

Working together to address domestic, family and sexual violence

NSW Women's Safety Commissioner
Strategic Plan 2024–2027



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Acknowledgement of Country

The Office of the Women's Safety Commissioner acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples and traditional custodians of Australia and the oldest continuing culture in human history. We acknowledge that sovereignty over this land was never ceded.

We acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of First Nations people across Australia and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters on which we live and work. We acknowledge the enduring resilience of First Nations communities who continue to fight for self-determination in the face of intergenerational legacies of trauma, colonisation, dispossession and discrimination.

We recognise that First Nations communities have unique strengths, distinct needs and innovative solutions. We pay tribute to the long-standing leadership of First Nations women in keeping their families and communities safe, including by preventing and addressing domestic, family and sexual violence, and we are committed to partnering with First Nations communities in this important work.



Yarra (Gumtree Gum Nuts) by Konstantina (Gadigal, Eora Nation)

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Konstantina (Kate Constantine) is a proud Gadigal woman of the Eora nation and a neo-contemporary Indigenous artist. She is re-imagining the traditions of her peoples' dot painters and providing a modern narrative for all Australians to better understand First Nations people as part of the fabric of Australia.

Message to victim-survivors

The Office of the Women's Safety Commissioner acknowledges and honours the expertise of people with lived experience of domestic, family and sexual violence. We recognise the harms that you have experienced, and continue to navigate, as you work towards healing and recovery.

We thank the victim-survivors who have shared their stories and advocated for change. Your perspectives have informed and inspired this Strategic Plan and continue to drive us to do more. Not everyone is able to speak up, but everyone is deserving of respect, support and healing. We remember and mourn those who have been murdered and acknowledge the ongoing pain of those who have lost loved ones.

We acknowledge that many people working to address domestic, family and sexual violence have lived experience themselves, whether or not they choose to disclose, and we honour their tireless work to help others.

We are committed to creating opportunities for victim-survivors to inform, challenge and enrich NSW's responses to violence and safety for women and children. We invite you to join us in implementing this Strategic Plan to effect positive and meaningful change.

Services and support

This Strategic Plan contains detail related to domestic, family and sexual violence, including sexual assault, sexual harassment and issues related to abuse and neglect of children, which some readers may find distressing.

If you or someone close to you is in distress or immediate danger, please call 000.

Support is available if you or someone you know has experienced domestic, family and sexual violence. Below is a list of relevant support services. For more information on support services, visit www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/children-and-families/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence.html.

HELP AND SUPPORT

General

1800RESPECT	Free and confidential national counselling service for sexual assault and domestic and family violence.	1800 737 732 (available 24/7) www.1800respect.org.au
Centre for Women's Economic Safety, Money Clinics	Free financial safety planning for women, non-binary and gender diverse people experiencing financial or economic abuse.	1800 730 031 https://cwes.org.au/money-clinics
LawAccess NSW (Legal Aid NSW)	Free legal information and referral service in NSW.	1300 888 529 www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au
Legal Aid NSW Domestic Violence Unit	Specialist domestic and family violence service at Legal Aid NSW.	1800 979 529
Link2Home	Information and referral helpline for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.	1800 152 152 (available 9am - 10pm daily)
NSW Domestic Violence Line	Free counselling and referrals to women experiencing domestic and family violence. Interpreters available.	1800 656 463 (available 24/7)
NSW Sexual Violence Helpline	Helpline for anyone in NSW who has experienced sexual assault. Also available for family members or other supporters of sexual assault victim-survivors, including professionals.	1800 424 017 (available 24/7)
Victim Services, NSW	Information, referrals and services to victims of crime in NSW.	1800 633 063 https://victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au
WDVCAS	Apprehended Domestic Violence Order support and case coordination, information, advocacy, safety planning and referrals.	1800 938 227
Women's Legal Service NSW	Free legal services for women in NSW.	02 8745 6900 www.wlsnsw.org.au

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

13 YARN	Support line for mob who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping.	13 92 76 (available 24/7) www.13yarn.org.au
Thirrili	First Nations postvention service supporting individuals, families and communities affected by suicide or other significant trauma.	1800 805 801 (available 24/7) https://thirrili.com.au/postvention-response-service

Well Mob	Social, emotional and cultural wellbeing online resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	www.wellmob.org.au
Wirringa Baiya	Community legal centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children and youth in NSW.	1800 686 587 www.wirringabaiya.org.au/contact

Children and young people

Kids Helpline	Free and confidential online and phone counselling service for children and young people aged five to 25.	1800 551 800 (available 24/7) www.kidshelpline.com.au
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LGBTIQA+

QLife	Free and confidential LGBTIQA+ peer support and referrals for people in Australia.	1800 184 527 (available 3pm - midnight daily) www.qlife.org.au
Rainbow Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence	Free and confidential helpline for LGBTIQA+ people who have been impacted by domestic, family or sexual violence.	1800 497 212 (available 24/7)
Say It Out Loud	Resource for LGBTIQA+ people and professionals working with people who have experienced domestic, family or sexual violence.	www.sayitoutloud.org.au

Men

MensLine Australia	Telephone and online counselling service for Australian men.	1300 78 99 78 (available 24/7) www.mensline.org.au
Men's Referral Service	Counselling, information and referral service for men who use violence and abuse, to support them to change their behaviour.	1300 766 491 (available 24/7) www.ntv.org.au/mrs

Mental Health

Beyond Blue	Information and support to help anyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health.	1300 22 4636 (available 24/7) www.beyondblue.org.au
Head to Health	Online mental health services from some of Australia's most trusted mental health organisations.	1800 595 212 www.headtohealth.gov.au
Lifeline	National helpline crisis support and suicide prevention services.	13 11 14 (available 24/7) www.lifeline.org.au
National Suicide Call-back Services	Phone and online counselling for people affected by suicide.	1300 659 467 (available 24/7) www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au
ReachOut	Online mental health service for young people and their parents.	www.au.reachout.com

Older People and People with a Disability

Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline	Free and confidential service for anyone who needs information or support or would like to report abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people or adults with disability.	1800 628 221 https://ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au
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Introduction by the NSW Women’s Safety Commissioner



Domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) is widespread and causes grave harm, particularly to women and children. It traumatises individuals, destroys families and undermines our ability to achieve equality in the community. It can be experienced by anyone, regardless of their background. It affects all groups, demographics, identities and communities.

While both men and women can use and experience DFSV, overwhelmingly the majority of victim-survivors are women and children, and the majority of people who use violence are men. This is rooted in power imbalances between men and women and reinforced by rigid gender norms and stereotypes. At its core, such violence is both a symptom and a cause of gender inequality and a barrier to its achievement.

Against this backdrop, in 2023 the NSW Government created a new role of Women’s Safety Commissioner to address the scourge of DFSV and enhance women’s safety in NSW. I was honoured to be appointed as the inaugural NSW Women’s Safety Commissioner.

My work is supported by a small, dedicated office (the ‘Office of the Women’s Safety Commissioner’) in the NSW Department of Communities and Justice. I also collaborate with the federal Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner on cross-jurisdictional initiatives and reforms.

“My new role presents a unique opportunity to drive systemic change to enhance women’s safety in NSW.”

I aim to drive change in the way government and non-government partners work together to create a more integrated system that better responds to DFSV, while also driving broader cultural change to prevent such violence in the long term.

