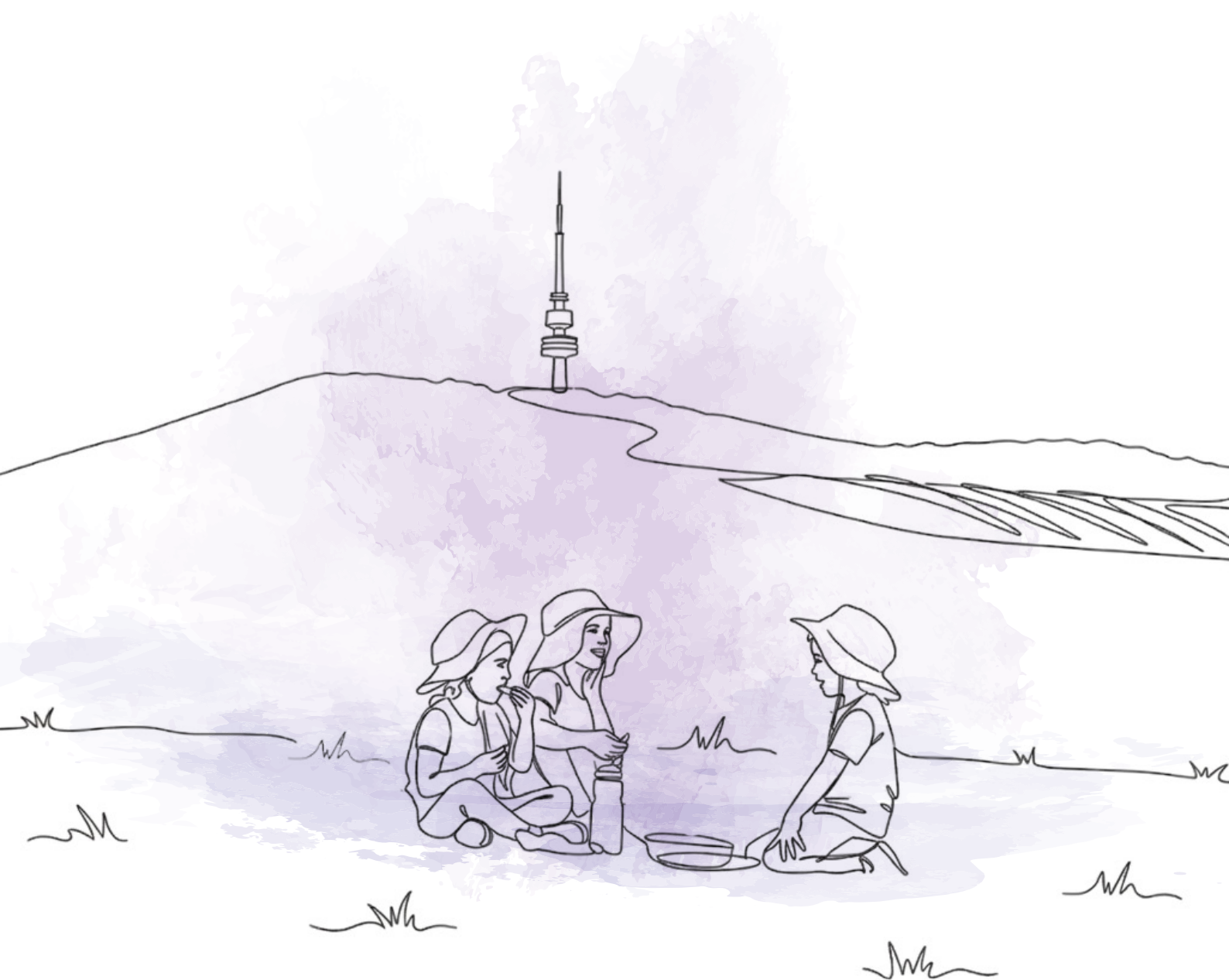


First Action Plan 2026-2028

ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy 2026-2036



Acknowledgement of Country



We wish to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the lands of the ACT and region and recognise any other people or families with connection to these lands. We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

We acknowledge the expertise, powerful advocacy and vital leadership role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Responses to domestic, family and sexual violence are best led by the community, delivered by the community, for the community. We are committed to listening deeply and continuously while working together in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, to strive to create an ACT community free from violence

Acknowledgement of Lived Experience

We wish to acknowledge the continued courage and strength of every victim and victim-survivor of domestic, family and sexual violence in our community, including those who have contributed to the development of this Strategy. We dedicate this Strategy to you.

