that will aid in the collection and comparability of data.

Secondly, is developing the diverse suite of approaches needed to evaluate the impact of individual initiatives and measure longer term change. The breadth and complexity of domestic and family violence initiatives within the Safer Families package calls for the use of multiple approaches to evaluation. These approaches include:

- > process evaluation in the form of regular monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the commitments;
- > evaluation of individual initiatives and programs; and
- > outcomes evaluation to assess the impact of the combined approach in the longer term.

Regular reporting on implementation of the Government's commitments to address domestic and family violence has been established to provide transparency and accountability for progress. The *ACT Government Response to Family Violence* included a commitment to present a Family Violence Statement to the Legislative Assembly every year. The *2017 Safer Families Statement* was delivered by the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Yvette Berry MLA, in the Legislative Assembly in June 2017 and is available online¹². The 2017 Safer Families Statement describes the impact of domestic and family violence in the ACT and details the commitment and reform underway by the ACT Government and the community to address these impacts. Budget Paper 3 provides a detailed report of the implementation and expenditure of the Safer Families initiatives for the period 2016-17 and the outlook across the forward estimates¹³. There has been significant progress to date on the implementation of the Safer Families initiatives as presented above in response to Terms of Reference A.

Specific evaluation strategies and outcomes will be developed for individual initiatives and programs by the responsible agencies, often this will be in the context of evaluation or assessment of a broader system or activity. There will be an additional targeted effort applied to evaluation of innovative trials and pilots such as Room4Change and the Family Safety Hub to ensure learnings are captured and applied in refining or scaling up these new models.

As work continues on the development of a Family Safety Hub during 2017-18, the Coordinator-General will, in consultation with directorates, the ACT community sector and relevant service providers, identify appropriate indicators for measuring the effectiveness of the Hub. These indicators will be used to measure the pilot Hub's effectiveness against agreed objectives and identify any necessary refinements before the Hub is fully implemented.

The Coordinator-General is also working in collaboration with directorates to embed training around family and domestic violence for frontline workers into existing capability frameworks, while taking into consideration the diversity of roles within the ACT Government, their training needs and any existing training programs. Indicators will be developed to measure the reach and effectiveness of the training.

The Community Services Directorate funds community sector organisations to deliver many of the support services delivering early intervention, crisis and post-crisis responses to victims, children, families and perpetrators experiencing or at risk of family violence. The Directorate is making a gradual transition

¹² http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0018/1071045/Safer-Families-Statement-June-2017.pdf

¹³ https://apps.treasury.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1069989/Budget-Paper-3.pdf (page 399)

to commission outcomes so that clients receive timely supports and services that are right for them. This means that the Directorate will place a greater focus on identifying, purchasing, measuring and reporting on outcomes, rather than inputs, activities and service outputs. These outcomes are the expected benefits and value created for clients, the community and the human services system. This work commenced with *A Step Up for Our Kids – Out of Home Care Strategy 2015-2020*.

An outcomes evaluation will tell us what difference the new approach has made in the lives of children, women and men experiencing domestic and family violence. It will be important to consider outcomes and impacts over the short, medium and longer term and to understand what the trajectory of change will look like. The following issues need to be considered in choosing the outcome measures:

- > increased awareness of domestic and family violence in the community is likely to result in increased numbers of people accessing services. Therefore more people accessing services should not be interpreted as an increase in the occurrence of domestic and family violence in the community or a failure of agencies to address domestic and family violence;
- > prevention efforts are difficult to evaluate given the complexity of domestic and family violence, particularly the multiple factors which contribute to domestic and family violence, many of which lie beyond the remit of the ACT Government;
- > the effectiveness of domestic and family violence initiatives, particularly those relating to prevention, should be viewed as a long-term intergenerational activity. For that reason, any measure of effectiveness of domestic and family violence initiatives would need to occur after a significant period of time has passed, following full implementation of each of the funded measures; and
- > efforts to prevent domestic and family violence may not bring about a reduction in the incidence of domestic and family violence in the short or medium term.

