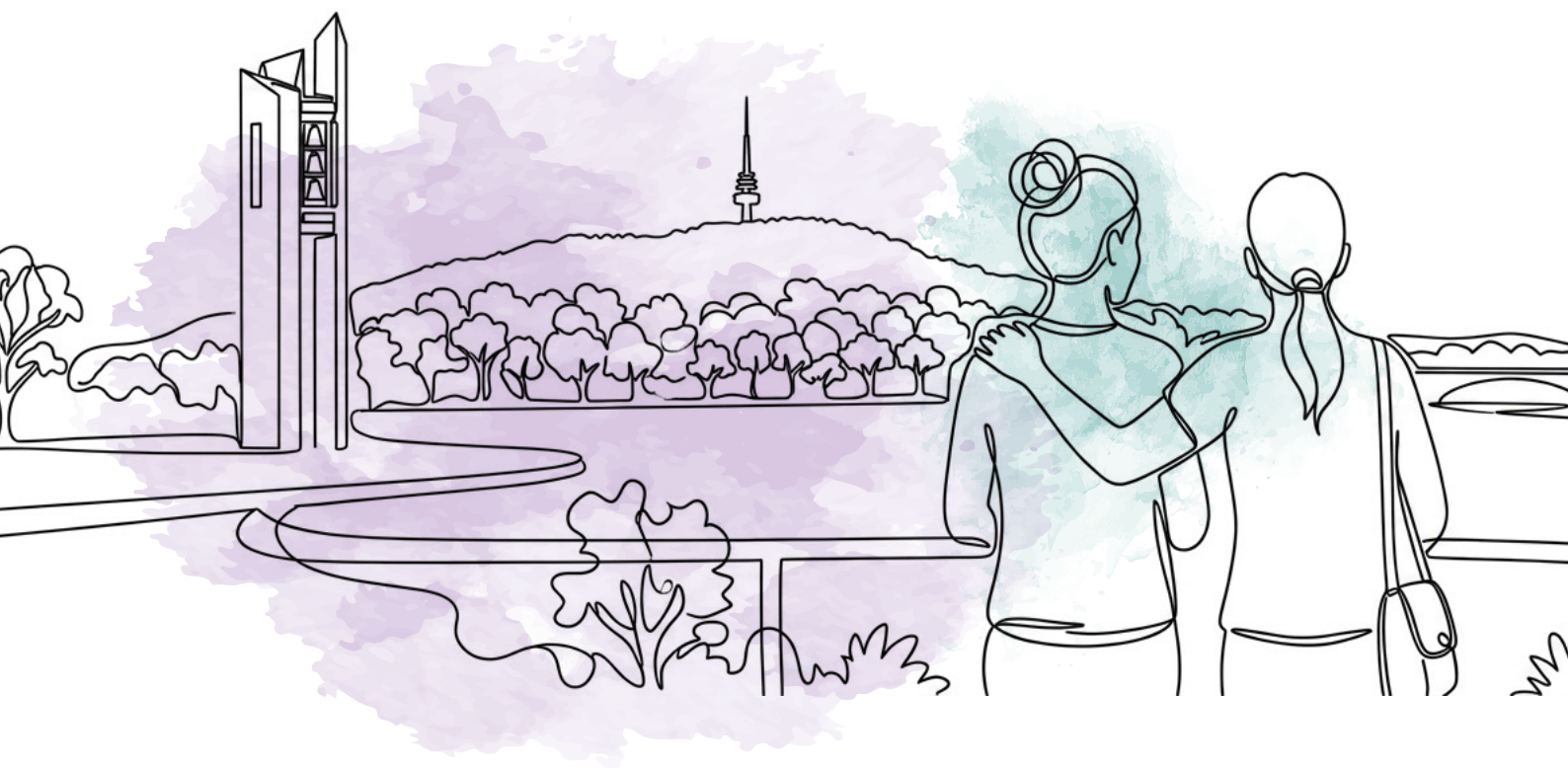


ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy 2026-2036



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.

Accessibility

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues, accessible to as many people as possible.

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an alternative format – such as large print or audio – please telephone (02) 6205 0282.

If English is not your first language and you require the translating and interpreting services – please telephone 131 450.

National Relay Service phone 133 677 then ask for 133 427.



Accessibility
Ph 13 22 81



Ph 131 450

Content warning and support

Domestic, family and sexual violence can be confronting. This Strategy contains information that may be distressing to readers. If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic, family or sexual violence, there are a range of services that can assist in providing safety and support.

In an emergency always call Triple Zero (000)

NATIONAL HOTLINES	ACT SUPPORT SERVICES
<p>1800 RESPECT Who: Anyone impacted by domestic, family or sexual violence Ph: 1800 737 732 W: 1800respect.org.au</p>	<p>Domestic Violence Crisis Service (DVCS) Who: Anyone living in the ACT region affected by domestic and family violence When: 24 hours, 7 days a week Ph: (02) 6280 0900 W: dvcs.org.au</p>
<p>Full Stop Australia Who: Anyone impacted by sexual, domestic or family violence, and their supporters Ph: 1800 385 578 (1800 FULL STOP) W: fullstop.org.au</p>	<p>Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC) Who: Anyone who has experienced any form of sexual violence recently or in the past, and their supporters When: 7am-11pm, 7 days a week Ph: (02) 6247 2525 W: crcc.org.au</p>
<p>Lifeline Who: Anyone feeling suicidal, overwhelmed, having difficulty coping or staying safe Ph: 13 11 14 W: lifeline.org.au</p>	<p>YWCA Canberra Who: Women and non-binary people and their families who are experiencing domestic and family violence When: 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday Ph: (02) 6185 2000 W: ywca-canberra.org.au</p>
<p>13YARN Who: Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in crisis, feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping Ph: 13 92 76 W: 13yarn.org.au</p>	<p>Sisters in Spirit Aboriginal Corporation Who: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women When: 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday Ph: (02) 6257 0794 W: facebook.com/SistersinspiritACT</p>
<p>Kids Helpline Who: Anyone aged 5-25 years old Ph: 1800 55 1800 W: kidshelpline.com.au</p>	<p>Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation Who: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families When: 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday Ph: (02) 6252 4914 W: yerrabi.org.au</p>

NATIONAL HOTLINES

Rainbow Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence Helpline

Who: Anyone from LGBTQ+ communities who has recently or in the past experienced sexual, domestic or family violence, and their family members, friends or supporters

Ph: 1800 497 212

W: fullstop.org.au/get-help/our-services

National Disability and Abuse Hotline

(9am-5pm, Monday to Friday)

Who: Anyone who wants to report abuse or neglect of people with disability

Ph: 1800 880 052

W: health.gov.au/contacts/national-disability-abuse-and-neglect-hotline

MensLine Australia

Who: Men with concerns about mental health, relationships, anger management, family violence (using and experiencing), stress and suicidal thoughts

Ph: 1300 789 978

W: mensline.org.au

ACT SUPPORT SERVICES

Yhurwun Bullan

Who: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence

When: 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday

Ph: 0427 870 636

W: <https://www.yhurwunbullan.org/>

Multicultural Hub Canberra (mHub)

Who: Anyone with a multicultural background

When: 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday

Ph: (02) 6100 4611

W: mhub.org.au

Victim Support ACT (VSACT)

Who: People who have experienced sexual assault or family violence, with some supports available to their family members

When: 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday

Ph: 1800 822 272 or (02) 6205 2222

W: victimsupport.act.gov.au

EveryMan

Who: Men who live in the ACT and region, and their families and partners.

When: Business hours, Monday to Friday

Ph: 02 6230 6999

W: everyman.org.au

Note on language

The language used to describe domestic, family and sexual violence is complex and continues to change. While terminology may evolve over the life of the Strategy, the intent and commitment remain the same. There is no single set of terminology that suits all situations and people. The terms included within the Strategy are not intended to be exclusionary or cause harm to the reader.

The Strategy uses the broad term ‘domestic, family and sexual violence’. It is important to note sexual violence can and does occur within domestic and family violence contexts but it also occurs in other relationships and settings.

While referring to violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the term ‘family, domestic and sexual violence’ is used with family violence appearing first. This reflects the preference communicated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, recognising the kinship and community contexts in which violence can occur.

There are a range of terms used to refer to people who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence. Throughout the Strategy, the term ‘victim-survivor’ is used when referring to people who have lived or living experience of domestic, family and sexual violence. We acknowledge that some people may not resonate with this term, however it is used respectfully to acknowledge both the impacts of violence and the strength and resilience of those with lived experience. Importantly, the term victim-survivor includes adults, children and young people of all genders.

In using this term, it is also important to acknowledge that some people who experience domestic, family and sexual violence do not survive.