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Introduction to the First Action Plan 2026 – 2028

Everyone deserves to be safe and feel safe in the ACT. Domestic, family and sexual violence undermines this right and causes profound harm to individuals, families and communities. The *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy 2026–2036* (the Strategy) sets out a long-term vision where

Canberra is a safe, equitable society where everyone lives free from domestic, family and sexual violence and feels safe in their relationships, homes, workplaces, education settings and communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are central in this vision.

The Strategy sets out 6 outcomes which collectively work together to achieve the Strategy’s vision.

The Strategy is being implemented through 3 consecutive action plans, each outlining the practical steps we will take to progress the 6 outcomes. Each action plan should be read alongside the Strategy – the Strategy sets the transformative vision, direction and evidence base for our work, while the action plans provide a clear, tangible list of the actions we will take over each period. The action plans focus our efforts and investment to achieve lasting impact.



The First Action Plan outlines ACT Government commitments for the first 2 years of the Strategy. It translates the Strategy's vision, outcomes and principles into a focussed set of near-term priorities and practical steps.

The First Action Plan focuses on:

Sustaining and strengthening the capacity of our current system to support victim-survivors, intervene early, and respond effectively to people using violence; and

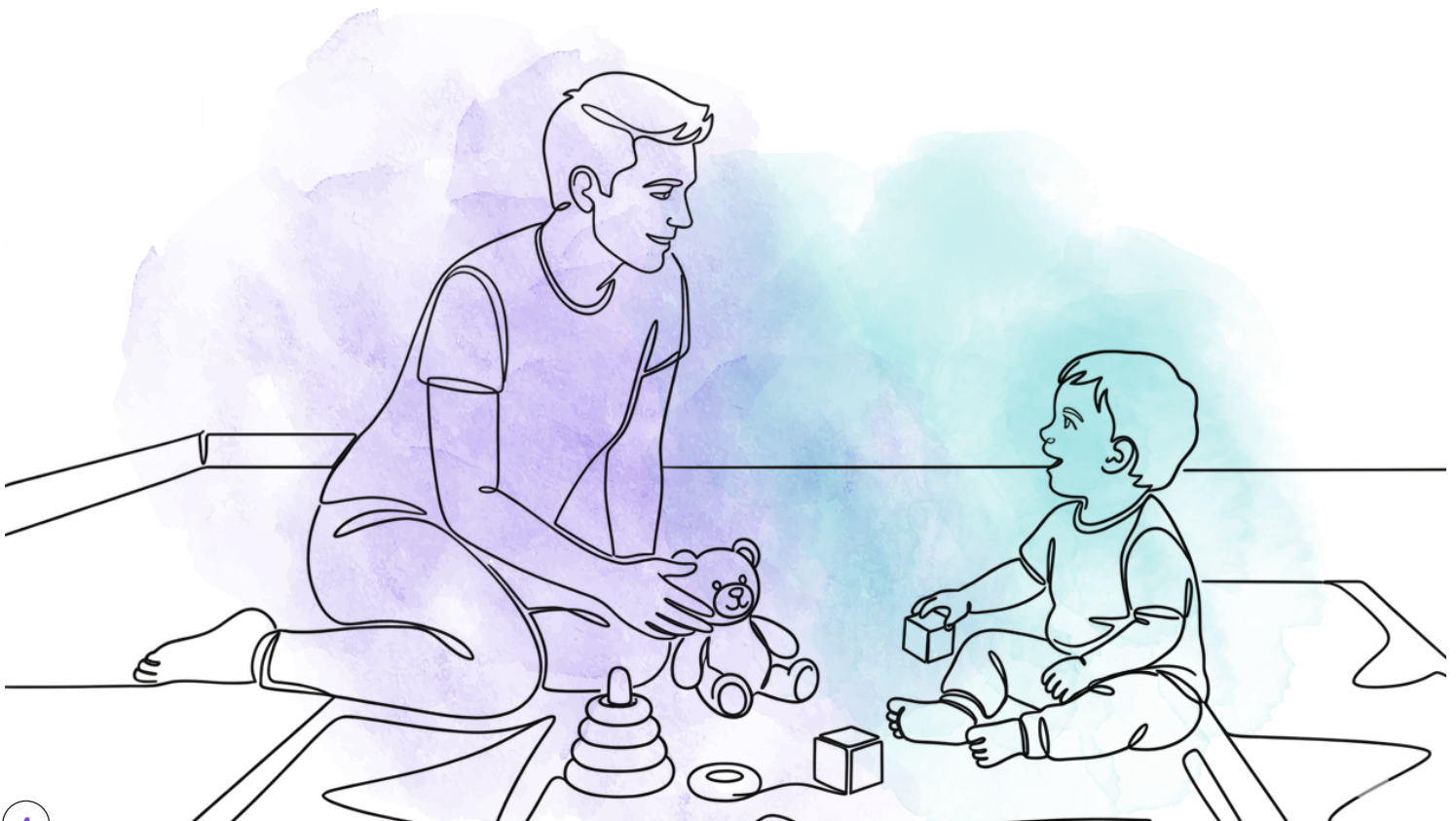
Advancing early system reforms that build strong foundational capability for a cohesive, integrated domestic, family and sexual violence prevention and response system in the ACT.

