

# Second National Action Plan

*National Plan to Reduce Violence against  
Women and their Children 2010-22*

## Submission

Australian Women Against Violence  
Alliance

# AWAVA

Australian Women Against Violence Alliance

The Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA) is one of the six National Women's Alliances funded by the Australian Government to bring together women's organisations and individuals across Australia to share information, identify issues and their solutions, to respond to and prevent violence against women and their children. AWAVA's role is to ensure that women's voices and particularly marginalised women's voices are heard by Government.

AWAVA's focus is to ensure that all women and children are able to live free from all forms of violence and abuse. The Alliance recognises that violence against women is both a consequence and cause of gender and other social inequalities, in all sectors of society and must be addressed by promoting women's empowerment.

AWAVA is able to provide supporting information or provide contacts for further discussion, on any of the issues or recommendations and proposals within this submission, as well as on other issues relating to violence against women. Please contact AWAVA's Program Manager Dr Trishima Mitra-Kahn (0410707129) or email: [pm@awava.org.au](mailto:pm@awava.org.au)

## ENDORSED BY:

The submission and project proposals are endorsed, in full or in part, by AWAVA's Member Organisations (**see Annex A**) and in full or in part:

## FOREWORD

In this submission, the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA) outlines policy recommendations for consideration by the Commonwealth Government for the development of the Second Action Plan under the ***National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-22***. We welcome the opportunity to provide our advice and comment on the submission questions.

Over recent years, the Commonwealth Government has demonstrated leadership and commitment towards preventing violence against women, improving both community understanding and awareness of domestic and family violence and sexual assault, and ensuring that legislation and services are put in place to protect and support women and their children who have experienced violence. AWAVA welcomed many aspects of the first action plan and subsequent policy announcements which have made a substantial start to deliver on the Government's commitment to reduce violence against women in line with *the National Plan to Reduce Violence against women and their children* (National Plan).

The *National Plan*, with its strong focus on prevention and emphasis on “working to increase gender equality to prevent violence from occurring in the first place”, is the bedrock of a cross-jurisdictional and comprehensive policy framework for the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence. AWAVA is delighted that the Commonwealth Government has already fully committed to the ongoing and robust implementation of the National Plan as a matter of urgency.

The following is a list of AWAVA Advisory Group member organisations who attended the Second National Action Plan roundtables in Adelaide, Canberra, and Queensland:

1. Julie Oberin, Chairperson AWAVA and WESNET
2. Tracy Howe, CEO, DV New South Wales AWAVA Advisory Group Proxy
3. Maria Hagias and Vicki Lachlan (AWAVA Advisory Group Proxy), Coalition of Women's Domestic Violence Services, CWDVS SA, South Australia
4. Helen McDermott, Australasian Council of Women and Policing (AWAVA Advisory Group)
5. Liz Little, Chairperson, National Association of Sexual Violence Services Providers (via telephone) (AWAVA Executive Committee member)
6. Maria Delaney, Association of Women Educators (AWAVA Executive Committee member)
7. Samantha Bowden, National Association of Sexual Violence Services Providers (AWAVA Advisory Group)
8. Chrystina Stanford, National Association of Sexual Violence Services Providers (AWAVA Advisory Group)
9. Rhonda Payget, Women's Legal Services Australia (AWAVA Advisory Group Member Organisation)
10. Dea Delaney Thiele, Chairperson, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA), (AWAVA Advisory Group Member Organisation)
11. Margie Charlesworth, Women with Disabilities Australia (AWAVA Advisory Group)
12. Lindy Edwards, WESNET (AWAVA Advisory Group Organisation and WESNET National Committee member)

We maintain our commitment to working in partnership with Government and stakeholders across all sectors. We hope that the implementation of these recommendations will be pursued by Government in partnership with the specialist women's responding to and preventing violence against women sector, as

we work together to support and empower all Australian women and their children to live lives free of violence and abuse.

