

Second Action Plan: National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032

July 2026

About The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is an international Christian movement with a presence in more than 130 countries. Operating in Australia since 1880, The Salvation Army is one of the largest providers of social services and programs for people experiencing hardship, injustice and social exclusion.

The Salvation Army Australia provides more than 1,000 social programs and activities through networks of social support services, community centres and churches across the country. Programs include:

- Financial counselling, financial literacy and microfinance
- Emergency relief and related services
- Homelessness services
- Youth services
- Family violence and modern slavery services
- Alcohol, drugs and other addictions
- Chaplaincy
- Emergency and disaster response
- Aged care
- Employment services

As a mission-driven organisation, The Salvation Army seeks to reduce social disadvantage and create a fair and harmonious society through holistic and person-centred approaches that reflect our mission to share the love of Jesus by:

- Caring for people
- Creating faith pathways
- Building healthy communities
- Working for justice

We commit ourselves in prayer and practice to this land of Australia and its people, seeking reconciliation, unity and equity.

Further information about The Salvation Army can be accessed at: < https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/>

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Our commitment to inclusion

The Salvation Army Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet and work and pay our respect to Elders, past, present and future.

We value and include people of all cultures, languages, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and intersex status. We are committed to providing programs that are fully inclusive. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of people of all ages, particularly children. Our values are:

- Integrity
- Compassion
- Respect
- Diversity
- Collaboration

The Salvation Army is a worldwide movement known for its acceptance and unconditional love for all people. We love unconditionally, because God first loved us. The Bible says, “God so loves the world” (John 3:16, RGT). As both a church and charity, we believe all people are loved by God and are worthy of having their needs met. Everyone is welcome to find love, hope, and acceptance at The Salvation Army.

The Salvation Army Australia Territory wishes to acknowledge that members of the LGBTIQA+ community have experienced hurt and exclusion because of mixed comments and responses made in the past. The Salvation Army is committed to inclusive practice that recognises and values diversity. We are ensuring our services affirm the right to equality, fairness, and decency for all LGBTIQA+ people, rectifying all forms of discriminatory practice throughout the organisation.

We seek to partner with LGBTIQA+ people and allies to work with us to build an inclusive, accessible, and culturally safe environment in every aspect of Salvation Army organisation and services. Everyone has a right to feel safe and respected.

Learn more about our commitment to inclusion: <**salvationarmy.org.au/about-us**>

Executive summary

The Salvation Army welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the Department of Social Services' consultation on the Second Action Plan (National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032).

The Salvation Army provides specialist family and domestic violence services in almost every state and territory across Australia. This support includes refuges, children's and parenting services, counselling, men's programs, accommodation, and advice and referral. We also interact with people impacted by family and domestic violence through a range of frontline services, including our Moneycare financial counselling, housing, youth, child and family services, emergency services, and our local corps (churches).

At the heart of our recommendations is the need to embed the voice of lived experience at all levels of policy development, legislative reform and service delivery. We stress that significant, targeted investment and action is required if we are to end violence against women and children in Australia in one generation.

The expertise from our frontline services, and the lived experience of the people we support, leads us to recommend the following areas of focus under the five priority areas identified in the consultation paper:

- **Victim-survivors.** Significantly increased investment in the specialist family and domestic violence service sector to ensure all victim-survivors can access the supports they need, when they need it.
- **Prevention and early intervention.** Multi-faceted and long-term funding for primary prevention and early intervention initiatives, including the need to work alongside men and boys.
- **Children and young people in their own right.** Significant investment in specialist responses for children and young people with an experience of family and domestic violence, or whose behaviour is violent.
- **People who use violence.** Early engagement with persons using violence, and cultivating an ecosystem of intervention, not limited by time or jurisdiction, to change their trajectory.
- **System integration and workforce.** Ensuring all services are equipped to identify and respond to family and domestic violence, that the specialist workforce is well supported, and strong outcomes measurement and evaluation across the sector to improve services for those impacted by family and domestic violence.

The Salvation Army has made 30 recommendations for the Department of Social Services to consider. A summary of these recommendations follows on the next page.

Summary of recommendations

Recommendation 1

1.6 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, significantly increase investment in the specialist family and domestic violence service sector.

Recommendation 2

1.12 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, commit to long-term, flexible funding models to deliver continuity of support and innovative responses to family and domestic violence, and account for program evaluation.

Recommendation 3

1.18 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, invest in the development of a range of recovery and healing supports for victim-survivors and their families. These supports should be embedded within the service system and be available long-term.

Recommendation 4

1.26 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, ensure all victim-survivors have access to safe accommodation options by increasing:

- *The stock of crisis and transitional accommodation, particularly in areas where there are no or limited crisis options;*
- *Investment in social and affordable housing to address bottlenecks; and*
- *Investment in services that support victim-survivors to remain in their home, or in a home of their choosing.*

Recommendation 5

1.35 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government review and improve government payments and Centrelink processes to ensure they are trauma-informed and enable victim-survivors maintain safety and dignity.

Recommendation 6

1.40 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, ensure that victim-survivors leaving a violent relationship have access to timely and flexible financial assistance to meet their immediate needs and prevent financial hardship.

Recommendation 7

1.48 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, ensure systems and the specialist family and domestic violence sector are equipped to respond to technology-facilitated abuse. This should include investing in research, adaptive policies, frontline services and collaboration across governments, businesses and the social services sector.

Recommendation 8

1.52 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, invest in reducing misidentification in instances of family and domestic violence. This should include investing in specialist training, co-responder models and increased access to affordable, timely legal assistance for victim-survivors.

Recommendation 9

1.56 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, increase investment in community-led family and domestic violence responses to ensure programs are culturally safe and tailored to the needs of priority cohorts.

Recommendation 10

1.62 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, ensure culturally responsive approaches for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by increasing investment in:

- *ACCOs and community-led family and domestic violence responses; and*
- *The development of strong partnerships between the wider service sector and ACCOs.*

Recommendation 11

1.65 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, invest in culturally safe responses for culturally and linguistically diverse victim-survivors. This should include:

- *Reviewing visa and immigration pathways to ensure they do not act as a barrier to victim-survivors seeking support; and*
- *Ensuring victim-survivors, irrespective of visa status, have access to a social safety net and support, including income support, housing assistance, healthcare and legal advice.*

Recommendation 12

1.73 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, support victim-survivors of modern slavery, including forced marriage, by:

- *Investing in specialist responses for victim-survivors of modern slavery, including forced marriage;*
- *Coordinating Commonwealth and state responses, creating a streamlined process for victim-survivors to be supported adequately; and*
- *Invest in upskilling the family and domestic violence and wider service sector.*

Recommendation 13

2.7 The Salvation Army recommends that to the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, commit to increased, multifaceted, and long-term funding for primary prevention and early intervention initiatives. This must include scaling up successful initiatives.

Recommendation 14

2.10 The Salvation Army recommends that to the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, work alongside men and boys in the context of primary prevention. This should include developing primary prevention initiatives tailored to men and boys and targeted towards areas with high engagement with men and boys.

Recommendation 15

2.14 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, increase investment in the development of a broad range of primary prevention initiatives that educate the community on the drivers of family and domestic violence.

Recommendation 16

3.12 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, increase investment in specialist services for children and young people with an experience of family and domestic violence.

Recommendation 17

3.17 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, increase the capacity of the wider service sector to identify and respond to children and young people with an experience of family and domestic violence.

Recommendation 18

3.21 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, strengthen housing pathways for young people who are victim-survivors of family and domestic violence. This should include investing in innovative solutions that acknowledge the unique and intersecting needs of young people.

Recommendation 19

3.25 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government streamline Centrelink processes and invest in on-site social workers in Centrelink offices to meet the needs of young people.

Recommendation 20

3.35 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, increase investment in trauma-informed responses that are tailored according to age and development, for children and young people whose behaviour is violent.

Recommendation 21

4.6 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments support early identification and response to persons using violence by:

- *Investing in embedded family and domestic violence specialists within the wider service sector to provide expertise and support regarding persons using violence; and*
- *Investing in assertive outreach and flexible engagement approaches to persons using violence.*

Recommendation 22

4.21 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments invest in a broad range of serious risk programs and service options to support engagement and behaviour change for persons using violence. This should include:

- *Ensuring funding is flexible and responsive to the needs of persons using violence;*
- *Investing in the rollout of co-responder, integrated family violence responses; and*
- *Consider the differing needs of persons using violence from diverse communities.*

Recommendation 23

5.5 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, develop a nationally consistent definition of family and domestic violence for use across jurisdictions and service systems. This should encompass physical and non-physical forms of violence and coercive control.

Recommendation 24

5.14 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, develop national and statewide frameworks in all jurisdictions to:

- *Ensure all frontline services understand their role and responsibilities in responding to family and domestic violence; and*
- *Support information sharing and collaboration to keep victim-survivors safe and hold persons using violence accountable.*

Recommendation 25

5.15 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, increase workforce training across the wider service sector to appropriately identify and respond to family and domestic violence, support the safety of victim-survivors and hold persons using violence accountable.

Recommendation 26

5.23 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, invest in an integrated service system that is well-equipped to respond to the intersectional needs of victim-survivors and persons using violence. This can be supported by investment in co-responder models and embedded practitioners.

Recommendation 27

5.34 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, invest in strategic workforce planning and investment to build and sustain the specialist family and domestic violence workforce, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.

Recommendation 28

5.41 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, ensure frontline services are adequately funded to provide interventions and opportunities to address employee burnout and fatigue, and promote job satisfaction, including sustainable caseloads, staff supervision and professional development.

Recommendation 29

5.47 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, work to embed outcomes measurement within family and domestic violence services and the sector to support evidence-based practice and decision-making.

Recommendation 30

5.50 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, ensure that all funding for family and domestic violence programs and services includes funding for their evaluation.

1 Victim-survivors

Increased investment in frontline family and domestic violence services

1.1 Adequately funding frontline family and domestic violence responses is critical to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of victim-survivors. All victim-survivors must be able to access the supports they need, when and where they need it. Across Australia, the specialist family and domestic violence sector does not have the capacity to manage the increasing number of victim-survivors seeking assistance. Family and domestic violence services are experiencing consistently high demand for services, with many reporting to be regularly at capacity.

1.2 For example, over the past 3 years a Salvation Army family and domestic violence refuge in Western Australia has more than tripled their service capacity (assisting 62 victim-survivors in the 2023-24 financial year and 233 victim-survivors in 2025-26). Despite this, over the same period, the number of occasions the refuge was contacted and unable to accommodate a victim-survivor in the refuge almost doubled (341 unaccommodated requests in 2023-24 and 608 unaccommodated requests in 2025-26). In these instances, our services work to find other accommodation options and can provide outreach support.

1.3 In rural, remote and regional areas, victim-survivors face additional service gaps. Our services frequently see victim-survivors who have been forced to travel great distances to access a service and escape a person using violence. It is not uncommon for these victim-survivors to later return to the person using violence due to financial pressures and lack of social supports associated with moving to a new area. It is often the case that the person using violence has increased control after a victim-survivor returns and their safety is put at greater risk.

