



Our Ways First Action Plan

What we heard

Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices

As the first National Plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family safety, *Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence 2026-2036* (Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices) is a significant milestone in Australia's collective commitment for supporting the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of First Nations families and communities.

Launched on 10 February 2026, Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices sets the long-term direction and priorities on what is needed to reduce the alarming rates of family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV) and child removal experienced by First Nations women and children. It is the key delivery mechanism for addressing Target 13 (reduce the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children by at least 50% by 2031, as progress towards zero) of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* (National Agreement) and will also contribute to addressing Target 12 (reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out of home care by 45% by 2031).

Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices builds on the Australian Government's significant investment in community-led solutions for reducing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children through the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025* (Action Plan). The Action Plan provided \$262.6 million over five years, from 2022-2023 to 2026-2027, for the implementation and expansion of the Leaving Violence Program Regional Trials, implementation of four immediate priority grant programs for crisis accommodation, men's wellness centres, FDSV programs in Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), and programs for children. The funding also included development work for a First Nations-led FDSV data collection activity, development of Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices and work to establish the National Peak Body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Safety, now known as Our Ways Strong Together: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Peak (Our Ways Strong Together).

Initiatives under the Action Plan laid essential groundwork for enduring change, setting the context and momentum for Our Ways. It strengthened community-led action, amplifying lived experience, and demanding that systems begin to transform—rather than simply tweak or accommodate existing services. Much of the work set out in the Action Plan continues and will be taken forward through Our Ways.



The Australian Government has committed \$218.3 million in initial actions to support the immediate implementation of Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices while the Our Ways First Action Plan is being developed. The package includes:

- \$167.6 million to fund the establishment of a national network of (up to 40 new and existing) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to deliver holistic and specialist services to support First Nations families experiencing or at risk of experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence and child removal.
- \$32.5 million for the extension of the Leaving Violence Program Trials for one year until June 2027, contributing directly to financial support packages and referrals to relevant services such as housing and financial counselling for First Nations peoples.
- \$15.5 million to support Our Ways Strong Together, and to ensure cultural authority, sector expertise and shared-decision making is embedded in the development and operation of the Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices governance arrangements.

Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices consultation findings

The consultation process for the development of Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices was a comprehensive and inclusive effort, aimed at ensuring the voices and perspectives of First Nations communities are central to governments' actions to address family, domestic and sexual violence.

An extensive consultation report was prepared by SNAICC – National Voice for Our Children: [Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices | National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence 2026–2036.](#)

Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices has 5 important threads that show what we need to do. Each one is strong on its own, but when they are woven together they create a fabric of safety and healing.

Voice, agency and self-determination

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, leadership and wisdom shape every decision.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led solutions that are strengths-based, preventive and healing

Support honours First Nations story and culture. Trauma responsive and community-led approaches bind Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in strength.

Reforming the institutions and systems that impact safety

Reform systems like justice, health, housing, education and child protection to strengthen supports.

Strengthening evidence, research and data, embedding Indigenous Data Sovereignty

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ownership of data and stories. The research woven into work is ethical, trustworthy, culturally sensitive and fit for communities.

Breaking the cycle through strengthened housing and financial security

Safe housing and fair and equal opportunities help women and children stay safe and strong.

Key consultation findings have been grouped by the most relevant thread, noting many cut across multiple threads and are linked.

Thread One: Centring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice, self-determination, and agency

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led accountability mechanisms

Consultation responses emphasised the importance of strong monitoring and accountability mechanisms to implement and oversee Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices.

Community-led solutions

Self-determination was identified as a foundational element for Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices. Consultations called for solutions to be community-led, designed and monitored and support the whole community. Participants noted efforts should be made to scale up existing grassroots and community-led responses, support men's and women's community-led groups and mentorship programs and support elders in their role. The need for governments to support and trust local ACCOs to deliver community-led responses.

Flexible funding

The need for ongoing, flexible funding to support ACCOs was highlighted. Participants called for funding models that allows for whole-of-family approaches to FDSV, scale-up successful programs and cover services' needs including infrastructure and administrative requirements. They noted communities should set KPIs and measures of success to determine if funded services are addressing community needs.

Thread Two: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led solutions

Culturally safe, trauma-informed and resourced supports

Workforce and organisational improvements are central to providing culturally safe, trauma-informed and resources supports. Participants highlighted workforce challenges such as short-term contracts, burnout and experience staff leaving. They also identified a need for a larger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in leadership roles. Participants suggested reducing barriers to qualifications, providing support for ACCO capacity building and increasing access to training and development for workers.

The needs of children and young people

Participants called for children and young people to be recognised as individuals in their own right in the FDSV service system. They highlighted gaps in services for children and young people and emphasised the importance of early intervention and prevention services including education around healthy relationships and communication and identifying violence.