Generally, the Strategy uses the terminology of ‘people who use violence’. This terminology focuses on violence as a behaviour, rather than part of a person’s identity. Often, the term ‘people who use violence’ is used interchangeably with the term ‘perpetrator’, which refers to someone who has committed an illegal act, including domestic, family and sexual violence. The Strategy uses the term people who use violence to be inclusive and accessible, inclusive of children and young people, while emphasising accountability. Occasionally, the term perpetrator is used for accuracy to reflect the language of the research or source it was drawn from.

We use the term ‘domestic, family and sexual violence sector’ throughout this Strategy to refer to specialist domestic, family and sexual violence organisations whose sole or primary focus is delivering domestic, family and sexual violence services, such as the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and Canberra Rape Crisis Centre; as well as organisations that deliver a domestic, family or sexual violence service, program or specialist response among their services. We acknowledge the distinct expertise of the domestic, family and sexual violence sector.

We recognise the majority of the domestic, family and sexual violence sector is based in community sector organisations, however, are identifying them as distinct from the broader community sector who deliver services to community members who may be impacted by domestic, family or sexual violence.

Throughout the Strategy, ‘we’ and ‘our’ are used to reinforce the collective action required by government, the domestic, family and sexual violence sector, broader community sector, institutions and ACT community to achieve the change needed to stop domestic, family and sexual violence.

Further information on key terminology is provided in Appendix A.

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Minister's Foreword



Everyone deserves to be and feel safe in the ACT community. Domestic, family and sexual violence fundamentally undermines this right.

It is unacceptable that approximately 1 in 5 women in the ACT report having experienced physical violence and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 - an alarming statistic with real human costs.

Ending violence against women and children is a national priority shared by the ACT Government, but responsibility extends beyond governments. Every member of our community has a role to play in ending domestic, family and sexual violence.

A combined, whole-of-community approach is essential to achieving our shared vision – an ACT where every person lives free from domestic, family and sexual violence, and where all Canberrans feel safe and are safe in their relationships, their homes, their workplaces and their communities. This requires urgent, coordinated and sustained action, recognising that domestic, family, and sexual violence is preventable, not inevitable.

I am proud to release the *ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy 2026-2036*. It is an important next step in stopping domestic, family and sexual violence in our local community.

This Strategy builds on significant efforts in the ACT to address domestic, family and sexual violence over the past decade. This includes major system reforms, such as responding to the *Glanfield Review (2016) and Listen. Take Action to Prevent, Believe and Heal. Report (2021)*, stronger legal pathways, including through the introduction of affirmative consent laws, increased responses for victim-survivors, including children and young people, and more interventions for people who use violence.

Over this time, our understanding of domestic, family and sexual violence has continued and will continue to evolve. For example, we now recognise coercive control as an inextricable part of domestic and family violence. We also have a stronger understanding of what is needed to respond to sexual violence as a distinct form of harm. We better understand the

role of systems in holding people who use violence accountable. We understand the harm of rigid gender roles and stereotypes and dominant masculinities in driving gender-based violence, and the importance of addressing these drivers to prevent it.

The Strategy brings together the ACT Government's current commitments and work program into a single coordinated, integrated whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach. This includes the domestic, family and sexual violence sector, who are critical in supporting victim-survivors and hold important specialist expertise. Policing and legal services are also vital frontline responders. But violence does not exist in isolation from broader government and non-government human services systems, such as healthcare and social services, or other settings including education and the justice system. The Strategy will coordinate this broader service system to end domestic, family and sexual violence.

Essential to the Strategy is the ACT Government's commitment to work in genuine partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to respond to violence. It is underpinned by the understanding that solutions are best led and delivered by the community, for the community. Self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities is critical to effective prevention and response.

The Strategy is the product of extensive and meaningful consultation with victim-survivors, the domestic, family and sexual violence sector, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, other community organisations and government agencies. I thank everyone for contributing to its development and look forward to continuing to work together to implement it over the years to come.

Together, we can and must take on the challenge to end domestic, family and sexual violence to ensure all Canberrans can always be safe and feel safe in our community. Lives depend on it.

The ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy

Domestic, family and sexual violence is not, and never will be, acceptable in the ACT community. More must be done to prevent violence and ensure that where it does occur, victim-survivors are able to access the help they need, when they need it.

The ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy provides a long-term framework for the system-wide responses and prevention work that is urgently needed to address this whole-of-society issue.

The Strategy reflects and brings together a broad range of evidence on what we know works to end violence. Significant consultation occurred with victim-survivors, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, the domestic, family and sexual violence sector and broader human services organisations to support its development. The ACT Government listened deeply to the insights shared which form a critical part of the evidence base that has shaped the direction and components of the Strategy to guide decisions about future work and investment over the next decade.

The Strategy sets out the ACT's vision for reforming key system domains to address domestic, family and sexual violence over the coming decade. It includes a set of outcomes which are the building blocks to achieve the vision (Figure 1). In addition, best practice principles define how our systems must operate to successfully and responsibly effect change.

Underpinning the Strategy is a commitment to develop a series of phased action plans, including the First Action Plan. This sets out the first phase of initiatives over 2 years, including those that are already underway. Alongside the Strategy and action plans will be a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework which will help us measure our progress, understand what is working well and support us to adapt our responses when needed. The relationship between the different documents that make up the Strategy is shown at Figure 4.

Over time, the Strategy is intended to drive a systemic change so that victim-survivors are supported at all stages of their journey through a coordinated, sustainable, integrated and capable domestic, family and sexual violence system. People using, or at risk of using, violence will be recognised early, held accountable and supported to change their behaviour before violence occurs or escalates. Finally, we will build effective primary prevention infrastructure to drive down rates of violence over time.

Together, the Strategy package gives the ACT Government, victim-survivors, the domestic, family and sexual violence sector, other community sector organisations and the community a clear and common understanding of what we are setting out to achieve between now and 2036. There is a role for every Canberran to play in ending the violence.

Strategy at a glance

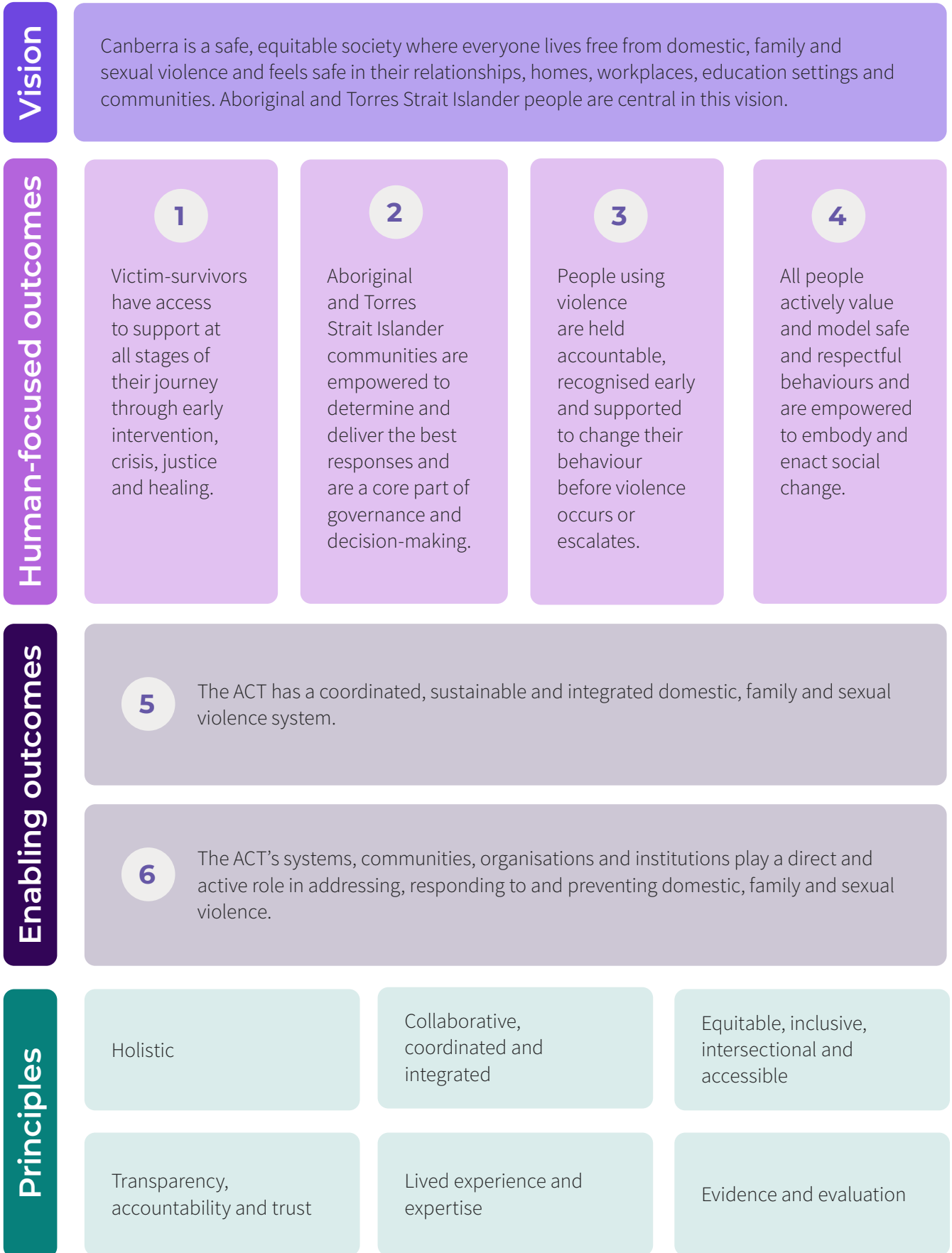


Figure 1

The Strategy in the national and ACT context

The ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy operates within a broader national and Territory-wide policy context, bringing together shared national reform directions and coordinated ACT Government action to drive long-term change.