A key aspect of my role is to promote and support the objectives of the *NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022-27* and *NSW Sexual Violence Plan 2022-27* (the NSW Plans), and to strengthen government accountability for delivery. The NSW Plans were purposely developed to respond to, and align with, the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (the National Plan). They work toward a shared vision that all people and communities in NSW are free from DFSV.

This inaugural Strategic Plan provides a roadmap for the Office of the Women’s Safety Commissioner’s activities between 2024 and 2027. It seeks to harness the collective expertise of government, the non-government sector, businesses, researchers, victim-survivors and others across the community, to achieve positive and meaningful change.

The Strategic Plan sets out actions aimed at achieving six overarching and interconnected priorities:

- Put people with lived experience at the centre
- Enhance oversight, monitoring and accountability for delivery of the NSW Plans
- Promote safe, accessible and integrated responses
- Champion a greater focus on primary prevention
- Strengthen workforces and informal support networks
- Support women’s economic safety and security.

This Strategic Plan was developed drawing on the priorities set out in the NSW Plans and the National Plan, a range of different consultations undertaken by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice in 2023, and various forms of consultation and engagement undertaken by my Office since February 2023.

“People with lived experience of domestic, family and sexual violence, particularly women, were central to the development of this Strategic Plan and will be central to its implementation.”

Eliminating DFSV is a complex challenge that will require both systems reform and cultural change. This will take time and cannot be achieved by one person, organisation or government. This Strategic Plan is intended to amplify and complement the crucial work already being done across NSW, building on the knowledge and expertise developed by others over many decades.

Implementing this Strategic Plan will require meaningful collaboration and partnerships. My Office will collaborate and partner with agencies, organisations and communities representing a diverse range of backgrounds and identities, including First Nations women, culturally and linguistically diverse people, members of the LGBTIQ+ community, children and young people, older women and women with disability. Their perspectives will inform our activities and foster tailored responses.

My Office will strive to ensure that our work is grounded in data, expertise and evidence of best practice. In collaboration with others, we will bring together available data and knowledge to enhance understanding, inform decision-making and measure progress, while also supporting researchers and data custodians to build the evidence base and identify emerging trends.

My Office and I are committed to driving sustained, collective action to address the scourge of DFSV. This will significantly improve the wellbeing of all people in NSW.

“Together, we can create safe homes and communities where women are respected and children and families thrive.”

Dr Hannah Tonkin
NSW Women’s Safety Commissioner
March 2024

The language used in this Strategic Plan

It is important to consider the language we use when talking about DFSV. Language frames how we understand a problem and can therefore influence how we respond. The terminology used in this context can have various meanings and interpretations, and often differs between jurisdictions.

This Strategic Plan purposefully uses terminology that reflects the language of key state and national frameworks, including the National Plan, the NSW Plans and *Our Watch: Change the Story*.¹

We have aimed to use inclusive language throughout this document. We recognise that terminology is constantly evolving and that no single set of terms suits all situations and people.



Domestic and family violence

This Strategic Plan adopts the NSW Government's common definition of 'domestic and family violence' set out in the *NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022-27*. This definition refers to domestic and family violence as 'any behaviour in a domestic relationship, which is violent, threatening, coercive or controlling and causing a person to live in fear for their own or someone else's safety. It is usually manifested as part of a pattern of ongoing controlling or coercive behaviour.'

Sexual violence

In this Strategic Plan, as in the *NSW Sexual Violence Plan 2022-2027*, the term 'sexual violence' is used as an umbrella term to describe acts of a sexual nature that happen without consent. Sexual violence comprises not only physical but also non-physical acts and behaviours, such as image-based sexual abuse. It can range from a single instance of harassment or assault to abuse perpetrated over long periods.

People with lived experience

In line with the NSW Plans and the National Plan, this Strategic Plan uses the terms 'people with lived experience' and 'victim-survivors' to identify people who have experienced, or are experiencing, DFSV. We recognise that experiences of violence are wide ranging and deeply personal, and that some individuals may not identify with these terms. This Strategic Plan aims to be inclusive of all affected individuals, and we respect the terminology that individuals choose to use to describe their own experience.

The scope of this Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan includes references to 'violence against women', 'gender-based violence' and 'domestic, family and sexual violence'. The references to 'violence against women' reflect the remit of the Women's Safety Commissioner and the terminology used in the international human rights context, as well as in key NSW and national frameworks. This recognises that gender-based violence is primarily perpetrated by men against women. We acknowledge that women are not a homogenous group, and the term 'woman' is intended to include both cis and trans women. We also acknowledge that gender-based violence impacts people of diverse sexualities and gender identities, often in complex and intersecting ways. The experiences and needs of LGBTIQ+ people and communities are intentionally included within this Strategic Plan.

Plan on a Page

Vision

All women in NSW enjoy safe homes and communities where they are respected and their children can thrive

Guiding Principles



Priority 1

Ensure that people with lived experience are at the centre

Objective

Amplify the diverse voices of people with lived experience of DFSV and ensure that their expertise informs policies, programs and public discourse

Actions

Champion mechanisms for incorporating lived expertise into the design of policy, programs and public education, including by establishing a lived experience advisory body for NSW

Encourage research on victim-survivor experiences, including their interactions with the justice system, to build the evidence base and identify emerging trends

Amplify the voices of children and young people who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing DFSV, and promote greater recognition of their unique needs

Priority 2

Enhance oversight, monitoring and accountability for delivery of the NSW Plans

Objective

Oversee and monitor the implementation of the NSW Plans and strengthen government accountability for their delivery

Actions

Strengthen governance mechanisms to facilitate effective implementation of the NSW Plans, enhance accountability and better utilise the DFSV sector's expertise

Provide evidence-based advice to the NSW Government to inform and influence policy, legislation, regulation and investment in line with the strategic direction of the NSW Plans

Promote effective monitoring of the NSW Plans, including by overseeing the development and implementation of an Outcomes Framework and publishing an annual Report Card

Priority 3

Promote safe, accessible and integrated responses

Objective

Advocate for safe, accessible and integrated responses to DFSV that meet individual needs, ensure accountability and do not perpetuate trauma

Actions

Improve collaboration and coordination across government and communities so that services are joined up, timely and easy to navigate, and systems are better equipped to intervene early

Advocate for holistic, integrated and trauma-informed justice and community responses to DFSV that support accountability and behaviour change for men who use violence

Partner with First Nations women and organisations to promote community-driven, strengths-based and culturally-safe approaches to DFSV

Priority 4

Champion a greater focus on primary prevention

Objective

Advocate for a greater focus on, and investment in, primary prevention to address the underlying drivers of violence against women

Actions

Collaborate with partners to strengthen understanding of, and commitment to addressing, the primary drivers of DFSV using a long-term, whole-of-population approach

Promote education and awareness raising, particularly among children and young people, aimed at changing attitudes, norms, structures and practices that drive violence against women

Engage men and boys in primary prevention and early intervention, including by challenging rigid gender stereotypes and promoting healthy models of masculinity

Priority 5

Strengthen workforces and informal support networks

Objective

Build the capacity of specialist and general workforces as well as informal support networks to identify, prevent and respond to DFSV

Actions

Support the flow of skilled workers into the specialist DFSV sector

Advocate for ongoing training and capacity building, both for workers in the specialist DFSV sector and for other workers who regularly respond to DFSV but are not specialists

Raise awareness and strengthen the capacity of informal networks and communities to identify, prevent and respond to DFSV

Priority 6

Support women's economic safety and security

Objective

Promote initiatives that improve women's economic safety in relationships and recognise the centrality of economic security in escaping and recovering from DFSV

Actions

Improve awareness and understanding of economic and financial abuse, including in the context of coercive control

Promote initiatives to strengthen DFSV victim-survivors' economic security and empowerment, both during and after abuse, including housing, employment and financial services

Engage with businesses and the corporate sector to strengthen their capacity to identify, prevent and respond to DFSV among employees and customers

About the NSW Office of the Women's Safety Commissioner

The NSW Government established the Women's Safety Commissioner role to strengthen responses to DFSV and enhance women's safety in NSW. This made NSW the first Australian state or territory to have a Commissioner dedicated to improving women's safety.