Holistic, culturally safe service system

Participants recommended prioritising "one stop shop" and "no wrong door" models for service delivery. They emphasised the need to support the whole community and use a holistic approach to FDSV. They talked about the need for services for strength-based, culturally grounded services for men. Participants also raised the siloed nature of governments as a barrier to accessing funding and providing support.

Thread Three: Reforming institutions and systems that impact safety

System reform

Participants highlighted the need to reform the FDSV system and related systems such as the justice, housing and health system to better meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. Key themes in submissions and discussions included the impacts of intergenerational trauma from colonialism and systemic racism, fear of child removal as a deterrent to help seeking and rates of misidentification.

Non-Indigenous sector reform

Participants identified opportunities for greater collaboration between ACCOs and non-Indigenous organisations through partnerships. The need to improve the cultural capability and safety of non-Indigenous services and systems through training and partnerships was raised. Participants also called for funding to ACCOs to be prioritised.

Addressing service gaps

Participants identified a range of service gaps which could be addressed through Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices. Gaps included healing services, including a focus on services that support the whole community; supports for keeping families unified; investment in refuges and safe spaces; education; improving the health sector role in identifying and addressing FDSV; primary prevention; and support for victim-survivors of sexual violence. Challenges associated with service access and delivery in regional and remote locations were also raised.

Thread four: Strengthening evidence, research, and the data ecosystem through Indigenous Data Sovereignty

Data collection and analysis

Participants noted the value and richness provided by qualitative and narrative-based data. They also noted how this data is a more effective way of capturing the full scope of services delivered by ACCOs and their impacts on families.

Data storage, ownership and sharing were identified as key issues for consideration in Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices. Participants called for alignment with Priority Reform 4 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and improvements in data sharing and transparency. The need to evaluate services and programs and provide funding for this was noted.

Thread five: Breaking cycles of harm through strengthened housing and financial security

Participants highlighted the importance of safe and secure housing options as essential for safety and addressing FDSV, this includes options that allow victim-survivors to stay safe at home and options which provide wrap around supports. Participants also called for additional housing options for men and for people using or at risk of using violence.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025

Opportunities for action have also been identified through the implementation of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025* (Action Plan). In the period covering August 2023 to 30 June 2025, activities were reported against 41 of the 55 actions identified in the Action Plan.

Opportunities to scale successful activities, address gaps and review unimplemented actions will be considered in the development of the Our Ways First Action Plan. Prior to the end of their tenure in December 2025, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (Advisory Council) reviewed the implementation of the Action Plan to identify areas requiring attention and sustained effort.

Expanding existing ACCO services, support for ACCOs, healing services, resource hubs and the establishment of a men's advisory body were among their top priorities. Safe spaces, crisis accommodation and training were also highlighted for continued or expanded effort.

In reviewing unimplemented actions, the Advisory Council identified a need for more robust data collection to fill gaps in current evidence. These gaps include data around the scale of the housing and homelessness problem for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children experiencing violence, data relating to missing and murdered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children across Australia and research around experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy peoples.

Unimplemented actions around policing remained a focus but were identified as needing to be reviewed and updated to have a greater impact.

Missing and murdered First Nations women and children

The Our Ways First Action Plan will provide an opportunity to progress actions against key recommendations in the *Missing and murdered First Nations women and children* Senate Inquiry Report. Potential opportunities include:

- reviewing and harmonising policing practices including cultural awareness training
- establishing sustainable funding for community-controlled organisations
- empowering First Nations women to lead the design and implementation of services and supports

- addressing trauma-informed healing, male behaviour change, community support programs and shared responsibility.

National Plan Second Action Plan consultations

The learnings from the Our Ways Plan consultation, Action Plan implementation and *Missing and murdered First Nations women and children* have been reinforced and expanded through the recent consultations to develop the Second Action Plan under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (National Plan).

The extensive consultation process has included a submission process, public survey and roundtables. First Nations voices and perspectives have contributed throughout the process.

Participants noted the importance of addressing risk factors and drivers of violence, including poverty, social isolation, inequality, unemployment, substance abuse and housing instability. Alcohol and gambling were also highlighted as risk factors that play a role in violence. They also raised how service capacity and gaps in rural, regional and remote communities contribute to higher rates of violence and reduced access to specialist FDSV services.

The need to consider children and young people as individuals was emphasised. Children and young people should be at the centre in decisions that affect them, including providing tailored, independent supports and safe pathways for disclosure.

Participants called for disability-inclusive responses including clear disability-inclusive definitions, improved communication and stronger safeguards are needed to keep women, gender diverse people and children with disability safe. Participants also called for disability specialist practitioners to be embedded within mainstream violence response systems. They noted the importance of access to mental health support, particularly regarding affordability, quick availability and inclusivity across all genders.

Consultation emphasised that sexual violence requires a specific action, which intersects with family and domestic violence but needs to be treated as distinct as it has different drivers.