## General Recommendations

In addition to our responses to the six submission questions, AWAVA would like to highlight and recommend:

1. That the Commonwealth Government **adequately invest to improve community awareness of the existence of the National Plan** (and Action Plans). As the *Report of the AWAVA National Plan Community Engagement Project 2011* notes: “Many participants had little or no knowledge of the National Plan prior to attending the event. This was improved dramatically as a result of the events. For some, this was the first time they had heard about the National Plan. For others, this was the first time they had heard in any detail about the National Plan and its significance”. Furthermore, awareness of the existence of the National Plan must be raised in all sectors of society, within the privacy of families, to schools, sporting institutions, clubs, communities, businesses etc. AWAVA was previously funded to raise the profile of the National Plan with very pleasing results. This could be repeated in negotiation with AWAVA.
2. That the Commonwealth Government address the need for improved communication between government and civil society about the National Action Plan and additional mechanisms for participation from civil society.
3. That the Commonwealth Government continue to demonstrate leadership and provide **adequate, long term funding to and resourcing of specialist women’s services**. The lack of robust funding for services directly impacts on early intervention and prevention work and risks the safety of women and children’s lives; the Commonwealth Government must proactively build the capacity of specialist women’s services, not only through resourcing but also by supporting meaningful structures to enable coordination across jurisdictions.
4. That the Commonwealth Government **commit to the “the continuation of funding for the [National Women’s] Alliances** work... [as] an integral component of the achieving the goals of the National Plan” (WLSA, 2014:7)<sup>1</sup>.
5. That the Commonwealth Government, as a matter of urgency, **continue the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) funding** for domestic and family violence services. Lack of access to safe, secure, appropriate, and affordable support and housing is one of the most significant barriers to women and children leaving dangerous situations. Domestic and family violence is also the greatest cause of gender-based homelessness in Australia.

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<sup>1</sup> Women’s Legal Services Australia (2014) Submission to inform the Development of the Second Action Plan. Available at <http://www.womenslegalnsw.asn.au/wlsnsw/wp-content/uploads/WLSA-Submission-second-action-plan-1.pdf>

6. That the Commonwealth Government ***include domestic violence / family violence as a protected attribute in anti-discrimination laws*** and implement workplace reform to support workers who are experiencing domestic or family violence.

7. That the Commonwealth Government Continue to be ***responsive to emerging forms of violence*** such as FGM/C, Early and Forced Marriage, so-called honour crimes, online violence and cyber stalking

8. That the Commonwealth Government, whilst implementing initiatives to improve the evidence base on violence against women issues, ***make use of existing data and acknowledge the value of pre-existing evidence and practice wisdom***. There are assumptions that we have almost a blank slate on the evidence base on violence against women and that there is need to start evidence gathering from here forward; this is not at all correct.

## SUBMISSION QUESTIONS

### 1. *What have been the achievements/gaps under the First Action Plan?*

#### 1.1 Achievements

**1.1.1 Bi-partisan support for the National Plan and First Action Plan, including bi-partisan support for the recognition of the gendered nature of domestic, family violence and sexual assault.**

**1.1.2 The success of COAG (Coalition of Australian Governments) in pushing states and territories to develop their own **State and Territory Prevention Plans**:** This is promising and for first time ever, in theory, we have a national landscape where there is a policy understanding and appreciation of gender based violence across jurisdictions.

**1.1.3 The establishment and ongoing development of 1800 RESPECT** which is a valuable resource. It has received a lot of good feedback from rural and remote services particularly isolated standalone workers needing support or debriefing from the worker portal. However there is a need for National Standards for Telephone and Online Counselling Services which apply both a gender lens as well as a trauma focused approach. We also note that 1800 RESPECT is not accessible to those with hearing disabilities and vision impairments.

**1.1.4 DV alert Training:** Under the First Action Plan, domestic violence training for health, frontline and allied health workers was expanded and Indigenous specific training program was implemented. However there are concerns that as the contract was not given to specialist family violence training services, the training has not hit the mark evidenced by the strong feedback from some frontline workers who have attended. AWAVA has been advised that some frontline workers felt underprepared and untrained at the workshops and awareness sessions. This is of concern given the nature of risk assessment and risk management needed to protect and support women and children experiencing gender-based violence.

**1.1.5 AWAVA and NRWC Toolkit "[Stopping Violence Against Women before it Happens: A Practical Toolkit for Communities](#)"** has received excellent feedback and has received calls to adapt it into different community languages. It has received positive feedback from its international promotion at the 57<sup>th</sup> and 58<sup>th</sup> Sessions of the UN Commission for the Status of Women.

**1.1.6 Stop the Violence Project for women with disabilities** has been an excellent project with new cutting edge research and recommendations along with being promoted at international level by AWAVA at the 58<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Commission for the Status of Women.