Dr Hannah Tonkin was appointed as the inaugural Women's Safety Commissioner and commenced on 6 February 2023. The Office of the Women's Safety Commissioner was established on 30 October 2023 to support the Commissioner's work. The Commissioner and her Office sit within the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, supporting the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

The Commissioner provides critical leadership and oversight across the whole of NSW Government in relation to women's safety, with a particular focus on DFSV. This includes overseeing relevant governance frameworks, monitoring the implementation of key strategies and initiatives, and promoting integrated and holistic responses across specialist and mainstream service systems.

The Commissioner also provides strategic advice and support to the NSW Government on policy development and law reform, including through regular inter-agency forums and Ministerial meetings.

The Commissioner's remit is grounded in the NSW Plans, which provide strategic direction to prevent and respond to DFSV in NSW over the five years from 2022. The NSW Plans were purposely developed to respond to, and align with, the National Plan.

The Office of the Women's Safety Commissioner works closely with the DFSV sector and aims to foster strong collaboration between the government, the non-government sector, businesses, researchers and communities to deliver improved safety outcomes for women. In this sense, the Commissioner aims to serve as a 'bridge' between the government and the broader community.

Importantly, the Commissioner's role includes awareness raising, education and public engagement aimed at improving community understanding of DFSV and influencing attitudes and cultural norms related to gender, power and violence.

A key aspect of the Commissioner's role is to give people with lived experience of DFSV a greater voice in the design, development and implementation of government policies and programs. Placing people with lived experience at the centre will help to deliver improved safety outcomes for women in the short and long term.

Snapshot of domestic, family and sexual violence

Prevalence and impact of domestic, family and sexual violence

Domestic, family and sexual violence is significantly underreported. Despite this, the available data demonstrates that such violence is prevalent, persistent and can be experienced by anyone, regardless of their background. Its pernicious effects cut across all groups, demographics, identities and communities. The devastating impacts of DFSV go far beyond individual victim-survivors, affecting entire families, communities and society as a whole.

In Australia

On average, approximately one woman is killed every week by an intimate partner²



1 in 4

Australian women have experienced violence by an intimate partner or family member since the age of 15³

82%



of women who experience violence by a current intimate partner do not report it to the police⁴

32%



of assault hospitalisations are due to domestic and family violence, and 9 in 10 are female victims⁵



1 in 5

Australian women have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15⁶

92%



of women who experience sexual assault do not report it to the police, with 31% citing shame or embarrassment as a barrier to reporting⁷

97%



of sexual assault offenders proceeded against by police in Australia are male⁸



Research indicates that up to 90% of incarcerated women have experienced DFSV at some point in their life⁹

It is estimated that violence against women and children costs the economy

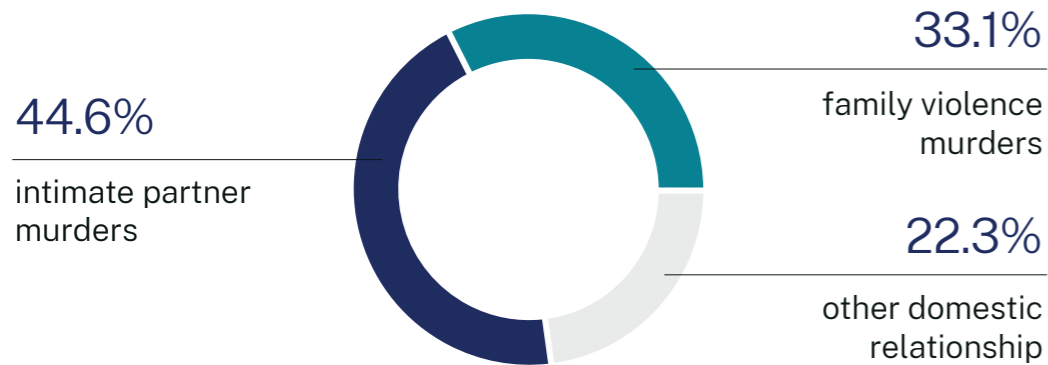
\$26 billion

each year nationally, with victim-survivors bearing approximately 50% of that cost¹⁰



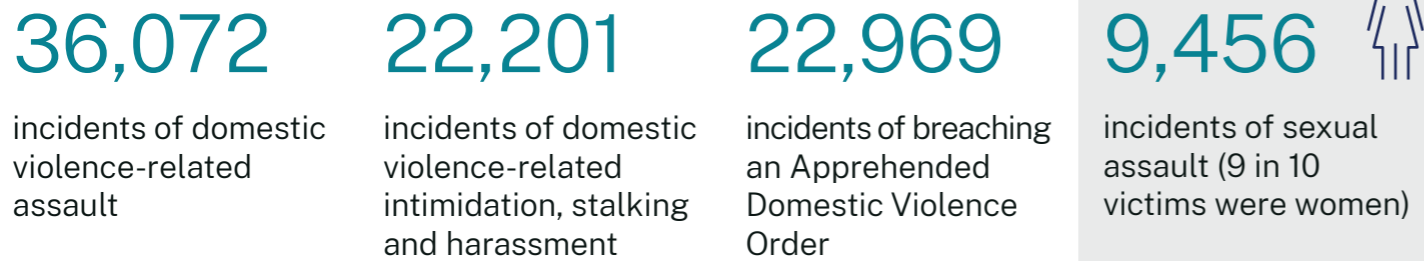
In NSW

In the five years to December 2023, NSW police recorded 139 victims of domestic violence-related murder:¹¹



79% of intimate partner violence murders were female victims

In the 12 months to December 2023, NSW police recorded:¹²



Sexual assaults recorded by NSW police increased

10.1% per year

on average in the five years to December 2023¹³

Domestic violence-related assaults recorded by NSW police increased

3.6% per year

on average in the five years to December 2023

Police respond to over

140,000

domestic and family violence calls every year

one call every four minutes¹⁴



39%

of defended hearings in the NSW Local Court are domestic violence-related¹⁵



Domestic and family violence is a leading reason for seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services (38% of clients, of whom 91% are women and children)¹⁶



Of the women who experience domestic and family violence, more than 50% have children in their care¹⁷

112,592 children

were reported at Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH) in 2022-23¹⁸

31%

of whom had domestic violence recorded as an assessed issue in at least one report



In

47%

of cases of intimate partner homicide by a male against a female victim examined by the NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team, the perpetrator's history of violence had never been reported to police¹⁹

The impact of domestic, family and sexual violence on children and young people

All children have a right to grow up in a home free from violence and abuse.

Yet according to the Australian Child Maltreatment Study, 40% of Australians report having been exposed to domestic and family violence as a child.²⁰ This could be through domestic and family violence directly targeting a child, or through a child witnessing or hearing such violence directed at other family members.