To create meaningful change, the First Action Plan brings together both new initiatives and the effective, evidence-based measures already underway. This combined approach allows us to accelerate progress now, while building towards the broader cultural and system transformation that will take time to achieve.

Bringing these efforts together supports a shared understanding of how government, non-government, and the community are taking actions toward our goals, improves transparency and understanding about how our current domestic, family and sexual violence system operates and clarifies why we are investing in specific measures and the change they are expected to deliver, and lays the ground work for further reform in the Second and Third Action Plans through further system transformation.

Collectively, the approach supports preparations for commissioning cycles for domestic, family and sexual violence programs and services in the ACT. Further, it rebalances efforts to provide comprehensive supports across the full continuum of prevention, early intervention, response and recovery and healing.

Subsequent action plans will continue this momentum, outlining the next stage of actions that will move us closer to achieving the Strategy's long term goals.



How to read this Action Plan

Action	Type	Contributors
Actions describe what we plan to do over the course of this Action Plan. Actions have been mapped to the 6 Strategy outcomes, however, may thematically relate to actions under other outcomes. Actions are intended to be focused on the overarching function, recognising realisation of these functions may come from agencies in a number of different ways. Level of specificity will vary, with higher specificity for actions addressing critical gaps for service type or priority communities.	New actions include those that are new initiatives, received new funding or are a new public commitment arising directly from this Action Plan. Continuing actions include those that are essential ongoing activities and continuing responses to pre-existing ACT Government commitments arising from previous key reports and recommendations delivered prior to release of the Strategy.	We recognise that the work of preventing and addressing domestic, family and sexual violence is a whole-of-community, whole-of-system, whole-of-government effort. While there may be contributors who will lead some of these actions, realisation of many actions will be an effort shared by ACT Government directorates, the domestic, family and sexual violence sector, other community sector organisations, human services organisations and advisory bodies. Likely contributors are listed against each action, with primary contributors or contributors with majority investment towards realisation of the action listed first, in bold.

Contributors

Contributor	Details
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory group	As referenced in Action 2.1
ACCOS	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
ACTCS	ACT Corrective Services
ACTP	ACT Policing
ATSIEB	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body
Community sector	Community sector organisations include non-government, not for profit organisations whose purpose include the provision of services, programs, initiatives, or advocacy for and on behalf of the community, or a particular subset/s of community (such as a vulnerable group or age group). For the purpose of this Strategy and First Action Plan, these are organisations that deliver services to community members who may be impacted by domestic, family or sexual violence or deliver services to people who are disproportionately impacted by this type of violence.

