

Draft National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032

Key areas to provide feedback/input (all statements are if you disagree, explain why in 100 words)

- *The draft National Plan includes a clear explanation of the prevalence, drivers, and different forms of gender-based violence in Australia (strongly disagree – strongly agree)*

Agree: The base explanation is adequate, however there is new guidance around how other forms of discrimination interact with gender inequality to produce violence: Changing the Picture regarding violence against First Nations women and Changing the Landscape regarding violence against women with disabilities should also be considered. The explanation should also take a whole of government approach by considering how violence may be exacerbated through systems such as social security, migration, education, institutional settings, and employment.

- *The draft National Plan meaningfully reflects issues highlighted through stakeholder consultations and the National Summit on Women's Safety, including the experiences of victim-survivors (strongly disagree – strongly agree)*

Agree: In 2021, WHM conducted a survey of ACT women's experiences of help-seeking following sexual assault, with over 200 respondents. Nearly 60% of respondents were not able to find the help they needed. Respondents told us of services being inadequately prepared to deal with disclosure of sexual assault or that lacked response training. The Plan reflects WHM's recommendations for increased training and awareness for health, community, and justice services to improve reporting and support experiences of victim-survivors.

- *The four Foundation Principles (gender equality, the diverse lived-experiences of victim-survivors are informing policies and solutions, Closing the Gap, and intersectionality) appropriately underpin the National Pillars and actions within the National Plan (strongly disagree – strongly agree)*

Agree: WHM's 2021 research demonstrates the importance of centring the voices of victim survivors. We support the centring of lived experience as a principle. The importance of specialist services for recovery was also an important theme in the research, and WHM suggests the role of specialist women's services as a key principle, following previous work by the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance. WHM also believes that rather than conceptualising intersectionality as one of several principles, it should be considered an overarching approach.

- *The four National Pillars in the draft National Plan provide a holistic approach to identifying and responding to gender-based violence (strongly disagree – strongly agree)*

Agree: WHM agrees with the four National Pillars, and that they reflect the priorities of the women in our 2021 survey regarding sexual assault. Women emphasised the importance of and their desire to see prevention (including consent education), as well as clear reporting pathways, and support services and healing (Response and Recovery pillars).

- *The four National Pillars in the draft National Plan reflect the family, domestic and sexual violence service system (strongly disagree – strongly agree)*

Agree: Though the specifics may not be able to be reflected in the Plan, it is important that an accompanying framework for implementation addresses the experiences of victim survivors as they

move through the reporting system. WHM's 2021 survey demonstrated that women experienced significant gaps when reporting and recommended building a strong network of health, community, and justice services to lessen re-traumatisation and fear of not being believed. This is critical to ensuring women's recovery from sexual assault.

- ***The draft National Plan reflects the needs and experiences of women and children (strongly disagree – strongly agree)***

Agree: As above, the National Plan is reflective of the priorities of women in our 2021 survey. Specifically, WHM supports alternative pathways to report violence, such as informal reporting trials in Queensland, with our 2021 research showing informal online reporting to be considered helpful for limiting avenues for re-traumatisation. Our research also found that unmet need regarding specialist support and counselling services for victim-survivors within Canberra, which should be considered with regard to appropriate resourcing.

- ***The draft National Plan reflects the needs and experiences of diverse communities and individuals (strongly disagree – strongly agree) (500 words)***

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples** Agree
- **Migrant and refugee women** Agree
- **Women with disability** Agree
- **Children and young people** Agree
- **LGBTQIA+ people** Agree
- **Brotherboys and Sistersgirls** Agree
- **Women in rural, regional and remote communities** Agree
- **Older women** Agree

Some language used to identify demographics in the National Plan has the potential to be exclusionary. Instead of 'Australians', consider 'people in Australia', as some people will not identify with the label 'Australian'. Instead of 'men and women', consider 'people of all genders', or 'women, men and non-binary people'. Additionally, instead of using the term 'vulnerability'/'vulnerabilities', consider other wording that recognises that the harms being referenced in the National Plan are caused by other people and systems, and are not inherently a result of a person's own attributes, e.g., disability, visa status.

- ***The draft National Plan supports building further evidence on what works for gender-based violence prevention, early intervention, response and recovery (strongly disagree – strongly agree)***

Agree: The Plan commits to ongoing work with Our Watch and ANROWS to continue building evidence. In addition, WHM's 2021 research shows that it is critical to value the lived experience of victim/survivors as evidence to understand what is working to end and respond to gender-based violence.

- ***The draft indicators and outcome measures provide a strong framework for measuring progress towards the next National Plan goals (strongly disagree – strongly agree)***

Agree: The Draft National Plan communicates an understanding of intersectional experiences regarding gender-based violence. However, it is important that an independent body is tasked with

monitoring the progress of the plan to keep the Plan and governing bodies accountable to the goals set by the Plan.

- *Is there any other feedback or additional information you wish to provide? (strongly disagree – strongly agree)*

Agree: Overall, many of the changes listed under the Four Pillars are in themselves good, e.g., 'ensure victim-survivors have access to appropriate survivor-centred justice responses,' however the mechanisms to ensure that this is implemented are still unclear. It is important that via the Action Plan under development, relevant agencies and representative organisations across jurisdictions are made accountable for their implementation with sufficient committed funding.