1.4 Our services also report that the support needs of victim-survivors are becoming increasingly complex, with many victim-survivors facing homelessness, financial insecurity and mental health issues. High demand for frontline services often leads to resources being directed towards victim-survivors deemed to be at serious risk, limiting the sector's ability to intervene earlier and provide a response before violence escalates.

1.5 It is unacceptable that people considered to be at risk of family and domestic violence are denied a service simply because the sector does not have the capacity to support them. We implore all governments to, as a priority, immediately and significantly increase funding to the family and domestic violence sector. This must include funding for a housing response, as well as case management and therapeutic supports.

Recommendation 1

1.6 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, significantly increase investment in the specialist family and domestic violence service sector.

Providing long-term, flexible funding models

1.7 Specialist family and domestic violence services must have sufficient funding and flexibility to respond to the individual needs of victim-survivors over extended periods of time. We have seen a positive impact when victim-survivors have received streamlined support for as long as they need, meeting them where they are at, across crisis, transitional and outreach services.

1.8 In our experience the restrictive nature of short-term funding contracts hinders services' ability to implement successful initiatives that meet the needs of target populations. This in turn impacts program effectiveness, outcomes and impact. Longer-term funding cycles allow for appropriate development, implementation and evaluation of programs.

1.9 Funding structures and arrangements must be flexible to support innovation, allowing organisations to pivot and redirect funding and resources according to identified service gaps, needs and opportunities within their local communities. We have found especially in rural and remote areas, where there can be limited access to services and resources, overly prescriptive funding arrangements limit the ability of local services to find creative solutions and harness local resources. Investment and funding models in regional and remote areas must also account for the unique challenges and costs of service delivery.

1.10 We suggest that a key mechanism to achieve flexible funding could include building surge capacity into funding grants, allowing community services to respond to need as it evolves over the funding cycle. Ultimately, we believe that flexible funding encourages and empowers service innovation and produces higher quality, diversified service delivery, leading to better outcomes for people impacted by family and domestic violence.

1.11 We note DSS's work on relational contracting and look forward to seeing in greater detail what a relational contract with the Department could involve and if this approach will provide greater flexibility and the ability for services to pivot and adapt according to emerging community needs.

Recommendation 2

1.12 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, commit to long-term, flexible funding models to deliver continuity of support and innovative responses to family and domestic violence, and account for program evaluation.

Investing in recovery and healing supports

1.13 The Salvation Army highlights the need to ensure that victim-survivors of family and domestic violence can access the support they need to ensure long-term health and wellbeing. Family and domestic violence can have a range of long-term impacts on victim-survivors and their families, including financial hardship, homelessness, substance abuse, social isolation, and both mental and physical health concerns.

1.14 For children and young people, family and domestic violence can also impact their development, relationship attachments, and cognitive and behavioural functioning.[1]

1.15 Recovery from family and domestic violence can be a life-long journey.[2] Supporting recovery needs to include addressing short-term, long-term and lifelong impacts of violence for victim-survivors and their families.

1.16 We believe that recovery and healing responses must be:

- **Integrated across service systems.** It is critical that recovery and healing supports are available to victim-survivors and their families from first contact with the family and domestic violence service system. To ensure this, we point to the need for integrated recovery and healing supports that are embedded across a range of service systems to ensure victim-survivors and their families have access to ongoing support that facilitates recovery.
- **Accessible when required,** in recognition that victim-survivors may need support at times throughout their lives.[3]

1.17 The Salvation Army notes that to ensure victim-survivors and their families can best engage with recovery and healing supports, their basic needs must be met – including their safety and access to stable income and housing.

Recommendation 3

1.18 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, invest in the development of a range of recovery and healing supports for victim-survivors and their families. These supports should be embedded within the service system and be available long-term.

Addressing homelessness and the housing crisis

1.19 Family and domestic violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness for women and children in Australia,[4] and remains the primary factor in women and children seeking The Salvation Army's homelessness services. The housing response is therefore crucial to tackling family and domestic violence. Victim-survivors must have access to affordable, safe, and sustainable housing, from crisis accommodation to transitional and long-term housing. This provides a vital foundation for a person to obtain and maintain safety, employment, education, training, family and social networks, health and wellbeing.

[1] Safe + Equal. (n.d.). *Impacts of Family Violence.* https://safeandequal.org.au/understanding-family-violence/impacts/
[2] Department of Social Services. (2022). *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022- 2032.* https://www.dss.gov.au/system/files/resources/national-plan-end-violence-against-women-and-children-2022-2032.pdf
[3] Department of Social Services. (2022). *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022- 2032.* https://www.dss.gov.au/system/files/resources/national-plan-end-violence-against-women-and-children-2022-2032.pdf
[4] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2025). *Specialist homelessness services annual report 2024–25.* https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-annual-report/contents/clients-who-have-experienced-fdsv

1.20 Our experience is that there is insufficient safe accommodation for victim-survivors across Australia. Many refuges across the country are operating at capacity and are unable to accommodate the increasing number of victim-survivors seeking assistance.

1.21 A lack of housing exits leaves victim-survivors in crisis accommodation for extended periods of up to 12 months, meaning other victim-survivors in need cannot enter crisis services. Concerningly, the absence of affordable housing exits means that many victim-survivors of family and domestic violence may have to choose between returning to live with the person using violence or facing homelessness.

1.22 In some areas, our services have needed to arrange for victim-survivors to fly out of area to access safe accommodation due to no refuge or hotel accommodation options being available. Whilst ensuring immediate safety, this entails a victim-survivor leaving their community and local support services, which can increase isolation and force them into unemployment. Arranging for, and funding, a victim-survivor to fly out of area is also complex and time-consuming for staff who are already managing large caseloads.

1.23 We call for immediate action to increase the supply of, and access to, safe and affordable accommodation across the housing continuum. This includes increasing stock of crisis and transitional accommodation for victim-survivors of family and domestic violence and funding for specialist family and domestic violence services to provide wraparound support.

1.24 Victim-survivors should have the option to be supported to remain safely in their home, or in the home of their choosing. The continued expansion of investment in technology and ongoing funding for programs, such as the Keeping Women Safe in their Homes program, needs to remain a priority. This is not only to prevent homelessness, but to maintain employment and the physical and emotional health and safety of victim-survivors.

1.25 It is important to note that investment in programs that support victim-survivors to remain at home must also be accompanied by increased investment in the development and expansion of accommodation and accountability services for persons using violence.

The Salvation Army's National Safer in the Home (SITH) program

The Salvation Army is a national provider of the DSS-funded Keeping Women Safe in their Homes program. This program aims to minimise the social and economic consequences of escaping family and domestic violence that may occur when victim-survivors are forced to leave the family home.

The SITH program operates as a national brokerage and safety enhancement program, providing targeted security upgrades and technology safety responses to the homes and devices of victim-survivors across the country, with specialist family and domestic violence oversight.

The model is intentionally light-touch with victim-survivors, while maintaining significant coordination with referrers, housing providers, contractors and support services. This ensures victim-survivors' safety remains central to decision-making throughout the client journey.

Demand for the program has increased significantly. Awareness of the program and increased reliance on home-based safety responses has led to our services experiencing backlog pressures for the first time.

Greater investment is required to ensure programs such as these can continue to support victim-survivors to remain safe in their homes, maintain community connections and avoid homelessness and further victimisation.

Recommendation 4

1.26 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, ensure all victim-survivors have access to safe accommodation options by increasing:

- **The stock of crisis and transitional accommodation, particularly in areas where there are no or limited crisis options;**
- **Investment in social and affordable housing to address bottlenecks; and**
- **Investment in services that support victim-survivors to remain in their home, or in a home of their choosing.**

Preventing financial hardship

1.27 Access to finances plays a significant part in a victim-survivor's ability to escape violence. It is important that our social safety nets enable people escaping violence to take that step as soon as they are ready. Without being financially able to leave, victim-survivors can find themselves trapped despite wanting to leave, or forced to return to an abusive situation due to cost pressures.

1.28 Many women and families are reliant on government payments and experience financial stress after leaving a violent relationship.[5] This is exacerbated by increased cost of living pressures, which we know hit hardest for people already experiencing financial hardship and disadvantage. Financial hardship can quickly spiral into unserviceable debt and homelessness.

1.29 Economic and financial abuse can also result in ongoing economic and financial hardship for victim-survivors. Persons using violence may restrict victim-survivors' access to money or accrue debt in their name. In many cases, financial abuse will continue after a victim-survivor has left a relationship.

Improving Centrelink payments and processes

1.30 The Salvation Army continues to call on the Australian Government to increase income support payments, such as the JobSeeker Payment and Youth Allowance, in line with the recommendations of the Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee.[6] Increasing the rate of income support payments is foundational to equip victim-survivors to escape violence and to maintain safety and dignity.

1.31 Our experience is that simpler, more responsive and trauma-informed Centrelink application processes could greatly help victim-survivors, including young people, to leave family and domestic violence earlier. This would also mitigate the risk of the prolonged impacts of poverty and financial hardship. The specific needs of young people escaping violence are covered in more detail in Chapter 3.

> *"I worked with a woman who was ready to leave the abuse but could not navigate the Centrelink system. She said, 'I will have to go back to him, won't I?' but I sat with her and reassured her I wasn't going anywhere till we sorted this out."*
>
> **- A Salvation Army Moneycare Team Leader**

1.32 We suggest two changes that could assist victim-survivors access income support payments:

- Reviewing and improving the way family and domestic violence is considered as a factor in determining whether a person should be considered a member of a couple. Currently, the 'couple rule' can prevent victim-survivors from accessing a Centrelink payment, making it more difficult to leave violence; and
- Accepting supporting evidence of family and domestic violence from specialist family and domestic violence services.

1.33 A dedicated trauma-informed specialist team within Centrelink could help victim-survivors and service providers navigate a complex system.

[5] Summers, A. (2022). *The Choice: Violence or Poverty.* University of Technology Sydney. https://www.violenceorpoverty.com/
[6] Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee. (2026). *Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee: 2026 report to government.* https://www.dss.gov.au/committees-councils-groups-and-panels/resource/economic-inclusion-advisory-committee-2026-report

1.34 An example of this type of support is the Family Advocacy and Support Service within Legal Aid NSW, a dedicated team supporting people affected by family and domestic violence. We also suggest the need to increase the number of on-site social workers within Centrelink offices to support and assist victim-survivors.

Recommendation 5

1.35 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government review and improve government payments and Centrelink processes to ensure they are trauma-informed and enable victim-survivors maintain safety and dignity.

Improving access to flexible, timely financial assistance for victim-survivors

1.36 Ensuring all Commonwealth and state funded frontline family and domestic violence services have access to brokerage funding would go a long way to ensuring victim-survivors can meet their immediate needs and reducing the risk of financial hardship. This funding is commonly spent on accommodation, safety upgrades, transport and health care, and basic material needs including food, clothing, bills and debt repayments.