Contributor	Details
DFSV sector	The domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) sector holds specialist expertise and includes: - Specialist domestic, family and sexual violence organisations whose sole or primary focus is delivering domestic, family or sexual violence services, working with victim-survivors or people who use violence. These include Domestic Violence Crisis Service and Canberra Rape Crisis Centre. - Organisations that deliver a domestic, family or sexual violence service, program or specialist response among their services. We recognise the majority of the DFSV sector is based in community sector organisations, however, are identifying as a distinct group for the purpose of the First Action Plan.
EDU	Education Directorate
HCS	Health and Community Services Directorate
JACS	Justice and Community Safety Directorate
VSACT	Victim Support ACT is a statutory office within the ACT Human Rights Commission that provides advocacy, support, counselling and assistance to victims of crime, including for victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence.
Whole-of-government	Relevant government agencies – this captures when multiple areas across different government agencies contribute to an action



Outcome 1

Victim-survivors have access to support at all stages of their journey through early intervention, crisis, justice and healing.

Over the next 2 years we will focus on making sure more people who have experienced domestic, family or sexual violence can access the assistance they need across the domestic, family and sexual violence system. We will focus on targeted investment for marginalised groups who are at greater risk of people using violence against them, while also making sure mainstream services are inclusive and accessible. Programs delivered through targeted investment will draw on the specialist expertise of the domestic, family and sexual violence sector, peer-led and community-led organisations, and lived and living experience.

We will continue responses which we know are effective, including specialist responses for victim-survivors of domestic, family violence and sexual violence in crisis and non-crisis settings. Victim-survivors accessing intersecting services will continue to receive supports that respond to their needs holistically, further supporting healing and recovery, including mental health supports and legal assistance. Justice and non-justice pathways for victim-survivors will be as accessible as possible. Access will be supported through navigation functions such as through embedded legal and specialist domestic and family violence workers to assist victim-survivors in accessing Family Violence Orders. ACT Policing will continue to operate with a victim-centric approach to sexual violence and pro-intervention approach to domestic and family violence, when there is no evidence to support an arrest or charge.

A number of established initiatives will continue to operate to maintain stability, support frontline responses and ensure victim-survivors receive targeted and timely assistance. These ongoing actions play a critical role in supporting priority populations, children and young people, strengthening justice and accountability pathways, and sustaining specialised sexual violence responses. Together, they ensure that the system remains responsive while new reforms are designed.

Action	Type	Contributors
1.1 Increase the capacity of specialist crisis domestic and family violence and sexual violence responses, so that victim-survivors can access appropriate support when they need it.	New action	HCSD , DFSV sector
1.2 Support Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation-delivered sexual violence responses to ensure culturally safe services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors.	New action	HCSD , ACCOs
1.3 Maintain effective specialist domestic, family and sexual violence responses for children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right, which recognise their specific needs and autonomy in their recovery and healing journey.	Continuing action	HCSD , DFSV sector
1.4 Establish a new LGBTIQ+ domestic, family and sexual violence program to provide specialist support to LGBTIQ+ people and address a significant gap in services in the ACT.	New action	HCSD , DFSV sector, community sector

Action	Type	Contributors
1.5 Continue supporting a dedicated support program for women from culturally and linguistically diverse, migrant and refugee backgrounds experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence, ensuring timely access to culturally safe, trauma-informed assistance and improve victim-survivor safety.	Continuing action	HCSD , DFSV sector
1.6 Continue to provide victim-survivors of sexual violence with access to navigation and advisory supports through both legal and non-legal pathways, informed by evidence and evaluation.	Continuing action	HCSD , JACS, VSACT, DFSV sector
1.7 Continue to support victim-survivors of domestic and family violence to meet immediate and long term housing, relocation needs, and financial recovery needs, minimising the risk of homelessness and preventing further harm to victim-survivors.	Continuing action	HCSD , JACS, VSACT, DFSV sector, community sector
1.8 Explore the potential development of a tailored domestic, family and sexual violence response for people with disability.	New action	HCSD , DFSV sector, community sector



Outcome 2

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are empowered to determine and deliver the best responses and are a core part of governance and decision-making.

Over the next 2 years, we will focus on listening to and working in genuine partnership with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Self-determined responses are vital to foster strong, resilient families and support healing. We recognise that solutions are most effective when they are led by the community, delivered by the community, for the community.