For the medium and longer term assessment, we will need to develop whole of system and whole of population measures to assess the quality of response to victims and families affected by violence, the effectiveness of perpetrator interventions, and changes in community attitudes and understanding. This work is being led by the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety. The approach will align with the following measures of success under the National Plan:

- > an increase in the community's intolerance of violence against women;
- > improved knowledge of, and the skills and behaviour for, respectful relationships by young people;
- > reduction in the proportion of Indigenous women who consider that family violence, assault and sexual assault are problems for their communities and neighbourhoods;
- > increase in the proportion of Indigenous women who are able to have their say within their communities on important issues, including violence;
- > an increase in the access to, and responsiveness of, services for victims of domestic and family violence and sexual assault;
- > an increase in the rate of women reporting domestic violence and sexual assault; and
- > a decrease in repeated partner victimisation.

The key data sources for measuring outcomes will include the National Community Attitudes Survey being undertaken by ANROWS, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey and the Personal Safety Survey both conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Ideally, these success measures will be disaggregated by a range of demographic factors to assess outcomes for different groups. However, there will be particular challenges for the ACT in relation to sample size for some of these data collections, which may make it difficult to disaggregate some measures by demographic factors.

The Office for the Coordinator-General for Family Safety will continue to progress work on a framework for evaluation and outcomes measurement.

TERMS OF REFERENCE (C)

THE ISSUES AND POLICY CHALLENGES (IF ANY) FOR THE ACT ARISING FROM THE NATIONAL FUNDING AND AGENDA/POLICY SETTING REGIME/Framework – INCLUDING HOW OUTCOMES ARE MEASURED AND REPORTED

NATIONAL PLAN

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

The *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (the National Plan) represents an unprecedented commitment from all Australian governments to ending violence against women and their children. Importantly it provides a long term framework for action which is essential for real change. The National Plan responds to the finding from the *Time for Action* report by the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women, that frequent changing of government programs and differences between the states and territories were major barriers to progress in reducing violence. *Time for Action* recommended that governments adopt a long term strategic approach: one that was widely communicated so that it could be used by government and non-government organisations.

The National Plan establishes six priority national outcomes and measures of success. The ACT's approach aligns with those national outcomes and will draw on the national outcome measures in evaluating progress. The National Plan is being implemented through a series of Action Plans, currently the Third Action Plan. During 2016, a series of national consultations identified key areas for attention in the Third Action Plan and determined a program of work that addresses ongoing and emerging issues. The six National Priority Areas for attention in the Third Action Plan are: 1. Prevention and early intervention. 2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children. 3. Greater support and choice. 4. Sexual violence. 5. Responding to children living with violence. 6. Keeping perpetrators accountable across all systems.

The National Plan, the progressively developed Action Plans and the National Plan Implementation Executive Group have provided important opportunities for collaboration and learning across jurisdictions. The National Plan has also prioritised partnerships with business, researchers and the community sector. Access to the experiences and lessons from other jurisdictions has helped inform the ACT approach.

Both Commonwealth and state and territory governments have important roles in responding to the unacceptably high levels of domestic, family and sexual violence across our nation. Alignment of effort between Commonwealth and state and territory governments in their respective areas of responsibility is crucial to improving protections and responses for victims of domestic and family violence, holding perpetrators to account and shifting towards a prevention and early intervention focus.

The Commonwealth Government has a critical national leadership role. It delivers support and services through family law, including legal assistance and the social security system. The Commonwealth plays a

key role in primary prevention of violence, in particular focusing on young people's attitudes towards violence and risk taking behaviours such as binge drinking. Helping young people better understand and develop respectful relationships will have long term impacts on the level of violence against women. The Commonwealth funds a range of relationship counselling services to assist people dealing with relationship issues including those experiencing violence, and to support them in their role as parents.

State and territory governments deliver a range of services including justice, policing and legal assistance for victims and perpetrators. They also fund and coordinate many services provided by the non-government sector.

A lack of alignment between the agreed objectives of the National Plan and funding decisions made by the Commonwealth in other related spheres have created challenges in delivering on the National Plan. This has been particularly acute in relation to national funding for community legal centres and homelessness services. In both cases funding cuts, delays or uncertainty have created significant risks for community services that play a critical role in the response to victims of domestic and family violence. This funding uncertainty has undermined the capacity at a local level to respond effectively to an increasing need for support. These specific examples are discussed in more detail below.