**1.1.7 Commencement of work on National Standards for Perpetrator Interventions.** Whilst welcome, the difficulty will be in obtaining jurisdictional standards and accountability.

**1.1.8 The Australian Gender Indicators** has been an excellent ongoing initiative. The value of gender equality indicators as a means to track and benchmark progress has been globally recognised by both Governments and Civil Society. We particularly welcome the four yearly ABS Personal Safety Survey and are delighted to hear that this will continue.

## **1.1.9 Establishment of the Foundation to PVAW and NCE**

AWAVA commends the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments for the establishment of the new National Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children. As the Commonwealth funded, issue based alliance on violence against women, AWAVA believes that the \$6.5 million invested in the new Foundation is evidence of bipartisan government support for and a strong commitment to the National Plan. We look forward to working with the Foundation on engaging and raising awareness in the community of all forms of violence against women. The new Foundation will no doubt support and enhance the innovative practices that are already present across the nation at the grass root level within the domestic and family violence and sexual assault sectors.

AWAVA commends the Commonwealth Government for the establishment of the National Centre for Excellence. As the NCE begins to take over responsibility for violence against women research and research dissemination, AWAVA looks forward to engaging and collaborating closely with the NCE. We welcome the appointment of Ms. Heather Nancarrow as Chief Executive Officer who brings to the post a wealth of academic, service provision, and policy expertise. We hope that the NCE will continue to enhance the evidence base with regard to domestic and family violence and sexual assault in support of the National Plan. We look forward to supporting the NCE and hope that the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse's and Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault's pioneering focus on translating evidence into information to support the work of practitioners in our Sector will be retained and strengthened. It is vital that the NCE notes the continuing importance of collaborating with our Sector, by harnessing and amplifying our practice wisdom, to strengthen the research infrastructure in responding to and preventing violence against women.

## **1.1.10 Commencement of work on National Data Collection and Reporting Framework**

AWAVA is very supportive of the development of the National Data Collection and Reporting Framework. We have provided robust input into [Defining the data challenge for family, domestic and sexual violence](#), [Bridging the data gaps for family, domestic and sexual violence](#), and [Defining the data challenge for family, domestic and sexual violence](#). AWAVA was invited to and has attended the National Framework teleconference workshop (Program Manager and AWAVA Advisory Group member Ms. Liz Snell from Women's Legal Services Australia). We do however take note that, barring our participation in the workshop, there was a lack of robust participation of specialist women's service providers. Nonetheless, we hope that the National Framework, conceptualised to lay a strong foundation to establish data collection strategies, will produce nationally consistent data.

## **1.2 Gaps**

### **1.2.1 Lack of timely and robust outcomes/deliverables focused communication to the National Plan Implementation Panel on the progress of the first action (and National Plan, more generally)**

A tripartite National Plan Implementation Panel (NPIP) has been established to advise on the development and implementation of key national priority projects identified in the Action Plans. The Implementation Panel was set up to provide advice to Ministers on emerging issues for subsequent Action Plans. Working/Advisory Groups were scheduled to be established to sit under the Implementation Panel to progress the implementation of important national priorities. Working/Advisory groups are yet to be established. NGO representatives to the National Plan Implementation Panel were initially required to sign confidentiality

agreements. While these NGO representatives have been told since that they are able to communicate NPIP work unless it is specifically declared confidential, the official communication from Governments out to the NGO sector is very slow. As per our member organisation Women Legal Services Australia's submission: ***Given the diverse, multi-sector involvement of civil society in the implementation of the National Plan, it is WLSA's view that there must be a conduit of information sharing such that the NPIP can respond effectively to an evolving agenda*** (WLSA, 2014: 2).

### 1.2.2 Failure to establish National Implementation Plan Advisory Groups

The First Action Plan provided for the establishment of advisory groups to report to the National Plan Implementation Panel (NPIP). Despite the mandate in the Plan, this has not yet occurred. AWAVA is concerned that despite writing to and liaising with the Commonwealth Government on the matter, information on the establishment of Advisory Groups is yet to be received. Without the establishment of Advisory Groups, there seems to be no provision for the vital incorporation of the legal sector's, the women's health sector's, and the CALD sector's wealth of expertise in the implementation of the Plan.