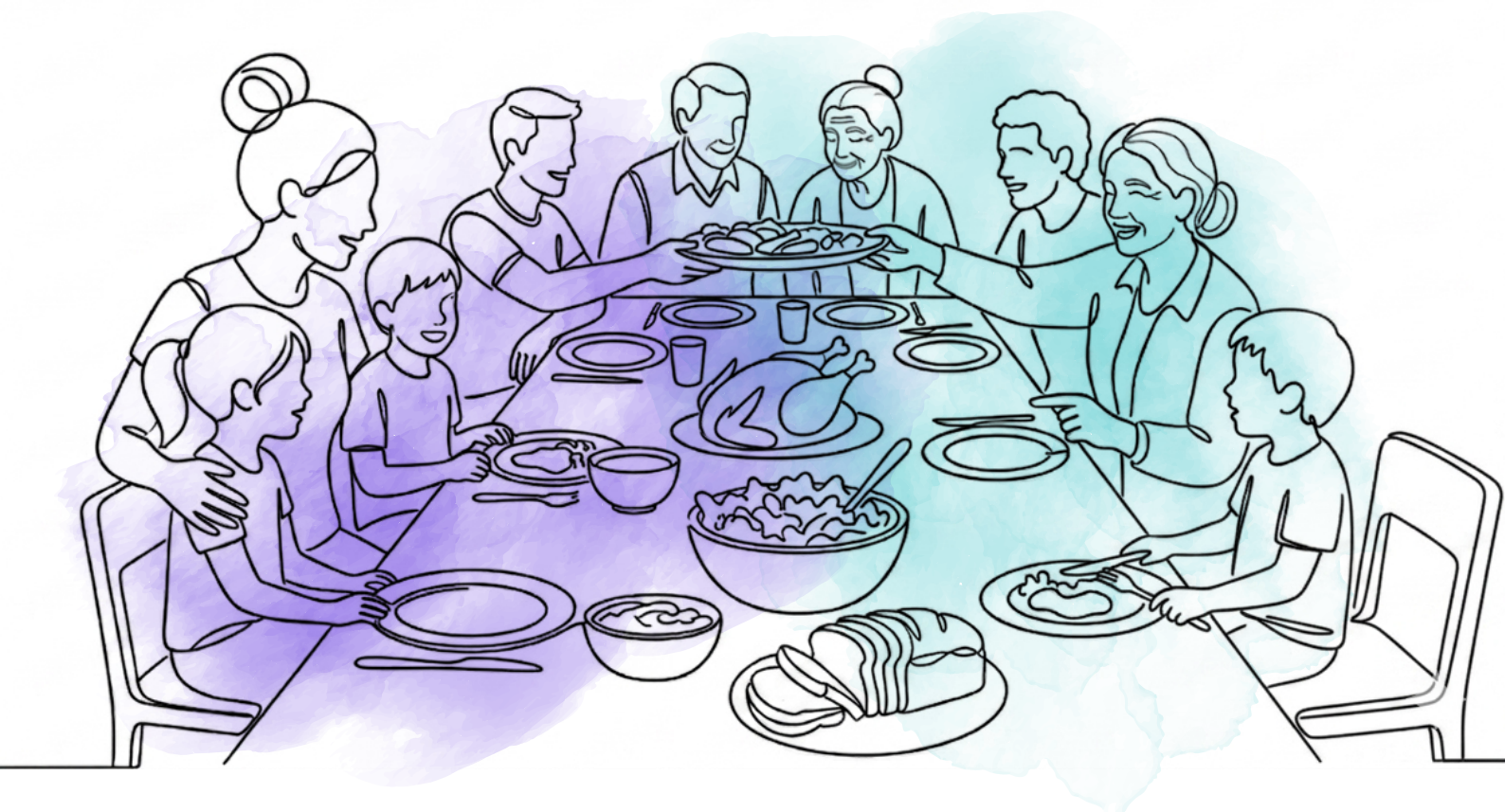
Ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with domestic, family and sexual violence expertise can speak directly to the highest levels of government will help embed their wisdom in the decision-making process. It is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community who has the answers to preventing and addressing the disproportionate and completely unacceptable rates of violence against their people.