The Strategy aligns with national plans and strategies that set overarching priorities and outcomes for ending domestic, family and sexual violence, while providing an ACT specific, long-term approach grounded in the needs of the ACT community. It is implemented alongside a range of intersecting ACT Government strategies and plans, ensuring preventing and responding to violence is embedded across government systems. This supports a whole-of-government approach that strengthens coordination, reduces fragmentation and drives meaningful, sustained change in the ACT.

The Strategy will also align closely with the ACT's next plan for women, girls and gender equity, to be launched in early 2027, which will set out the key priorities for promoting gender equity in the ACT, providing greater detail and action toward addressing the gendered drivers of violence.



National

Provide a nationally shared vision and framework for action

[National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032](#)

[Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence 2026-2036](#)

[National Agreement on Closing the Gap \(Target 13\)](#)

[National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030](#)

ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy 2026-2036

Sets the long-term direction, overarching outcomes, and specific actions to achieve our shared vision to prevent and respond to domestic, family and sexual violence in the ACT

ACT strategies:

[ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019 - 2028](#)

[Next Steps for Our Kids 2022-2030](#)

The next plan for women, girls and gender equity

[Capital of Equality Strategy 2024-2033](#)

[ACT Disability Strategy 2024-2033](#)

[ACT Health Services Plan 2022-2030](#)

[ACT Disability Justice Strategy 2019-2029](#)

[ACT Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Regional Plan 2025-2030](#)

[ACT Housing Strategy 2018-2028](#)

[ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022-2026](#)

[Strategy for Gambling Harm Prevention in the ACT](#)

ACT Youth Justice Strategy (in development)

Figure 2

Why we need a dedicated ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy to accelerate action

Domestic, family and sexual violence is a national crisis. It can affect any individual, family or community. At the same time, some groups face compounded risk of harm or specific types of violence, and greater barriers to seeking help. It is also recognised some people are more likely to use violence due to a range of personal or social factors, and that some people and communities are particularly well-placed to play a leadership role in preventing violence.

Domestic, family and sexual violence is gendered and disproportionately affects women, children and other marginalised groups. The overwhelming majority of violence against women in Australia is perpetrated by men.¹ Forms of discrimination, such as racism, colonialism, ageism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia, intersect with the gendered nature of violence, leading to increased risk of experiencing violence, and exposure to specific types of violence, for women, children and people affected by these power dynamics.

Domestic, family and sexual violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is statistically more frequent and severe than that experienced by other women and children in Australia. This violence is perpetrated by men of all cultural backgrounds. Violence affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is also driven by the ongoing effects of colonialism, intergenerational trauma and systemic racism. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are frequently wrongly identified as the person responsible for violence.^{2,3} This can deter victim-survivors from reporting and engaging with police and other service providers due to fears of punitive responses.⁴ For those who may live with disability or are from LGBTIQ+ communities, help-seeking can be even more restricted.

- » **42%** of women – or an estimated 73,200 women – in the ACT reported having experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15.¹⁶
- » Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are **27 times more likely** than other women to be hospitalised due to family violence.¹⁷
- » Adults with disability resulting in severe or profound limitations were about **three times as likely** as adults without disability to have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15.¹⁸
- » **61%** of LGBTIQ+ people have experienced intimate partner violence.¹⁹
- » **28.5%** of children in Australia have experienced child sexual abuse, with girls **twice as likely** to experience abuse as boys.²⁰
- » Women from migrant and refugee backgrounds are particularly at **risk of financial abuse, reproductive coercion and immigration-related violence**.²¹
- » Around **1 in 6** older people living in the community **experienced elder abuse** in the past year.²²

Children and young people are particularly at risk of experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence and its impacts. Whether they witness violent behaviour or are directly subjected to it, they have experienced violence, and require tailored supports to heal and recover. LGBTIQ+ children and young people may experience significant violence within their families of origin.⁵

Domestic, family and sexual violence perpetrated against LGBTIQ+ people often involves identity-based abuse, where people using violence exploit stigma, discrimination, or a person's gender or sexual identity, such as threatening to "out" someone, restricting access to gender-affirming care, or forcing conformity to gender norms.^{6 7}

People with disability are more likely to be victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence than people without disability, may experience unique forms of abuse, such as threats to withdraw care or restrict mobility, and encounter additional barriers to seeking help.⁸ Research shows violence against women and girls with disabilities tends to occur more frequently, over a longer period of time, across a wide range of settings and from a greater range of people, than people without disabilities or men with disabilities.⁹

Women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds may face increased risk of exposure to domestic, family and sexual violence alongside significant barriers to reporting and accessing services. Language barriers, social isolation, community norms, and limited access to trusted networks can be compounded by controlling partners restricting access to information about rights and services. While people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are not a homogenous group, people using violence may exploit factors such as migration status, language barriers, and cultural practices to exert coercive control, including visa-related and dowry-related abuse.¹⁰

Abuse and mistreatment of older people - referred to as elder abuse - occurs in a complex environment of dependency and trust. It is often hidden and goes under-reported.¹¹ The most commonly recognised forms include physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, financial abuse, neglect and cultural or spiritual abuse.¹² This violence can be caused by family members, often involving abuse of parents by adult children, but can also occur in institutional settings such as violence from support workers in residential aged care and health services.¹³

Sexual violence prevention, response, and recovery and healing need to be in focus to ensure we work to address the societal drivers of this in our prevention work, respond appropriately when it does occur, whether or not it occurs in the context of domestic and family violence. Evidence shows women are more likely to experience sexual violence by a man they know than a stranger.¹⁴

The impact of domestic, family and sexual violence on individuals, communities and our society is vast

Domestic, family and sexual violence is a violation of human rights with significant social and economic impacts.

We recognise the impacts of violence for victim-survivors are far-reaching and can be long-term affecting many aspects of their lives, including their immediate physical safety, health outcomes, access to housing and financial security. Experiences of violence for children and young people are a key driver of involvement with the child protection system and can lead to disrupted education, reduced developmental health and wellbeing, and undermining of the relationship with the non-violent parent. The consequences of the violence can last a lifetime, including an increased risk of choosing to use violence or revictimisation in adulthood, which can perpetuate the cycle of violence. Beyond the significant human cost, violence against women and girls is estimated to cost the Australian economy over \$26 billion every year.¹⁵



Domestic, family and sexual violence is driven by gender inequality

The drivers of violence and discrimination in our communities and institutions need to be addressed to prevent future violent relationships or interactions occurring, in the long term.

Eliminating these drivers by promoting gender equality and transforming attitudes and cultures in our community will help us build a society where violence is no longer enabled or allowed.

This includes addressing and challenging rigid gender norms and hierarchical ideas about sex, gender and sexuality.

We need to take a gendered, intersectional approach that includes tailored responses for men and boys, while recognising the experiences of women, gender-diverse and non-binary people, and engaging the broader community in prevention.

Violence is less likely where people grow up and live with gender equality, emotional safety and relationships organised around respect rather than control. Violence-free lives can be supported by: secure income and housing; access to support for stressors including new parenthood, problem gambling and substance misuse; safe and respectful relationships modelled from childhood and connection to positive masculine role models who actively challenge misogyny, disrespect and entitlement. Violence is not inevitable when positive conditions are absent, but factors of inequality, isolation and trauma can mean violence is harder to recognise and disrupt.