### 1.2.3 Independent monitoring and evaluation of the implementation plan

UN Women (2012:72)<sup>2</sup> note that "National Action Plans on violence against women should provide for the regular and comprehensive evaluation, monitoring and reporting of implementation progress, including (1) indicators and targets; (2) an institutional mechanism to monitor implementation; (3) meaningful participation of civil society and other stakeholders; (4) evaluation of practice and systems; and (5) accountable reporting procedures.

Frequent calls for an independent monitoring and evaluation mechanism and the resourcing of civil society to participate in this has resulted in the National Implementation Plan for the First Action Plan 2010 – 2013 *Building a Strong Foundation* (First Action Plan released September 2012) referring to governments "and their community partners" agreeing to a framework for the evaluation over the 12 years of the National Plan "including agreement on the methodology, data and information requirements and timing" by mid-2012. The evaluation framework is yet to be finalised by the Government. The government must fast track this and commit to continuing the implementation of an independent monitoring and evaluation mechanism and the resourcing of civil society to meaningfully participate in this.

### 1.2.4 Failure to include specific programs for marginalised women

<sup>2</sup> UN Women (2012) *Handbook for National Plans on Violence Against Women*. Available at <http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2012/7/HandbookNationalActionPlansOnVAW-en%20pdf.pdf>

### Meaningful participation of civil society

Civil society representatives ... have a unique knowledge-base and experience invaluable to the development, implementation and monitoring of National Action Plans... Given the long-term, cooperative nature of National Action Plans, States have found it useful to establish ongoing formal structures and partnerships, beyond initial consultation, comprising key sectors with roles in implementation and monitoring of plans. ***Building trust and transparency in relationships between government and civil society is particularly important*** and beneficial to this effort, and often requires specific actions or concerted effort. The full and meaningful participation of stakeholders through such structures requires that the ***bodies be invested with power and resources*** to influence direction and decision making although this needs to be balanced against ensuring civil society organizations retain their independence and ***capacity to hold government accountable***.

- UN Women, 2012: 19-20

Whilst [there are 68 Immediate National Initiatives](#) to address violence against women under the First Action Plan, the First Action Plan has not adequately developed specific programs for particularly marginalised groups of women. AWAVA notes in particular the lack of specific programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, CALD and NESB women, LGBTIQ communities, women with disabilities, women in prisons, older women, girls and young women.

### 1.2.5 Lack of timely Follow up on *all* National Plan and First Action Plan Initiatives

AWAVA would like more information, including progress and/or outcomes reporting, on the following initiatives:

- Timelines for the delivery of **Evaluation Frameworks**: According to the Progress<sup>3</sup> report to COAG “Bearing in mind the considerable work that is being done to build and consolidate the evidence base on violence against women, we also need to turn our attention to the development of an evaluation framework for individual action plans and across the lifespan of the National Plan. This framework will be developed over the next 12 months, *in consultation with NPIP*, and will be underpinned by data such as that collected through the PSS and the NCAS” (2013: 70).
- Timelines for the publication delivery of the **NCE’s National Research Agenda**
- Timelines for the publication delivery of the **National Data Reporting Framework**
- Timelines for the delivery of **National Standards** for online and telephone counselling services
- Timelines for the delivery of working with GPs and effective **risk assessment across the health sector**

### 1.2.6 Strengthening *The Line*

The Progress Report to COAG 2010–2012 noted that as at October 2012, the social media campaign *The Line* had over 70,000 Facebook fans (COAG, 2012: 34). As of March 2014, the campaign has 75,956 followers. This suggests that the reach and social media impact of *The Line* has somewhat stalled. The progress report to COAG also states that regular tracking research is conducted for *The Line* every six months, however it is not clear how people are being surveyed or how the reach and impact of *The Line* is being tracked. *The Line* also needs to fully address **equal** relationships (not simply respectful). It needs to focus on sexual assault, intimate partner and dating violence and not simply on bullying. The significantly gendered dimensions of bullying – e.g. sexism and homophobia – need to be articulated and addressed as well. AWAVA also submits that the as the current focus of *The Line* is on 12-20 year olds, this is simply too broad an age cohort to meet the specific needs of particular groups within the cohort.