Domestic, family and sexual violence has devastating and long-lasting impacts on children and young people. Children who experience such violence can experience a range of short and long-term emotional, psychological and physical consequences, including anxiety, depression and PTSD-like symptoms. These impacts often extend to their educational experiences, manifesting as concentration difficulties, poor academic performance and higher absenteeism rates. Every child's experience is different, depending on their specific individual, family and environmental protective and risk factors.²¹

There is growing awareness of the need to recognise the unique experiences and needs of children and young people who experience DFSV, and to provide targeted and timely support and interventions. This includes therapeutic interventions, support in educational settings, and ensuring a stable and safe environment. The right support at the right time, tailored to their unique needs, can help children to recover from the impacts of developmental trauma and help break future cycles of violence.

Australian Child Maltreatment Study (2023):

40% of adults aged over 16 were exposed to domestic and family violence as children

32% of adults aged over 16 experienced physical abuse as children

31% of adults aged over 16 experienced emotional abuse as children

In families where children are exposed to domestic violence, there is a much higher chance of children experiencing other forms of maltreatment

Australian Institute of Family Welfare (2023):

29% of 18- and 19-year-olds experienced intimate partner violence or abuse in the past 12 months²²

The multifaceted nature of experiences

It is crucial for policies, programs and decision-makers to approach gender-based violence with an intersectional lens, recognising the uniqueness of each individual and family.

This approach recognises that individuals come from diverse backgrounds and personal circumstances, and possess multiple, varied identities. These factors can lead to overlapping experiences of inequality, marginalisation and discrimination.

Discrimination based on factors such as race, ability, age, citizenship and residency status, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic and geographical status, along with the enduring impacts of colonisation, can intersect in complex ways. Violence against women and

gender inequality are interwoven with these structural and systemic forms of inequality, marginalisation and discrimination.

This intersectionality means that DFSV can disproportionately affect certain individuals and groups, including children and young people, First Nations communities, people with disability, LGBTQIA+ communities, older people, and multicultural communities, particularly those facing compounding forms of disadvantage and discrimination. These intersections can result in unique experiences of violence and risk, and distinct barriers to seeking help.

Applying an intersectional lens enables a deeper understanding of the diverse experiences and impacts of violence. It highlights the importance of recognising and addressing barriers to seeking help, and of designing and delivering tailored solutions that meet complex needs without perpetuating societal inequalities. This approach is essential for effectively addressing DFSV, and supporting all affected individuals and communities.

65% of women with disability report experiencing at least one incident of violence since the age of 15

60% of LGBTQIA+ people report having experienced intimate partner violence²⁵

Women with disability are **2x** more likely than women without disability to have experienced sexual violence²³

Between 2014-15 and 2019-20, the number of allegations of sexual assault in aged care homes in Australia **doubled**²⁶

First Nations women are **31x** more likely to be hospitalised from domestic and family violence than non-Indigenous women²⁴

1 in 3 migrant and refugee women have experienced some form of domestic and family violence, with temporary visa holders reporting relatively higher levels of violence²⁷



Community attitudes and understanding

The majority of Australians acknowledge that violence against women is a serious issue in society. However, misconceptions about the nature and causes of violence, such as blaming the victim or excusing the violence due to external factors like stress or alcohol, are still prevalent.

Many Australians also misunderstand the gendered nature of DFSV, or hold attitudes that may indirectly contribute to minimising or even condoning this violence.

National Community Attitudes Survey

The most recent National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey, conducted by the Australian National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS), showed that between 2009 and 2021 in Australia, there was an overall positive shift in attitudes that reject gender inequality and violence against women.²⁸ There was also an improvement in understanding of violence against women. However, the Survey included the following findings:

<p>41% of respondents believe that domestic violence is carried out by men and women equally. This is despite a range of data sources clearly showing that most perpetrators are men and most victims are women.</p>	<p>While 91% of respondents agree that violence against women is a problem in Australia, only 47% agree that it is a problem in their own suburb or town</p>
<p>34% of respondents believe that it is common for sexual assault accusations to be used as a way of getting back at men. This is despite the fact that false allegations of sexual assault are extremely rare, and the overwhelming majority of women who experience sexual assault do not report it to police.</p>	<p>25% of respondents believe that women who do not leave their abusive partners are partly responsible for violence continuing</p> <p>41% of respondents would not know where to access help for a domestic violence issue</p>

These findings indicate that significant work is still needed to improve community understanding of, and attitudes towards, violence against women in Australia.

Coercive control law reform in NSW

In November 2022, NSW became the first Australian state or territory to pass legislation criminalising coercive control as a stand-alone offence.²⁹

The criminalisation of coercive control in NSW followed the introduction of coercive control offences in a number of overseas jurisdictions, including England and Wales, Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Coercive control involves patterns of abusive behaviour that have the cumulative effect of denying victim-survivors their autonomy and independence. This can include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, financial or spiritual abuse. Coercive control has been identified as a common precursor to intimate partner homicide, meaning that these patterns of abusive behaviour can be a significant ‘red flag’ for domestic violence murders.

On 22 September 2023, the Standing Council of Attorneys-General released the National Principles to Address Coercive Control in Family and Domestic Violence. They set out a shared understanding of the common features and impacts of coercive control, as well as guiding considerations to inform responses to this issue. They make it clear, however, that each state and territory government is responsible for determining whether and how to criminalise coercive control.

In NSW, the coercive control offence will come into effect on 1 July 2024.

The long implementation period was intended to allow adequate time for training of key actors in the criminal justice system, as well as education and community awareness raising about coercive control. Training programs are also being developed for workers in the domestic and family violence sector.

The implementation of the new law is guided by a multi-disciplinary statutory Taskforce, led by the Secretary of the NSW Department of Communities and Justice. This is supported by 10 sector-specific reference groups, each chaired by a member of the Taskforce, which provide advice and recommendations to the Taskforce.

The 10 Reference Groups are as follows:

- Government
- Legal
- Domestic and family violence service delivery
- First Nations communities
- Culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- LGBTQIA+
- People with disability
- Older persons
- Children and youth
- Lived expertise.

A statutory review of the NSW legislation must be undertaken two years after the commencement of the coercive control offence, and then repeated a further two times.

The Women’s Safety Commissioner will play an important role in supporting and monitoring the implementation of NSW’s new coercive control laws in the coming months and years.

This will include participating in the Taskforce and Reference Groups, supporting the development and delivery of training, promoting community education and awareness raising related to coercive control, amplifying the voices of victim-survivors, and contributing to the statutory review process.



NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team

The Domestic Violence Death Review Team (DVDRT) was established in 2010 under the *Coroners Act 2009 (NSW)* to review deaths occurring in the context of domestic violence in NSW.



The DVDRT undertakes comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analyses of these deaths to identify systemic issues, trends and patterns, highlight limitations or weaknesses in service delivery, and make recommendations for reform. It also collects data in relation to homicides and suicides that take place in a domestic violence context.

The DVDRT's overarching objective is to examine domestic violence-related deaths in NSW so as to facilitate improvements in systems and services and thereby reduce the incidence of future deaths.³⁰

The DVDRT is convened by the NSW State Coroner and includes government representatives from a range of key agencies, as well as non-government representatives with recognised expertise in relation to domestic and family violence. The NSW Attorney-General appoints members of the DVDRT for a period of two years.