1.37 In 2023, the Queensland Government established the Domestic and Family Violence Rent Assist Brokerage Grants, which were funded through the Family, Domestic and Sexual Responses 2021-27 National Partnership. The grants provided funds to specialist family and domestic violence services to assist victim-survivors with housing issues.[7] Funding was flexible and could be used for rental assistance, addressing repair costs for property damage, and even the cost of food.[8] This program provided relief to many victim-survivors experiencing a short-term period of financial stress and helped victim-survivors to continue to access housing in the private market. We recommend this program be funded to continue and similar programs be expanded into other jurisdictions.

1.38 We highlight the important role of the Leaving Violence Program in providing financial support to victim-survivors who have left, or have a plan to leave, a violent intimate partner relationship.[9] This program provides financial assistance in the form of cash payments and for goods and services, including material aid, accommodation assistance and transport assistance, for victim-survivors who have changed, or are planning to change, their living arrangements.

[7] D'Ath, Y. (2024, May 30). *Community grants increase rental and accommodation assistance for DFV victim-survivors* [Media release]. Queensland Government. https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/100447
[8] D'Ath, Y. (2023, October 18). *Applications open for new $2.5m DFV rental housing assistance grants* [Media release]. https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/98945
[9] Department of Social Services. (n.d.) *Leaving Violence Program.* https://www.dss.gov.au/safety-programs-prevention-and-evidence/leaving-violence-program

1.39 We are concerned that the Leaving Violence Program and its delivery is not always sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of victim-survivors leaving violence. The narrow timeframe of 12 weeks does not acknowledge the complexity of leaving a violent relationship and slow payment processes fail to respond to the urgency. Payments that are assessed and provided quickly assist victim-survivors to plan and take action. Unfortunately, we have often seen payments take over two weeks for assessment and payment, increasing the risk that victim-survivors may remain in a violent relationship or face homelessness while they are waiting to be approved for a payment.

Recommendation 6

1.40 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, ensure that victim-survivors leaving a violent relationship have access to timely and flexible financial assistance to meet their immediate needs and prevent financial hardship.

Addressing technology-facilitated abuse

1.41 Technology-facilitated abuse has become a common form of family and domestic violence.[10] Our frontline services continue to see tactics change and evolve in how technology is used to track, stalk, control and abuse victim-survivors. Most commonly we see legitimate apps and technology being misused by persons using violence such as location sharing apps, doorbell cameras and children's devices and apps.

1.42 Often victim-survivors are aware the person using violence is accessing their phone or tracking them, but many are unaware of the full extent and mechanisms being used and how to thoroughly check that their devices, online accounts and social media are secure.

1.43 We acknowledge the work of the eSafety Commission in developing Safety by Design principles, assessment tools and industry guides to support technology companies to be proactive and embed safety into their products and services.[11] The expertise of lived experience and family and domestic violence specialists must be central to the development of technology to ensure products and platforms have sufficient safeguards in place to prevent family and domestic violence. We recommend innovative options be explored to further involve technology companies in working to prevent and reduce harms.

[10] eSafety Commissioner. (2023). *Technology-facilitated abuse: family, domestic and sexual violence: Literature scan.* https://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-10/Technology-facilitated-abuse-family-domestic-sexual-violence-literature-scan.pdf?v=1784095653277

[11] eSafety Commissioner. (2026). *Safety by Design.* https://www.esafety.gov.au/industry/safety-by-design

1.44 The Salvation Army highlights the need for continuous research, adaptive policies and collaboration with experts in various fields to ensure that the family and domestic violence sector is responding to technological shifts that impact family and domestic violence. We suggest the need for collaboration between experts in the field of cyber security and family and domestic violence to ensure research and policies reflect the future trajectory of the family and domestic violence sector related to technology-facilitated abuse.

1.45 We draw attention to the increased use of tracking and monitoring via technology used by parents to manage their children's safety. We are concerned this behaviour can become normalised and then accepted in their future relationships. It is important that information and educational resources are developed so that this can be addressed within families and within consent education.

1.46 Specialist family and domestic violence services are expending significant time and resources to keep up to date with evolving technology-facilitated abuse tactics. In Victoria and Queensland, our family and domestic violence services have partnered with IT companies, who provide technology checks for victim-survivors' devices and vehicles and provide education to victim-survivors. These are valuable services, but they are limited in their ability to provide ongoing capacity building for victim-survivors and family and domestic violence staff. In other jurisdictions, family and domestic violence services and staff must internally develop and fund strategies for staff to identify tracking and check the safety and security of victim-survivors' devices, especially prior to a victim-survivor accessing refuge accommodation, to support the safety of individual victim-survivors, as well as other service users and staff at the refuge.

1.47 We highlight the need for greater support for the frontline service sector to equip them to identify and respond to technology-facilitated abuse, including:

- **Regularly updating family and domestic violence risk assessments** and accompanying resources to address emerging and evolving forms of family and domestic violence, including technology-facilitated abuse. Risk assessments are covered in more depth in Chapter 5;
- **Ensuring free and accessible sector-wide training is available** to equip frontline services to identify and respond to technology-facilitated abuse. Training must be regularly updated to keep up to date with the evolving ways technology is being weaponised; and
- **Increased investment in specialist family and domestic violence services** to account for the increased workload required for staff and services to continually upskill and adapt their processes and resources in response to technology-facilitated abuse.
  We recommend exploring options to embed technology specialists within family and domestic violence services to build the capability and capacity of specialist services and victim-survivors. The use of embedded practitioners is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Recommendation 7

1.48 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, ensure systems and the specialist family and domestic violence sector are equipped to respond to technology-facilitated abuse. This should include investing in research, adaptive policies, frontline services and collaboration across governments, businesses and the social services sector.

Preventing misidentification

1.49 The misidentification of victim-survivors as perpetrators of family and domestic violence can occur in a range of contexts, but it primarily occurs where victim-survivors are misidentified on a family violence order or face criminal charges.

1.50 Our services continue to report a high number of victim-survivors being misidentified as the person using violence. Treating victim-survivors of violence as perpetrators not only undermines their confidence in the legal system and justice responses, but it also denies victim-survivors appropriate support.[12] Being misidentified as a perpetrator can negatively impact a victim-survivor's future interactions with police and can be used in family law proceedings and child protection decisions.[13]

1.51 We point to the following systemic reforms as critical to reducing misidentification:

- **Specialist training for police and justice staff.** Police and justice staff play a crucial role in supporting the safety of victim-survivors and holding persons using violence accountable. Ensuring all justice staff, including police, judicial officers and prosecutors, have a clear understanding of the person most in need of protection in family and domestic violence matters is critical to reducing misidentification. Training must focus on family and domestic violence as a pattern of behaviours as opposed to a one-off instance of violence. Any training that aims to reduce misidentification must also include understanding the neo-colonial context of violence, particularly in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors' violent resistance and reluctance to cooperate with police during investigations. We suggest this training could be extended to other priority areas, such as services within the child protection system.
- **Investing in co-responder models.** Embedding family and domestic violence specialists within police units assists with recognition and identification of persons most in need of protection from family and domestic violence. Please refer to Chapter 5 for further information and recommendations related to integrated services and co-responder models.

[12] Nancarrow, H., Thomas, K., Ringland, V. & Modini, T. (2020). *Accurately identifying the 'person most in need of protection' in domestic and family violence law.* Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. https://www.anrows.org.au/project/accurately-identifying-the-person-most-in-need-of-protection-in-domestic-and-family-violence-law/.

[13] Reeves, E. (2021). *The continuing problem of misidentification for family violence victim-survivors.* Monash University Lens. https://lens.monash.edu/the-continuing-problem-of-misidentification-for-family-violence-victim-survivors/

- **Access to legal support.** Timely access to legal support can assist victim-survivors to understand their rights and challenge family violence orders or criminal charges. Many victim-survivors are unable to access affordable and timely legal assistance. Without support, the legal system can be confusing, complex and retraumatising for victim-survivors, leading to many victim-survivors not having the issue of misidentification rectified. In Victoria, our Alexis Family Violence program has partnered with Southside Justice to provide access to timely community legal support for victim-survivors. We are seeing positive outcomes from this partnership and are currently going through the process of formal evaluation with Monash University. We recommend investment in similar partnerships across Australia to improve victim-survivors' access to legal support.

Recommendation 8

1.52 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, invest in reducing misidentification in instances of family and domestic violence. This should include investing in specialist training, co-responder models and increased access to affordable, timely legal assistance for victim-survivors.

Meeting the needs of diverse communities

1.53 The Salvation Army believes the Second Action Plan must focus efforts on building a dynamic and responsive family and domestic violence sector that is equipped to meet the diverse needs of victim-survivors. This must include all work across prevention, early intervention, response and recovery.

1.54 A one-size-fits-all approach to family and domestic violence will not be effective, nor meet the needs of all communities. As acknowledged in the Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) consultation paper, significant gaps and challenges remain for communities experiencing intersecting and additional forms of disadvantage.[14] This includes but is not limited to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTIQA+, regional and remote, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, as well as people living with a disability, and children and young people.

1.55 Wherever possible, grassroot communities and organisations should be empowered to drive, lead and develop projects and responses in a manner that is tailored to their community needs.

[14] ANROWS. (2026). *Evidence to action: informing direction for the Second Action Plan: Consultation Paper in support of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*. https://engage.dss.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/second-action-plan-consultation-paper.pdf

Recommendation 9

1.56 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, increase investment in community-led family and domestic violence responses to ensure programs are culturally safe and tailored to the needs of priority cohorts.

1.57 We also highlight specific recommendations for just some of the priority cohorts we work alongside, who face additional barriers to accessing support.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

1.58 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are diverse, as are their experiences with colonisation and trauma. Responses to family and domestic violence need to be community-specific, consider the local context and support healing. Responses must also recognise that culture, kinship, identity and connection to Country are central to prevention, healing and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.[15]

1.59 It is critical for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to be actively involved in governance and decision-making, and to have ownership over interventions and evaluation processes to ensure they recognise the cultural, geographical, and specific needs of local communities. Valuing cultural authority and self-determination across these systems is critical to ensuring responses are effective, culturally safe and reflective of community priorities.

1.60 We highlight the need to invest in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to ensure the availability of a range of culturally responsive resources in response to family and domestic violence, as well as in primary prevention, early intervention, and recovery and healing from violence. We also draw attention to the need for strong partnerships and genuine collaboration between the wider service sector and ACCOs to ensure mainstream service responses are culturally safe, do not retraumatise or do more harm, and embed cultural strengths and healing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors.

1.61 We welcome the 'Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence 2026-2036' and the Federal Budget funding allocated to support initial actions. 'Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices' stands on equal footing with the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children. This must be reflected in the governance structures, investment and action.