The ACT Government is strongly committed to continuing to implement all 12 recommendations of *The Long Yarn (2024)* – a community-led report aimed at preventing and addressing family and domestic violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There is still significant work to do in fully delivering on these recommendations, especially to further support the growth and sustainability of the domestic, family and sexual violence Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) sector. The Government recognises ACCO delivered services are better for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, achieve better results, employ more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and are often preferred over mainstream services. The services currently funded encompass individual and systemic advocacy, holistic support for women and children, programs for people who use violence and programs to support prevention and healing.

New and existing ACCOs will continue to have access to whole-of-government initiatives to support their growth and organisational capacity and capability building through programs such as the ACCO Establishment and Expansion Fund.

We will continue to work in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, ACCOs, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders to progress the ACT's commitments under the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, particularly outcome 13, the *Our Ways – Strong Ways - Our Voices National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence 2026-2036* and the *Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Sector Strengthening Plan*.

Action	Type	Contributors
2.1 As part of revised governance arrangements for domestic, family and sexual violence, ensure an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory group with domestic, family and sexual violence expertise has a direct reporting line to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence.	New action	HCSD, ACCOs
2.2 As part of implementing The Long Yarn recommendations, develop a reporting and accountability process for communicating outcomes and progress to the community, in a way which works for the community.	New action	HCSD, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory group, ATSIIEB
2.3 Explore ways to formally strengthen the accountability of mainstream domestic, family and sexual violence services to deliver culturally safe services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including scoping improvements to service requirements and reporting in future contracting arrangements.	New action	HCSD, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory group, ATSIIEB, whole-of-government, DFSV sector, community sector organisations



Outcome 3

People using violence are held accountable, recognised early and supported to change their behaviour before violence occurs or escalates.

Over the next 2 years we will strengthen the ACT's approach to responding to people who use violence or are at risk of using violence across the continuum of early intervention to intensive response. This means strengthening both initiatives that focus on individual behaviour change and accountability, as well as bolstering systemic accountability in our system so that specific parts are clear on their roles and responsibilities, respond immediately to breaches or increased risk, and provide clear pathways for people wishing to change their behaviour to reduce their risk of continuing to use violence.

We will do this by building a clearer, more coordinated perpetrator response system and continuing to invest in responses that are effective, ensuring people who use violence can be engaged and supported to change their behaviour at critical touchpoints across community services, custodial programs and reintegration supports. Men's behaviour change programs will be delivered in line with the ACT's Practice Standards while we continue to collaborate across jurisdictions on the development of national standards. We will leverage opportunities to commence and grow pilots that respond to the needs of specific groups in our community and are delivered in ways that prioritise victim-survivor safety, including through support for partners and families affected by domestic, family and sexual violence. ACT Policing will continue to play a crucial role, including through the Domestic and Family Violence Investigation Unit, which focuses on investigating the ACT's highest risk and most complex domestic and family violence matters.

Our work toward this outcome will be informed by emerging evidence about what works, including evaluations of local responses, so that opportunities to scale up effective responses can be considered in future action plans and commissioning cycles.

Action	Type	Contributors
3.1 Increase capacity for behaviour change interventions to enhance perpetrator accountability and reduce risk, supporting safer outcomes for victim-survivors.	New action	HSCD , DFSV sector
3.2 Explore approaches to strengthening domestic and family violence risk screening and assessment for detainees across corrective services, including consideration of the appropriateness, safety and feasibility of custodial and community based interventions to promote accountability, reduce risk and support behaviour change at key transition points.	New action	ACTCS
3.3 Evaluate perpetrator system responses, including in settings where people using violence are accessing support for co-occurring issues.	Continuing action	HSCD , DFSV sector

Action	Type	Contributors
3.4 Continue to support intensive case coordination between government and non-government agencies to address high-risk domestic and family violence perpetration in the ACT and keep people who use violence in view of the system.	Continuing action	VSACT , ACTP, ACTCS, HCSD, DFSV sector, community sector
3.5 Strengthen family services-wide approaches to identifying and responding to children and young people at risk of significant harm who use domestic and family violence, including clearer pathways, improved coordination, and access to specialist support across Government and community sector.	New action	HCSD , DFSV sector, community sector



Outcome 4

All people actively model safe and respectful behaviours and are empowered to embody and enact social change.