The DVDRT reports to the NSW Parliament biennially, setting out its data analysis, findings and recommendations. It also undertakes public monitoring of its recommendations, and responses to these recommendations, in its tabled reports and on its website.

The DVDRT plays an important role in strengthening responses to domestic and family violence in NSW. The Women's Safety Commissioner is a member of the DVDRT and is committed to championing the translation of its expertise and evidence into strong governance, policy development and systems reform.

Closing the Gap Priority Reforms

The Office of the Women's Safety Commissioner is committed to the four priority reforms set out in the National Partnership Agreement for Closing the Gap (the Agreement), which focus on changing the way governments work with First Nations people across Australia:

- 1. Formal partnerships and shared decision-making
- 2. Building the community-controlled sector
- 3. Transforming government organisations
- 4. Shared access to data and information at a regional level

Target 13 of the Agreement states that by 2031, 'the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced by at least 50 per cent, as progress towards zero.'

The NSW Government is currently working in partnership with First Nations communities in NSW to develop a dedicated NSW Aboriginal Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Plan and achieve Target 13. This new Plan will respond to, and closely align with, the dedicated national

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan, which was released in August 2023.

The Office of the Women's Safety Commissioner will be led by, and work in partnership with, First Nations women and communities to support the Australian Government's commitment under Target 13 and the NSW Government's development and implementation of an Aboriginal Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Plan. The Office is committed to ensuring that the voices of First Nations women are central to government action on DFSV in NSW.

About this Strategic Plan

This inaugural Strategic Plan presents an opportunity for government to collaborate with the non-government sector, businesses, researchers, victim-survivors and others across the community to address DFSV.

- The Strategic Plan sets out a framework for action, which includes:**
- Six overarching and interconnected priorities for the Office of the Women’s Safety Commissioner’s work from 2024 to 2027
 - A corresponding objective for the work we will undertake to achieve each priority
 - Three specific actions for each priority
 - Five guiding principles, which will underpin our approach to everything we do.

The six priorities have been carefully chosen to amplify and complement the crucial work being done by various arms of government, the non-government sector and across the community. Each priority serves as a cornerstone in the complex machinery of systemic change, from streamlining service delivery and governance frameworks to incorporating lived experience into policymaking in a meaningful and transformative way.

This crystallises the essence of the Commissioner role: to not only oversee and monitor the delivery of existing governmental plans, but also to actively contribute to their evolution and effectiveness based on data, evidence and expertise.

In the coming three years, these priorities will guide us in sharpening the focus, scaling the impact and accelerating the pace of reform across NSW and nationally.

How this Strategic Plan was developed

This Strategic Plan for was developed through research, evidence and consultation, in particular drawing on:

- the priorities set out in the NSW Plans and the National Plan
- various consultations undertaken in 2023 by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice related to the implementation of the NSW Plans, including consultations related to the development of a NSW Primary Prevention Strategy, a Workforce Strategy and a Data Strategy
- preliminary consultations and analysis undertaken by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice related to the development of a dedicated NSW Aboriginal Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Plan

- various forms of consultation and engagement undertaken by the Women’s Safety Commissioner between February 2023 and February 2024, including with government representatives, peak body leaders, victim-survivors, frontline workers, researchers, policy experts and business leaders.

These consultations included individuals and organisations representing a diverse range of backgrounds and communities, including people with disability, First Nations communities, multicultural communities, older women, children and young people, and the LGBTIQ+ community.



How we will implement this Strategic Plan

Preventing and addressing DFSV is a complex challenge that will require both systems reform and cultural change. This will take time and requires collaboration across a range of different actors and organisations. The Office of the Women’s Safety Commissioner will only achieve its objectives by working together with others across government and the community to drive a whole-of society response.

We are committed to working collaboratively through partnerships and co-design, building on the extensive knowledge and expertise already held across government and the community. We will work closely with relevant stakeholders to advance the priorities in this Strategic Plan, and we will actively seek feedback throughout the implementation period. We welcome approaches to the Commissioner at any time.

We are also committed to harnessing data, evidence and expertise in all aspects of our work. We will ensure that our activities support and align with the NSW Government’s Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Data Strategy, and we will collaborate with researchers

and data custodians to gather evidence and identify emerging trends.

A key priority is to engage meaningfully and safely with people with lived experience of DFSV, and to ensure that their diverse perspectives inform policies and solutions. To advance this objective, we will convene a new lived experience advisory group for NSW. This group, supported by a broader network of people with diverse lived experience, will complement existing lived experience bodies and research to inform the ongoing work of our Office and of the NSW Government.

We will strive to amplify the voices of people who are disproportionately impacted by DFSV, and those whose voices are often not heard, and we will work to develop tailored solutions. Together, we will ensure that the needs and voices of those most affected by violence and abuse are not just acknowledged but actively shape a safer, more inclusive NSW.

How we will measure and report on progress



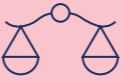


Each of the six priorities in this Strategic Plan, as well as the corresponding actions, has been carefully chosen to align with the priority areas set out in the NSW Plans.

The Office of the Women’s Safety Commissioner will develop an Outcomes Framework to measure progress in relation to DFSV in NSW, and will publish an annual

Report Card documenting the progress of the NSW Plans across their lifespan. Our actions under this Strategic Plan will be included in the Report Card, which will be publicly available each year.

Guiding principles

These guiding principles reflect the fundamental values of the Office of the Women’s Safety Commissioner and underpin our approach to everything we do. They guide our day-to-day activities and embed appropriate and effective ways of working at every step.

 <p>Person-centred</p>	<p>We will put people and families at the centre of everything we do. We will advocate for policies and programs that aid healing by continually consulting with victim-survivors and experts in trauma-informed practices. We will work to reorient systems to better meet the needs of individuals and families, supporting their agency and harnessing their strengths. This approach will inform our daily decision-making, the framing of our initiatives and our engagement with stakeholders. We recognise that <i>how</i> we engage matters, and we will strive to engage in a way that treats people with dignity and respect and contributes to them feeling heard, safe and supported.</p>
 <p>Collaborative</p>	<p>We will nurture an inclusive and collaborative approach through regular engagement, shared projects and community outreach. We will work in partnership with diverse stakeholders and bring their collective wisdom to bear on the challenges we are seeking to address. We will foster networks and relationships across government, civil society, business, research institutions and communities, including with other jurisdictions. This strong focus on collaboration and partnership will enhance the efficacy of policies and programs and generate a more cohesive and responsive support network.</p>
 <p>Accountable</p>	<p>We will foster a culture of openness and transparency by publishing regular updates on the Commissioner’s activities, as well as an annual Report Card on the progress of the NSW Plans. We will strive to act with integrity at all times, and we will actively seek feedback on our activities. Through constant dialogue with diverse stakeholders and communities, we will ensure that goals are not just set but are actively met, and we will hold ourselves accountable for achieving them.</p>
 <p>Evidence-informed</p>	<p>We will use an evidence-informed approach to ensure that policies and programs are built on solid foundations. Research, data analysis and evaluation will be ongoing processes, informing adjustments to policies, programs and strategic advice. We will maintain flexibility to respond to emerging trends, and we will seek to amplify examples of effective evidence-informed practice.</p>
 <p>Innovative</p>	<p>We value and encourage innovative approaches to addressing DFSV. This is essential to drive change and build the evidence base in an evolving landscape. We will cultivate an openness to new approaches and technologies, including innovations in jurisdictions outside Australia. We will explore and support place-based responses to DFSV that address local needs and harness community expertise. This will help to ensure that NSW stays at the forefront of solutions.</p>

Our Priorities for 2024-2027

The following six priority areas traverse, inform and underpin all aspects of the Office of the Women's Safety's Commissioner's work. They are focused on improving ways of working across the whole system, strengthening accountability and driving broader societal change to address DFSV.



