



ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE FINAL REPORT OF THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION COUNCIL EXTRAORDINARY MEETING REGARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Community Services Directorate

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BACKGROUND

The ACT Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC) has played a valuable role in identifying and communicating issues of importance related to domestic and family violence in the ACT since its establishment in 1997. Both the Extraordinary Meeting of April 2015 and the DVPC Death Review Report in 2016 were significant drivers for the policy and funding investments made by the ACT Government in the 2016 *ACT Government Response to Family Violence*.

While children and young people can be profoundly impacted by violence in the home, there exists a lack of support and assistance for the children who have been exposed to this violence. Insights from the Family Safety Hub also identified that ‘there is not enough focus on children and the impact of the significant trauma they experience.’

In April 2018, the DVPC convened an Extraordinary Meeting which brought together a wide range of experts in the community, Government officials with substantial accountabilities for ACT services and responses to children and young people, relevant professionals, and members of the Legislative Assembly to:

- discuss and better understand the key issues for children and young people who have been affected by domestic and family violence in the ACT;
- provide input and advice about the status of current work in this space;
- identify opportunities to develop and improve the ACT's responses in this space; and
- inform practical measures that the ACT could take to improve supports for children and young people to inform the ACT Government's next steps.

To ensure that the voices of children and young people with lived experience were part of the conversation, keynote speakers recounted lived experiences to inform the Meeting.

On 12 October 2018, the DVPC released a report which outlined key insights from the meeting. The report outlined that children and young people exposed to domestic and family violence are often invisible in ACT service systems, and the supports and services that provide a crucial response to adults do not adequately recognise children and young people as clients in their own right. In addition, it was revealed that the full extent and impacts of the problem are not yet clear, due to limitations in ACT approaches to identifying clients and capturing case data.

The report made a number of recommendations on actions to be taken to improve the ACT's capacity to understand and respond effectively to the needs of children and young people affected by domestic and family violence including sexual violence.

These recommendations build on the insights identified in the design of the Family Safety Hub and other existing work in the sector to address the needs of children and young people impacted by violence. Many of these recommended actions also align with national commitments relating to children and young people, including *The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* and the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (2010–2022)*.

The ACT Government acknowledges the critically important work undertaken by the DVPC and thanks them for their report on the outcomes of the Extraordinary Meeting. The actions and priorities documented in the report will enable the Government to build on the progress made in recent years in addressing the risks and consequences of domestic and family violence and ensure that service responses meet the needs of children and young people.

ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The ACT Government is committed to honouring the investment, insights and recommendations that were expressed by participants of the DVPC Extraordinary Meeting regarding children and young people in April 2018. This *ACT Government Response to the DVPC Report* (ACT Government Response) details the approach the ACT Government will take over the next twelve months to fulfil its commitment.

The ACT Government agrees or agrees in principle all the recommendations made in the DVPC Report. The ACT Government Response describes what action will be taken in response to each of the recommendations.

An implementation plan for the first year, July 2019 to June 2020 has been included. This articulates the actions to occur, the lead within the ACT Government for each action, and the milestones and timeframes for each action. Several new initiatives have been funded in response to the DVPC Report recommendations; some of these initiatives are exploratory in nature, employing a strong action-learning or try, test and learn approach. Continuous monitoring and learning during the first year will inform the development of an implementation plan for the second year.

The actions committed to within this ACT Government Response are not occurring in isolation. Appendix A provides a summary of existing or planned work underway across the ACT Government that supports the intention of the DVPC Report.

The ACT Government will work with the DVPC to ensure actions are consistent with the original intent of the DVPC Report.

The ACT Government Response has been prepared with careful consideration of the strong legal and policy context supporting the rights of children and young people in the ACT. These are articulated in the Guiding Principles.

Guiding principles

All children and young people in the ACT have a fundamental right to feel safe and protected in their community. The ACT is guided by a specific set of principles regarding children and young people that are jointly the responsibility of the ACT Government and community to uphold.

The ACT is a Human Rights Jurisdiction, committed under the *ACT Human Rights Act (2004)* to protecting the rights of children and young people, including their right to seek special protection because of vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. The Act imposes direct obligations on both government and non-government institutions to ensure that children and young people are given equal respect, recognition and protection under the law.

The *ACT Children and Young People's Commitment 2015-2025* (Commitment) has been developed in alignment with the *ACT Human Rights Act* and a range of relevant Human Rights Treaties and sets the Territory's vision for a whole of government and whole of community approach to promoting the rights of children and young people. The Commitment was informed through an analysis of available evidence and co-designed following community engagement with children, young people, community agencies and the ACT Government.

The Commitment is underpinned by a set of principles that recognizes that all citizens are all equally entitled to their rights without discrimination:

- Children and young people should neither benefit nor suffer because of their culture, differing ability, ethnicity, birth status and gender, political or other opinion

- Laws and actions affecting children and young people should put their best interests first and benefit them in the best possible way
- Government and the community should work together to protect children and young people and support their full development
- Children and young people have a right to have their say in decisions that affect them and to have their opinions valued and considered

The Royal Commission's Final Report into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse highlighted how institutions who provide services to children must do more in both preventing and responding to abuse to uphold their rights. The Commission devised ten *Child Safe Standards* that institutions in each jurisdiction who deliver services to children and young people must comply with. The standards will drive cultural change in organisations so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of leaders, staff and volunteers.

The Royal Commission also recommended the implementation of *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations* that reflect the *Child Safe Standards* and provide a nationally consistent approach to creating organisational cultures that foster child safety and wellbeing across all sectors in Australia. The ACT Government is committed to adopting the *Child Safe Standards* and the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*.

The actions undertaken to inform each recommendation made in this report will be implemented through adherence to the ACT's commitments under these guiding principles. The Government must ensure that the human rights of every child and young person in the ACT will be upheld, that existing services are augmented to ensure they are fit for purpose, and that future practices and policies encourage the necessary cultural change needed to prevent domestic and family violence occurring against children and young people in the first instance.