There remain outstanding risks associated with the National Plan focus on raising whole of community awareness and the Commonwealth-led awareness-raising and prevention campaigns. This effort is critical to the long term intergenerational change we need to achieve. In the short and medium term, strategies to build awareness will also have a flow on impact on demand for crisis services as more victims are encouraged to seek help. The ACT Government has raised with the Commonwealth the need for awareness-raising campaigns to be matched with additional resources to meet the increased demand for support services.

National Outcome 1 – Communities are safe and free from violence

Measure of success: an increase in the community's intolerance of violence against women.

Data: National Community Attitudes Survey to be undertaken every four years across the life of the National Plan

National Outcome 2 – Relationships are respectful

Measure of success: improved knowledge of, and the skills and behaviour for, respectful relationships by young people.

Data: Evaluation of the respectful relationships education projects and Commonwealth social marketing campaign.

National Outcome 3 – Indigenous communities are strengthened

Measure of success: reduction in the proportion of Indigenous women who consider that family violence, assault and sexual assault are problems for their communities and neighbourhoods; and increase in the proportion of Indigenous women who are able to have their say within their communities on important issues, including violence.

Data: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey.

National Outcome 4 – Services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence

Measure of success: an increase in the access to, and responsiveness of, services for victims of domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

Data: Personal Safety Survey to be conducted every four years across the life of the National Plan.

National Outcome 5 – Justice responses are effective

Measure of success: an increase in the rate of women reporting domestic violence and sexual assault.

Data: Personal Safety Survey to be conducted every four years across the life of the National Plan.

National Outcome 6 – Perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account

Measure of success: a decrease in repeated partner victimisation.

Data: Personal Safety Survey to be conducted every four years across the life of the National Plan.

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services

People experiencing domestic and family violence can have many legal issues arising from the violence but can also often be faced with financial and other barriers that prevent them from accessing legal advice and case representation. Legal Aid ACT and Community Legal Centres are critical in providing access to legal assistance for victims of domestic and family violence. The Commonwealth under the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services (NPA) provides a key funding stream for community legal centres and Legal Aid.

There has been a period of significant Commonwealth funding instability in relation to funding of community legal centres under the NPA with two ACT centres that support women and children experiencing, or at risk of domestic and family violence, the Women's Legal Centre and Canberra Community Law, facing an unexplained 25 per cent cut in their core funding from 2017-18. In response to this funding uncertainty, the ACT Government committed \$2.48 million from 2017-18 to support the Women's Legal Centre, Canberra Community Law and Street Law, for four years, and the Environmental Defenders' Office for two years.

From 1 July 2017, dedicated Commonwealth funding for community legal centres to provide family law and family violence related services was committed through the NPA. The Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) is responsible for managing this funding, as well as for facilitating service planning for the ACT legal assistance sector. JACS administers this function as chair of the ACT Legal Assistance Forum, which supports the Government to facilitate service planning as required under the NPA.

Under the NPA, Legal Aid ACT is funded to deliver services through its specialist Family Violence and Protection Orders Unit. This unit, based at the Magistrates Court, provided over 1,600 instances of family violence advice and representation in 2016-17. In January 2017, the Federal Government also committed \$1.45 million to Legal Aid ACT's new 'Family Advocacy and Support Service' over 2.5 years. This service provides integrated duty lawyer and family violence support services for families affected by family violence. The service is based at the Canberra Family Courts Registry and crucially assists families to transition between, and manage matters across, the Commonwealth Family Law and ACT Family Violence Order and Child Protection jurisdictions.

The Commonwealth family violence funding for ACT community legal centres has been allocated to the Women's Legal Centre and Canberra Community Law to allow them to continue to provide crucial services to women and children experiencing or at risk of domestic and family violence. The funding for Canberra Community Law and the Women's Legal Centre is recurrent funding to support their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs. The funding is provided via an outcomes based funding agreement

incorporating reporting requirements relating to services provided to victims of domestic and family violence.

This initiative is largely aimed at assisting two groups most susceptible to domestic and family violence—Canberra’s homeless population and people from the ACT’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This supports the Government’s Safer Families initiative and its overall commitment to support people experiencing or at risk of domestic and family violence.