Over the next 2 years we will focus on building community awareness and understanding of domestic, family and sexual violence.

To achieve this, we will take a coordinated, whole-of-community approach that strengthens knowledge, attitudes and capabilities across the community, drawing on the expertise of the local domestic, family and sexual violence sector. This approach recognises that lasting change requires education at every stage of life and across diverse communities, supporting a culture where domestic, family and sexual violence is not tolerated and everyone plays a role in prevention. We will do this by continuing successful initiatives such as the effective Gender Equality in Schools Initiative to foster a culture of gender equality among children and young people as a foundation for preventing domestic, family, and sexual violence. We will also continue community education campaigns on ACT Government platforms, such as Affirmative Consent campaign materials, and continue to collaborate with partners such as Our Watch and Commonwealth agencies to optimise the impact of primary prevention frameworks.

Action	Type	Contributors
4.1 Strengthen community awareness of coercive control, to build community literacy in identifying coercive controlling behaviours, what to do and where to go for support, including opportunities for tailored approaches to reach priority communities.	New action	HSCD
4.2 Consider evaluation results at both the ACT and national level to support an integrated approach to primary prevention strategies including the rollout of Respectful Relationships Education to foster a culture of gender equality and prevent domestic, family and sexual violence.	New action	EDU , HSCD
4.3 Implement a 'Violence is Not Our Way' program as recommended by The Long Yarn report, in collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory group and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to encourage victims and people who use violence to seek help and emphasise positive role models for men, women, and children.	Continuing action	HSCD , Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory group, ACCOs
4.4 Scope potential future actions to challenge structural drivers of violence and shift norms, such as through addressing gender inequity, misogynistic attitudes, rigid gender norms, hierarchical ideas about sex, gender and sexuality, and intersecting forms of oppression and discrimination. This may occur through aligned ACT Strategies like Capital of Equality Strategy, Disability Strategy and the next plan for women, girls and gender equality,	New action	HSCD

Outcome 5

The ACT has a coordinated, sustainable, integrated, and capable domestic, family and sexual violence system.

Over the next 2 years, we will strengthen the sustainability and integration of the ACT's domestic, family and sexual violence system by continuing to implement key system foundations in partnership with the domestic, family and sexual violence sector. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of legislative responses to domestic, family and sexual violence, to provide victim-survivors with more choice and control when engaging with the justice system. We will continue to participate in national and cross-jurisdictional activities to leverage work which will improve consistency and maximise impact across our system, including building on national work to develop and consolidate domestic, family and sexual violence datasets and information sharing arrangements.

Building on previous consultations and mapping work, we will develop a shared, system-wide understanding of how the domestic, family and sexual violence system currently operates, the roles and responsibilities of government, the domestic, family and sexual violence sector, other community organisations, and how services connect and coordinate across the continuum of need. Through this, we will develop a clearer understanding of the true costs of delivering safe, effective and integrated functions and responses, and the funding arrangements required to sustain them. This work will be underpinned by robust and refreshed governance, with clear governance structures that recognise the expertise of victim-survivors, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the domestic, family and sexual violence sector and government agencies.

By the end of 2 years, the ACT will have a clear domestic, family and sexual violence sector commissioning roadmap that sets out system functions and investment priorities, equipping the ACT's responses to meet current and future demand, to be delivered through the Second Action Plan, with core functions such as information sharing and governance well established.