Recommendation 1: Put the voices of children and young people at the heart of service design and delivery so that they directly influence the development of child-centred service responses to family and domestic violence

1.1 Prioritise and allocate funding for a Family Safety Hub co-design challenge with young adults with lived experience of domestic and family violence (DFV) to inform the development of child-focused support/services;

ACT Government Response: Agree

1.2 Allocate specific funding to the Children and Young People Commissioner to undertake specific consultation & engagement with children/young people on their experiences of DFV, the effects on their lives, the supports and/or services they received and supports and/or services that would best empower/support them to report/ recover from DFV;

ACT Government Response: Agree

The DVPC Report acknowledges the strong message from Extraordinary Meeting participants of the importance of including the voices of children and young people in service design and delivery. The ACT Government is committed to working with children and young people to ensure their experiences, desires and needs drive policy and service design, delivery and evaluation. Genuine engagement with children and young people recognises their own unique perspectives that cannot be substituted by an adult's idea about what children and young people experience or need.

The DVPC Report seeks a refocusing of efforts, specifically in relation to children and young people affected by DFV. In response to the DVPC Report, the ACT Government has allocated funding to enable the Coordinator-General for Family Safety (Coordinator-General), in partnership with the ACT Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner (the Commissioner), to access specialist expertise to consult and engage with children and young people in 2019. This includes consultation with young people to understand their diverse experiences of domestic and family violence, the effects on their lives, the supports and services they receive, and supports and services that best empower them to report and recover from DFV. The consultation will also seek to explore the specific experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

The consultation and engagement will generate insights to inform a Family Safety Hub Challenge focused on children and young people. Whilst the DVPC Report recommended the Commissioner lead the consultation and engagement, the ACT Government considers a partnership between the Commissioner and the Coordinator-General to be the preferred approach. The rationale for this approach is that the consultation will inform a Family Safety Hub challenge on the needs of children and young people (also recommended), as such these two pieces of work are vitally interconnected.

The involvement of the Coordinator-General in conducting the consultation will ensure the outcomes generated will align with previous insights work and be in an appropriate format to apply the established Family Safety Hub methodology of; ideate, design, test, pilot and scale.

This project will bring the voices of children and young people who are victims of domestic and family violence directly into policy and service design, including future directions for the Family Safety Hub. Importantly, these consultations will build upon consultations and other work already completed, or in progress across community and government.

1.3 Ensure the co-design of a service system response is child-centred from its origin, through the requirement for child-impact assessment or a similar tool to guide the design, procurement, implementation, review, reporting & evaluation of responses to DFV and DFV services that engage with children in any capacity. This tool should implement the National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations, central to which is the need for ongoing consultation

and engagement with children and young people and their meaningful participation in decisions that affect them.

ACT Government Response: Agree in Principle

The ACT Government will deliver on the intent of this Recommendation to embed a child-centred view in system service design through the implementation of the *Child Safe Standards* across the Territory. The *Child Safe Standards* comprise ten standards that cover all aspects of an organisation's operation and include a requirement that organisations promote the participation and empowerment of children. Implementation of the *Child Safe Standards* will ensure that policy and service design is informed by the views and needs of children. ACT organisations will be able to access a range of existing national tools to support implementation of the said standards in their particular context.

This work will be supported by research being undertaken as part of Recommendation 2 to clearly establish the features of an effective therapeutic service for children. This will augment future service system design to ensure that it is child focused.

The *Child Safe Standards* (the Standards) have been developed through *The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* following extensive research and consultation about what makes institutions child safe. The adoption of the Standards in the ACT will drive cultural change in organisations so that protecting children from abuse is embedded into everyday practice.

The ACT Government acknowledged in their formal Response to the Royal Commission that more needs to be done to prevent and respond to the abuse of children that may occur within their organisations. Provisional work was undertaken in 2018 to map how the Standards fit into the existing regulatory and governance landscape and to understand current sector readiness for implementation of the Standards across government and non-government sectors.

Building on this work, the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate has recruited a Senior Manager to work across community and government to progress the implementation of the Standards in the Territory in 2019 and 2020. Over the next 12 months, the Senior Manager will work with community and government stakeholders to develop advice to government on how to implement the Standards in the ACT.

The ACT Government is also working with other jurisdictions to adopt the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations* (the National Principles). The National Principles echo and expand the ten *Child Safe Standards* recommended by the Royal Commission, providing guidance for institutions on implementation. The Community Services Directorate is leading this work on behalf of the ACT Government, in collaboration with the Public Advocate and Children and Young People's Commissioner.

The Education (Child Safety in Schools) Legislation Amendment Act 2019 enables the Government to make regulations that provide for the implementation of the Royal Commission's recommendations regarding child safety in non-government schools. Consultation with the non-government sector is underway. The Education Directorate is also reviewing its professional learning programs, the public education staff code of conduct, policy frameworks and development, and ongoing programs to support the application of the *Child Safe Standards*.

The 2019-2020 ACT Government Budget allocated \$1.272 million over four years to support the health sector to meet the recommendations of the Royal Commission. This includes work to drive cultural and practical change across health services within the ACT to finalise and implement the Child Safe, Child Friendly and Child Aware Framework. By implementing this Framework, health services will meet the Royal Commission's recommendation to implement the *Child Safe Standards* and the National Principles.

Recommendation 2: The ACT Government increase the number/availability of therapeutic services for children and have clearer referral pathways and visibility of what services exist

2.1 Map therapeutic services/programs being provided in the ACT for children exposed to DFV.

This mapping should consider what organisations are doing to ensure the service/program is child centred and results in positive outcomes for children;

ACT Government Response: Agree

2.2 The ACT Government increase the availability and number of therapeutic responses and services available to assist children who experience or witness family violence, and who are sexually assaulted.

ACT Government Response: Agree in principle

The ACT Government is committed to reducing the impact of domestic and family violence (DFV) on children and young people by investing in prevention and early intervention. In addition, however, it is important to consider our responses to those children and young people who are exposed to DFV. Services for children and young people must focus on the whole person; this means gaining a full understanding from the person of the issues that are important to them. Historically, services for children and young people have focused primarily on immediate physical safety issues. The ACT Government is committed to investing in the long-term recovery of children and young people through the provision of therapeutic services so that they may go on to lead happy and healthy lives.