[15] Department of Social Services. (2026). *Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence.* https://www.dss.gov.au/system/files/documents/2026-03/260219-our-ways-report-v7-web_0.pdf

Recommendation 10

1.62 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, ensure culturally responsive approaches for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by increasing investment in:

- **ACCOs and community-led family and domestic violence responses; and**
- **The development of strong partnerships between the wider service sector and ACCOs.**

Culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people seeking asylum and temporary visa holders

1.63 Victim-survivors from culturally and linguistically diverse communities face additional barriers to accessing support – including but not limited to different cultural expectations, language barriers, a history of trauma, competing settlement challenges, discrimination, racism and differing family structures. Cultural differences can mean that victim-survivors from these communities may not associate behaviours they experience with abuse. They may also be subject to cultural shame and fear related to their family or community.

1.64 These barriers to support can be further exacerbated by:

- **Visa and immigration systems**. Current immigration and visa pathways often fail to sufficiently identify and protect people with an experience, or at risk, of family and domestic violence. Our clients frequently report feelings of fear and insecurity both before and during migration processes – exacerbated by lengthy delays and systems that lack transparency. Victim-survivors on temporary visas are also susceptible to additional forms of coercion and control regarding their visa status, and in our experience, may refrain from reaching out for help for fear of deportation, losing their immigration status, or losing access to their children.
- **Individual and systemic disadvantage**. We see experiences of disadvantage permeate nearly every aspect of life for people seeking protection in Australia – with many who come to us for support navigating housing insecurity, financial hardship, and poverty alongside trauma from being forced to flee their home. These challenges are compounded by systemic barriers for people seeking asylum who are generally excluded from the mainstream social safety net – including Medicare, income support payments and temporary accommodation. Restrictions on the right to work and study can further prevent people seeking asylum from earning an income or pursuing education and training. This is a significant issue, particularly for victim-survivors in this cohort who can feel as though their only option is to remain or return to living with the person using violence.

Recommendation 11

1.65 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, invest in culturally safe responses for culturally and linguistically diverse victim-survivors. This should include:

- **Reviewing visa and immigration pathways to ensure they do not act as a barrier to victim-survivors seeking support; and**
- **Ensuring victim-survivors, irrespective of visa status, have access to a social safety net and support, including income support, housing assistance, healthcare and legal advice.**

Modern slavery, including forced marriage

1.66 The Salvation Army provides support to victim-survivors of modern slavery, including forced marriage, through the DSS-funded national Additional Referral Pathway (ARP) support service and our Trafficking and Slavery Safe House accommodation and case management programs.

1.67 Modern slavery is a gendered issue. Women, girls and gender-diverse people experience compounding inequality and are disproportionately impacted by forms of modern slavery including forced marriage, domestic servitude and sexual exploitation.[16] Our experience has led us to consider forced marriage and certain forms of modern slavery as manifestations of family and domestic violence.

1.68 Modern slavery can involve victim-survivors in family and family-like relationships through coercive or deceptive means for the purposes of forced marriage, forced labour, domestic servitude, servile marriage, sexual exploitation, debt bondage and other forms of slave-like practices and exploitation.[17]

1.69 For example, in our experience, forced marriage is accompanied by controlling and coercive behaviours, including shaming, threatening family reputation and creating family pressure, monitoring of daily life, and threats and manipulation around visa status and migration. Pressure and control forcing a person into marriage often occurs over time, sometimes over many years.

1.70 Exit trafficking is another form of modern slavery, where typically a woman, and sometimes her children, are forced, threatened or deceived into travelling offshore by a spouse or extended family member. Exit trafficking commonly occurs within a pattern of controlling and coercive behaviours. This is a form of violence that is often under-identified in mainstream services and requires urgent specialist responses for prevention or to assist with repatriation.

[16] Walk Free. (2020). *Stacked Odds: How lifelong inequality shapes women and girls' experience of modern slavery.* https://cdn.walkfree.org/content/uploads/2020/10/19130043/WF-Stacked-Odds-20210517.pdf

[17] Moore, H. (2019). *Service or Servitude: A Profile of Trafficking for Domestic Work in Australia*. Sydney, NSW: Mercy Foundation and The Salvation Army.

1.71 We highlight the following recommendations for consideration under the Second Action Plan:

- **Invest in specialist responses.** We often see victim-survivors of modern slavery, including forced marriage, excluded from mainstream support services and social safety nets. For example, despite the fact many victim-survivors of modern slavery would benefit from a model of safe refuge accommodation due to support and security needs, they are often unable to access mainstream homelessness and family and domestic violence refuge accommodation. We stress the need to invest in specialist responses for this cohort to ensure victim-survivors can access the support they need, when they need it. This should include investing in services such as the DSS-funded Additional Referral Pathway (ARP) and our Trafficking and Slavery Safe House in NSW, as well as integrated family and domestic violence responses that are accessible and responsive to the needs of women and children who have experienced modern slavery.
- **Coordinated and collaborative service responses** between Commonwealth and state-based mechanisms, including specialist family and domestic violence services, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of victim-survivors of modern slavery, including forced marriage. In our experience, there is room for much greater coordination and collaboration, particularly between the Australian Federal Police who have skills and knowledge in this area, and state-based police and support services.
- **Investing in upskilling the service sector** to identify and respond to modern slavery and forced marriage. Many frontline workers lack the knowledge to recognise these forms of coercion, and do not fully understand the intersections between family violence and modern slavery, including forced marriage. This prevents victim-survivors from accessing support. We believe that targeted education and training can improve early identification and support improved outcomes for victim-survivors.

1.72 The Salvation Army's responses to the DSS evaluation of the Support for Trafficked People Program (STPP) and the Additional Referral Pathway (ARP) in June and July this year outline in further detail systemic gaps and opportunities that we see, and provide further recommendations to improve outcomes for victim-survivors of modern slavery.

Recommendation 12

1.73 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, support victim-survivors of modern slavery, including forced marriage, by:

- **Investing in specialist responses for victim-survivors of modern slavery, including forced marriage;**
- **Coordinating Commonwealth and state responses, creating a streamlined process for victim-survivors to be supported adequately; and**
- **Invest in upskilling the family and domestic violence and wider service sector.**

2 Prevention and early intervention

Changing how primary prevention and early intervention is funded

2.1 We need specific and long-term funding for primary prevention and early intervention initiatives to make a difference. Our experience is that funding for primary prevention initiatives is typically short-term, and early intervention commonly occurs through innovation and in addition to the work services are funded to do (as illustrated in the Reservoir Neighbourhood House Initiative case study below). This is particularly problematic when specialist services are already under stress due to high demand causing capacity restraints. Our staff report that early intervention programs are not widely available and accessible in all areas for the people they work with.

The Salvation Army's Reservoir Neighbourhood House Initiative

The Specialist Family Violence Outpost Initiative (the Outpost Initiative) is a place-based, early intervention partnership between The Salvation Army, Reservoir Neighbourhood House and Women's Health in Victoria. The Outpost Initiative has been established to improve access to specialist family and domestic violence support early by embedding a family and domestic violence specialist within a trusted community setting. This recognises that many individuals seek support through trusted community networks before engaging with specialist services.

By meeting people where they are, the Outpost Initiative:

- Promotes earlier service engagement. The model supports early identification and response to family and domestic violence risk, and creates opportunities for people who may not otherwise identify or access specialist family and domestic violence services;
- Increases the visibility and accessibility of specialist family and domestic violence support and creates a timely, community-based referral pathway for victim-survivors; and
- Enables immediate information, advice, risk assessment, safety planning and referral, reducing barriers to access and minimising the likelihood of people falling through service gaps.

The Outpost Initiative also strengthens the capacity of the broader community service sector through secondary consultation, workforce development and an integrated practice approach, ultimately building capability to identify and respond to family and domestic violence across the sector.

Overall, the Outpost Initiative demonstrates how specialist family and domestic violence services can work beyond traditional service models to strengthen early intervention, improve service accessibility and foster integrated, community-based responses.

2.2 Preventing family and domestic violence requires long-term commitment, and change will not happen overnight.[18] For primary prevention to be effective, governments must provide dedicated, multifaceted and long-term funding to build and expand upon essential infrastructure and systems that work to prevent violence.[19]

2.3 People have differing needs and personal experiences, and as such, no single primary prevention approach will work for everyone.[20] Prevention efforts have been suggested to work best when they include a combination of universal and targeted approaches, and multiple strategies and interventions.[21] Effective preventative action must be taken across a range of settings – including homes, parenting programs, education settings, and workplaces – and requires enabling infrastructure involving research, information, monitoring and evaluation.[22]

2.4 Behavioural and structural changes that lead to a reduction in family and domestic violence can and will take time. Long-term investments to address underlying social factors and issues that drive family and domestic violence are as critical as strategies that focus on shorter-term prevention efforts.[23]

2.5 Long-term funding agreements allow for appropriate development, implementation and evaluation of any new primary prevention program.[24] The Salvation Army believes that grant agreements for primary prevention and early intervention initiatives should have a minimum length of five years and should always include funding for program evaluation. The need for funding specifically for evaluation is discussed further in Chapter 5.

2.6 Funding must also be allocated to scale up primary prevention and early intervention initiatives that have proven successful, to expand their reach to more people and communities.[25] We also highlight the need for clear definitions of both primary prevention and early intervention. As outlined in the ANROWS consultation paper, these areas may overlap, however clear definitions would support the delivery of sufficient funding to each of these areas.[26]

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[18] Our Watch (2021). *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia.* https://assets.ourwatch.org.au/assets/Key-frameworks/Change-the-story-Our-Watch-AA.pdf
[19] Ibid.
[20] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2014). Prevention for a healthier future [Feature article]. https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/6c8ffb4a-a0f6-49f8-9b05-01f2157b822c/8_1-health-prevention.pdf.aspx
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Khan, N., McLean, L., & Heise, L. (2023). *Doing Violence Prevention Well: Matching Aspirations with Funding Timeframes.* https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/doing-violence-prevention-well-en.pdf
[25] Khan, N., McLean, L., & Heise, L. (2023). *Doing Violence Prevention Well: Matching Aspirations with Funding Timeframes.* https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/doing-violence-prevention-well-en.pdf; Safe +Equal. (2025). *Early intervention in family and gender-based violence: Scoping paper.* https://safeandequal.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Early-Intervention-in-family-and-gender-based-violence_Safe-and-Equal-Scoping-Paper_FINALv2.pdf
[26] ANROWS. (2026). *Evidence to action: informing direction for the Second Action Plan: Consultation Paper in support of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032.* ANROWS. (2026). Evidence to action: informing direction for the Second Action Plan: Consultation Paper in support of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032. https://engage.dss.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/second-action-plan-consultation-paper.pdf; Safe + Equal. (2025). *Early intervention in family and gender-based violence: Scoping paper.* https://safeandequal.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Early-Intervention-in-family-and-gender-based-violence_Safe-and-Equal-Scoping-Paper_FINALv2.pdf

Recommendation 13

2.7 The Salvation Army recommends that to the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, commit to increased, multifaceted, and long-term funding for primary prevention and early intervention initiatives. This must include scaling up successful initiatives.

Working alongside men and boys

2.8 Violence is gendered. Research tells us that most family and domestic violence is perpetrated by men, against women.[27] To change the attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence, governments must develop and invest in primary prevention and initiatives that are developed in consultation with, and tailored to, men and boys.

