



Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council

COMMUNIQUE 5 JULY 2024

The Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council (Council) was convened in Canberra and virtually today, attended by:

- Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher (Commonwealth)
- The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP (Commonwealth)
- The Hon Justine Elliot MP (Commonwealth)
- Ms Yvette Berry MLA (Australian Capital Territory)
- The Hon Jodie Harrison MP (New South Wales)
- The Hon Kate Worden MLA (Northern Territory)
- The Hon Katrine Hildyard MP (South Australia)
- The Hon Madeleine Ogilvie MP (Tasmania)
- Ms Vicki Ward MP (Victoria)
- The Hon Sabine Winton MLA (Western Australia)
- The Hon Sue Ellery MLC (Western Australia)

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP (Victoria), the Hon Ngaree Ah Kit MLA (Northern Territory), and the Hon Yvette D'Ath MP & the Hon Shannon Fentiman MP (Queensland) sent their apologies.

The Commonwealth Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner, Micaela Cronin, attended as an ex-officio member.

National Cabinet meeting on gender-based violence

Ministers reflected that there continues to be Australian women and children killed as a result of gender-based violence. There was unanimous consensus among jurisdiction for the need to eliminate all forms of domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) in Australian homes and communities, noting that every death is one too many. All leaders reaffirmed their commitment to ending gender-based violence in a generation, and activating community and business toward this goal.

Ministers discussed how the Council can further support work to accelerate change in ending gender-based violence being led by the National Cabinet following its meeting on gender-based violence on 1 May 2024. Ministers committed to aligning efforts on the National Cabinet work by working with Data and Digital Ministers, the Standing Council of Attorneys-General and Police Ministers, and the Joint Council on Closing the Gap. These priorities build on the crucial efforts already underway through the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (National Plan).

Minister Rishworth spoke to three key initiatives: the \$925.2 million commitment to establish the Leaving Violence Program (LVP) as an ongoing financial support program from mid-2025, \$4 million in funding for Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) in 2024-25 to help further build the research and evidence base on DFSV, and the continued focus on the impact of DFSV in First Nations communities, including missing and murdered First Nations women and children.

Minister Gallagher updated the Council on the work of Data and Digital Ministers, led by the Commonwealth and Victoria, to improve information sharing across systems and jurisdictions on perpetrators of domestic and family violence.

Ministers heard from Commissioner Cronin on progress and early insights from consultations underway through the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches, and welcomed the work of the expert panel leading this work.

Ministers also discussed the importance of engaging with men and boys on work to address gender-based violence, and that this will be considered further at the Council's next meeting. Ministers also agreed on the importance of an enduring focus on the spectrum of sexual violence as part of this work.

Minister Rishworth updated the Council on the Commonwealth-led voluntary industry code for dating apps aimed at reducing gender-based violence on digital platforms.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family, domestic and sexual violence & Activities Addendum

Minister Rishworth provided the Council with an update on the development of the standalone First Nations National Plan and reporting against the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025* (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan).

The Council agreed in-principle to the joint request from the Australian and state and territory governments to establish annual public reporting against actions at the Reform Area level for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan, to align with the timing of reporting on the Activities Addendum of the *First Action Plan 2023-27* (First Action Plan) under the National Plan, with details on reporting mechanisms and scope to be decided at Senior Official level.

Safe Places Emergency Accommodation Program

Minister Rishworth provided the Council with an update on the Safe Places Emergency Accommodation (Safe Places) Program, including progress on the first round of Safe Places and outcomes from the second round, the Safe Places Inclusion Round. The Safe Places Inclusion Round is expected to fund approximately 720 new safe places, bringing the total number of safe places delivered by the Program to around 1,500.

Minister Rishworth acknowledged the ongoing efforts by state and territory governments and thanked them for their support of the Program since its establishment. Minister Rishworth noted their insight had been invaluable in ensuring the Program meets the needs of women and children experiencing family and domestic violence in accessing crisis accommodation.

Yearly Report to Parliament by the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission

Commissioner Cronin provided an update on the Commission's activities, including progress on the development of the Yearly Report to Parliament, which will be tabled later this year. The Report will be informed by extensive engagement across stakeholder groups, including with people who have lived experience of DFSV, along with targeted forums and roundtables, key sector stakeholders and Commonwealth, state and territory departments and agencies.

The Commissioner reiterated the report will provide an independent perspective on the Australian Government's progress towards the National Plan's objectives, and shared key highlights and observations from the development of the report.

Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality

Minister Gallagher provided the Council with an update on the implementation of *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* (the Strategy), released on 7 March 2023. The update included that the Commonwealth will measure and report on the gender equality outcomes in the Strategy through a



number of mechanisms. These mechanisms include the Status of Women Report Card and the Women's Budget Statement. Importantly, the Commonwealth is also working with departments to develop a consistent approach to gender equality reporting through Annual Reports.