The Community Services Directorate (CSD) has commenced research to better understand what is meant by the term “therapeutic service/program”. This work will consider current academic research and be informed by consultations with children and young people and experts in the field, including the work undertaken by the Children and Young People’s Commissioner and the Coordinator-General for Family Safety to inform *Recommendation 1*.

Consideration will be given to the full range of services required for children and young people, from early intervention to crisis and recovery support, and the role of trauma informed care. This acknowledges that the effects of DFV continue long after the violence has ended. The research will consider the needs of children of different ages and developmental stages.

The research piece will provide a clear policy statement and direction for analysing the existing service network. This will provide greater clarity and certainty for investments in future services or programs. Following completion of the definitional work to understand therapeutic services for children and the analysis of the existing service network by CSD, the Health and Education Directorates will convene to address the findings and establish a plan for addressing future requirements.

In conducting this work the ACT Government acknowledges that children and young people have needs that are unique and separate to those of their family or carers, however for a service response to be most effective it will likely need to be family/carer inclusive.

Recommendation 3: The ACT Government use the opportunities in the ACT's justice system to build the momentum for children and young people affected by domestic and family violence

3.1 The establishment of an ACT intermediary scheme with a view to long-term use of intermediaries in ACT courts;

ACT Government Response: Agree

The DVPC Report recognises the stress and trauma that can be experienced by children and young people who become part of the justice system because of domestic and family violence (DFV). The Criminal Justice Report of the Royal Commission stated that “an effective criminal justice response must punish the convicted offender, protect children from the offender and restate the community’s abhorrence of such crimes” (Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, 2017, p. 158)

In June 2018, the Chief Minister and Attorney-General released the ACT Government Response to the four reports issued by the Royal Commission. In its response, the Government agreed in principle the recommendation to establish an intermediary scheme. The ACT Government supported the intent of the recommendation, noting consultation had commenced on the introduction of an intermediary scheme in the ACT.

The 2019-20 ACT Government Budget allocated \$5.776 million over four years to introduce an intermediary scheme. The scheme, once operational, will ensure that the needs and vulnerabilities of a witness with access to an intermediary are clearly communicated and considered from the point of police interview to giving evidence at trial.

Intermediaries play a valuable role in reducing stress and trauma potentially experienced by vulnerable witnesses. Whilst the intermediary scheme relates to child sexual abuse matters rather than family violence matters, it is important to note that a significant proportion of child sexual abuse matters relate to abuse that has occurred within a DFV context. Evaluation of any intermediary scheme could consider how to expand the scheme to apply to DFV matters without any element of child sexual abuse.

3.2 Extend the existing special measures for vulnerable witnesses to children and young people and their families in a broader range of circumstances. Such reform would minimise trauma for children and young people who are required to give evidence about family violence, including sexual violence perpetrated by family members;

ACT Government Response: Agree

Extension of the existing special measures for vulnerable witnesses to children and young people and their families in a broader range of circumstances has been implemented through the amendments made in the Royal Commission Criminal Justice Legislation Amendment Act 2018, which commenced on 5 December 2018.

The Act implemented specific Royal Commission Recommendations relating to the expansion of special measures for witnesses in child sexual abuse cases. This included ensuring legislative provisions and physical resources are in place to allow for the pre-recording of a witness’s evidence in child sexual abuse prosecutions and introducing legislation to require the audio-visual recording of evidence given by complainants and other witnesses the prosecution considers necessary, with those recordings to be tendered in any subsequent trial or retrial.

The Act also implemented changes to special measures, which affords children and young people greater protection in a broader range of circumstances. These include but are not limited to aligning the definition of ‘family violence offence’ to the definition in the Family Violence Act 2016, clarifying

the categories and descriptions of vulnerable witnesses and improving provisions in relation to the principles for dealing with child witnesses.

3.3 That ACT Government consider legislative reform so that the Federal Circuit and Family Courts have appropriate access to ‘Evidence in Chief’ interviews recorded by ACT Policing in relation to ACT Family Violence offences.

ACT Government Response: Agree

In early 2018, the ACT Government requested the National Family Violence Working Group consider the lawful basis for the Family Court providing court appointed experts with audio-visual recordings that have been provided to a State or Territory, to ensure national consistency and harmonised information sharing between national and local courts.

The Council of Attorneys-General met in November 2018 and noted ‘the work underway to develop a proposed framework for the appropriate sharing of court orders, judgments, transcripts and other documents between the family law, family violence and child protection systems. Participants agreed for the Family Violence Working Group to continue its work on this topic and report back to the Council of Attorneys-General in the second half of 2019’ (Council of Attorneys-General, 2018). The ACT Government will continue to engage in the national conversation and will consider implementation strategies agreed by the Council of Attorneys-General.

Working towards a national approach is an important step to ensuring that the protections for vulnerable witnesses remain in place when information is shared with appropriate parties for Family Court proceedings. The existing family violence evidence in chief provisions were carefully crafted to ensure a trauma informed approach to gathering and managing evidence of a sensitive and traumatic nature. Ensuring that this evidence is not abused or used to further perpetuate abuse is an important factor when considering how best to implement this recommendation.

Recommendation 4: The ACT Government leverage off the current work being done by the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety to develop Domestic and Family Violence training

4.1 Ensure the training being developed through the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety covers the impacts and needs of children and young people affected by DFV and explore the opportunity to expand this beyond the current target group (ACT Government frontline staff) to support those who work in roles/places that come into contact with children and young people.

ACT Government Response: Agree

The ACT Government Domestic and Family Violence Frontline Worker Training Strategy (The Strategy) was developed in response to the commitment made in the 2016 *ACT Government Response to Family Violence* to develop a skilled and educated workforce equipped to recognise and respond to the needs of adults and children experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV). The Strategy was developed in collaboration with users and service providers both within government and the community sector. The Strategy is an innovative initiative that will deliver an increase in capability across the ACT Public Service reaffirming the ACT Government's position that responding to DFV is everyone's business.

In response to the DVPC report, content has been enhanced to comprehensively cover the specific experiences and needs of children and young people. This applies to training delivered to managers, and foundation level training through to training for frontline staff coming into regular contact with people experiencing DFV.