Action	Type	Contributors
5.1 Finalise a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the domestic, family and sexual violence system, to support us to track progress toward Strategy outcomes at both the system and program level and to embed a culture of continuous learning. As part of this action, publish annual reporting on Action Plan progress.	New action	HCSD , Whole-of-government, DFSV sector, community sector
5.2 Establish a mechanism for coordinated sector consultation and advice, including continued collaboration on domestic, family and sexual violence reforms and to provide a forum for partnerships within and across the sector to identify shared issues, gaps, and opportunities.	New action	HCSD , DFSV sector, VSACT
5.3 Review ACT Government governance of domestic, family and sexual violence reform and coordination through a cross-directorate oversight group, sharing accountability and oversight for delivering and reporting on Strategy outcomes and enhancing integration across different parts of the human service system.	New action	HCSD , Whole-of-government

Action	Type	Contributors
5.4 Continue to engage and centre lived and living experience in shaping and implementing policy, programs and processes which relate to people impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence.	Continuing action	HCSD , Whole-of-government, DFSV sector
5.5 Implement the domestic and family violence (DFV) Information Sharing Scheme to facilitate better coordination between a range of government and community agencies to identify, assess, and manage DFV risk, including supporting more community sector agencies to join the Scheme over time.	Continuing action	HCSD , Whole-of-government, DFSV sector, community sector
5.6 Embed the updated Risk Assessment and Management Framework (RAMF) to drive a more integrated, evidence-based approach to understanding, identifying, assessing and managing DFV risk, including supporting entities to share information under the DFV Information Sharing Scheme.	Continuing action	HCSD , Whole-of-government, DFSV sector, community sector
5.7 Undertake updated systems and journey mapping as part of building a comprehensive and shared understanding of current system capacity and functions. This will include the unique and interconnecting systems for victim-survivors, children as victims in their own right, and people using violence.	New action	HCSD , Whole-of-government, DFSV sector, community sector
5.8 Build on mapping work (5.7) to develop a commissioning roadmap which clearly sets out a preferred future state which may consider access points, service model and service requirements.	New action	HCSD , DFSV sector
5.9 Embed a whole-of-system oversight and implementation approach to criminalisation of coercive control in preparation for offence commencement.	New action	HCSD , JACS, ACTP, DFSV sector
5.10 Consider workforce capability and capacity requirements to effectively implement criminalisation of coercive control.	New action	HCSD , JACS, ACTP, DFSV sector
5.11 Continue to review and improve justice system responses to domestic, family and sexual violence to ensure legislation, policies and practice are informed by contemporary evidence, enable trauma-informed engagement with victim-survivors, and promote accountability for persons using violence.	Continuing action	JACS , HCSD , VSACT, ACTP

Outcome 6

The ACT's systems, communities, organisations and institutions play a direct and active role in addressing, responding to and preventing domestic, family and sexual violence.

Over the next 2 years we will engage settings, institutions and workforces to build the ACT's prevention infrastructure as a whole-of-society priority and drive down rates of gender-based violence.

We will develop a clear and shared understanding of existing prevention activities and gaps across government, community and institutional settings. This will involve identifying opportunities to strengthen capability and reach across settings such as schools, workplaces, sports and faith-based organisations, and the justice and human services systems – including through leveraging local expertise of the domestic, family and sexual violence sector. Scoping work will consider capacity and resource requirements to test approaches and consider options for longer term phased implementation of a primary prevention infrastructure model.

By the end of 2 years, our foundational work will increase domestic, family and sexual violence-informed capability across workforces and strengthen holistic responses for victim-survivors from more touchpoints along the journey. We will have scoped a plan to support sustained prevention work in the ACT, informing longer-term system redesign and enabling a shift towards a system with greater capacity for evidence-based prevention activities that harness and activate all actors across the system to address the gendered drivers of domestic, family and sexual violence at a whole-of-population level.

Action	Type	Contributors
6.1 Scope an ACT primary prevention infrastructure model to support sustained primary prevention work across multiple settings and sectors.	New action	HCSD , Whole-of-government, DFSV sector, community sector
6.2 Consider a coordinated approach to Relationships and Sexuality Education, Respectful Relationships Education, Protective Behaviours and child safety to strengthen alignment of systems, practice and resources.	New action	EDU
6.3 Strengthen the capability of workforces that interact with people impacted by domestic, family or sexual violence to apply the Risk Assessment Management Framework to identify and respond to violence, make referrals, and activate timely and appropriate supports through appropriate training.	Continuing action	HCSD , Whole-of-government, DFSV sector, community sector
6.4 Consider opportunities to enhance capacity of key workforces to better address and support people with disability who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing domestic, family or sexual violence.	New action	HCSD , DFSV sector, community sector



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