

# Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council

## WOMEN AND WOMEN'S SAFETY MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

### COMMUNIQUE 17 MARCH 2023

The inaugural meeting of the Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council was held today, which has now been formally established under the National Cabinet architecture.

The Council, co-chaired by Minister for Women, Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher and Minister for Social Services, the Hon Amanda Rishworth MP brings together the Commonwealth and state and territory Ministers for Women and Ministers with portfolio responsibility for women, families and/or the prevention of domestic, family and sexual violence.

Ministers who attended today's meeting are:

- Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher (Commonwealth)
- The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP (Commonwealth)
- The Hon Justine Elliott MP (Commonwealth)
- Ms Yvette Berry MLA (Australian Capital Territory)
- The Hon Katrine Hildyard MP (South Australia)
- The Hon Jo Palmer MLC (Tasmania)
- The Hon Ros Spence MP (Victoria)
- The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP (Victoria)
- The Hon Sue Ellery BA MLC (Western Australia)
- The Hon Sabine Winton BA MLA (Western Australia)

The Hon Shannon Fentiman MP (Queensland) and the Hon Kate Worden MLA and the Hon Lauren Moss MLA (Northern Territory) provided their apologies and the New South Wales Government is currently in caretaker period. QLD, NT and NSW were represented by officials.

The Commonwealth Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner, Ms. Micaela Cronin, attended the meeting as an observer to support improved coordination of policy and services for those experiencing violence.

The Council provides a forum for the states and territories, and the Australian Government, to drive national progress on gender equality and women's safety across all areas in ending violence against women and children within Australia.

The Council committed to collaborate and deliver outcomes for women across the country, and report back to National Cabinet on its progress towards advancing its priorities.

States and territories shared their key priorities and important work underway in their jurisdiction. The Council also discussed opportunities to increase gender balance across the labour market, and the importance of understanding the key drivers of economic inequality in Australia to help drive the work of the Council.

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## ***The National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality***

The Commonwealth provided an update on the work it is leading to develop a National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality (the Strategy). The Strategy will complement existing national strategies, such as the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2023-2032*, and work by states and territories on strategies within their own jurisdictions.

Minister Gallagher spoke on the next phase of public consultation to inform the development of the Strategy, which includes the release of a public survey on the Office for Women website. The survey invites the views of all people to share their priorities in their own words. Organisations also have the chance to participate as part of the consultation, guided by a discussion paper to spark conversations on gender equality in homes, workplaces, schools, communities and among friends.

The Strategy will guide whole of community action to make Australia one of the best countries in the world for gender equality, and will be an important mechanism to elevate and prioritise actions to achieve change

States and territories provided feedback on their experiences developing strategies to drive gender equality, and outlined their shared commitment to driving gender equality.

## ***Workplace Gender Equality Act Reporting***

Data is a driver of gender equality – as you cannot address what you can't measure. It is important to create a robust national data set to inform policy aimed at improving gender balance across Australia's workforce.

The Council affirmed its commitment to progressing the National Cabinet agreement on reporting public sector workforce data to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) across six Gender Equality Indicators.

States and Territories will work alongside WGEA to address challenges in aligning cross-jurisdictional data sets and how this data is collected. This will enable the public sector to be aligned with the private sector for WGEA's reporting purposes.

The Council will provide an update on progress when it next meets later in 2023.

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

Australia is committed to ending gender based violence.

Minister Rishworth provided an update on the development of the First Action Plan, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan and Outcomes Framework under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*. To support further consultation, the Council has agreed to work towards the implementation of these products by 1 August 2023.

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Key issues of women's safety were discussed, including the national roundtable on online dating safety and the need for ambitious and measurable national targets in the First Action Plan to demonstrate progress over time towards ending gender-based violence.

The Council acknowledged the public consultation process which is currently underway to support the development of the dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan, the consultations are demonstrating the Government's commitment to listen to First Nations voices.

The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner, Micaela Cronin, also acknowledged the importance of hearing from and listening to people with lived experience of domestic, family and sexual violence, considering the range of different and diverse feedback people have. She also highlighted the Commission's role in establishing ongoing engagement mechanisms to inform improvements to policy, services and systems to end violence in Australia.