The Strategy has a strong element of evaluation that will support ongoing revision and improvements over time. The consultations to be undertaken as per *Recommendation 1*, to put the voices of children and young people at the heart of service delivery, will directly inform the content review over the coming twelve months.

The 2019-20 ACT Government Budget allocated \$2.831 million over four years to support the ongoing cost of implementing the training across all ACT Government Directorates.

While the original intention was to confine training to staff in frontline roles, consultation and engagement with key stakeholders that informed the development of the Family Safety Hub noted that the dynamics of DFV, including non-physical violence and the use of coercive behaviours to control victims, are poorly understood across the community. Insights gathered through these engagements also highlighted that victims of DFV are most likely to disclose to trusted people, but that trusted people are often not equipped to respond.

The Strategy has therefore been designed to build a core level of capability across the entire ACT Government workforce, so all employees have an awareness of the harmful impacts of DFV and have the skills to appropriately respond to disclosures.

While the comprehensive nature of the Strategy will reach many of the people who come in contact with children and young people, research undertaken by the Children and Young People's Commissioner and the Coordinator-General for Family Safety to inform *Recommendation 1* will provide insights onto where the ACT Government should additionally focus effort.

Recommendation 5: The ACT Government improve the ACT's use of data to inform strategies for children and young people

5.1 Prioritise relevant datasets for inclusion in the Government's data lake to drive improved visibility and consistency across government;

ACT Government Response: Agree

5.2 Assess opportunities to link data in the data lake to generate new insights about the extent and circumstances of children and young people who may be at risk of DFV in the ACT but are not currently visible in existing data;

ACT Government Response: Agree

In 2017-18 the ACT Government funded the Data Analytics Centre which includes a whole of government scalable data storage and analytics platform (the 'data lake') to enhance evidence-based policy decisions, performance measurement and privacy-safe data sharing. Recognising domestic and family violence (DFV) as a priority for the government, one of the first areas the Data Analytics Centre has been tasked with examining is Family Safety.

The Data Analytics Centre in partnership with the Coordinator-General for Family Safety and other agencies including ACT Policing, ACT Courts and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate is currently working on solutions to streamline the sharing of appropriate family safety case details. This work will be built on progressively over time, with the ultimate aim to perform new analyses of DFV risk factors in the ACT by drawing together previously disparate data sources. The Data Analytics Centre will continue this work and help to build capacity within the Community Services Directorate and other agencies to make better use of the data available to Directorates.

The Coordinator-General for Family Safety has sought the assistance of the Data Steering Committee to oversee these recommendations, which sit across many Directorates. To support this response, the Data Steering Committee will review the datasets across government that are either directly or indirectly relevant for informing DFV strategies into the future. This work will include an assessment of what datasets could be linked to generate new insights about children and young people who may have experienced or be at risk of DFV. Any decision to proceed with the linking of data will need to take into consideration issues such as social licence, the Territory's Privacy Principles and relevant legislation.

Noting the costs and technical constraints for adding different datasets to the data lake will vary, the Committee's advice will suggest a prioritised order for adding data based on factors such as their usefulness for informing DFV strategies and providing new insights, costs of integrating with the data lake, quality of the data set, and so on.

The 2019-20 ACT Government Budget allocated \$90.325 million over four years to implement a Digital Health Record across all ACT Government funded public health services. This system would provide a single point of reference for the clinical records of patients, replacing many disparate electronic and paper-based systems currently in place. It is proposed the Digital Health Record would be implemented at Canberra Health Services (across inpatient, outpatient and community settings) and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce, ensuring a seamless experience across the Territory for patients, their carers and clinical staff.

The Digital Health Record will store information on all children and young people who access public health services within the ACT. Increasingly, Health Services are capturing additional client information on social health determinants. As the sole location from where health data for the ACT will be stored, it provides a unique opportunity for relevant datasets to be made available to the data lake from a single source system.

The implementation of this information into the data lake will provide new insights about the extent and circumstances of children and young people at risk of DFV in the ACT. This includes the potential

to recognize specific children and young people with multiple presentations of modalities as potentially experiencing DFV. It will also streamline the future evaluation of strategies which aim to address children at risk.

The ACT Government will continue to work at the national level with other jurisdictions to develop consistent definitions and data requirements for reporting on key child safety outcome indicators.

5.3 The government, community sector and researchers collectively design a program of evaluations for DFV strategies and services in the ACT, including jointly scoping evaluations and sharing findings without prejudice.

ACT Government Response: Agree

In 2019-20 the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) will establish a small new unit to support evaluation practices and capabilities across government. This team will work with the Coordinator-General for Family Safety to identify opportunities and priorities for evaluating DFV programs and strategies in the ACT. Where possible this work will leverage efforts to improve the use of relevant DFV data per Recommendation 5.1 and 5.2.

The community sector and other non-government stakeholders play a critical role in preventing and responding to DFV in the Territory, including in the development of strategies and the delivery of programs and services. As the expertise, perspectives, data and responsibility are widely spread across government, community sector and other experts, CMTEDD and the Coordinator-General will work with stakeholders to formulate a shared program of DFV evaluations. This will also include sharing and discussion of evaluation findings, whether through the DVPC and/or other fora, with a view to building a shared understanding of what works and what does not.

Governance and progress reporting on the ACT Government Response

The ACT Government Response includes multiple actions set for completion within twelve months, with responsibility lying with CMTEDD, CSD, JACS, Education and Health Directorates. Some actions will require directorates to work together to achieve desired outcomes. The Human Services Cluster Inter-Directorate Committee (IDC), which has a strategic oversight role for work relating to Family Safety as well as other cross-directorate human service reform priorities, will play a role in supporting cross-directorate implementation of recommendations of the DVPC Report.

Directorates identified as lead agencies in the Implementation Plan will provide regular reporting against the initiatives back to the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety (OCGFS). These responses will be collated, and progress reports will be provided to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence at regular intervals.

The OCGFS will also undertake strategic reporting to identify cross-directorate, systemic issues in their implementation to the IDC for resolution.