The gendered drivers of violence, as outlined by Our Watch²³, are:

- » The condoning of violence against women
- » Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public and private life
- » Rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity
- » Male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control

Reinforcing factors influence the likelihood and frequency of violence occurring in communities or relationships:

- » Condoning of violence in general
- » Experience of, and exposure to, violence
- » Factors that weaken prosocial behaviour, including alcohol and gambling
- » Backlash and resistance to prevention and gender equality

The ACT Government has been working to respond to domestic, family and sexual violence

The ACT Government has a longstanding commitment to addressing domestic, family and sexual violence in the Territory, with over 10 years of significant reviews and policy development. Many initiatives and commitments are already in place or underway, including our commitments under the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032* (National Plan).

Our work is and will continue to be driven by the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, particularly Target 13 to reduce the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children by 50% by 2031. This commitment is reinforced through Target 4 of the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028*.

We are implementing 45 agreed recommendations:

- 21 [Listen. Take Action to Prevent, Believe and Heal. \(2021\)](#)
- 8 [Sexual Assault \(Police\) Review \(2024\)](#)
- 12 [The Long Yarn \(2024\)](#)
- 4 [ACT Auditor-General's Performance Audit Report – Safer Families Levy \(2024\)](#)

We are responding to other major reports, including:

- ✓ [Glanfield Review \(2016\)](#)
- ✓ [ACT Domestic Violence Service System Final Gap Analysis Report \(2016\)](#)
- ✓ Domestic and Family Violence Review Biennial Report ([2023](#) and [2025](#))
- ✓ [Innovative Perpetrator Responses in the ACT – Scoping Study \(2024\)](#)

The Government has been working in partnership with the breadth of non-government workforces to prevent and respond to domestic, family and sexual violence response. These workforces have shown unwavering dedication and advocacy to drive meaningful, positive systemic change while providing effective services every day. This includes specialist domestic, family and sexual violence organisations, other organisations providing a domestic, family and sexual violence service or program as well as broader community sector organisations that are also touchpoints for people impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence.

We are working with evidence of what works, and what you've told us we need to do to end domestic, family and sexual violence

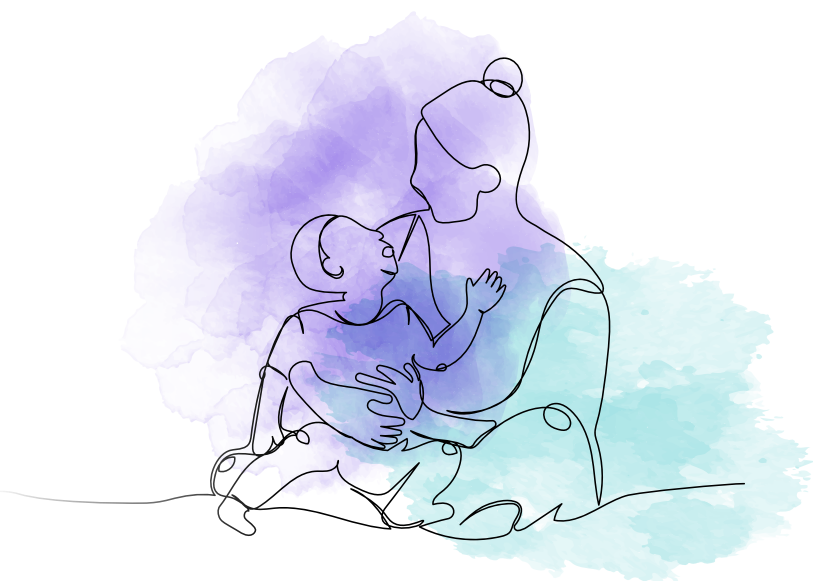
What is needed to strengthen effective services in the broader system:

- ✓ Investment in all domains of the National Plan
- ✓ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination
- ✓ Recognising children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right
- ✓ Including children and young people in prevention
- ✓ Creating coordinated and integrated systems
- ✓ Engaging the broader community
- ✓ Working with men and boys
- ✓ Building the evidence base for men's behaviour change programs

Reports and reviews into the ACT's domestic, family and sexual violence system inform both current and future work. For example, the ACT Domestic and Family Violence Review Biennial Reports in 2023 and 2025 documented the prevalence and significance of coercive control, identifying this form of violence in almost all deaths examined. The reports also emphasised the importance of recognising victim resistive behaviours and responding to patterns of violence, rather than focusing on single incidents. These reports, combined with contemporary research, lived experience, lessons from other jurisdictions, recent national reviews, and in-depth consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, guide what needs to be done to end domestic, family and sexual violence.

We operate within a multi-layered, interconnected domestic, family and sexual violence system that influences and supports individuals and communities. Applying a systems lens is vital to identify opportunities for holistic reform, highlight gaps or unintended consequences, and pinpoint leverage points to support meaningful change.

There is a growing national consensus, supported by ACT evidence, on what is needed for an effective domestic, family and sexual violence system. Recent reports and reviews such as the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission Yearly Report (2025) and the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches (2024) emphasise the importance of investing across the continuum of domestic, family and sexual violence responses from primary prevention through to longer term healing and recovery.²⁴



Prevention	Early intervention	Response	Recovery and healing
Stopping violence before it starts by addressing the underlying drivers among the whole community	Stopping violence escalating and preventing it from reoccurring by identifying and supporting people early	Efforts and programs that address existing violence, including services such as counselling, financial, housing, homelessness or medical assistance as well as justice responses	Breaking cycles of violence and reducing the risk of re-traumatisation through supports to recover and heal from trauma and the physical, mental, emotional and economic impacts of violence

This continuum is well-established, as highlighted in ACT reports and reviews, and aligns with other common features of an effective domestic, family and sexual violence system. While we define prevention as stopping violence before it starts, it is important to acknowledge that every intervention across the continuum has a prevention effect, and is a chance to disrupt future cycles of violence. We need to focus on how to better integrate this into the broader service system as people touch the system at many points and should be supported to navigate what will work for them and their families.



Victim Survivor Voices Strategy Consultation

To centre lived experience, Women's Health Matters conducted a separate consultation with adult victim-survivors across the ACT as part of the peer-led, Victim Survivors Voices pilot program.

Participants shared their experiences and perspectives on the Strategy's vision, goals, and priorities, published in a [consultation report](#) on the Strategy.

What we heard is important from **victim-survivors**:

- ✓ Accountability
- ✓ Lived experience advice
- ✓ Intersectionality
- ✓ Trauma-informed approaches
- ✓ Justice system reform

Strategy Consultation

We worked with a consultant to lead a comprehensive engagement process with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, the domestic, family and sexual violence sector, broader human services organisations and relevant government agencies to inform our work on the Strategy.

The consultation involved several phases, including on the long-term Strategy's vision, actions for the first Action Plan, and feedback on a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The consultation delivered two [Listening Reports](#) on the Strategy vision, principles and priorities, and on actions for inclusion in the First Action Plan. Through this process, we have heard further evidence about priorities to end violence in the ACT.

What we heard is important from **domestic, family and sexual violence services, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and government stakeholders**:

- ✓ Cultural safety and responsiveness in mainstream services
- ✓ Responding to sexual violence in its own right
- ✓ Sector sustainability
- ✓ Building our prevention infrastructure
- ✓ Strengthen our system coordination and governance
- ✓ Invest in data collection to monitor and evaluate our efforts

The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy is the next step in our response

Our shared vision sets out a long-term goal - 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.

Our principles are the underlying requirements, or means, to work towards the overarching vision. They describe the qualities that will be embodied by a best-practice domestic, family and sexual violence system and which must be reflected in all our responses if they are to effect positive change.

Our outcomes set out the core components required to realise the Strategy's vision, showing how each outcome contributes to the overall impact the Strategy seeks to achieve.

The first 4 outcomes are human-focused, reflecting a positive, constructive experience for individuals and an informed, engaged and proactively preventative community. They represent the most direct and meaningful changes the Strategy seeks to deliver and sit at the centre of its impact logic, expressing the long-term changes required to break the cycle of harm and build a community that prevents violence before it occurs.

Domestic, family and sexual violence responses are shaped by a broad and interconnected service system. This system extends beyond specialist responses and includes wider human services such as health and mental health, housing, early childhood settings, education, police, courts and corrective services, through to community settings like workplaces, faith groups and sporting clubs. Together, these parts form the ecosystem that identifies risk, supports safety and recovery, promotes perpetrator accountability, shifts social norms and drives prevention.

Outcomes 5 and 6 describe system-level capabilities required to ensure our systems are correctly positioned and are operating effectively to support and enable positive impacts at both the individual and societal level. These enabling outcomes create the condition for integrated, timely, and effective responses and are essential to sustaining the long-term benefits of systemic reform.

Our principles provide high-level guidance on how we approach our work to address domestic, family and sexual violence, and will underpin how we deliver outcomes

Holistic

It is not enough to respond to victim-survivors in crisis. A holistic approach means building our capacity and capability across all 4 domains of the National Plan, including primary prevention to stop violence before it starts, early intervention before violence escalates to crisis, trauma-informed responses at the times when crisis is unavoidable, and support remaining engaged throughout the years-long journey of recovery healing.