National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness

The ACT Government invests over \$20 million per year for community agencies to deliver specialist homelessness services. Until 30 June 2018, this has been funded through the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH), and through the ACT Government appropriation. Included in this funding is a range of services supporting women and children affected by domestic and family violence. This includes immediate safety in emergency accommodation and various other transitional, case management, and follow up supports.

The current NPAH gives priority to frontline services focussing on women and children experiencing domestic and family violence and homeless youth, and requires 25% of funding to be dedicated to services to assist families escaping domestic and family violence and youth homelessness. The ACT Government exceeds this target, with 33% of NPAH funding supporting these cohort groups.

Since 2015, the NPAH has operated on a year-to-year agreement, creating significant uncertainty for frontline services funded through this agreement. As discussed earlier, this also created risks to the delivery of the objectives of the National Plan. Throughout this time, the ACT Government advocated for the need for funding certainty for the NPAH. The Commonwealth Government announced in May 2017 that the NPAH and NAHA will be combined into the new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA). States and territories are currently negotiating with the Commonwealth on the NHHA, which will take effect from July 2018. Timing of the new Agreement is crucial to ensure continued funding certainty for the homelessness sector, which provide critical supports to victims of domestic and family violence. Through the negotiations on the new NHHA, the ACT Government will work with the Commonwealth on jurisdiction-specific outcomes for the delivery of frontline homelessness services.

As well as a range of outputs, all specialist homelessness services are required to report on the following outcomes every six months:

- > people’s immediate needs are addressed;
- > people will develop living skills to sustain their accommodation;
- > people will increase their capacity to engage support to live independently; and
- > people will increase their connection to the community.

In addition, the ACT Government provides \$4.6 million in funding for homelessness services for young people, many of whom have left home due to family violence or relationship breakdown.

National Partnership on National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions

Keeping perpetrators accountable across all systems is one of the six national priority areas under the *Third Action Plan 2016-19* of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022*. A key action outlined in the Third Action Plan is to implement key performance indicators against the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions (NOSPI) and develop an approach to report against these indicators annually to drive further refinements and improvements.

The NOSPI have been designed to be a key tool to drive improvements across perpetrator intervention systems, from initial police, community, domestic violence and sexual assault responses through to how perpetrators are dealt with by courts, behaviour change programs and corrections facilities. The ACT Government is supportive of reporting the effectiveness of perpetrator interventions, while acknowledging the initial implementation of the NOSPI is limited in scope and will be built on overtime.

The ACT Government has been involved in consultations with the Commonwealth Government for the development of implementation materials, including performance indicators and a reporting framework for the NOSPI. At the 19 May 2017 meeting of the Law, Crime and Community Safety Council, Attorneys-General and Justice and Police Ministers agreed to the Commonwealth working with all jurisdictions to commence reporting on the NOSPI in 2017. Jurisdictions, including the ACT, are now in the reporting phase of this work program. It is envisaged that the 2017 NOSPI report will be finalised towards the end of 2017, with a view to being available in 2018.

The Commonwealth has provided time-limited funding to states and territories to facilitate the implementation of the NOSPI, which was welcomed by the ACT Government. However, this will not be sufficient to fully achieve the objectives of the NOSPI and the Commonwealth and state and territory governments will need to consider the future resourcing of this work program.

TERMS OF REFERENCE (D)

BEST PRACTICE POLICY APPROACHES AND RESPONSES BEING UNDERTAKEN IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS TO PREVENT AND/OR RESPOND TO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

The approaches adopted in the ACT Government will be informed by best practice examples from other jurisdictions, while still being tailored to suits the specific of the ACT. The ACT's context is unique and diverse and any policy approach needs careful consideration about how best to adapt from the ACT environment. Generally importing another jurisdiction's approach for such a complex issue may not yield the same result in the ACT, given the different laws, services, funding models and population make-up.

The ACT Government is well-connected to learn from best practice approaches in other jurisdictions via membership in several key national groups working on domestic and family violence reform in Australia.

As noted, above, the ACT is represented on the National Plan Implementation Executive Group that is driving the Third Action Plan National Priorities and Actions and closely aligns its effort with the work of this group.