Implementation Plan

DVPC Report recommendation	Lead Agency	Action	Date/milestones
Recommendation 1: Put the voices of children and young people at the heart of service design and delivery so that they directly influence the development of child-centred service responses to family and domestic violence	Community Services Directorate and Children and Young People's Commissioner	The Coordinator-General for Family Safety and the Children and Young People's Commissioner undertake consultation with children and young people to better understand their needs and provide insights to inform and improve responses for children and young people affected by domestic and family violence. Consultations will generate insights to inform future Family Safety Hub activities with children and young people.	December 2019 – Insights Report regarding Children and Young People is released
	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate	In consultation with the community, stakeholder groups and ACT Government Directorates, prepare advice for the ACT Government regarding options for implementing the Child Safe Standards in the ACT	Advice provided to ACT Government in 2019 regarding options for implementation of Child Safe Standards in the ACT.
	Community Services Directorate and Children and Young People's Commissioner	Lead adoption of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations in the ACT	

DVPC Report recommendation	Lead Agency	Action	Date/milestones
	Education Directorate	The Education Directorate will develop resources to enable schools to assess their current school policies and practices against the Child Safe Standards.	June 2020 – ACT schools have access to resources to assess their policies and practices against the Child Safe Standards
	ACT Health Directorate and Canberra Health Services	Drive implementation of the Child Safe, Child Friendly, Child Aware Framework across health services in the ACT	Plan for implementation of the framework for Acute and Community Health Service Organisations that provide care to children developed by June 2020.
Recommendation 2: The ACT Government increase the number/availability of therapeutic services for children and have clearer referral pathways and visibility of what services exist	Community Services Directorate	Community Services Directorate to work with community and government to develop a policy position regarding therapeutic services.	December 2019
	Community Services Directorate	Community Services Directorate to conduct mapping of sector to identify existing therapeutic services in the ACT	Initial mapping completed in December 2019. Detailed mapping of sector completed by March 2020.
	ACT Health and Education Directorate with a supporting role by CSD	The Health Directorate and Education Directorate will convene to address the findings of the CSD mapping and establish a plan for addressing gaps.	June 2020- plan to address gaps in services is developed in consultation with stakeholders
Recommendation 3: The ACT Government use the opportunities in the ACT's justice system to build the momentum for children and young people affected by domestic and family violence	Justice and Community Safety Directorate	Establish an ACT intermediary scheme for children and young people	December 2019 – project plan developed and endorsed

DVPC Report recommendation	Lead Agency	Action	Date/milestones
	Justice and Community Safety Directorate	Through membership on the Council of Attorneys-General and the Family Violence Working Group, advocate for the development of a framework for the appropriate sharing of court orders, judgments, transcripts and other documents between the family law, family violence and child protection systems.	June 2020 – report on engagement and developments at a national level
Recommendation 4: The ACT Government leverage off the current work being done by the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety to develop Domestic and Family Violence training	Community Services Directorate	Update the Training Strategy content to reflect findings from consultations with children and young people.	March 2020- the Training Strategy content updated.
	Community Services Directorate	Use the findings from the consultations with children and young people to determine areas outside Government where the training should be implemented.	
Recommendation 5: The ACT Government improve the ACT’s use of data to inform strategies for children and young people	Community Services Directorate	Develop capabilities and infrastructure, including the ability to use the data lake effectively.	March 2020 – plan developed for program of works over four years to build data and digital capability. Timing TBC – training delivered to staff to increase data and ICT skills Timing TBC – data audit completed, and data warehouse designed
	CMTEDD with all Directorates	Through the whole of government Data Steering Committee, CMTEDD will lead the review and prioritisation of DFV data sets for inclusion in the data lake. This will include consideration of opportunities to link data sets subject to consideration of issues.	Advice prepared by the Data Steering Committee and provided to the Coordinator-General for Family Safety and DVPC by July 2019.

DVPC Report recommendation	Lead Agency	Action	Date/milestones
	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate & CSD	CMTEDD and the Office for the Coordinator General for Family Safety will work with the community to develop a program of DFV evaluations and explore models for sharing evaluation information and developing capabilities.	July 2019 – Establish new policy innovation team in CMTEDD. December 2019 – Engagement with government and non-government stakeholders on evaluation priorities.

References

Council of Attorneys-General (2018) <https://www.ag.gov.au/About/CommitteesandCouncils/Council-of-Attorneys-General/Documents/Council-of-Attorneys-General-communique-November-2018.pdf>

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017), Criminal Justice Report, Executive Summary and Parts I and II.

https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/file-list/final_report_-_criminal_justice_report_-_executive_summary_and_parts_i_to_ii.pdf

UNSW (2011) The impact of Domestic Violence on Children: A literature Review (conducted by the UNSW for the benevolent society)

<http://earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/files/ImpactofDVonChildren.pdf> (Mainly taken from page 4-5)

Domestic Violence Prevention Council's final report on the Extraordinary Meeting on the needs of children and young people, 2018

<http://www.dvpc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Final-DVPC-report-to-Minister-from-2018-Extraordinary-Meeting.pdf>

Appendix A

The commitments made in the ACT Government Response do not exist in isolation, but rather build upon and complement a range of other initiatives across government and community. Appendix A provides a snapshot of some of this work under the themes of the DVPC Report. It is not exhaustive, and we can expect a fuller picture of existing initiatives will come to light as the commitments are implemented, particularly with relation to analysis of services and data holdings.

Children and young people should be consulted to understand their needs to inform policies and programs going forward

The ACT Public Advocate and Children and Young People's Commissioner (the Commissioner) has both a statutory mandate and the expertise to design and undertake consultations with children and young people in a manner that promotes their meaningful participation and serious consideration of their views. In addition to direct consultations undertaken by the Commissioner, they also work to develop this capability in others.

In 2017, on behalf of Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians, the Commissioner coordinated the development of a background paper about children and young people's experience of domestic and family violence, providing a comprehensive overview of relevant considerations that support a child-centred approach to understanding and responding to the primacy of a child or young person's experience of domestic and family violence. This and other work of the Commissioner provides a rich source for those across the ACT seeking to better understand the impacts of DFV on children and young people.