Prevention and early intervention were highlighted in consultations. Suggested responses included prevention through respectful relationships education, which should focus on consent, coercive control and technology-facilitated abuse. Prevention responses for technology-facilitated abuse Addressing technology-facilitated abuse should also be embedded in workplace policies, online platforms and media content. Participants also noted early intervention and prevention with people using violence is important for young Aboriginal men and boys to talk about violence in their own contexts without shame.

Additional insights are grouped by thread.

Thread One: Centring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice, self-determination, and agency

The importance of consulting with and being led by First Nations communities and victim-survivors in designing services and programs was highlighted. There was strong agreement that responses must be designed and delivered in partnership with Aboriginal communities, recognising cultural authority

and local knowledge. Many comments noted solutions should be co-designed with communities, support community-led organisations, and ensure services are culturally safe, accessible and responsive to different lived experiences.

Thread Two: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led solutions

Stakeholders recognised the significant impacts of intergenerational trauma and violence, particularly within many Aboriginal communities, and highlighted the importance of investing in culturally-led, community-designed responses that focus on healing as well as accountability.

Community-led responses get to the root causes of violence and help break the cycle of violence, as they better account for intergenerational and past trauma, governance and community context.

It was also noted that healing programs need to be culturally governed and grounded in community authority. Stakeholders called for better access to trauma-informed, inclusive and culturally safe services that are responsive to the diverse needs of individuals and communities. They also emphasised how healing and recovery requires wrap-around support, including financial, housing, community, health and mental health supports to ensure healing recovery and long-term safety for victim-survivors.

Stakeholders highlighted the importance of healing and recovery programs but noted healing-based responses for people using violence as behaviour change programs will not work where fundamental needs are not met.

Thread Three: Reforming institutions and systems that impact safety

Participants noted there is some progress being made in partnerships with ACCOs and shared decision-making with community-controlled peaks, however there is more to be done.

They highlighted the importance of communities and mainstream institutions as early intervention and prevention settings due to the importance of developmentally appropriate education, extending to families, parents, communities and sporting clubs.

Building workforce capability to recognise and respond to violence, including more consistency in standards, utilising adjacent workforce and long-term funding was a priority.

Stakeholders identified barriers to reporting and disclosure is a significant deterrent to help-seeking, including concerns about escalation of violence, being misidentified, or having children removed. Coercive control was identified as common and damaging, yet one of the least visible and least prosecuted forms of family violence.

They also identified system issues including:

- Funding services based on population base doesn't take account of the more complex nature of service delivery with Aboriginal communities, especially in rural and remote areas.
- Overrepresentation in statutory systems reflects insufficient investment in culturally safe, community-based support services.
- Concerns about work placements in health settings not having enough mandated protocols for ensuring safety, particularly keeping children safe.

- Legal practices and DFSV specialist services working together but also having specific First Nations liaison and supports embedded.
- Potential for wrap-around case worker or support worker support through the systems for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.
- Address requirements for multiple storytelling across systems, especially when 'telling of the story is to no effect' due to lack of supports available, or referral doesn't land in the right hands. Requires more integration across systems and services.

People using violence

Participants identified reforms to better respond to people who use violence. They noted long-term programs are required, integrated with accommodations and structured aftercare. They suggested responses could leverage local cultural authority and extended family networks to manage risk.

Participants noted community-led initiatives provide a localised, trusted framework that mainstream systems do not. They called for system integration and collaboration to prevent siloes and make it easier for people who use violence to get help earlier.

Stakeholders also called for stronger accountability and justice responses for people who use violence.

Thread four: Strengthening evidence, research, and the data ecosystem through Indigenous Data Sovereignty

Consultations reinforced the importance of supporting First Nations-led data platforms which allow communities to own, evaluate, and manage their own risk data and ensure early warning signs are flagged through a culturally accurate lens.

Participants called for action to address a lack of Aboriginal-led data sovereignty platforms for risk assessment. A number of stakeholders noted the need for 'real-time risk assessment' that ensures services are not operating in silos and keeps data governance in the community's hands.

The need to demonstrate progress on targets under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, particularly Target 13 was raised.

Thread five: Breaking cycles of harm through strengthened housing and financial security

Impacts of insufficient and unsafe housing and accommodation and financial insecurity are strong themes across consultation feedback, including from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations.

Stakeholders suggested there is significant unmet need in housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Housing issues including overcrowding intersect with increased violence in Aboriginal communities. The intersection between housing, and mental health and alcohol and other drug misuse contributes to family violence. Participants called for solutions to be co-designed with Aboriginal families.

Financial systems, such as the way the DSP and Carer Payments are designed and delivered can increase risk and dependency for victim-survivors. Participants also noted the need to address financial barriers to safety and support so that people excluded from means-tested supports can still afford and access services.

Community-controlled organisations can be funded to integrate supports across housing and crisis supports, as opposed to funding through government services and payments that often don't reach those in need. This includes option to go to one trusted hub or services to access the supports that are required.