Focusing on all 4 domains means recognising that the needs of victim-survivors are diverse, sitting across human, justice and education services. These needs will change over time as victim-survivors move through the system and as their experience evolves towards recovery and healing.

Collaborative, coordinated and integrated

Creating meaningful change requires a whole-of-system approach because violence crosses all societal systems. These systems must be supported to work safely and sustainably together to ensure services are trauma informed and ensure harm is not experienced by people interacting with these systems. Shared direction and objectives break down barriers to access for victim-survivors and promote cohesive, responsive care.

A well-coordinated, interconnected and collaborative system will mean roles and responsibilities are clear, and where every access point can support victim-survivors and intervene with people choosing to use violence to promote healing and end harm.

Equitable, inclusive, intersectional and accessible

Domestic, family and sexual violence can impact victim-survivors differently, particularly when it intersects with other forms of marginalisation, disadvantage and discrimination. Race, culture, class, sexuality, gender identity, disability, visa status among other characteristics and experiences interact to shape individual experiences of violence and systemic responses.

Victim-survivors and people who use violence of all abilities, ages, genders, bodies, sexualities, relationships, faiths and cultures must be able to access services that are safe, timely and responsive. Services must recognise and respond to people's needs, including through culturally safe and trauma-informed responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Transparency, accountability and trust

Transparency means that key information and decisions are communicated openly and honestly. Accountability is about accepting responsibility. A foundation of trust and respect is essential to achieving meaningful, system-wide change to end domestic, family and sexual violence.

Transparency, accountability and trust are crucial across all levels of the domestic, family and sexual violence system, from interactions of victim-survivors with the justice system, between service providers, and between community services and government. Victim-survivors must be able to trust the systems available to support them, and government and non-government stakeholders must be able to transparently share information, hold shared standards, and engage in open dialogue and collaboration.

Lived experience and expertise

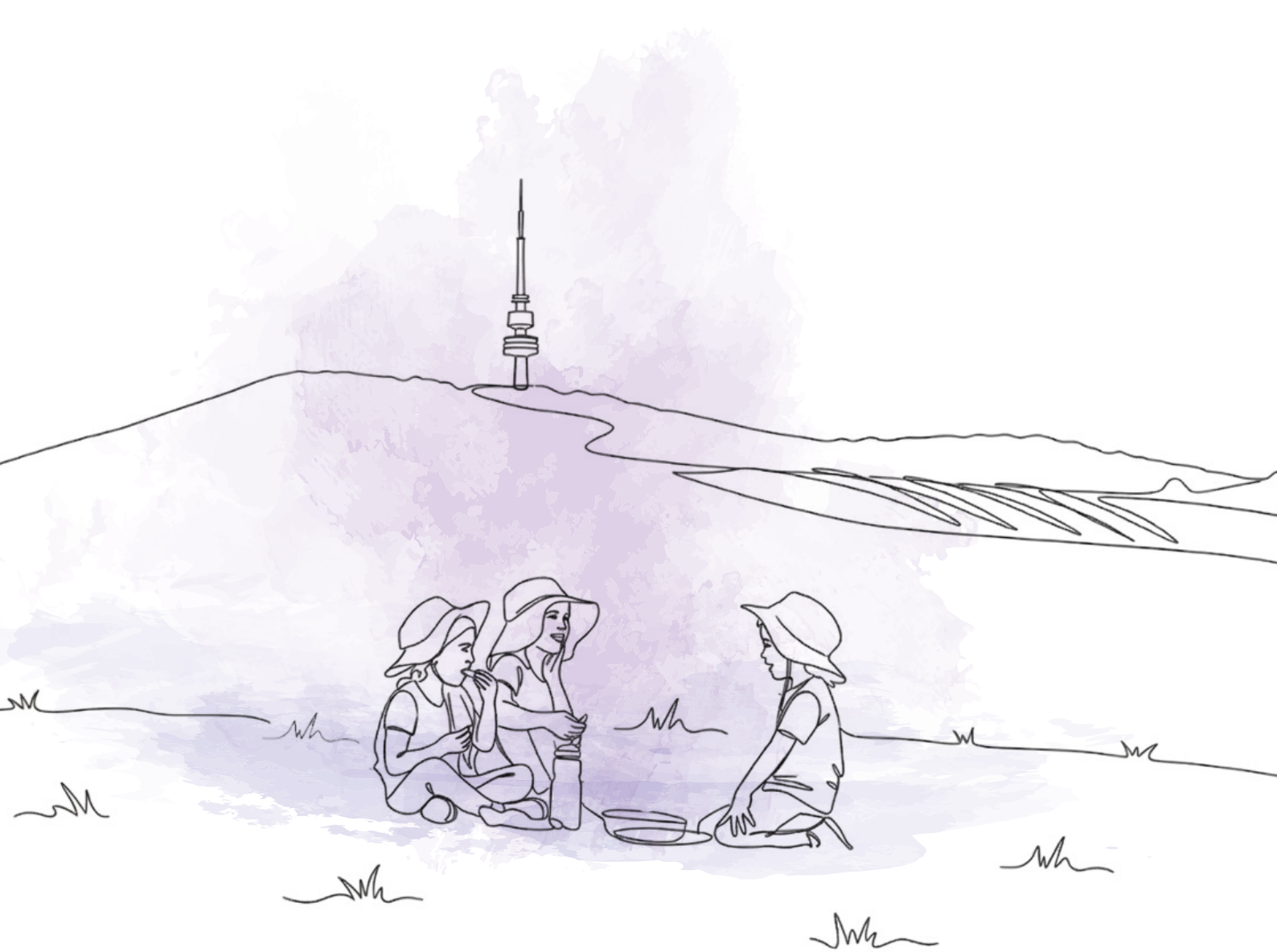
Centring the expertise of people with lived and living experience of domestic, family and sexual violence is essential to designing responses that genuinely meet the needs of victim-survivors and effectively respond to people who use violence. The real world knowledge and insights of people who have experienced violence illuminate the complexities and barriers that shape how victim-survivors navigate systems.

People with lived experience are influential partners throughout the process of designing, developing and implementing policies and programs.

Evidence and evaluation

Robust evidence builds our understanding of what works, implement impactful interventions, and identify where our approaches may need adjusting.

The system utilises a broad evidence base to continually improve knowledge about what works to address perpetration and victimisation, support healing and recovery, and prevent violence from occurring in the first place. In doing so, it draws on a diverse knowledge base including lived experience, practice expertise, data and academic research and programmatic evaluations.



Our outcomes describe what we are aiming to achieve and are the areas where we will focus our efforts under the Strategy

They have been identified through consultation, previous reviews and existing evidence as the components of a strong domestic, family and sexual violence system and illustrate the building blocks that will help us achieve our vision.

Outcome 1

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

Appropriate responses from services and support circles are critical to validating a victim-survivor's experience and preventing further harm. This outcome focuses on ensuring victim-survivors can access the right supports at the time violence has occurred and throughout the non-linear process of healing and recovering, regardless of where they enter the system.

Victim-survivors are most meaningfully supported by responses that are trauma-informed, culturally safe, and tailored for their unique selves and experiences. Effective support is accessible, equitable and inclusive of age, culture, identity, experience and ability. This includes recognising the experiences, voices and needs of children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right. Support also responds to the specific drivers, complexities and harms of sexual violence.

Responses that consistently prioritise safety, choice and dignity remove barriers, reduce harm and enable victim-survivors to understand their options and make informed decisions about their wellbeing and next steps. When the right supports are in place, there are better individual and system outcomes, future violence is prevented and revictimisation is reduced as victim-survivors are supported to recover and heal.

This means:

- » **Victim-survivors are able to access cohort-specific programs** which are inclusive, culturally-safe and responsive to their diverse needs. They have genuine choice in how they access and receive support throughout their journey.

- » **Justice responses for victim-survivors** validate their experience, provide genuine protection and meaningful accountability for the perpetrator. They are delivered in a victim-survivor-centred way, offering agency and choice throughout the process.

- » **Victim-survivors of sexual violence** can safely disclose their experiences and cultural background, access specialised trauma counselling to support their healing and be referred to appropriate and timely support. They can access justice without re-traumatisation, trusting all arms of the justice system, including police, courts, community legal services, victim support services and corrections, to provide responses that are aware of and relevant to sexual violence.

- » **Children and young people** are seen and supported as victim-survivors in their own right, recognising the profound harm caused by violence. They can access comprehensive support and programs which extend to working with protective parents and carers as partners in children and young people's healing, while centring the child or young person's individual agency, voice and choice.