The Commissioner has also developed guidelines and templates to assist individuals and agencies to undertake Child Impact Assessments to assess how a proposed policy or service will impact on children and young people. The completion of a Child Impact Assessment ensures agencies meet their statutory human rights obligations and make decisions in the best interests of children and young people.

The Community Services Directorate conducted a literature review in March 2018, which identified DFV as a key driver of homelessness amongst unaccompanied 12-15 year olds. Independent research was also commissioned to interview young people aged 16-19 to reflect on their past experiences of homelessness when they were 12-15. The research report is now published containing the lived experiences and voices of young people and will be used to inform future policy and service design.

The ACT Government is actively working to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in organisations, families and communities. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission) recommended that all organisations providing facilities or services to children adopt the Child Safe Standards. These standards aim to drive cultural change in organisations so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of leaders, staff and volunteers.

The ACT Government agrees with the Royal Commission that organisations providing services to children must do more to prevent and respond to child abuse that may occur within their organisations. In mid-2018, the ACT Government engaged a consultant to determine the current regulatory landscape in the ACT and to identify the regulatory readiness of institutions to implement the ten Child Safe Standards. This exercise also identified the capability of existing regulatory and governance roles to provide monitoring and oversight in relation to the Child Safe Standards.

In October 2018, the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate partnered with the Commissioner to conduct stakeholder forums to better understand organisational readiness to implement the Child Safe Standards. These forums were attended by representatives from a wide range of community, sport, religious, residential and educational institutions and organisations that provide services to children and young people.

The forums highlighted the range of processes and policies currently in place across organisations to protect the safety of children and young people, and the need for increased awareness of obligations to ensure compliance with the regulatory schemes operating in the ACT. A summary of the discussions held at the forums are available in the listening report available here: https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.act-yoursay.files/1015/4500/0673/Stakeholder_Forum_Listening_Report_-_Creating_a_Child_Safe_and_Child_Friendly_Canberra.pdf

Endorsed in February 2019, by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), the National Principles will be promoted across all organisations within the community services sector working with children and young people, in particular the out-of-home care and family support sectors to foster genuine cultural change in organisations to support child safety and wellbeing.

The National Principles for Child Safe Standards (National Principles) provide ten high-level standards designed to provide a nationally consistent approach to creating organisational cultures that foster child safety and wellbeing. The Australian Human Rights Commission engaged with children and young people during the cross-sector national engagement process on the development and implementation of the National Principles. To support implementation of the National Principles, the Australian Human Rights Commission has developed a series of resources which are applicable to all organisations and sectors working with children and young people. These are available at <https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/>.

Canberra Health Services complies with the *National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards*. These standards provide a nationally consistent statement about the level of care consumers can expect from health services. The standards were updated in November 2017 to incorporate child specific actions and measures, for example actions relating to effective communication with children and families. Organisations seeking accreditation with the NSQHS Standards are required to provide evidence for example of how they consider the role of family in communicating with children, the widely varied levels of communication skills and understanding of children; and the involvement of children and family at transitions of care. Canberra Health Services was awarded three-year accreditation against the NSQHS Standards in July 2018.

Increased availability of therapeutic trauma informed services for children and young people and clear referral pathways

The *We Don't Shoot Our Wounded* and *Family Safety Hub Insights* reports highlight the special considerations in service delivery design that are required to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families affected by family and domestic violence.

The *We Don't Shoot Our Wounded* report studied the help-seeking behaviours of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women affected by family violence. Through interviews with women with lived experience, the report found that family violence is intergenerational and protecting children is a prime motivator for women leaving violent relationships. There is also a strong desire for counselling for children to help them understand what is happening at home.

It is important to understand that the response within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is family-centred and community-centred. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women interviewed for the *We Don't Shoot Our Wounded* report stated that brothers, fathers and uncles were often called to mediate the violence and to provide support to the mothers and children. Some of the interviewees identified their mother as their primary support, knowing their mothers had survived family violence and did not judge their relationships and would not pressure them to leave.

As such, the ACT Government is committed to therapeutic interventions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children that are holistic with supports to the mother, grandmother, children and larger kin network to create safety and space for healing as a community.

The 2019-20 ACT Government Budget allocated funding to support joint work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to develop specific actions in response to the report's recommendations. This funding will focus on improving family-centred supports for those impacted by DFV, preventing and de-escalating DFV, and diverting men who use violence from the justice system where appropriate to reduce demand on the Alexander Maconochie Centre.

Funding allocated in the 2019-20 ACT Government Budget will enable the ACT Health Directorate to focus specifically on children who are exhibiting sexually concerning behaviours, many of whom have a family history of DFV. The Health Directorate will engage a specialist consultant to assist with mapping therapeutic services in the ACT for children who are exhibiting sexually concerning behaviours. This mapping, together with the definitional work and mapping undertaken by Community Services Directorate in relation to therapeutic services, will inform the review, development and implementation of health specific and system wide responses to children exhibiting sexually concerning behaviours.

The ACT Public Advocate and Children and Young People's Commissioner chairs the Children and Young People Oversight Agencies Group whose current strategic focus area is children and young people with complex, high-level needs. With the aim of developing a solution-oriented framework in respect of service responses for this vulnerable cohort of children and young people, the Children and Young People Oversight Agencies Group is currently engaging with relevant agencies to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of current service delivery models and to generate a sense of direction in respect of service improvement opportunities and/or new specialist service delivery models.

A range of important services are already being provided across the ACT by community and government providers to children and young people experiencing vulnerability including domestic and family violence.

In May of 2019 the Early Family Support Initiative (EFSI) commenced. This initiative is funded by the Women Youth and Children Community Health Programs (WYCCHP) and has the overarching aim of increasing the number of children entering school healthy and developmentally on track.

This aim is aligned with the recommendations of the Early Support by Design Team from the Human Services Cluster. To achieve this aim the EFSI will analyse and implement, where possible, potential avenues for change within WYCCHP. This includes improving the capacity to identify vulnerable children as they enter WYCCHP (in collaboration with broader Canberra Health Services referral points), improving internal referral pathways to better meet client needs and better utilise multidisciplinary opportunities within WYCCHP and analysing the potential for strengthening the existing Home Nurse Visiting Service.