2.9 Gender inequality sets the underlying context for violence against women.[28] An effective primary prevention approach must focus on addressing the underlying and gendered drivers of violence, including but not limited to inequality, gender stereotypes, and cultures of masculinity. They should also position men and boys as allies in ending family and domestic violence. We suggest targeting primary prevention efforts towards areas that have high levels of engagement with men and boys, such as schools, workplaces, prenatal services, parenting programs, and sporting clubs.

Recommendation 14

2.10 The Salvation Army recommends that to the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, work alongside men and boys in the context of primary prevention. This should include developing primary prevention initiatives tailored to men and boys and targeted towards areas with high engagement with men and boys.

[27] Safe + Equal. (n.d.). *Who Experiences family violence.* https://safeandequal.org.au/understanding-family-violence/who-experiences family-violence/

[28] Our Watch. (n.d). *The link between gender inequality and violence against women.* https://www.ourwatch.org.au/link-between-gender-inequality-and-violence

Educating the community

2.11 Educating the community is critical to ensure that people are aware of and understand their roles and responsibilities in addressing the drivers of family and domestic violence. We must continue to educate the community to recognise and call out disrespectful and controlling behaviours as unacceptable. We also need to continue to address discrimination, disadvantage, exploitation, and entrenched gender inequity in all settings.

2.12 We advocate for better awareness raising to ensure greater support for community-based violence prevention and for every Australian to consider themselves active bystanders.

2.13 We believe that beneficial education can include:

- **Respectful relationships.** Education on healthy relationships, particularly in relation to respectful relationships within primary schools and healthy peer-to-peer and early intimate relationships in high schools is critical. This should include education on consent, power and control dynamics, the use of social media and its ability to 'blur' young people's ability to navigate online peer relationships, and the appropriate use of technology.
- **Tailoring prevention to the needs of young people**. We highlight the need to find creative ways to engage young people in primary prevention and early intervention across various settings – including social services, sporting clubs, and through social media.
  We also highlight the need to develop educational initiatives targeted at children and young people who are at risk of violent behaviour. This could include programs that focus on conflict resolution, positive coping mechanisms and emotional regulation.
- **The early warning signs of family and domestic violence** (particularly coercive and controlling behaviours), and the **broader drivers of violence** and how these behaviours can show up before physical violence occurs.

> *"There isn't enough to help young people learn how to be a good partner."*
>
> **- A Salvation Army Youth Services Program Manager**

Recommendation 15

2.14 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, increase investment in the development of a broad range of primary prevention initiatives that educate the community on the drivers of family and domestic violence.

3 Children and young people in their own right

3.1 The Salvation Army's family and domestic violence services have extensive experience working with children and young people, including through our specialist children's practitioners and when working with families to provide wraparound whole-of-family responses. More broadly, The Salvation Army works with young people through our specialist homelessness, life skills, education and vocation, drug and alcohol, family mediation and case management services. Family and domestic violence and family breakdown continues to be one of the main reasons young people access our youth services.

3.2 As acknowledged in the ANROWS consultation paper, children must be recognised and treated as victim-survivors in their own right, as opposed to witnesses or dependents of a parent who is a victim-survivor.[29] The Second Action Plan must reflect this in language usage and through increased investment in evidence-based responses that are child and youth-centred.

3.3 Children and young people are not a homogenous group. Transitioning through childhood and adolescence is a period of profound physical, physiological, emotional, cognitive and social change.[30] A one-size-fits all approach will not be sufficient to address the age, developmental and other diverse needs of this broad cohort. Wherever able, children and young people must be empowered and supported to participate in discussions and decisions surrounding systems, policies and programs that impact them, through forums that are tailored according to age and development.

3.4 We draw attention to the following areas as critical to ensuring that children and young people impacted by family and domestic violence are supported where, when and how they need it.

Providing specialised services for children and young people

3.5 Children and young people who are victim-survivors of family and domestic violence require specialised support from prevention, through to early intervention, response, recovery and healing. Currently, access to specialist services for this cohort is limited or difficult to access across Australia. Supports that do exist are most commonly delivered through family violence crisis response services, generalist youth or generalist therapeutic services.

[29] ANROWS. (2026). *Evidence to action: informing direction for the Second Action Plan: Consultation Paper in support of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*. ANROWS. (2026). Evidence to action: informing direction for the Second Action Plan: Consultation Paper in support of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032. https://engage.dss.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/second-action-plan-consultation-paper.pdf

[30] Mastorci, F., Lazzeri, F., Vassalle, C. & Pingitore, A. (2024). The transition from childhood to adolescence: between health and vulnerability. *Children*, 11(8). https://doi.org/10.3390/children11080989

3.6 In our experience, some jurisdictions do not fund children's specialists within frontline family and domestic violence services, and where there is funding, it commonly only covers staffing costs of a children's specialist without funding for the resources required to support this work. Where we are able, The Salvation Army uses internal or philanthropic funding to provide or supplement this service.

3.7 Funding that is available for children and young people is often limited and short-term. This is deeply problematic considering that a lack of appropriate and timely intervention can result in long-term impacts - including psychological and behavioural impacts, health and socioeconomic impacts, and increased risk of intergenerational violence and re-victimisation.[31]

3.8 For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children there is a double conundrum. Firstly, the family and domestic violence sector is not equipped to respond to the needs of children as victim-survivors in their own right. Where there are child-specific resources, they are often not culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Secondly, there are few culturally appropriate family and domestic violence services available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and those that do exist, focus on adults and not on the specific needs of children.[32]

3.9 Our services are also increasingly seeing presentations of young people who identify as members of the LGBTIQA+ community with an experience of family and domestic violence. Members of this community experience greater risk of family and domestic violence due to social barriers and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalisation. Research has also found differences in how persons use violence against LGBTIQA+ people, exploiting knowledge of identity to exert power and control. This can include using homophobia and revealing, or threatening to reveal, gender identity or sex assigned at birth.[33]

3.10 Children and young people, particularly those in out-of-home care, are at risk of a variety of forms of exploitation and violence, including being manipulated or coerced into engaging in harmful, sexual or criminal behaviour.[34] Specialist responses are required to prevent and respond to ensure the safety of children and young people.

[31] Richards, K. (2011). *Children's exposure to domestic violence in Australia*. Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice. No. 419. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi419
[32] Morgan, G. et al. (2022). *New Ways for our Families: Designing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practice framework and system responses to address the impacts of domestic and family violence on children and young people*. Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/new-ways-for-our-families-designing-an-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-cultural-practice-framework-and-system-responses-to-address-the-impacts-of-dfv-on-children-and-yo/
[33] Carman, M. et al. (2020). *Pride in Prevention: A guide to primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities.* Rainbow Health Victoria. https://www.latrobe.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1141833/Pride-in-Prevention-Evidence-Guide.pdf
[34] Corrales, T. et al. (2025). Criminalising processes at the intersection of policing and residential care. *Journal of Criminology*. https://ntrca.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/2025-Criminalising-processes-at-the-intersection-of-policing-and-residential-care-1.pdf

3.11 Children and young people need to be engaged and supported early as individuals, through systems that recognise their needs and the benefit of intervention to prevent long-term negative impacts of trauma. They need to be able to access timely case management and therapeutic responses that promote their participation and are tailored according to age and development, and that are not limited by time.[35] Funding must reflect the creative and tailored responses that are required for this cohort, as well as the need for community-led and culturally safe approaches for young people in diverse communities.

Recommendation 16

3.12 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, increase investment in specialist services for children and young people with an experience of family and domestic violence.

Strengthening whole-of-sector capacity to respond to children and young people

3.13 Many children and young people with an experience of family and domestic violence do not engage with specialist family and domestic violence services. Services across all settings that children, young people, parents and families are in contact with – including schools, and health, youth and community services – must be equipped to identify and respond to children and young people at risk of, or experiencing, family and domestic violence.

3.14 Providing integrated and developmentally appropriate care is essential for engaging and supporting the needs of children and young people. Services must be flexible and collaborative to reduce the barriers that many young people face.

3.15 Community support services are often under-resourced and work in silos due to limited capacity. Services must be adequately funded to support inter-service relationship building and effective collaboration to ensure children and young people receive wraparound support.

3.16 The Salvation Army's youth services are often a first point of contact for many young people experiencing forms of disadvantage. Our youth services build trusting relationships with young people and are ideally placed to identify family and domestic violence, assess risk, provide education and support, and warm referrals to specialist services. Based on this experience, we highlight the need to:

[35] Safe + Equal. (n.d.). *Supporting children and young people*. https://safeandequal.org.au/working-in-family-violence/tailored-inclusive-support/children-and-young-people/

- **Develop risk assessment and safety planning tools** that recognise the unique experiences and needs of children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right. Children and young people must be actively involved in assessing risk and developing safety plans. Risk assessment tools must be coupled with consistent and mandatory training for all frontline services to identify and respond to children and young people experiencing, or at risk of, family and domestic violence. Risk assessments and whole-of-sector training are discussed in further detail in Chapter 5.
- **Bolster collaboration** between the family and domestic violence sector and specialist youth services to ensure that support is available for children and young people where, when and how they need it. Enhancing collaboration allows more seamless navigability of supports for the young person and strengthens their access to specialist supports that suit their diverse needs. Collaborative practice also improves referral pathways by minimising the access points a young person or their family encounters to engage in meaningful and holistic support. We stress that any funding to bolster collaboration must be in addition to existing funding to deliver services, and must be flexible.
- **Leverage existing youth infrastructure** and reinforce this with knowledge of the family and domestic violence sector and specialists. The Salvation Army has adopted this approach through self-funded initiatives. For example, in some areas we provide family and domestic violence specialists embedded within our youth programs and services to engage and support children and young people within existing contexts. The role of embedded practitioners is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Recommendation 17

3.17 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, increase the capacity of the wider service sector to identify and respond to children and young people with an experience of family and domestic violence.

Addressing housing and financial needs

Investing in housing supports for young people

3.18 Family and domestic violence is one of the main causes of youth homelessness in Australia,[36] and one of the main reasons that young people present to The Salvation Army's youth services.

[36] Youth Off the Streets. (n.d.). *Youth Homelessness in Australia*. https://youthoffthestreets.com.au/youth-homelessness-facts/#:~:text=The%20main%20causes%20of%20youth,poverty%20and%20the%20housing%20crisis.

3.19 We highlight the need to strengthen housing pathways for young people who are victim-survivors of family and domestic violence. This includes increasing investment in housing across the continuum, from crisis accommodation through to long-term social and affordable housing, as addressed in Chapter 1, to increase young people's access to safety, stability and independence.

3.20 We also highlight the need for flexible and innovative housing and support models that are responsive to the varying needs and preferences of young people. As with those who have the benefit of supportive home lives, young people who have experienced various types of disadvantages, trauma and family breakdown deserve to be invested in. This includes the investment of time, care and support to help them learn the life skills required to successfully sustain housing, live with others and integrate into healthy communities. Support may be required for some years, with step-up and step-down service models to adapt to the learning and developmental needs of each young person. We draw attention to our Youth Housing and Support Program in the ACT as an example of flexible and responsive service delivery.