- » **Victim-survivors and their intersecting needs** are understood and addressed holistically to enable recovery and healing over the long-term in areas such as housing, workforce participation and healthcare.

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.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have the right, and are best placed, to determine and lead their own responses to family, domestic and sexual violence. This outcome focuses on embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the solutions that break cycles of harm, ensuring their voices, leadership and lived experience are central to shaping responses that are respectful, empowering, culturally safe and trauma-informed.

Self-determined responses deliver stronger outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children and families. To achieve this, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership must be a part of governance and decision-making at all levels for this to occur.

Government, mainstream organisations and institutions also have a shared responsibility to be culturally safe, responsive and accountable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This includes by addressing the ongoing impacts of colonisation and supporting the growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led solutions.

This means:

- » **Voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people** are listened to and integral in decision-making, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors and their experiences are heard and included in policy design. Cultural safety is strengthened across the domestic, family and sexual violence system by actively engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and expertise.

- » **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities** are supported through community-driven approaches. To do this, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations are sustainably funded through agreements that foster true self-determination and data sovereignty.

- » **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors** have genuine options about where and how they receive support. This extends to mainstream services providing culturally safe and responsive services to support a 'no wrong door' approach to service provision.

- » **Aboriginal men and boys** are supported through early intervention initiatives and empowered to play an important role in preventing violence and promoting healing to foster safe and resilient families.

Outcome 3

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

Victim-survivors are never responsible for the violence they are subjected to. Using violence is a choice and systems and services responding to domestic, family and sexual violence must ensure responses focus on this choice as the issue.

Ending domestic, family and sexual violence is achieved through strengthened responses to people who use violence. This outcome focuses on the systems and services holding people who use violence accountable while supporting them to change their behaviour and harmful attitudes.

Accountability will be reinforced by the systems that people who use violence encounter, with social and institutional consequences that reflect the severity of the harm caused. Robust legal system responses appropriately address violence and recognise the harm inflicted on victim-survivors. Every system touchpoint plays a role in preventing recurrence by keeping people who use violence in view, preventing manipulation of systems and responding immediately to continued or escalating violence.

By identifying and intervening early with the right response at the right time, we can address the drivers and risk factors associated with a person's use of violence. This includes through identification of trajectories including where there is a high risk of serious harm or lethality. The aim is to reduce the incidence and impacts of harm, and prevent future violence. Interventions must be evidence based and holistic, recognising the intersectional experience of the people involved, while addressing issues including mental ill health, problematic alcohol and other drug use and trauma.

When working with people who use violence, the people impacted by the violence must be kept safe and supported. People impacted by violence should be able to rely on services to effectively engage the person who uses violence and identify changes to the risk they pose with appropriate supports.

This means:

- » **The safety of people impacted by violence** is the core priority of all interventions. People impacted by the person's use of violence can rely on services to monitor and respond to any changes in risk, including through risk assessment and safety planning.

- » **People who use violence** face appropriate justice and legal consequences that match the severity of harm caused by their behaviour. The justice system responds effectively if mandatory actions and sanctions are not complied with.

- » **People being supported to change their behaviour** can access tailored responses that help them understand the impacts of their actions, take accountability for their behaviour and stop using violence.

- » **Systems and services** work together to intervene effectively with people who use violence to stop the violence in the short and long term.

Outcome 4

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

Everyone has a role to play in preventing violence. This outcome focuses on engaging with the broader community to prevent violence by addressing its underlying drivers.

Prevention is most effective when every member of the community is leveraged to build attitudes, provide support and take action to reject violence. We will all promote gender equality, challenge gender norms and stereotypes, embody safe and respectful behaviour and respond to violence we witness, when it is safe to do so. All members of our community will be aware of and reject violence, creating and contributing to environments based on respect, gender equality, non-discrimination and where violence is not condoned or supported. This includes the promotion of healthy masculinities to counter the influence of online misogyny.

Community education is a powerful and effective approach that supports positive attitudes, behaviours, norms and structures, helping to create a culture where everyone can thrive and be themselves. From childhood, we will develop the essential social and emotional skills to foster healthy, safe and equal relationships, helping to prevent future violence.

This means:

- » **Community members** are empowered to lead their own, local initiatives to prevent violence and step into roles as active bystanders, refusing to accept or condone violence in their own lives or for those around them. They recognise red flags and know how to respond safely and appropriately, supporting victim-survivors to connect with services, and challenging harmful behaviours and attitudes.
- » **Children and young people** are engaged as a critical cohort for prevention and kept safe from exposure to harmful content and its impacts. They are taught essential social and emotional skills to foster healthy, safe and equal relationships, helping to prevent future violence.
- » **Men and boys** are supported to develop healthy masculinities, including building positive relationships with themselves and others, engaging across diverse groups and settings, and recognising the diversity of masculinities and the different ways men can define their role in society.
- » **People** are identified early and supported with effective interventions to promote emotional awareness and management, and foster healthy relationship attitudes and beliefs.

Outcome 5

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

The right system foundations will allow all services and practitioners to operate as part of a cohesive, sustainable, and holistic system response to violence. This outcome is focused on strengthening the settings and structures required for a best practice domestic, family and sexual violence system that is accessible for victim-survivors and provides clear pathways into and across the services they need. Further, the system responds effectively to people who use violence by keeping them in view and reinforcing accountability.

Our system includes the domestic, family and sexual violence sector, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, community sector and our wider human services such as health, mental health and housing, early childhood settings, education, police, legal services, courts and corrective services. A well-resourced and trained investigative and enforcement capability for ACT Policing is critical to achieving this outcome. Evidence shows that for a whole-of-system approach, coordination, integration and the ability to work beyond silos are essential. Working together in partnership across this system, and placing victim-survivors and their choices at the centre will support safety, healing and meaningful responses.

The roles and responsibilities across the domestic, family and sexual violence system are known and understood to ensure victim-survivors feel confident they will be believed, responded to, supported and protected when they speak up against and report violence. An integrated system also requires ongoing work to achieve data linkages across justice and related areas.

This means:

- » **The domestic, family and sexual violence sector including Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations** are appropriately resourced to meet demand and long-term funding arrangements are used where appropriate.

- » **Government human services agencies** coordinate effectively within and between their areas to provide a holistic response that recognises and activates all touchpoints for victim-survivors and people who use violence.

- » **Shared tools and frameworks** clearly define roles and responsibilities across the domestic, family and sexual violence system and facilitate and guide collaboration, enabling the system to respond flexibly and address emerging challenges.

- » **Governance structures** provide oversight and establish pathways for partnership across the system, ensuring domestic, family and sexual violence responses are whole-of-government and whole-of-system.

- » **Robust evaluation processes** are evidence-based and draw from comprehensive sources of data to guide continued investment.

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.

Communities, organisations and institutions have a powerful role to play in addressing violence. This outcome is focused on activating the capacity and capability of people, organisations and institutions in the ACT to prevent and respond to domestic, family and sexual violence.

Our organisations, institutions and the people within them must be strengthened and empowered to prevent and respond to domestic, family and sexual violence in their spheres of influence. The web of human services, justice services and policing, and prevention settings such as sports clubs, faith groups, peer-led organisations and workplaces provides essential touchpoints for leverage in active prevention.

All people working across these touchpoints must be enabled using shared frameworks and standards to recognise, respond and refer within and across their domains of influence. When we get this cultural shift right, we will systemically embed gender equality and a zero tolerance approach to violence in the pillars that support our community.

This means:

- » **Communities, organisations and institutions** in the ACT are aware of and actively playing their critical role in preventing and addressing domestic, family and sexual violence. They are empowered to develop and engage embedded violence prevention mechanisms within and between all areas where we live, work and play.

- » **All institutions** understand the structural and gendered drivers of domestic, family and sexual violence and continuously build awareness. They align their actions with best practice responses for victim-survivors and are committed to holding people who use violence accountable for their behaviour.

- » **Employers** take responsibility for protecting their employees from harm in the workplace and initiate and enforce internal processes to prevent violence. Employees are supported to report harmful behaviour when they see it, without fear of consequences.

- » **More settings become activated** as part of building the ACT's prevention infrastructure to strengthen and expand prevention efforts that promote social cohesion and stop violence before it starts.

How we will deliver action



Figure 3

We will monitor and evaluate the Strategy at both a systems-level and program-level

A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will be used to establish a consistent approach to how the ACT Government monitors, reports and evaluates reforms and initiatives to address domestic, family and sexual violence, including those funded by the Safer Families Levy.

