

Safer Families Levy Principles

1. Introduction to the Safer Families Levy Principles

The Safer Families Levy was originally introduced on 1 July 2016 to provide community support and to raise awareness of domestic and family violence in the ACT community. The Safer Families Levy provides a partial offset to the ACT Government's broader investment to address domestic, family and sexual violence.

From 2021-22, the ACT Government increased the Safer Families Levy by \$5 per year over four years, bringing the Levy to \$50 per household in 2024-25. The ACT Government will be increasing the Levy to \$60 in 2025-26, and then to \$70 in 2026-27. The Levy is now expected to raise around \$49.401 million over the next 4 years to 2027-28. This increase will allow the ACT Government to enhance responses to domestic and family violence and expand funding for critical frontline service delivery. It enables the community to contribute in a tangible way to our collective efforts to end domestic and family violence.

Importantly, funding for all non-frontline ACT Government positions was moved out of the Levy in the 2024-25 Budget. This meets the Government's commitment that all Safer Families Levy funding will be directed to frontline services, who provide direct support to the ACT community.

The ACT Auditor-General's Performance Audit Report of the Safer Families Levy recommended developing principles for funding initiatives through the Levy. The principles below are intended to guide decision making of Levy expenditure from the 2025-26 financial year.

2. Key Principles

| | Principle | Explanation |
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| 1 | The purpose of the Levy is to prevent, reduce and respond to all forms of domestic, family and sexual violence. | <p>The scope of the Levy addresses the broad spectrum of domestic, family and sexual violence across all stages, namely prevention, early intervention, response and recovery.</p> <p>Principle 1 is the primary principle and all funded initiatives must align with this Principle to ensure the Levy is focused solely on addressing domestic, family and sexual violence.</p> |
| 2 | The Levy provides only a partial offset to the funding required for domestic, family | <p>The Levy is not the only source of funding required to meet the demand for addressing domestic, family and sexual violence across the services system.</p> |

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| | and sexual violence prevention, responses and reform. | The Levy is a partial offset to the broader investment in preventing and responding to domestic, family and sexual violence. |
| 3 | The allocation of funding under the Levy aligns with the priorities and needs identified in the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032 including its underpinning action plans and outcomes framework, and any current or future ACT strategies or plans addressing domestic, family and sexual violence. | <p>Initiatives funded from the Levy will align with the strategic intent of The National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032 (National Plan) including its underpinning action plans and outcomes framework and once finalised, the ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy and Action Plans.</p> <p>The National Plan commits to working with victim-survivors and recognises the value and diversity of lived experience to inform the development and implementation of domestic, family and sexual violence initiatives.</p> <p>This will aim to address systemic gaps across all areas of domestic and family violence responses. In this way, allocation of the Levy will be strategic and respond to identified long-term priorities.</p> |
| 4 | The Levy supports frontline initiatives and staff capability across community and government sectors to address domestic, family and sexual violence. | <p>A frontline initiative provides services directly for people impacted by, or at risk of being impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence. This includes services that provide support coordination functions for individuals even if that service does not directly liaise with the impacted individuals.</p> <p>The Levy funds non-government and government frontline initiatives across the spectrum of prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery and healing.</p> <p>Levy funding for frontline initiatives can include use of funds to build frontline staff capability and skills through training, supervision, and activities that build staff resilience and protect against vicarious trauma.</p> <p>Levy funding for frontline initiatives includes improving access to supports for groups facing additional and intersecting barriers such as people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people who identify as LGBTIQA+ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</p> |
| 5 | The Levy allocates a meaningful proportion of funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led programs, particularly Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing, | <p>The ACT Government is committed to building a strong ACCO sector, in alignment with Priority Reform 2 of The National Agreement on Closing the Gap</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led solutions and services deliver high quality, responsive, and culturally safe services using a holistic approach which achieves better results, employs more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and results in higher engagement from service users.</p> |



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| | <p>or at risk of experiencing, domestic, family and sexual violence.</p> | <p>The National Agreement on Closing the Gap outlines that a meaningful proportion is an amount which takes into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations providing DFSV services in the ACT • the existing community-controlled sector • the service demands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people • the views of the ACT's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled peak organisation, the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body. <p>The use of funds raised through the Levy should therefore reflect a focus on providing appropriate investment to grow the ACCO sector in the ACT.</p> |
| 6 | <p>The Levy needs to support new initiatives in response to existing system gaps and emerging need in the ACT community.</p> | <p>The Levy is intended to provide funding for new and/or innovative responses to domestic, family and sexual violence to trial their feasibility, effectiveness, and value, and contribute to continuously improving the ACT's systemic responses to domestic, family and sexual violence. However, this principle does not exclude using the Levy to fund existing services to meet service gaps with demonstrated need.</p> <p>It is important that the Levy directs some funding towards new and emerging responses and initiatives to meet current or future need, and that the Levy's funding is not taken up by ongoing programs that become part of core business.</p> <p>To ensure the Levy can fund new initiatives, successful initiatives can be considered for transitioning to alternative sources of funding, and initiatives can be ceased when they are either unsuccessful and/or ineffective.</p> <p>Potential initiatives to be transitioned out of the Levy will be considered for future funding from other revenue sources through Government Budget processes.</p> |
| 7 | <p>There will be clear and transparent reporting on the allocation of the Safer Families Levy through the ACT Budget and annual Ministerial Statement in the ACT Legislative Assembly.</p> | <p>The ACT Government is committed to ensuring reporting on the allocation of the Levy is clear and transparent.</p> <p>The ACT Budget process and annual Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Ministerial Statement from the Minister for the Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence will provide the basis for ongoing reporting on where Levy funds are being allocated.</p> |



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| | | <p>Both means of reporting will clearly define how Levy funding is being used and be provided to community sector stakeholders and the general public.</p> <p>A monitoring and evaluation framework (the framework) will be developed alongside the ACT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Strategy, in consultation with stakeholders and made publicly available. Domestic, family and sexual violence initiatives, including those funded by the Safer Families Levy will be monitored, reported and evaluated in alignment with the framework.</p> |
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3. Methodology to apply the key principles

When considering initiatives to be funded from the Levy and applying the principles, the following issues will be considered:

- The principles should be applied holistically to consider each initiative which is proposed for funding, as well as the broader package of initiatives funded through the Levy. In addition, initiatives should be considered in relation to how they strategically align with the ACT Government's responses to domestic, family and sexual violence and the Government's broader package of investment.
- The primary principle is Principle 1 and all funded initiatives must align with Principle 1 to ensure the Levy is focused solely on addressing domestic, family and sexual violence. Some initiatives may align with all principles, while other initiatives may align more strongly with certain principles than others, and certain initiatives may align with some principles but not others.
- Principle 2 should be considered when making decisions regarding the Levy as a whole, recognising it as a partial offset to a broader package of investment and not as the primary funding for domestic, family and sexual violence responses.