The Salvation Army's Oasis Youth Housing and Support Program in the ACT

The Salvation Army's ACT Youth Services have intentionally created an eco-system of support to meet the diverse needs of young people accessing our services. This includes a variety of housing solutions, including crisis accommodation, transitional accommodation, educational-tied housing and private market rental choice programs.

This model allows our youth workers to build stable, supportive relationships with young people and provide continuity of care through their housing journey, as required. The flexible funding model allows our services to be responsive to the needs of the young people we support. Currently the support provided by this program includes:

- An integrated case management framework – with specialty roles including a cultural support worker and a family and children's specialist case worker who works with young parents and their children;
- A dedicated role for a young person to lead youth participation and peer-based leadership;
- Therapeutic supports, including dedicated psychological supports;
- Dedicated family and domestic violence, mediation, and reunification supports; and
- Additional internal funds for designing and testing innovative solutions to youth homelessness.

This unique approach creates real opportunities for young people to receive the support they need and build the skills they require to exit homelessness for good.

Recommendation 18

3.21 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, strengthen housing pathways for young people who are victim-survivors of family and domestic violence. This should include investing in innovative solutions that acknowledge the unique and intersecting needs of young people.

Streamlining Centrelink processes

3.22 Our experience is that Centrelink processes are often protracted and inaccessible for young people, which inhibits their ability to leave violence, and places them at increased risk of the prolonged impacts of poverty and financial hardship. This acts as a major barrier for young people who are leaving family and domestic violence.

3.23 Many of the young people who attend our youth services following instances of family and domestic violence arrive with just one bag of clothes, no identification and no income.

3.24 Our services work with these young people to access income support through Centrelink. Our experience is that the presumption of dependence until the age of 25, requirements for parental consent, and subjective risk assessments make it difficult for young people who have experienced violence to apply for payments. The Salvation Army would encourage Centrelink processes to be age-appropriate and streamlined for young people. We also suggest the need for on-site dedicated social workers within Centrelink offices to support young people fleeing violence.

Recommendation 19

3.25 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government streamline Centrelink processes and invest in on-site social workers in Centrelink offices to meet the needs of young people.

Supporting children and young people whose behaviour is violent

3.26 Children and young people whose behaviour is violent must be understood and responded to in a different way to adults who use violence. The language used within the Second Action Plan must reflect this. We advise against using terms such as ‘perpetrator’ or ‘choose to use violence’ to describe children and young people. Language must recognise the age and developmental stage of children and young people.

3.27 Anecdotally, our youth homelessness services are reporting rising numbers of young people entering our refuges who have used violence. We hold significant concerns around the lack of support options and interventions for these young people.

3.28 There is a strong link between adverse childhood experiences and trauma – particularly from family and domestic violence – and the use of violence by young people.[37] Responses for this cohort must be trauma-informed. Children and young people who have experienced disadvantage and trauma must be met with proportionate, compassionate, and supportive responses.[38]

3.29 Interventions for adults who use violence are not effective for young people who require more tailored and individualised responses which are age and developmentally appropriate.

3.30 We also urge the need to utilise cultural strengths when engaging young people at risk of, or using violence, who are from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Emphasis should be placed, and investment focused on, initiatives developed and facilitated by these communities, for their communities.

Addressing adolescent violence in the home

3.31 The Salvation Army believes early support is critical to best support young people whose behaviour is violent, or who are at risk of violent behaviour. Adolescent violence in the home (AVITH) is a term that describes a pattern of violent behaviour used by a young person within their family, and may include property damage, financial, psychological, physical and sexual forms of violence.[39]

3.32 Violence used by young people typically follows different patterns to those seen amongst adults. Young people's use of violence is commonly reactive and impulsive and may be driven by dysregulated emotional states, as a means of managing family conflict or a form of self-defence. This contrasts with more controlled patterns seen in adults. [40]

3.33 We draw attention to the unchartered nature of responding to AVITH. Within the family and domestic violence sector, AVITH programs are limited, and investment is needed to adequately address the needs of young people using violence in the home. AVITH research has pointed to an acute need for early intervention for families and young people that takes the form of wraparound collaborative responses.[41] We echo this sentiment, urging that responses must aim to break down barriers and stigma surrounding seeking support.

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[37] Joshi, A. & Truong, M. (2024). *The role of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in adolescent use of violence.* Australian Institute of Family Studies: Australian Government. https://aifs.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-11/2411_CFCA_ACE%20adolescent%20use%20of%20violence.pdf ; Gillfeather-Spetere, S. & Watson, A. (2024). *In their own right: Actions to improve children and young people's safety from domestic, family and sexual violence.* ANROWS. https://anrows-2019.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/25125930/CYP-ANROWS-In-their-own-right-Children-and-young-people-Gillfeather-Spetere-Watson-ANROWS.pdf

[38] Harris, A. (n.d.). Trauma, Young People and Juvenile Justice. *Australian Child & Adolescent Trauma, Loss & Grief Network.* https://www.ics.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1323524/Trauma-and-juvenile-justice-in-Australia.pdf

[39] Campbell, E. et al. (2020*). The PIPA project: Positive interventions for perpetrators of adolescent violence in the home (AVITH).* Research report 04/2020. ANROWS. https://anrows-2019.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/02222028/Campbell_RR_PIPA.pdf

[40] Campbell, E. et al. (2023). *WRAP around families experiencing AVITH: Towards a collaborative service response.* Research report 04/2023. ANROWS. https://anrows-2019.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/27091154/RP.20.01-Campbell-RR1-WRAP-AVITH-1.pdf

[41] Ibid.

3.34 AVITH needs to be met with responses that are trauma-informed, address barriers to engagement, are flexible and tailored according to the individual needs of young people, and are intersectional and culturally safe.[42] We believe AVITH interventions need to be completely external and prior to involvement of other intervention systems, such as youth justice or child protection services.

Recommendation 20

3.35 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, increase investment in trauma-informed responses that are tailored according to age and development, for children and young people whose behaviour is violent.

[42] Campbell, E. et al. (2023). *WRAP around families experiencing AVITH: Towards a collaborative service response.* Research report 04/2023. ANROWS. https://anrows-2019.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/27091154/RP.20.01-Campbell-RR1-WRAP-AVITH-1.pdf

4 People who use violence

4.1 The Salvation Army works with persons using violence in multiple jurisdictions across Australia. Many of these services are based in Victoria, where we provide men's behaviour change programs (MBCPs) and case management, as well as our Alexis Family Violence Response Model alongside Victoria Police. Our experience has led us to highlight the following areas as critical to ending family and domestic violence in Australia.

Identifying and engaging persons using violence early

4.2 To make the biggest difference in preventing and responding earlier to the use of violence, we believe that governments must focus on:

- Earlier identification of persons using violence; and
- Stronger pathways to engage persons using violence.

4.3 Persons using violence are often already known to the wider service sector, but opportunities for engagement are missed. In our experience this is due to services not being equipped to recognise and respond to family and domestic violence indicators, limited service capacity, long waitlists, delays in referral uptake and difficulty making initial contact with persons using violence.

4.4 Reducing the time between identification, referral and engagement would increase the likelihood of intervention when people are most receptive to support. Expanding referral pathways is also critical, so concerns can be picked up earlier across multiple systems.

4.5 We point to the need for:

- **Increased workforce training** to ensure that the wider service sector are equipped to recognise and provide appropriate responses and referrals for persons using violence. This should include topics such as identifying coercive control, high-risk family violence indicators, and where and how to refer for support. See Chapter 5 for more information and a recommendation on workforce training.
- **Embedded family and domestic violence specialists** within the wider service sector who can provide support and expertise when persons using violence access services such as housing, mental health, and alcohol and other drug services. We discuss embedded practitioners further in Chapter 5.
- **Investment in assertive outreach and flexible engagement** approaches to help overcome some of the barriers associated with engaging persons using violence. We have seen great outcomes with our Alexis Family Violence Response Model (AFVRM), highlighted below, which provides proactive case management alongside Victoria Police and has an 83 per cent successful contact rate with persons using violence. We discuss the AFVRM further below.

Recommendation 21

4.6 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments support early identification and response to persons using violence by:

- **Investing in embedded family and domestic violence specialists within the wider service sector to provide expertise and support regarding persons using violence; and**
- **Investing in assertive outreach and flexible engagement approaches to persons using violence.**

Delivering an ecosystem of interventions for persons using violence

4.7 The Salvation Army believes that significant investment is required into working with persons using violence to support accountability, change behaviours, and ultimately end family and domestic violence in Australia.

4.8 As outlined in Chapter 1, adequately funding frontline specialist family and domestic violence services is critical to ensuring the safety of victim-survivors. This must include adequately funding specialist services working with persons using violence.

> *"A suite of programs and responses, that are not limited by time or jurisdiction, must be made available to persons using violence to ensure long-term outcomes."*
>
> **- A Salvation Army Family Violence Senior Manager of Practice and Development**

4.9 We believe that the development of a broad range of serious risk programs and service options is key to engaging persons using violence. No single program will meet the needs of all persons using violence. We need to develop the infrastructure to engage people using violence across multiple jurisdictions for as many years as required to make long-lasting change.

4.10 We strongly advocate for increased government investment in programs and trials to develop effective prevention, early intervention and post-violence interventions. A continuum of intervention options must also include outreach programs, including support and case management, and therapeutic counselling whilst in, and when exiting, prison. We also highlight the need for post-intervention services, which change the risk trajectory of persons using violence in the long term, complementing multiple intervention modalities with intensive, integrated, and ongoing case management and support. Alongside significant increased investment, The Salvation Army highlights the need for increased public awareness of the availability of interventions for persons using violence.

4.11 We point to the following areas for consideration when investing in working with persons using violence.

Investing in integrated responses to family and domestic violence

4.12 The Salvation Army supports the use of co-responder, integrated family violence services that respond to persons using violence, while also focusing on victim-survivor safety. Integrated services are discussed further in Chapter 5. We draw attention to our AFVRM in Victoria and recommend that the Australian Government make resources available to roll out similar programs across the nation.

Alexis Family Violence Response Model (AFVRM)

Established in 2014, the AFVRM is a partnership between The Salvation Army and Victoria Police, targeting serious-risk and repeat family violence cases. Under the partnership, specialist family violence practitioners are embedded into police stations' Family Violence Investigation Units, active in four stations across Victoria, with two new sites currently being established.

Through the AFVRM, the specialist family violence practitioner aims to:

- Strengthen integration between police and services;
- Reduce the incidences of police attendance where there is a history of recidivism;
- Prevent escalation of risk to women and children by intervening early; and
- Promote successful and ongoing engagement in mainstream services.

The AVFRM engages both victim-survivors and persons using violence to achieve better outcomes. Priority families receive comprehensive support including assertive outreach, case coordination, risk assessment, safety planning and emotional support, and immediate intervention post critical incident.