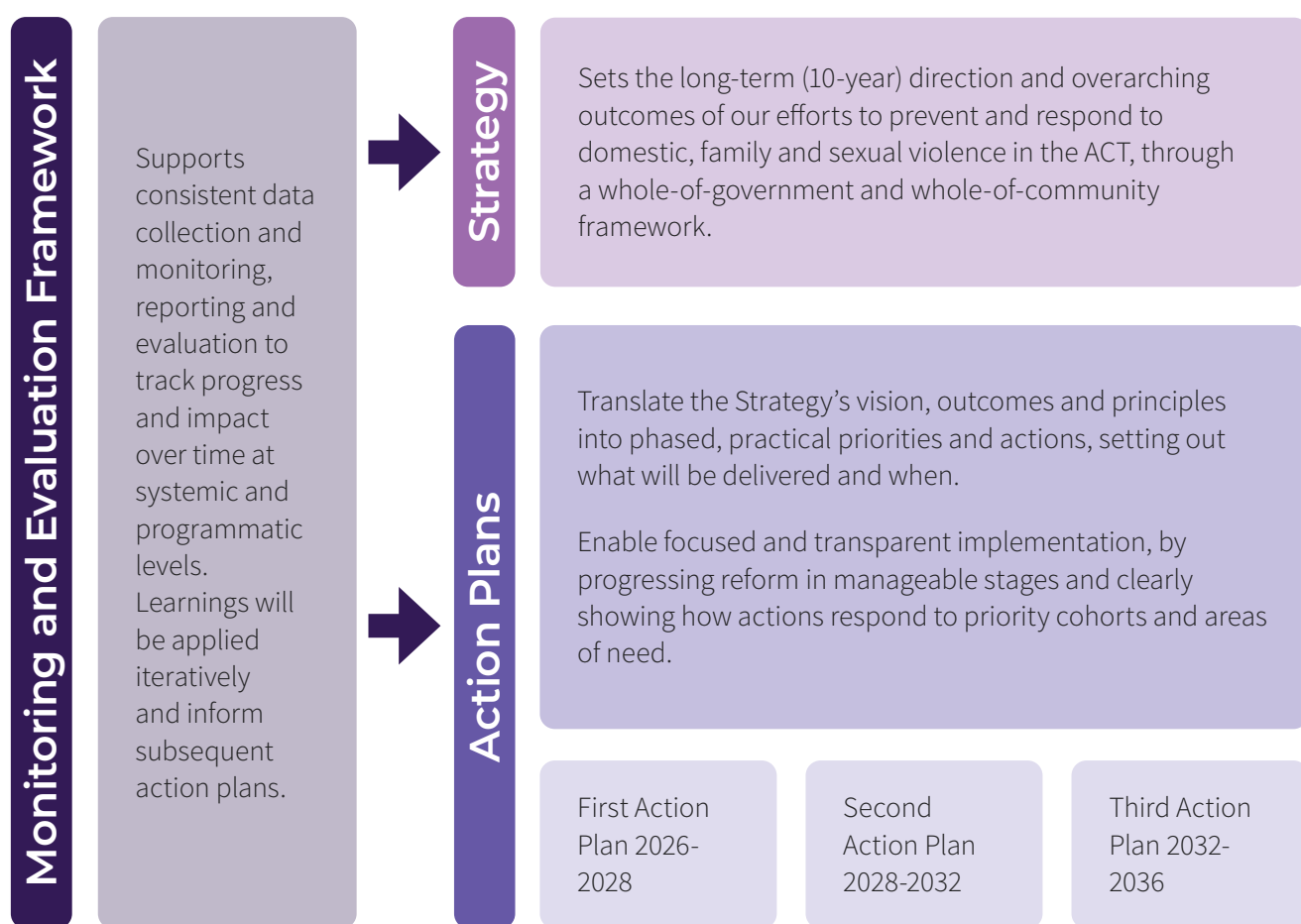
Importantly, this will ensure that the progress and impact of the Strategy and supporting Action Plans are effectively measured. It will also ensure that meaningful data and insights are captured to inform future investment decisions in the ACT, and adaptations in our approach, where and when they are needed.

Overall, the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will track the progress and impact of the different elements of the domestic, family and sexual violence system that collectively make up an effective service system.

The domestic, family and sexual violence system is strengthened by effective governance to drive coordinated, sustainable reforms stemming from the Strategy. Strong, transparent governance arrangements are being developed for the ACT that bring together government, the domestic, family and sexual violence sector, and people with lived experience to share priorities, monitor progress and ensure accountability. With the right governance in place, the system can adapt to emerging needs and maintain momentum towards long-term, systemic change.

Overview of the ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy reform package

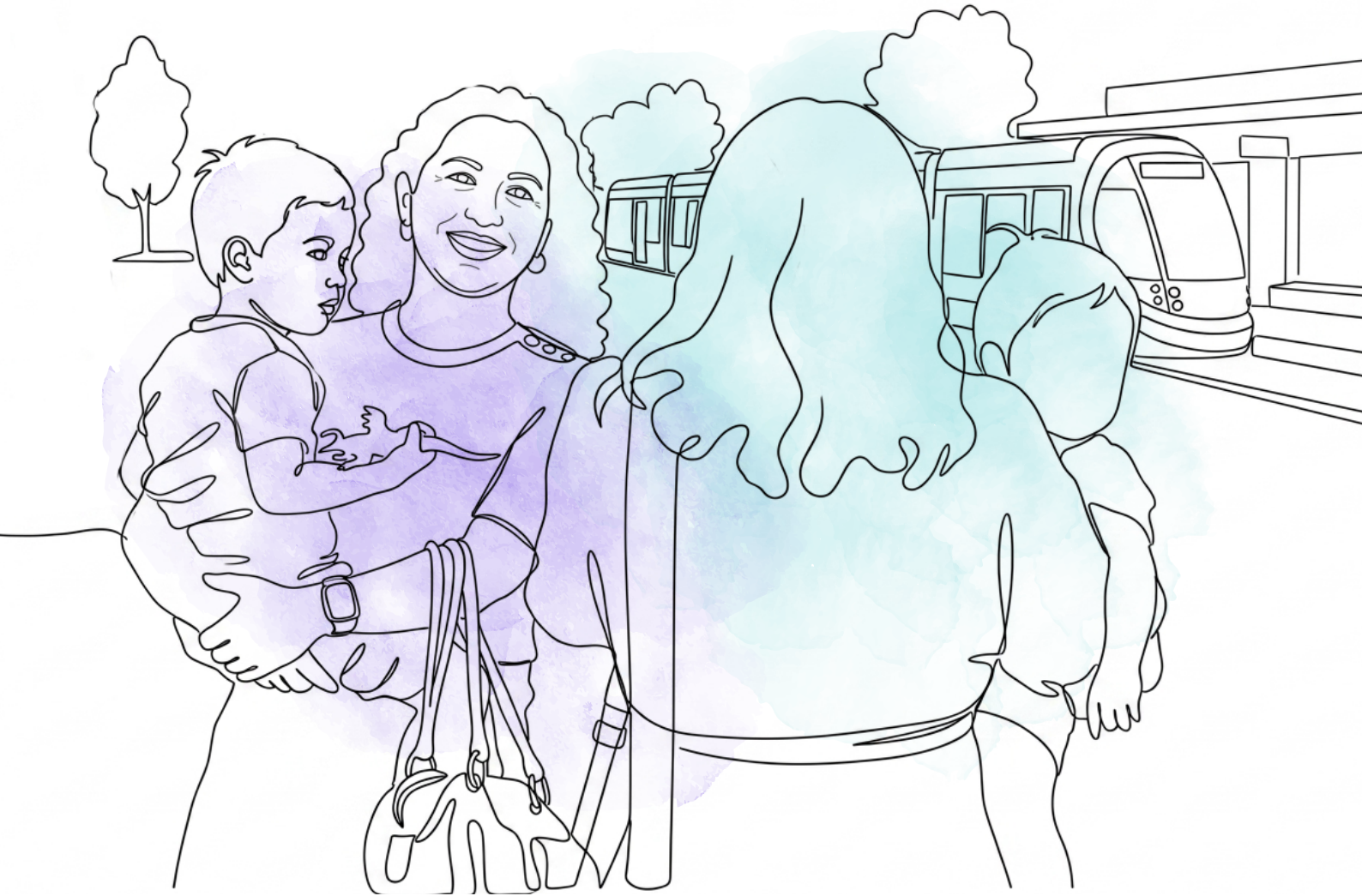
The reform package is made up of several inter-related documents that together set the long-term direction, guide action and track progress in preventing and responding to domestic, family and sexual violence in the ACT.



Governance

Refreshed governance arrangements to support effective coordination, partnership and oversight, including clear pathways for domestic, family and sexual violence sector input, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and advice, whole-of-government accountability and strengthened whole-of-system governance.