Priority 1

Ensure that people with lived experience are at the centre

Objective: Amplify the diverse voices of people with lived experience of DFSV and ensure that their expertise informs policies, programs and public discourse

Why this is a priority

The inclusion of people with lived experience is crucial in planning, designing and implementing policy and programs to address DFSV. People with lived experience can provide policymakers with first-hand insights into the unique experiences and challenges faced by those who are using, or are impacted by, the services and systems in question. This expertise can strengthen responses, improve cultural safety and avoid unintentional harm.

Incorporating the diverse voices of people with lived experience can also promote their empowerment and connect their experience to positive change. Their engagement and leadership can be powerful in advocating for policy changes, and can contribute to a holistic, intersectional approach to addressing DFSV.

Key voices often missing from discussions are those of children and young people, who have the expertise to shape the services they need. It is important to ensure that their voices are heard, amplified and embedded in government work. This will help to promote greater recognition of their unique needs and facilitate tailored responses.

What we will do

The Office of the Women's Safety Commissioner is committed to putting people with lived experience at the heart of our efforts and championing a greater role for lived expertise across government.

Our specific actions will include:

- Championing mechanisms for incorporating lived expertise into the design of policy, programs and public education, including by establishing a lived experience advisory body for NSW
- Encouraging research on victim-survivor experiences, including their interactions with the justice system, to build the evidence base and identify emerging trends
- Amplifying the voices of children and young people who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing DFSV, and promoting greater recognition of their unique needs.

The creation of a lived experience advisory body for NSW, supported by a broader network of people with diverse lived experience across the state, will be a significant step forward and will complement existing groups in NSW. We will consult with experts and with government and non-government partners, including in other jurisdictions, to ensure that the establishment and operation of the new body follows best practice. We recognise, however, that no single group of people can ever represent the diverse range of experiences and needs of victim-survivors across NSW. Accordingly, we will continue to work closely with community organisations, researchers and existing lived experience bodies to ensure that a diverse range of voices are heard and listened to.

Priority 2

Enhance oversight, monitoring and accountability for delivery of the NSW Plans

Objective: Oversee and monitor the implementation of the NSW Plans and strengthen government accountability for their delivery

Why this is a priority

The *NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022-2027* and *NSW Sexual Violence Plan 2022-2027* provide strategic direction to prevent and respond to DFSV in NSW over the five years from 2022. They work toward a shared vision that all people and communities in NSW are free from DFSV.

The NSW Plans were designed to respond to, and align with, the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*. They were informed by consultation with key government agencies, advisory groups, peak organisations, sector representatives, Aboriginal organisations and victim-survivors across NSW. They set out 137 actions under five pillars: primary prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and healing, and systems enablers.

Strong inter-agency governance is essential to ensure effective implementation of the NSW Plans. While strong governance is important for the implementation of any initiative, it is particularly critical for the complex whole-of-government activities that are required to prevent and address DFSV. The NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team has highlighted challenges in implementing recommendations requiring inter-agency collaboration and coordination, demonstrating that this is a key area for improvement across government in NSW.³¹ Rigorous monitoring and regular reporting on outcomes are also critical to strengthen delivery and ensure transparency and accountability.

What we will do

The Office of the Women's Safety Commissioner is uniquely placed to oversee and monitor the implementation of the NSW Plans through whole-of-government leadership and oversight, the provision of strategic advice to government, and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders.

Our specific actions will include:

- Strengthening governance mechanisms to facilitate effective implementation of the NSW Plans, enhance accountability and better utilise the DFSV sector's expertise
- Providing evidence-based advice to the NSW Government to inform and influence policy, legislation, regulation and investment in line with the strategic direction of the NSW Plans
- Promoting effective monitoring of the NSW Plans, including by overseeing the development and implementation of an Outcomes Framework and publishing an annual Report Card.

We are committed to promoting collaborative governance that utilises the DFSV sector's expertise while also harnessing the expertise of people with lived experience. Our ongoing engagement with stakeholders will inform the strategic advice that we provide to decision-makers, and we will utilise the latest data and evidence to help understand the impact that the NSW Plans are having across NSW throughout their lifespan. Our actions under this Strategic Plan are intentionally aligned with the priority areas set out in the NSW Plans, and our activities will be included in the Report Card that will be published each year to document progress on the Plans.

Priority 3

Promote safe, accessible and integrated responses

Objective: Advocate for safe, accessible and integrated responses to DFSV that meet individual needs, ensure accountability and do not perpetuate trauma

Why this is a priority

The widespread and lifelong impacts of DFSV require safe, accessible and integrated responses that meet the holistic needs of victim-survivors, including children and young people, and do not perpetuate trauma. Specific culturally safe and appropriate approaches need to be developed with, and for, people with different cultural and language backgrounds and delivered by trusted people in the community.

Unsafe or inappropriate responses can result in violence inadvertently being minimised or condoned, exacerbating trauma and causing additional harm. These negative experiences can act as disincentives for women to seek further help and push them to remain in unsafe circumstances. Systems can themselves be harmful and can be weaponised as tools of abuse, causing further trauma and victimisation. Too many women affected by violence have come to regret speaking up and seeking support.

It is critical to ensure that men who use violence are held accountable and are supported to change their behaviour. Service systems must keep users of violence in view and provide timely access to appropriate and targeted supports to prevent further violence. This will help to keep women and children safe and avoid the perpetuation of harm across generations.

Improving and better integrating DFSV responses will require strong coordination and collaboration across government and communities. Holistic and integrated service responses are particularly important where experiences of DFSV intersect with children's needs, alcohol and other drug use, and/or mental health care needs³²

What we will do

The creation of the Office of the Women's Safety Commissioner provides an opportunity to enhance collaboration and coordination and reduce fragmentation across the system, while promoting timely and tailored responses that put individuals and families at the centre. This will help to build a system that is better equipped to intervene early and provide safe, accessible and integrated responses.

Our specific actions will include:

- Improving collaboration and coordination across government and communities so that services are joined up, timely and easy to navigate, and systems are better equipped to intervene early.
- Advocating for holistic, integrated and trauma-informed justice and community responses to DFSV that support accountability and behaviour change for men who use violence
- Partnering with First Nations women and organisations to promote community-driven, strengths-based and culturally-safe approaches to DFSV.

Key initiatives will include strengthening information sharing mechanisms and supporting the development and implementation of a common risk assessment framework that can be used by all agencies and providers. Our efforts to improve DFSV governance, outlined above under Priority 2, will play a central role in supporting this work.

We will collaborate with government and non-government partners to minimise the risk of misidentification of the predominant aggressor in domestic and family violence situations, and to support DFSV victim-survivors navigating the justice system more generally. We will also support efforts to strengthen evidence-based approaches to reduce offending and reoffending.

Our work with First Nations women, families and communities in NSW will include supporting Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to provide tailored programs and services for both victim-survivors and users of violence, and we will champion this approach across the whole government.