An evaluation of the AFVRM model by RMIT University found an 85 per cent reduction in recidivism 12 months following exit from the program.[43] There have also been identified benefits to police including improved skills and knowledge in handing family violence incidents, reduced stress, improved job satisfaction and improved accountability in regard to court briefs and proactive policing.[44]

The success of the AVFRM can be attributed in part to the program's role in providing case coordination support and service integration for families. The AFVRM also acts as an example of embedding support for victim-survivors in the justice system. Our services continue to see victim-survivors who do not feel safe reporting their experiences to police. Embedding family and domestic violence specialists within police units who empower, advocate for, and refer victim-survivors to services, assists with recognition of gender-driven family and domestic violence.

[43] Harris, L., Powell, A., & Hamilton, G. (2017, August). *Alexis – Family Violence Response Model.* School of Global, Urban and Social Studies RMIT University. https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/scribe/sites/auesalvos/files/documents/fdv/CSN_CLT_REP_Alexis_Report_20171127.pdf

[44] Hamilton, G. et al. (2024). *Updated Evaluation of the Alexis Family Violence Response Model.* RMIT University, Melbourne. https://research-repository.rmit.edu.au/articles/report/Updated_Evaluation_of_the_Alexis_Family_Violence_Response_Model/28426769?file=53341361

Sufficient funding that is flexible and responsive to needs

4.13 Our experience is that current funding levels for working with persons using violence are often not enough to ensure best outcomes.

4.14 For example, staff delivering The Salvation Army's men's behaviour change programs in Victoria have identified opportunities to deliver better outcomes for participants by being creative and tailoring these programs to meet the needs of the individual, if we had access to more funding and resourcing.

4.15 Funding must allow services working with persons using violence to be flexible, responsive and innovative to ensure programs are tailored to the individual needs of persons using violence to support engagement and change their trajectory.

> *"We need a significant investment into men's behaviour change and case management programs that allow for a more flexible, individualised approach, but also longer engagement. We are working with people that have really deep-seated beliefs and values for three months for two hours a week, and we're supposed to change their entire perception of the world."*
>
> **- A Salvation Army Senior Alexis Project Manager**

Supporting culturally safe responses to persons using violence

4.16 We also call for investment into community-led and co-designed interventions for persons using or at risk of using violence to ensure initiatives are culturally safe and recognise the differing nature and prevalence of violence in diverse communities.

4.17 For example, there is a need for culturally appropriate and responsive services to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons using violence to make change, whilst also maintaining a connection to Country and kinship. To address violence within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, investment in interventions for persons who use violence that are community owned, have a focus on healing, fulfil the cultural needs of participants, adopt a holistic approach,[45] and consider the impact of colonisation and intergenerational trauma, is essential. It is equally important to acknowledge and embed cultural practices and principles within these programs. This includes respecting that addressing violent behaviours can be deemed men's business and the confidentiality that comes with that.

Addressing associated disadvantage to reduce risk and increase engagement

4.18 We believe that early responses to persons using violence need to focus on behaviour change and accountability, as well as addressing any underlying drivers of disadvantage that contribute to complexity of risk.

[45] Andrews, S. et al.(2021). Holistic program developments and responses to Aboriginal men who use violence against women. *International Social Work,* 64(1), 59-73. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0020872818807272

4.19 This includes but is not limited to housing stress, mental health, alcohol and other drug use, and previous experiences of trauma.

4.20 This type of support is rarely provided to persons using violence, but in our experience, it is difficult to support meaningful behaviour change when a person does not have some level of stabilisation or their basic needs are not being met.

Recommendation 22

4.21 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments invest in a broad range of serious risk programs and service options to support engagement and behaviour change for persons using violence. This should include:

- **Ensuring funding is flexible and responsive to the needs of persons using violence;**
- **Investing in the rollout of co-responder, integrated family violence responses; and**
- **Consider the differing needs of persons using violence from diverse communities.**

5 System integration and workforce

5.1 The Salvation Army highlights the critical need for collaborative and integrated responses to be prioritised within the Second Action Plan to promote better outcomes for people impacted by family and domestic violence. There are some examples of system integration occurring across the country, but it is not happening consistently, in all areas, nor at scale.

Nationally consistent definitions

5.2 The Salvation Army believes a nationally consistent definition and approach to family and domestic violence would enhance clarity and understanding of all forms of violence. This would facilitate more consistent responses to support for victim-survivors, ensuring they are not disadvantaged due to locality or situation. It would also enhance perpetrator accountability.

5.3 Currently there is no single national definition of family and domestic violence that includes non-physical forms of violence and coercive and controlling behaviours. Coercive control must be recognised as a harmful pattern of behaviour and is a manifestation of family and domestic violence. A national definition must be broad enough to include a wide range of behaviours, situations, cultural influences, community groups and vulnerabilities.

5.4 The Salvation Army believes that forced marriage and certain forms of modern slavery are also manifestations of family and domestic violence.

Recommendation 23

5.5 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, develop a nationally consistent definition of family and domestic violence for use across jurisdictions and service systems. This should encompass physical and non-physical forms of violence and coercive control.

Emphasising whole-of-sector responsibility

5.1 Due to the intersectional needs of those impacted, and the often-hidden nature of family and domestic violence, police and family and domestic violence specialist services will not always be the first responders for victim-survivors or persons using violence.

5.2 The Salvation Army highlights the need to ensure that all frontline services across health, education, justice and the social services sector should have a clear understanding of their role in identifying and managing risk related to family and domestic violence, and the tools to respond appropriately.

5.3 Our experience is that risk assessment frameworks, information sharing frameworks and cross-sector training are integral for this to happen in a cohesive manner.

Risk assessment frameworks

5.4 We acknowledge the Australian Government's investment in developing new national best practice family and domestic violence risk assessment principles and a best practice National Risk Assessment Framework.[46]

5.5 We stress that joint risk assessments are critical to supporting all frontline services to identify family and domestic violence, and to working collaboratively to keep victim-survivors safe and hold persons who use violence accountable. Currently, not every jurisdiction in Australia has a statewide family and domestic violence risk assessment framework.

5.6 We draw attention to the Victorian Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) framework as an example of best practice. The MARAM has established clear responsibilities for the identification and management of risk related to family and domestic violence.[47] The framework establishes three levels of responsibility as follows:

- **Screening and identification** – referring to practitioners who may come into contact with a victim-survivor when delivering services considered universal;
- **Brief and intermediate** – referring to practitioners whose role is associated with family violence risk, but responding to family and domestic violence is not their core business; and
- **Comprehensive** – referring to specialist family and domestic violence practitioners who have regular contact with people experiencing family and domestic violence.[48]

5.7 We believe that by adopting a similar approach within all jurisdictions in Australia, we can ensure that engaging both victim-survivors and persons using violence becomes a whole-of-sector responsibility, and that all practitioners have the capability and knowledge to do so.

[46] Department of Social Services. (2025). *National best-practice family and domestic violence risk assessment principles and National Risk Assessment Framework*. https://www.dss.gov.au/national-plan-end-violence-against-women-and-children/progress/first-action-plan-progress/first-action-plan-activities-addendum/national-best-practice-family-and-domestic-violence-risk-assessment-principles-and-national-risk-assessment-framework

[47] Victorian Government. (2021). *MARAM Practice Responsibilities for Professionals*. https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-foundation-knowledge-guide/maram-practice-responsibilities-professionals

[48] Ibid.

Information sharing frameworks

5.8 We acknowledge the Australian Government's leadership in developing national guidance to enable best practice family and domestic violence information sharing.[49] We stress however that information sharing systems both nationally and across states and territories, must be strengthened to ensure that patterns of family and domestic violence, including coercive behaviour, are recognised and documented clearly to support the safety of victim-survivors.

5.9 Currently information sharing processes vary between states and territories, which complicates collaboration and risk management. For example, our services find it difficult to access and share information across borders when a person using violence moves interstate, which can undermine accountability efforts and service engagement, putting victim-survivors at increased risk.

5.10 We have seen the positive impact that a dedicated legislative scheme for information sharing can have on the level of collaboration between services at the state level. We again point to Victoria's MARAM and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) as examples of best practice. The implementation of the MARAM framework has further increased agencies' capacity to understand risk and share information through the FVISS. Under the scheme, Information Sharing Entities can share information related to assessing or managing family and domestic violence risk.

Cross-sector training

5.11 Risk assessment and information sharing frameworks must also be bolstered by consistent and mandatory specialised training for all frontline services to identify and respond to family and domestic violence. This includes the healthcare, housing, education, youth services, financial and child protection sectors. Training must also help professionals understand any differences in the nature and risk factors of violence amongst priority community groups, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse, and LGBTIQA+ communities, children and young people, and victim-survivors of modern slavery and forced marriage.

5.12 Cross-training between services is a beneficial way to upskill frontline workers, build the capacity of services to respond to victim-survivors and persons using violence with intersecting needs, and ultimately reduce risk of harm to victim-survivors. We recommend the development of a shared training loop, with training to respond to family and domestic violence delivered by and for sectors such as law enforcement, healthcare professionals, youth, homelessness, finance, education, and family and domestic violence services.

[49] Department of Social Services. (2025). *National best-practice family and domestic violence risk assessment principles and National Risk Assessment Framework*. https://www.dss.gov.au/national-plan-end-violence-against-women-and-children/progress/first-action-plan-progress/first-action-plan-activities-addendum/national-best-practice-family-and-domestic-violence-risk-assessment-principles-and-national-risk-assessment-framework

5.13 We believe a shared training loop would acknowledge the expertise of the sector, whilst ensuring that services which may come across family and domestic violence receive updated training and information. Shared training should occur at both local and state level jurisdictions. For example, The Salvation Army currently offers a package of training to Victoria Police regarding collusion.

Recommendation 24

5.14 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, develop national and statewide frameworks in all jurisdictions to:

- **Ensure all frontline services understand their role and responsibilities in responding to family and domestic violence; and**
- **Support information sharing and collaboration to keep victim-survivors safe and hold persons using violence accountable.**

Recommendation 25

5.15 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, increase workforce training across the wider service sector to appropriately identify and respond to family and domestic violence, support the safety of victim-survivors and hold persons using violence accountable.

Building an integrated system

5.16 Siloed service responses can be retraumatising for victim-survivors with intersectional needs who need to repeatedly share their story and can contribute to hesitancy in seeking support. Integrated service responses provide a mechanism for improved communication and knowledge sharing, and allow frontline services to work together more effectively.[50] This reduces systemic barriers to support for victim-survivors and promotes improved safety outcomes through more accurate risk assessment and coherent responses.[51]

[50] Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. (2020). *Working across sectors to meet the needs of clients experiencing domestic and family violence.* https://anrows-2019.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/27083147/Interagency-Synthesis-ANROWS-Insights.pdf
[51] Ibid.