Figure 4



Appendix A: Language Guide

Term	Definition
Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation	<p>Under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisation delivers services, including land and resource management, which build the strength and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and peoples and is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> incorporated under relevant legislation and not-for-profit controlled and operated by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples connected to the community, or communities, in which they deliver the services governed by a majority Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander governing body.²⁵
Affirmative consent laws	<p>In the ACT, the law states that all parties in all sexual interactions need to ask for consent and give consent, every time. It says that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consent is not to be presumed – you can't assume someone consents just because they aren't actively saying no. People have a right to choose not to participate in sexual activity. Consensual sexual activity involves ongoing communication and making decisions together.²⁶
Coercive control	<p>Coercive control involves patterns of abusive behaviours over time in a way that creates fear and denies liberty and autonomy. Coercive control is almost always an underpinning dynamic of family and domestic violence. People who use coercive control can use many different types of abusive behaviours to exert power and dominance. It may be physical or non-physical behaviours, or a combination or both.²⁷</p>
Community sector	<p>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).</p> <p>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.</p>
Cultural safety	<p>Cultural safety is about overcoming the power imbalances of places, people and policies that occur between the majority non-Indigenous position and the minority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person so that there is no assault, challenge or denial of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person's identity, who they are and what they need. Cultural safety is met through actions from the majority position that recognise, respect, and nurture the unique cultural identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Only the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person who is recipient of a service or interaction can determine whether it is culturally-safe.²⁸</p>

Term	Definition
Domestic and family violence	<p>Domestic and family violence is a pattern of abuse used to incite fear in victims. It can involve physical, sexual, emotional, psychological or economic abuse, as well as threatening behaviour, coercion or coercive behaviour that controls or dominates a family member, damaging property, harming an animal, stalking, deprivation of liberty, harmful use of technology or any behaviour that exposes a child to these forms of violence.</p> <p>The term ‘domestic violence’, which is a form of ‘family violence’, is often used to refer to violence against an intimate partner or ex-partner, including dating. ‘Family violence’ is a broader term that includes violence by parents and guardians against children, between other family members and in family-like settings. This includes for example elder abuse and violence occurring in a relationship between a person with disability and their carer. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, it includes relationships in line with traditions and customs.^{29 30}</p>
Domestic, family and sexual violence	<p>The Strategy uses the umbrella term ‘domestic, family and sexual violence’, however this is referred to as ‘family, domestic and sexual violence’ for certain contexts such as violence impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Family violence is the preferred term of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as it covers the extended families, kinship networks and community relationships in which violence can occur.³¹</p>
Domestic, family and sexual violence sector	<p>The domestic, family and sexual violence sector holds specialist expertise and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>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.</p>
Domestic, family and sexual violence system	<p>Refers to the full range of services, organisations, institutions, individuals, legislation and policy settings that people impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence may encounter. It includes the domestic, family and sexual violence sector; other community sector organisations; broader human services such as health, mental health, alcohol and other drugs, housing, family and youth, disability, aged care; policing, legal and justice responses; and education. The system also encompasses societal networks such as friends and families, peers, workplaces, faith groups, community organisations and groups which shape awareness, attitudes and help-seeking. Together, these elements function as a multi-layered, interconnected and mutually reinforcing system that supports prevention, early intervention, crisis interventions, and recovery and healing.</p>

Term	Definition
Elder abuse	Elder abuse is when someone tries to control or harm an older person. The abuser is usually someone the older person knows and trusts, such as a family member or carer. Examples include: physically or sexually assaulting the older person; physically restraining the older person and limiting their ability to move around; preventing the older person from leaving the house or having contact with others; neglecting to provide basic necessities including food and medical care; using the older person's money or property without their permission; forcing or pressuring the older person to alter documents such as a will.
Financial abuse	Financial abuse is when someone controls or misuses a person's money. Examples include: forcing or pressuring a person to get a credit card or take out a loan against their wishes; using a person's name to get a credit card or take out a loan, without their knowledge; controlling what a person can spend their money on; controlling a person's access to their own money, such as their wages or salary; using a person's money without their permission; selling a person's property without their permission; preventing a person from getting a job and earning money; demanding money or taking possessions.
Gendered drivers of violence	The underlying causes that are required to create the necessary conditions in which violence against women, children and LGBTIQ+ people occurs. They relate to the particular structures, norms and practices arising from gender inequality in public and private life, but which must always be considered in the context of other forms of social discrimination and disadvantage. ³²
Gender equality	Involves equality of opportunity and equality of results. It includes both the redistribution of resources and responsibilities between men and women and the transformation of the underlying causes and structures of gender inequality to achieve substantive equality. ³³
Gender inequality	A social condition characterised by unequal value afforded to men and women and an unequal distribution of power, resources and opportunity between them. It is the direct result of patriarchal systems that privilege the needs, interests and behaviours of men over women, and that permeate many aspects of Australian society and institutions. ³⁴
Gender norms	The dominant beliefs and rules of conduct that are determined by a society or social group in relation to the types of roles, interests, behaviours and contributions expected from girls and boys, men and women. Norms are not neutral in their effect, but rather create and maintain unequal relations of power. ³⁵
Immigration-related violence	Immigration-related violence refers to the use of a person's immigration status to control or coerce them including through threats, intimidation or deliberate misinformation. This can include threats of deportation (often without their children), visa cancellation and the withholding of immigration documents. ³⁶

Term	Definition
Intergenerational trauma	A form of historical trauma transmitted across generations. Survivors of the initial experience who have not healed may pass on their trauma to further generations. In Australia, intergenerational trauma particularly affects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, especially the children, grandchildren and future generations of the Stolen Generations. ^{37 38}
Intersectionality	Intersectionality recognises that people’s lives are shaped by their identities, relationships and social factors. These combine to create intersecting forms of privilege and oppression depending on a person’s context and existing power structures such as patriarchy, ableism, colonialism, imperialism, homophobia and racism. ^{39 40}
People who use violence	Refers to the individual who uses domestic, family and sexual violence to cause harm to another. People who use violence are sometimes referred to as ‘perpetrators’. The term perpetrator refers to a person who commits an illegal, criminal or harmful act, including domestic, family or sexual violence. The term ‘people who use violence’ focuses on violence as a behaviour, rather than part of a person’s identity.
Primary prevention	Whole-of-population initiatives that address the primary (‘first’ or ‘underlying’) drivers of violence against women. ⁴¹
Primary prevention infrastructure	Refers to the coordinated and mutually reinforcing set of systems, leadership, resources and mechanisms required to enable sustained, population-level action to prevent domestic, family and sexual violence by addressing its underlying drivers.
Sexual violence	Sexual violence refers to sexual activity that happens where consent is not freely given or obtained, is withdrawn or the person is unable to consent due to their age or other factors. It occurs any time a person is forced, coerced or manipulated into any sexual activity. Such activity can be sexualised touching, sexual abuse, sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment and intimidation and forced or coerced watching or engaging in pornography. Sexual violence can be non-physical and include unwanted sexualised comments, intrusive sexualised questions or harassment of a sexual nature. Forms of modern slavery, such as forced marriage, servitude or trafficking in persons may involve sexual violence. ⁴² Sexual violence can also involve technology-facilitated or image-based abuse. ⁴³
Specialist domestic, family and sexual violence organisations	Organisations whose sole or primary focus is delivering domestic, family or sexual violence services, working with victim-survivors or people who use violence. Specialist domestic, family and sexual violence organisations hold expertise in providing targeted services to address domestic, family and sexual violence and form a critical part of the domestic, family and sexual violence sector.

Term	Definition
Systems abuse	Refers to the manipulation of legal and other systems by perpetrators of family violence, done so in order to exert control over, threaten and harass a current or former partner. ⁴⁴ Perpetrators of domestic and family violence who seek to control the victim before, during or after separation may make multiple applications and complaints in multiple systems (for example the courts, Child Support Agency, Centrelink, child protection) in relation to a protection order, breach, parenting, divorce, property, child and welfare support and other matters with the intention of interrupting, deferring, prolonging or dismissing judicial and administrative processes, which may result in depleting the victim's financial resources and emotional well-being, and adversely impacting the victim's capacity to maintain employment or to care for children. ⁴⁵
Trauma-informed	Trauma-informed care and practice recognises the prevalence of trauma and its impacts on the emotional, psychological and social well-being of people and communities. Trauma-informed practice means integrating an understanding of past and current experiences of violence and trauma in all aspects of service delivery. The goal of trauma-informed systems is to avoid re-traumatising individuals and support safety, choice and control to promote healing. ⁴⁶
Victim-survivors	People who have experienced domestic, family or sexual violence. This term is understood to acknowledge the strength and resilience shown by people who have experienced or are currently living with violence. People who have experienced violence have different preferences about how they would like to be identified and may choose to use 'victim' or 'survivor' separately, or another term altogether. Some people prefer to use 'people who experience, or are at risk of experiencing, violence'. ⁴⁷

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