The Child at Risk Health Unit (CARHU) provides specialist therapeutic services to children, young people and their families or carers in the ACT or surrounding areas that have been affected by abuse and/or neglect. The CARHU seeks to support children and young people and their families to recover from abuse and the resulting trauma. CARHU offers therapeutic services for children 10 years of age and under who have exhibited sexualised and sexually harmful behaviours. The CARHU therapy team provides short term interventions for parents and carers to respond to children's sexualised behaviours that may not meet the threshold of concerning or problematic behaviours.

The Maternity and Paediatric Social Work Team at the Canberra Hospital assist patients, their families and carers to identify strategies to effectively manage emotional and social issues impacting their health. Social work interventions are trauma informed, using a strengths-based child centred and family focused framework to ensure best outcomes for children and families impacted by DFV.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provides comprehensive assessment and clinical management for children and young people with moderate to severe mental health issues. All CAMHS clinicians and CAMHS medical staff, have training to be able to ask and to act in relation to domestic and family violence. This occurs at the first and subsequent contact by clinicians with young

people and their families. The individual's clinical records document any DFV, including when violence is denied.

The Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, Canberra Health Services, has commenced a pilot to implement the Victorian program *Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence* initially in the maternity setting. This program seeks to build capacity in the hospital setting to better identify and respond to disclosures of DFV. The decision to commence implementation in the maternity setting recognises the heightened risk of DFV for women during pregnancy and early parenting and recognises this as an opportunity for early identification and support.

The ACT Education Directorate has taken active steps to create safe, supportive and responsive school environments for students who have experienced trauma. This includes the provision of trauma informed professional learning to ACT teachers through the Neuro Education approach. This approach has been integrated into the *Positive Behaviour for Learning* whole school approach to social and academic learning. Over fifty percent of ACT Public schools have commenced implementing *Positive Behaviour for Learning*.

A number of professional learning programs offered to schools and staff are currently available. Professional learning on trauma informed practice was delivered in November and December 2018. The Continuum of Education Supports for high school students commenced in Term 4 2018 with increasing capacity in the forward years. Trauma informed service provision is ongoing through multiple programs and training packages. An increase in school psychologists and allied health professionals through recruitment is ongoing.

With a strong focus on health promotion and early intervention, the School Youth Health Nurse Program supports the health and wellbeing of students in secondary schools as they transition to adulthood. The objectives of the program are to promote positive health outcomes for young people and their families and to provide an opportunity to access a health professional in the school setting. Nurses are often the first point of contact for health and wellbeing matters and play an important role in referring to appropriate health care and other providers.

The School Youth Health Nurse Program is currently expanding from seven high schools to ten high schools. Further recruitment of school youth health nurses will take place during 2019 to roll out the program all ACT public high schools.

The Child and Family Centres are at the forefront of services for families with young children. The centres are staffed by highly skilled and experienced professionals, including social workers and psychologists. The centres deliver holistic, universal and targeted community-based services that respond to the needs of these families. The Child and Family Centres offer drop-in parenting support; ongoing support in the form of intensive programs; and early intervention programs such as supported playgroups and wellbeing clinics. The success of the Child and Family Centres in working with children and families has been strengthened by strong partnerships developed over time with government and community partners.

The ACT Government has been progressing work to ensure that services for children and young people in the child protection and out-of-home care systems in the ACT are trauma-informed and therapeutic. The ACT Government established Melaleuca Place in 2014. Melaleuca Place is the ACT's trauma recovery centre for children 12 years of age and under. Since the commencement of A Step Up for Our Kids in 2016 the ACT Government has continued to invest in developing a trauma informed therapeutic focused service system including:

- Establishment of ACT Together, specifically the Australian Childhood Foundation who provides specialist trauma informed guidance to staff and carers;
- Therapeutic assessors who undertake therapeutic assessments for children and young people in care.

Under *A Step Up for Our Kids*, the ACT Government supports programs and service delivery that practice a therapeutic approach that is child-centred and family focused. These programs and services are evidence-based and provide developmentally appropriate interventions to children, young people and their families to strengthen children and young people's connection to community and culture.

A fundamental tenet of the out-of-home care system is undertaking therapeutic, assessments for all children and young people in out-of-home care. These assessments review different areas of a child or young person's life, such as health and development, emotional and behavioural development, education and learning, family and social relationships, self-help skills, culture and identity, and indicators of trauma in the child or young person. Therapeutic Assessments are being phased in over the life of this Strategy until every child and young person has an assessment completed. These assessments are reviewed each year and inform therapeutic care plans. The Community Services Directorate is working in partnership with the Australian Childhood Trauma Group to ensure more children and young people in out-of-home care, and their carers, benefit from having a therapeutic assessment in place.

The Community Services Directorate continues to provide ongoing trauma-informed training to child protection practitioners. The inaugural Talking Practice Conference, held in 2018 brought together child protection workers, carers and community agencies partnered under *A Step Up for Our Kids* and had a particular focus on developing practice including in the area of understanding trauma. The Community Services Directorate has developed a suite of documents to guide child protection practitioners on how to support children and young people, birth families and carers in a therapeutic, trauma-informed way. The documents provide simple tools to support the healing process.

The Case Analysis Team in Child and, Youth Protection Services was established to provide independent analysis of individual cases at key decision-making points. Independent case analysis allows case managers to consider the long-term cumulative impact of abuse and neglect and ensures the voice of the child is at the centre of the work. Case analysis also explores the risks and vulnerabilities to a child's safety.

The 2018-19 ACT Government Budget allocated funding to enable the ongoing delivery of the Family Group Conferencing program, including permanent appointment of two dedicated Family Group Conferencing facilitators. Family Group Conferencing aims to provide families with the opportunity to develop effective family plans that will keep their children safe. Family Group Conferencing ensures all members of a child's extended families are contacted and encouraged to be involved in the decision-making process about their child's situation. This process is considered in line with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural values of family and community responsibility. A pilot of the program between November 2017 and November 2018 involved 21 families, supporting 48 children. Of these, 31 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children did not subsequently enter care or were restored to the family following a Family Group Conference.