5.17 The Salvation Army believes that a high-quality and well-resourced family and domestic violence system is one that is responsive to the needs of the whole family following an instance of family and domestic violence, and provides wraparound, integrated supports in a timely manner to ensure best outcomes for the whole family into the future. We draw attention to The Salvation Army's AFVRM in Victoria, highlighted in Chapter 4, that embeds family violence practitioners within police stations and provides integrated, whole-of-family support.

5.18 We believe that an integrated service system can be supported by embedding family and domestic violence specialists within the wider service sector, including police, health, mental health, alcohol and other drug services, child protection and housing. Specialist practitioners can support a more holistic response, provide review and consultation services, support service capacity building, and build relationships and referral pathways across sectors.

5.19 The Salvation Army also provides Embedded Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Practitioners across two police stations in Mackay. We have seen this program have a positive impact on victim-survivors, as they receive an immediate response, reducing barriers to engagement. The program has also helped to build the capacity of Queensland Police to respond to family and domestic violence. This program is currently being formally evaluated. We recommend that the Australian Government provide funding to roll out similar programs in other jurisdictions.

5.20 We highlight the Specialist Family Violence Advisor program in mental health and alcohol and other drug services in Victoria. These positions were rolled out as part of Victoria's Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2016. Specialist Family Violence Advisors are embedded in mental health or alcohol and other drug services to build family violence capability and capacity and to support collaboration.[52] These positions ensure that a family and domestic violence approach is embedded in service delivery, which in turn improves responses to victim-survivors.

5.21 Specialist family and domestic violence services can also benefit from embedded specialist practitioners to improve their capacity to meet the intersectional and diverse needs of victim-survivors. In Chapter 1 we recommended embedding IT specialists within family and domestic violence services to improve responses to technology-facilitated abuse.

[52] Department of Health (2024). *Specialist Family Violence Advisor program in mental health and alcohol and other drug services Guidelines*. Victorian Government. https://www.health.vic.gov.au/specialist-family-violence-advisor-program-mental-health-alcohol-other-drug-services

5.22 We also recommend that specialist mental health practitioners be embedded in family and domestic violence services. Victim-survivors often experience short- and long-term mental health issues, and risk of suicide.[53] Our specialist family and domestic violence services frequently support victim-survivors experiencing suicidal ideation and risk in the context of family and domestic violence. Having an embedded specialist mental health practitioner would improve our services' capacity to respond to victim-survivors experiencing mental health issues and suicidality and when navigating the mental health system. These positions could also provide support and guidance to our own staff, who are often working with people experiencing complex mental health issues and a high level of risk.

Recommendation 26

5.23 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, invest in an integrated service system that is well-equipped to respond to the intersectional needs of victim-survivors and persons using violence. This can be supported by investment in co-responder models and embedded practitioners.

Growing and supporting the specialist workforce

5.24 The family and domestic violence sector is facing critical workforce challenges, including a shortage of workers with specialist skills and qualifications, high rates of vicarious trauma, burnout, and staff turnover. The increasing demand for specialist family and domestic violence services across the nation additionally necessitates an increase in the workforce to keep pace with service growth.

5.25 Sustained investment is needed across the country to recruit, retain, upskill and support the family and domestic violence workforce, particularly in rural and remote areas. We point to the following for consideration under the Second Action Plan.

Recruiting and retaining staff

5.26 Staffing shortages across Australia impact on the ability of specialist family and domestic violence services to effectively respond to victim-survivors and persons using violence. In some areas our services have been unable to commence or continue providing programs because of difficulty recruiting staff, including expert practitioners.

[53] Coroners Court of Victoria. (2024). *Experiences of family violence among people who suicided, Victoria 2009-2016.* https://coronerscourt.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-09/Coroners%20Court%20of%20Victoria%20Experience%20of%20family%20violence%20among%20people%20who%20suicided%202009-20016.pdf
Hoeger, K. at al. (2025). *Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme Domestic Homicides and Suspected Victim Suicides 2020-2024 Year 4 Report*. Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme. https://www.vkpp.org.uk/assets/Year-4-Report_publication-with-footnote.pdf.

5.27 Services in regional and remote areas face additional barriers attracting and retaining suitably qualified staff, with a smaller pool of workers available, often leading to staff being recruited from out of area. This can present challenges where relocation costs are high, and housing availability is limited, and if staff do not remain living in the area, their knowledge, expertise and relationships are lost when they move.

5.28 Strategic workforce planning and investment is required to improve pathways into the family and domestic violence sector, as well as pathways to specialisation within the sector.

5.29 We recommend investment in:

- **Paid internship programs and graduate roles**, with a well-developed training and capacity building model.
- **Accessible and flexible training pathways** that enable workers to commence employment and be supported to work towards attaining minimum qualifications whilst employed.
- **Strategic initiatives to provide education and training** within local communities prior to the roll out of new family and domestic violence programs.

5.30 Workforce investment must prioritise the recruitment, retention and professional development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce within the family and domestic violence sector. A culturally strong and representative workforce is critical to delivering safe, effective, and community-led responses to family and domestic violence.

5.31 We therefore need to invest in developing culturally appropriate educational and upskilling pathways, such as traineeships, graduate programs, paid work placements, and study grants, that are accessible and culturally safe.

5.32 We also suggest working to ensure that human resources and employment processes are culturally aware and do not act as a barrier to onboarding or retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and that remuneration for identified roles reflects levels of cultural expertise.

5.33 Any efforts to strengthen and build the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce needs to be coupled with a commitment to ensure flexibility within the programs. Programs must be adaptable to different community needs and priorities rather than adhering to strict protocols. It is also important to allow for shared positions to reduce the likelihood of staff burnout.

Recommendation 27

5.34 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, invest in strategic workforce planning and investment to build and sustain the specialist family and domestic violence workforce, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.

Preventing burnout and fatigue

5.35 Frontline family and domestic violence work can be emotionally taxing. Exposure to trauma, combined with high workloads, time pressure and limited resources can result in distress, compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma and burnout among frontline workers. Burnout is a critical concern with significant implications for both the workforce's wellbeing and the ability of the workforce to continue to provide quality care and support.[54]

5.36 Counteracting fatigue and burnout in the frontline workforce will promote staff retention, job satisfaction and wellbeing. This will preserve the workforce, the sustainability of services and the provision of quality support. This can take the form of organisational interventions (such as providing workers with autonomy and control in the way they conduct their work) and individual interventions (such as supervision, professional coaching or education).[55]

5.37 Central to staff wellbeing is ensuring that services are adequately funded and staffed to meet the demand and provide individual caseloads that are sustainable.

> *"Funding that reflects demand is important to prevent overworking and burn out. You can have all the best programs available for staff but if they do three people's work due to demand and funding then they will burn out."*
>
> **- A Salvation Army Family and Domestic Violence State Manager**

5.38 The Salvation Army's family and domestic violence services recognise the importance of supervision for staff wellbeing and practice development. The cost of external supervision is only accounted for within grant funding in some jurisdictions; in other areas The Salvation Army funds this support for staff internally.

5.39 Access to professional development activities can build self-confidence, increase work engagement, and reduce staff burnout and high staff turnover rates.[56] We highlight that services are not funded sufficiently to support all staff to engage in a wide range of professional development activities, including education, training and conferences. Employees across the frontline should have access to opportunities that can cultivate skills and build their experience in a meaningful way.

[54] SafeWork NSW. (2024). *Evidence check: Burnout in the health care and social assistance sector.* NSW Government. https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1379414/Evidence-check-burnout-in-the-health-care-and-social-assistance-sector.pdf
[55] Ibid.
[56] Safe + Equal. (2022). *Health, safety and wellbeing self-assessment: Tool handbook.* https://safeandequal.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Health-Safety-and-Wellbeing-Self-Assessment-Tool-Handbook-v2.pdf

5.40 Critically, a significant portion of the family and domestic violence workforce has lived experience of family and domestic violence. This can bring specific benefits to service delivery, as well as individual challenges, including added emotional toll.[57] It is important that services are resourced to provide suitable infrastructure to support staff with lived experience.

Recommendation 28

5.41 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, ensure frontline services are adequately funded to provide interventions and opportunities to address employee burnout and fatigue, and promote job satisfaction, including sustainable caseloads, staff supervision and professional development.

Embedding outcomes measurement and program evaluation

5.42 Embedding outcomes measurement across the family and domestic violence sector is important to supporting evidence-based practice and decision-making.

5.43 In our experience, there is significant work to be done across the nation to ensure robust evidence is available to fully understand what is working (and to what extent), where improvements are needed, and where gaps persist in family and domestic violence services. This evidence is critical to service improvement, efficient resource distribution, and successful innovation across the family and domestic violence sector.

5.44 In response to this, The Salvation Army developed a national Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Outcomes Measurement Framework (the Framework) for our family and domestic violence accommodation and outreach services. We launched the Framework in 2025, alongside 'The Salvation Army Wellbeing and Recovery Indicator' (TSAWRI), a purpose-designed and validated outcomes measurement tool. A summary of The Salvation Army's Framework report has been included as an additional attachment to this submission, with the full report to be publicly released in coming months.

[57] Victorian Government. (2024). *Best practice supervision guidelines: Family violence, sexual assault and child wellbeing.* https://www.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-07/Best-practice-supervision-guidelines-Family-violence%2C-sexual-assault-and-child-wellbeing.pdf

5.45 Within the Framework report, we highlight the following key recommendations for government as key players when it comes to implementing outcomes measurement frameworks within the family and domestic violence sector:

1. Embed flexibility and agility within outcomes measurement reporting frameworks;
2. Invest in services' outcomes measurement capability and sustainability;
3. Prioritise outcomes, not just outputs;
4. Build on existing service-level practice;
5. Ensure outcomes measurement delivers value to services and victim-survivors;
6. Centre victim-survivor voice in outcomes measurement; and
7. Provide clarity and lead time on service-level data requirements.

5.46 Further expansion of these recommendations and our learnings are included in the Framework report.

Recommendation 29

5.47 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, work to embed outcomes measurement within family and domestic violence services and the sector to support evidence-based practice and decision-making.

Funding program and service evaluation

5.48 In our experience there are significant gaps in the evidence base across the family and domestic violence sector. We draw attention particularly to the limited research into interventions for persons using violence, including children and young people whose behaviour is violent, and limited evaluation of primary prevention and early intervention initiatives. Our staff have highlighted that programs in these areas continue to appear and disappear and the sector is left with little understanding of what worked and what did not.

5.49 We believe that any funding for interventions and programs in the family and domestic violence sector must include funding for their evaluation to better understand how to develop effective programs to end violence in Australia.

Recommendation 30

5.50 The Salvation Army recommends that the Commonwealth Government, together with state and territory governments, ensure that all funding for family and domestic violence programs and services includes funding for their evaluation.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The Salvation Army thanks the Department of Social Services for the opportunity to provide a written submission to the consultation on the Second Action Plan (National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032).

6.2 The Salvation Army would welcome the opportunity to discuss the content of this submission should any further information be of assistance. Further information can be sought from government.relations@salvationarmy.org.au.

The Salvation Army Australia Territory

July 2026