Priority 4

Champion a greater focus on primary prevention

Objective: Advocate for a greater focus on, and investment in, primary prevention to address the underlying drivers of violence against women

Why this is a priority

There is an urgent need for a greater, more targeted focus on primary prevention to end DFSV in NSW. By addressing the root causes that normalise or excuse violence, we aim to dismantle the conditions that perpetuate it in the first place. A whole-of-population approach will ensure that the impact is systemic, altering the social norms that implicitly condone violent behaviour.

To achieve meaningful change across the whole population, prevention efforts must engage people in multiple, mutually reinforcing ways over the course of their life span. This approach entails shared responsibilities across all levels of government, as well as the non-government sector, the private sector and the broader community, with everyone working towards the same goal. Whole-of-society primary prevention initiatives must work in parallel with more direct approaches to intervene early and prevent violence from occurring or escalating.

Crucially, the inclusion of men and boys in this dialogue is not merely participatory – it is transformative. By challenging long-standing gender stereotypes, advocating for healthy models of masculinity, and encouraging men and boys not to be bystanders in the face of violent or disrespectful behaviour towards women, we pave the way for a cultural shift that aims to prevent violence before it starts.

Working with children and young people, as well as the parents, teachers and other role models who influence them, is another crucial aspect of creating positive behaviours and healthy norms. Educating children and young people about gender equity and respectful relationships, and encouraging them to challenge harmful stereotypes, will help to build a culture that does not tolerate violence against women.

What we will do

The Office of the Women's Safety Commissioner will seek to consolidate and build on existing prevention work across NSW in a manner that is coordinated, effective and sustainable. We will advocate for a stronger focus on primary prevention of DFSV across the whole of society, including by promoting grassroots initiatives and spearheading the implementation of the NSW Government's DFSV Primary Prevention Strategy. In parallel, we will encourage research and dialogue about different approaches to prevention and emphasise the critical importance of early intervention to interrupt intergenerational cycles of violence.

Our specific actions will include:

- Collaborating with partners to strengthen understanding of, and commitment to addressing, the primary drivers of DFSV using a long-term, whole-of-population approach
- Promoting education and awareness raising, particularly among children and young people, aimed at changing attitudes, norms, structures and practices that drive violence against women
- Engaging men and boys in primary prevention and early intervention, including by challenging rigid gender stereotypes and promoting healthy models of masculinity.

We will champion an approach to primary prevention that adopts an intersectional lens to recognise and address the different experiences and needs of diverse communities in NSW. This includes primary prevention initiatives that are led by, and co-designed with, First Nations communities, recognising the ongoing impacts of colonisation and systemic racism as key drivers of violence in First Nations communities.

Priority 5

Strengthen workforces and informal support networks

Objective: Build the capacity of specialist and general workforces as well as informal support networks to identify, prevent and respond to DFSV

Why this is a priority

Preventing and addressing DFSV is complex and requires a whole-of-society approach, including responses from a range of service systems (government and non-government) and informal support networks across the community. Prioritising specialist and general workforces, as well as informal support networks, is a strategic imperative.

The needs of different communities vary greatly. A skilled, professional and diverse workforce is essential to identify, prevent and respond to DFSV across a range of diverse communities. This includes both workers in the specialist DFSV sector and other workers who play a key role in responding to DFSV but are not specialists. Currently, however, the DFSV sector is overstretched and under-resourced, with real consequences for individuals in terms of stress, burnout and vicarious trauma. The sector is largely sustained by the strong commitment, knowledge and expertise of its workers. Challenges for both specialist and general workers are particularly acute in regional and rural areas.

There is a need to broaden pipelines into the specialist sector by improving qualification and training options, while also strengthening relevant course content in general education programs. In addition, both specialist and general workers need enhanced training opportunities, career pathways, employment stability and ongoing support to ensure that they can operate at the forefront of best practice and sustain their work in the long term.

But DFSV responses extend well beyond the formal sector. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, women who experience violence are more likely to seek support from an informal source (e.g. friend or family member) than a formal source (e.g. counsellor, GP, police).³³ Informal networks, including faith organisations, community groups, sports clubs and workplaces, as well as friends and family, are therefore a key part of the ecosystem that supports victim-survivors, and these networks can be upskilled to improve support and services. This is pivotal for creating a comprehensive social response.

What we will do

The Office of the Women's Safety Commissioner is committed to supporting specialist and general workforces and informal networks to provide safe, culturally appropriate and effective responses to DFSV across diverse communities in NSW.

Our specific actions will include:

- Supporting the flow of skilled workers into the specialist DFSV sector
- Advocating for ongoing training and capacity building, both for workers in the specialist DFSV sector and for other workers who regularly respond to DFSV but are not specialists
- Raising awareness and strengthening the capacity of informal networks and communities to identify, prevent and respond to DFSV.

An important aspect of our work will be supporting the development and implementation of the NSW Government's 10-year Domestic and Family Violence Workforce Development Strategy, to help build a specialist sector that can attract, retain and support a diverse workforce capable of meeting growing service demand. We will also support the development and implementation of a dedicated NSW Aboriginal Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Plan, which will include a focus on building workforce capacity and capability across sectors.

Priority 6

Support women's economic safety and security

Objective: Promote initiatives that improve women's economic safety in relationships and recognise the centrality of economic security in escaping and recovering from DFSV

Why this is a priority

Domestic, family and sexual violence generates significant financial costs for women and contributes to high levels of financial stress. Its negative consequences often reverberate through women's lives and increase financial hardship for many years. For example, domestic and family violence is a primary cause of homelessness among women and children, but only a tiny fraction of victim-survivors can access appropriate long-term housing.³⁴ For First Nations women, disproportionate rates of domestic and family violence, combined with living in regional and remote locations, amplify the barriers to economic participation.³⁵

Economic abuse is a common form of domestic and family violence involving a pattern of behaviour that controls a person's ability to acquire, use and maintain economic resources, in a way that threatens their economic security and potential for self-sufficiency. It can continue long after a relationship has ended, for example by withholding child support payments or deliberately delaying a financial settlement. Economic abuse remains poorly understood in the community, and service systems are not well equipped to identify, prevent and respond to it. There is a clear need to raise awareness about economic abuse and the financial impacts of violence against women more generally.

Research indicates that economic security is a key factor influencing a woman's decision or ability to leave, stay in, or return to an abusive relationship. When faced with the prospect of living in poverty or even experiencing homelessness if they leave an abusive relationship, many women have little choice but to remain.³⁶ Those who manage to leave an abusive relationship often face systemic barriers to economic recovery, particularly after leaving economic abuse. Concerted efforts are needed to address these challenges.

Businesses and the corporate sector can play a critical role in identifying, preventing and responding to DFSV, including economic abuse. Their impact can be wide ranging and life changing. Important areas of focus for the private sector include improving supports for employees and customers experiencing DFSV, designing products and services that are safe and prevent misuse, and promoting accountability for those who use products and services to perpetrate abuse.

What we will do

The Office of the Women's Safety Commissioner will collaborate with government agencies, the community sector, businesses, researchers and victim-survivors to prevent and address economic abuse and improve economic supports for women both during and after abusive relationships. We will also seek to harness the power of the private sector, through partnerships with businesses and institutions across a range of industries, to improve systems, products and services for employees and customers.