The ACT government is also an active member of Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and OurWatch. OurWatch was established to drive nationwide change in the culture, behaviours and power imbalances that lead to violence against women and their children. The ACT government contributes both financially as well as providing expertise to the national work they perform in the areas of prevention, early intervention and research relating to domestic and family violence.

The ACT government is also a part of the National Family Violence Working Group. This group is a working group of justice officials to develop measures to improve the interaction between the federal family law, and state child protection and family violence systems. This working group works on information sharing, risk identification and assessment, amendments to the *Family Law Act 1975*, legislative protection for

witnesses and improving family violence competency for professionals working in the family law and family violence systems.

The ACT government is regularly engaged with other jurisdictions to discuss specific domestic and family violence initiatives, including the NSW Government Behavioural Insights Unit, the Central Coast Hub and the New Zealand Vulnerable Children's Hub. The ACT is collaborating with the Victorian Government via a process of information sharing on key elements of the family violence response, including around the development of family safety hubs which both jurisdictions have committed to delivering. Both the ACT and Victoria take a similar approach to working closely with service providers, advocates and victims of family violence in shaping our response and reforming services. There is also scope to collaborate on key projects rolling out under our family violence responses, such as the ACT's new Room4Change program.

The risk assessment used by ACT Policing is modelled on the Risk Assessment Screening Tool (RAST) used by Tasmanian police. The RAST is utilised by operational police at the attendance of family violence incidents to assist in assessing the risk of a victim experiencing future violence. The RAST was evaluated in 2009 where it was found to have increased the rigour and accountability of the process of risk assessment and provided a transparent record of decision-making processes with respect to the management of risk and safety of victims.

TERMS OF REFERENCE (E)

ANY OTHER RELATED MATTERS

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

There has been a range of recent community-led reports and initiatives on domestic and family violence resulting from projects or forums. The Government is currently consider the below reports as it progresses policy approaches to addressing domestic and family violence.

BEYOND CRISIS report

The *BEYOND CRISIS: Working with Canberra's professional firms and businesses to make safer choices easier for survivors of domestic violence* paper reports on a project led by Women's Centre for Health Matters, with support from the Domestic Violence Crisis. In 2015-16, the ACT Government awarded \$27,227 to the Women's Centre for Health Matters, through the Women's Safety Grants, to engage with private businesses to identify opportunities to reduce barriers for women experiencing domestic and family violence. The project aimed to find business and industry-led solutions to prevent women and men from returning to violent relationships or re-entering the crisis homelessness/family violence service systems due to financial hardship, as well as establish a network of business and industry leaders to support this work.

The project resulted in a number of initiatives being developed, including:

- > The Assistance Beyond Crisis micro-finance facility offering one-off, no interest loans;
- > Beyond Bank participating in the development and trialling of local domestic and family violence training for local staff;
- > Communities@Work committing to enter into an Memorandum of Understanding with the Domestic Violence Crisis Service for a pilot to explore the offer of limited free childcare places;

- > The Community Services Directorate working with Women's Centre for Health Matters to develop a model for a Scholarship Program to sponsor children through early childhood education and care;
- > Transport Canberra working with Women's Centre for Health Matters and Domestic Violence Crisis Service to explore and trial options for access to free bus trips for those without private transport;
- > Project Independence working with Domestic Violence Crisis Service and Women's Centre for Health Matters to explore expanding the Project Independence housing model;
- > Manuka and Kippax vets establishing a monthly free pet clinic for basic health treatment;
- > Community Housing Canberra Affordable Housing establishing a Memorandum of Understanding with Domestic Violence Crisis Service to allocate three houses for Domestic Violence Crisis Service clients and prioritising Domestic Violence Crisis Service clients for housing.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Forum: Domestic and Family Violence report

The Domestic Violence Prevention Council partnered with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to hold an Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Community family violence forum on 29 and 30 March 2017. The forum aimed to raise awareness and work together with community agencies, government and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities to build awareness and capacity.

The report from the forum summarises the discussions held and provides a series of recommendations for the Government, the Domestic Violence Prevention Council and the Elected Body about improving service responses to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities affected by domestic and family violence.



ACT
Government

Directorate name
Long name

Date 2016

