

Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council

COMMUNIQUE 22 NOVEMBER 2024

The Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council (the Council) was convened virtually today to bring together Commonwealth and state and territory governments to drive national progress on gender equality and gender-based violence.

Ministers began the meeting by acknowledging that Monday 25 November marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, starting the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence. The 16 Days of Activism calls on all people to join forces to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls. It also calls on governments worldwide to share how they are investing in gender-based violence prevention.

Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to end gender-based violence in one generation and expressed continued devastation about the lives lost to this violence. One life lost is one too many and the impact of this violence ripples across communities.

The meeting renewed shared efforts by the Commonwealth and states and territories to end gender-based violence and acknowledged progress on the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 and the subsequent Action Plans, along with investments to bring it into life.

First Nations Family Safety Plan

Ministers were unanimous about the need to address the disproportionate levels of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children. Minister Rishworth was joined by Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy, Minister for Indigenous Australians, to provide an update on the development of Australia's first dedicated First Nations Family Safety Plan (Family Safety Plan). The Council reaffirmed its commitment to delivering the Family Safety Plan, to sit alongside the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*. Minister Rishworth noted that this Family Safety Plan will be a signature piece of policy that will guide a whole of society approach to addressing the unacceptable rates of violence against First Nations women and children.

6 September National Cabinet on Gender-based Violence Outcomes

Ministers discussed the 6 September National Cabinet on gender-based violence outcomes and next steps for the Council.

National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses

Minister Rishworth noted that formal NPA negotiations commenced on 26 September 2024 and thanked all state and territory representatives for their contributions to develop the renewed NPA Schedule. Minister Rishworth also confirmed that indexation would be included, bringing the Commonwealth's contribution to \$365.884 million, with an additional \$1 million set aside for an evaluation.

Minister Rishworth noted she will be seeking Ministerial endorsement and signature of the renewed NPA for execution following the completion of negotiations. Once the renewed NPA Schedule is executed, the Commonwealth will work with state and territory officials for the first payments to be released in July 2025.

National FDV model best-practice risk assessment framework

Minister Rishworth noted that the initiative to develop new national FDV risk assessment principles and model framework (model framework), will be delivered through close collaboration with jurisdictions and across the Commonwealth. This initiative will also be informed by work undertaken by jurisdictions in

response to the 1 May 2024 National Cabinet meeting, to explore opportunities to strengthen national consistency and drive best practice approaches across jurisdictions. The Commonwealth will work across its agencies and with all jurisdictions to ensure alignment between the model framework and relevant work programs announced at the 6 September 2024 National Cabinet.

Overseeing the response to the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches

Ministers agreed to use the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches (the Rapid review) to inform collective action and national coordination to address gender-based violence, including by prioritising the following areas in 2025:

- Men's behaviour change – by taking targeted efforts to address the significant gaps in responses to people who use violence, including improving the national evidence base, quality, capability and supply of men's behaviour change programs.
- Risk assessment – by working together to better manage risk, including the development and implementation of nationally consistent risk assessment and management principles.
- Workforce – by collaborating to build the specialist FDSV workforce and to expand workforce capability of other services and sectors.

Ministers agreed to explore opportunities and discuss next steps for collective and cross-jurisdictional actions to progress these key Rapid Review areas at the Council's next meeting.

Attendees

- Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher (Commonwealth)
- The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP (Commonwealth)
- The Hon Justine Elliot MP (Commonwealth)
- The Hon Kate Thwaites MP (Commonwealth)
- Dr Marisa Paterson MLA (Australian Capital Territory)
- The Hon Jodie Harrison MP (New South Wales)
- The Hon Robyn Cahill OAM (Northern Territory)
- The Hon Fiona Simpson MP (Queensland)
- The Hon Amanda Camm MP (Queensland)
- The Hon Katrine Hildyard MP (South Australia)
- The Hon Jo Palmer MLC (Tasmania)
- The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP (Victoria)
- The Hon Sue Ellery MLC (Western Australia)
- The Hon Sabine Winton MLA (Western Australia)

Ms Vicki Ward MP and the Hon Jinson Charls sent their apologies.

The Commonwealth Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner, Ms Micaela Cronin, attended the meeting in an ex-officio capacity. Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy, Commonwealth Minister for Indigenous Australians, also attended the meeting as a guest to provide an update on the First Nations Family Safety Plan.