Our specific actions will include:

- Improving awareness and understanding of economic and financial abuse, including in the context of coercive control
- Promoting initiatives to strengthen DFSV victim-survivors' economic security and empowerment, both during and after abuse, including housing, employment and financial services
- Engaging with businesses and the corporate sector to strengthen their capacity to identify, prevent and respond to DFSV among employees and customers.

In addition, we will support the development and implementation of the NSW Government's new Homelessness Strategy and Social Housing Strategy, and other relevant initiatives related to housing and homelessness. We recognise the centrality of economic security and independence to women's safety and wellbeing, and we are committed to working across the whole community to make this a priority.

Appendix: Related plans and strategies

This Strategic Plan forms part of, and is supported by, a broader context of related plans and strategies at the state and national level. Some of the key plans and strategies are listed below, with a focus on relevant NSW frameworks. This list is provided for reference purposes and is not intended to be exhaustive.

Overarching national frameworks

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	National Agreement on Closing the Gap
Children and young people	National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030 Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031, together with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Action Plan 2023-2026 • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023-2026
Domestic, family and sexual violence	National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032, together with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Action Plan 2023-2027 • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025 • Outcomes Framework 2023-2032
Gender equality	National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality

Key NSW plans and strategies

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	NSW Aboriginal Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Plan (under development)
	NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2013-2023
	NSW Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2022-2024
	NSW Health Aboriginal Family Wellbeing and Violence Prevention Strategy
Children and young people	NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2022-2024
Disability	NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021-2025
Domestic, family and sexual violence	NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022-2027
	NSW Sexual Violence Plan 2022-2027
	NSW Domestic and Family Violence Workforce Development Strategy (under development)
	NSW Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Data Strategy (under development)
	NSW Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Strategy (under development)
	NSW Health Strategy for Preventing and Responding to Domestic and Family Violence 2021-2026
NSW Youth Justice Domestic and Family Violence Strategy 2019-2022	
Housing and homelessness	NSW Homelessness Strategy 2024-2034 (under development)
	NSW Social Housing Strategy (under development)
LGBTIQ+	NSW LGBTIQ+ Health Strategy 2022-2027
Multicultural	Multicultural NSW Strategic Plan 2021-2025
	NSW Department of Communities and Justice Multicultural Plan 2022-2025
Safety at work	SafeWork NSW Respect at Work Strategy: Preventing Sexual Harassment 2023-2027
Seniors	Ageing Well in NSW: Seniors Strategy 2021-2031
Women and gender equality	NSW Women's Health Framework 2019
	NSW Women's Strategy 2023-2026

Notes

¹ Our Watch, *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia* (2nd ed., 2021).

² Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), *Violence against women: Accurate use of key statistics* (2018).

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Personal Safety Survey, 2021-22* (15 March 2023), available at <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/personal-safety-australia/2021-22>.

⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: Continuing the national story*, Cat. No. FDV 3 (2019).

⁵ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Family, domestic and sexual violence summary* (updated 15 February 2024), available at <https://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/resources/fdsv-summary>.

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, above n 3.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Sexual Assault – Perpetrators* (2 February 2022), available at <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/sexual-assault-perpetrators>.

⁹ ANROWS, *Women's imprisonment and domestic, family and sexual violence: Research synthesis*, ANROWS Insights 03/2020 (2020).

¹⁰ KPMG, *The cost of violence against women and their children in Australia* (May 2016).

¹¹ NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, *Recorded Crime Statistics, December 2023* (2024). 'Intimate partner murder' includes a current or former spouse, partner, boyfriend or girlfriend. 'Family violence murder' includes a child, parent, sibling or other family member. 'Other domestic relationship' includes a household member or ex-partner of a current partner.

¹² NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, *NSW Trends in Domestic and Family Violence Quarterly Report, December 2023* (2024).

¹³ NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, above n 12.

¹⁴ Audit Office of NSW, *Police responses to domestic and family violence* (Performance Audit, 4 April 2022).

¹⁵ NSW Bureau Of Crime Statistics and Research, *Criminal Court Statistics* (2023).

¹⁶ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *SHS annual report 2022-23* (2024); Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Specialist Homelessness Services Collection Data Cubes 2011-12 to 2022-23* (2024).

¹⁷ *NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022-2027* (December 2022), 9.

¹⁸ NSW Family and Community Services Insights, Analysis and Research, *Annual statistical report 2022-23, Children and families thrive: Supporting children in statutory protection* (2023).

¹⁹ NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team (2024). This refers to 46.6% of intimate partner homicide cases in the period from 1 July 2000 to 31 June 2022 where the DVDRT Secretariat identified a history of violence and a predominant aggressor (male) and victim (woman) (286 of 356 cases).

²⁰ Haslam, D. et al., *The prevalence and impact of child maltreatment in Australia: Findings from the Australian Child Maltreatment Study: Brief Report* (Queensland University of Technology, 2023).

²¹ See, e.g., Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story* (2020); Campo, M., *Children's exposure to domestic and family violence: Key issues and responses* (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2015).

²² O'Donnell, K. et al., *Intimate partner violence among Australian 18-19 year olds*, Growing Up in Australia Snapshot Series, Issue 11 (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2023). The Study found that 25% of 18- and 19-year-olds had experienced emotional abuse, 12% had experienced physical violence and 8% had experienced sexual abuse in intimate relationships.

²³ Our Watch and Women with Disabilities Victoria, *Changing the landscape: A national resource to prevent violence against women and girls with disabilities* (2022), 26. See also NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, *Trends in rates of victimisation and offending for people with disability in NSW* (Bureau Brief No. 163, 2022); NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, *The victimisation of people with disability in NSW: Results from the National Disability Data Asset pilot* (Crime and Justice Bulletin No. 252, 2022).

²⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Family, domestic and sexual violence: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People*, available at <https://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/population-groups/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people> (updated 15 February 2024).

²⁵ Hill, A. et al., *Private Lives 3: The health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ people in Australia*, ARCSHS Monograph Series, No. 122 (Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, 2020), 72.

²⁶ Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, *Final Report* (2021) vol 2, 142. The report notes that these figures "significantly understate the true extent of alleged assaults in residential aged care".

²⁷ Segrave, M., Wickes, R., and Keel, C. *Migrant and Refugee Women in Australia: The Safety and Security Survey*. (Monash University, 2021).

²⁸ ANROWS, *Attitudes Matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey* (2023). While these findings relate to respondents across Australia, the Survey found that community attitudes and understanding in NSW are on par with Australia more broadly.

²⁹ The *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Act 2022* (NSW) introduces a standalone offence of coercive control into the *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW), which will come into effect on 1 July 2024. The Act also introduces a statutory definition of "domestic abuse" into the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal) Violence Act 2007* (NSW), which came into effect on 1 February 2024.

³⁰ *Coroners Act 2009* (NSW), s 101A.

³¹ NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team, Report (2019-2021), 203-206.

³² See, e.g., ANROWS, *Critical interpretive synthesis: Child protection involvement for families with domestic and family violence, alcohol and other drug issues, and mental health issues* (2021).

³³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, above n 3.

³⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Specialist homelessness services annual report 2022-2023: Clients who have experienced family and domestic violence* (2024); Equity Economics, *Nowhere to go: The benefits of providing long-term social housing to women that have experienced domestic and family violence* (2021).

³⁵ NSW Treasury, *First Nations Women's Economic Participation Review: Pathways to Prosperity* (August 2023).

³⁶ See, e.g., Anne Summers, *The Choice: Violence or Poverty* (2022).

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