The Child, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP) within the Community Services Directorate has engaged Gagan Gulwan Aboriginal Corporation, in partnership with OzChild, to commence a trial of *Functional Family Therapy-Child Welfare* in the ACT. This program aims to strengthen support arrangements to ensure the best possible outcomes are achieved for children and young people, including education and health needs. The trial will target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families with children and young people aged 0-17 who are experiencing vulnerability and are at risk of entering the out of home care system.

In 2017-18, Housing ACT provided one off additional funding of \$100,000 for the *Provision of Support for Children and Young People Living with Domestic Violence Grant* to each of the three Homelessness Women's Services - Doris, Beryl and Toora. This was in recognition of the increased demand to support children and young people who have experienced a history of trauma and homelessness due to significant impacts of domestic violence.

In the 2018-19 ACT Government Budget, ongoing funding of \$100,000 per annum was provided to each of these organisations. Doris, Beryl and Toora are using the funding to continue to support critical training for their Children's Worker and purchasing resources including therapeutic services for their Children's Program and delivery of activities to children. This funding will continue, at a scaled indexed rate, until 2022.

The Child, Youth and Family Services Program supports children and young people who are experiencing vulnerability, and their families, by providing early intervention supports and services, including the delivery of professional therapeutic services. While these services do not specifically deliver targeted DFV services for children, young people and their families, anecdotal evidence received from funded providers suggests they are supporting and providing assistance to individuals for whom DFV is a common story. Therapeutic services are delivered under CYFSP by Companion House, Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation, Relationships Australia and YWCA Canberra.

Improving court and legal approaches to reduce the impact on children and young people involved in the court process.

The Warrumbul Court, legislated for in the Magistrates Court Act 1930 (effective from 1 September 2018), builds on the success of the adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Circle Sentencing Court (Galambany) with the expansion of the concept in the Children's Court. Under the guidance of a Panel of Elders, children and young people are assisted to understand the underlying reasons and circumstances behind their offending behaviours. This allows them to be diverted from the mainstream system and into a culturally meaningful and sensitive justice process where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Panel Members have an opportunity to work collaboratively with the Magistrate to address overrepresentation and offending behaviour among children and young people.

Training for people who work with children so they can recognise and respond to children and young people impacted by DFV

The Training Strategy aligns and builds on existing training occurring within the ACT Government. Examples of existing DFV training includes the 5-day 'Working with families affected by Domestic and Family Violence' training run by Child and Youth Protection Services in partnership with Domestic Violence Crisis Service that develops a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of DFV as well as the long-term impacts/ consequences for children experiencing DFV.

The Canberra Health Services is also piloting the *Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence* (SHRFV) framework. This is an evidenced-based family violence change strategy which is tailored specifically for health professions. The required capabilities identified for the ACT Government Domestic and Family Violence Frontline Worker Training Strategy have been mapped against SHRFV and there is close alignment. The ACT Domestic and Family Violence Policy, developed in 2017, outlines the principle and expected behaviours on responding to DFV and perpetrators in the ACTPS and associated workplaces. The Policy is a part of the ACTPS DFV Toolkit and outlines to managers and employees DFV leave entitlements, how to respond to disclosures and how to get help.

Additionally, a key action of the 2nd Implementation Plan 2015-2017 of the ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Strategy 2011-2017 was "All Directorates will consider becoming White Ribbon Accredited". Several ACT Directorates are undertaking White Ribbon workplace accreditation and the Training Strategy has been designed to support the training requirements outlined by White Ribbon. This includes training of all Senior Managers, so they are able to respond to and support staff who may be impacted by DFV, and DFV training is made available to all staff.

The implementation of the ACT Government Domestic and Family Violence Frontline Worker Training Strategy will develop stronger linkages within the service system across the government and non-government sectors and support multi-agency coordinated responses in the provision of service responses for children impacted by DFV. It will contribute to the long term cultural and systemic

change needed to end violence against women and their children and equip managers within the ACTPS with the skills and knowledge to support employees impacted by DFV.

Using data to inform DFV strategies for children and young people

ACT Health is introducing an injury surveillance code in Emergency Departments across the ACT. The code will give clinicians the opportunity to record how an injury occurred. The injury surveillance code will be used to record how an injury occurred for all persons presenting to the Emergency Department, including children and young people. Over time, injury surveillance data will provide important information to health services to drive service and policy development. Disclosures of domestic and family violence will trigger a specialist response for individuals.

As part of the broader commitment to strengthening the Government's performance and accountability mechanisms the *ACT Government Evaluation Policy and Guidelines* provide guidance to ACT agencies for embedding evaluation in their operations, setting evaluation objectives, strategies, and priorities, and conducting evaluations. The policy and guidelines aim to build evaluation maturity across government, and to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness of government services.

The ACT Government recognises evaluation is an essential component of an integrated policy cycle and service development. Evaluation helps to determine how effective the earlier stages of policy or service development, implementation and management were. Accordingly, evaluation should be considered and planned early in policy and service development and implementation.

The Coordinator-General for Family Safety is developing an evaluation framework to support the evaluation of the Family Safety Hub. This evaluation will consider the effectiveness of the Family Safety Hub model of *try, test and learn* as well as the outcomes of specific initiatives, such as the Free Access to Legal Advice pilots.

The Community Services Directorate is in the process of establishing an innovation lab that will devise a try, test and learn framework to support continuous learning and evaluation of initiatives. The Lab will have a broad membership including experts and people with lived experience, drawing on their knowledge and skills as needed to design and deliver innovative initiatives. Once the try, test and learn methodology is devised by the Innovation Lab, it can be applied to a broad number of programs and initiatives.

The Innovation Lab is in its early stages of formation. It is anticipated the next phase will invite relevant partners into the Lab to be involved in the next stage of initiatives. The Lab will have a 10-year life-span, linked to implementation of the Community Services Directorate Strategic Plan, with the intention to embed a culture of innovative thinking as business as usual.



ACT
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Community Services Directorate

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