### 1.2.7 White Ribbon Programs

The Commonwealth funds a variety of White Ribbon programs and projects including work place programs, programs in schools, programs in rural and remote communities, and new programs with emerging and emerged communities (announced by the Prime Minister on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2013). The funding for these programs runs in to millions of tax payers dollars. As with any Government funded program, independent and publically available evaluations/reviews are a must. With respect to White Ribbon programs, concerns have been raised by the Women’s Sector around the lack of meaningful engagement and consultation with the Sector in order to amplify and harness over 30 years of practice and frontline expertise as well as other

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<sup>3</sup> Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (2012) National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children: Progress Report 2010-2012. Available at [http://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05\\_2013/final\\_edited\\_report\\_edit.pdf](http://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2013/final_edited_report_edit.pdf)

concerns regarding an inadequate understanding of structural gender and intersectional issues. For example, White Ribbon's 'Women Champions Program' encourages women survivors to publically share their stories (in print journalism, on the White Ribbon website, etc.) of domestic and family violence. There are a range of ethical and practical considerations when women share their experiences of violence in the media. They need to have appropriate and specialist supports around them when they do, including legal support. Women can become very exposed when they 'go public'; we're aware of many cases where women receive vitriolic abuse through social media and in public (often concerted campaigns by the perpetrator's supporters, but also by the general public). The potential for being re-traumatised is very real and this needs to be mitigated as much as possible by support services. Any calls for women to disclose their experiences will have a flow on effect to the broad service system. This is why any organisation embarking on an awareness-raising campaign needs to work with and involve on-the-ground-services to prepare for this and needs to understand their role in the overall system and their capacity (or lack thereof) to respond. White Ribbon has an important role to play in raising awareness of violence against women and engaging men in awareness raising activities; addressing the aforementioned would strengthen the work they undertake.

#### **1.2.8 National Register of Apprehended Violence Orders**

State, Territory and Commonwealth governments have agreed to a national register of apprehended violence orders. However, this is yet to be implemented.

#### **1.2.9 Changes to *Fair Work Act 2009***

Amendments to the *Fair Work Act* have resulted in a right to request flexible work arrangements for victims/survivors of family violence and carers of victims/survivors. However, the Commonwealth Government should commit to re-reviewing the proposed amendment to include an adverse action protection relating to being a victim/survivor of domestic and family violence in the *Fair Work Act*.

#### **1.2.10 The recommendations of the ALRC 2010 Inquiry *Family Violence—A National Legal Response***

The National Plan includes a commitment to consider the recommendations made in the 2010 report. This commitment has not been demonstrated to the level AWAVA would expect. We endorse our member organisation [Women's Legal Services views on the recommendations of the ALRC 2010 Inquiry](#):

**"Disappointingly, over half of the recommendations are only 'noted'.** Of these recommendations, there is a recurring inference that it falls to states and territories to change laws, practices and procedures regarding sexual assault in the context of family violence. This seems to run contrary to the Bill recently introduced into Parliament which provides protection for vulnerable witnesses giving evidence in Commonwealth criminal proceedings, for example, related to forced marriage and slavery. This is a protection we would like to see extended to vulnerable witnesses in family law proceedings to prevent perpetrators directly cross-examining victims of violence as a continuation of the violence."

#### **1.2.11 Implementation Plan and Measures of Success**

Some indicators of success in the first Implementation Plan are vague and seem difficult to measure, including, for example, "increased intolerance of violence against women"<sup>4</sup> which will be measured through a survey. It is hoped that measures of success in the Second Action Plan will be more precise, clear, and measurable.

<sup>4</sup> *National Implementation Plan First Action Plan 2010-2013*, P.37

## QUESTION TWO

### 2. What are the opportunities for consolidating and building upon the actions undertaken under the National Priorities of the First Action Plan?

**2.1 Introduce Human Rights language as per recommendation by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Professor Rashida Manjoo.** AWAVA are happy to provide recommendations.

**2.2 Commitment to renewed funding for NPAH (National Partnerships on Homelessness)**

AWAVA expresses concerns about the government's ongoing commitment to the NPAH (National Partnerships on Homelessness) funding for which will end 30 June 2014. Domestic and family violence remains the primary cause of homelessness for women and children. Women and children escaping domestic violence risk having to return or remain in an unsafe or violent environment as women's refuges do not have the room to accommodate them. Additionally, there is extensive evidence that children who experience homelessness are more likely to be homeless later in life. Projects and programs funded under NPAH have resulted in extensive systems reforms within homelessness services resulting in better connected service systems and collaborative ventures across both government and non-government services. In South Australia for example, the reform outcomes have included:

- Statewide coverage of generic, youth, Aboriginal and Domestic Violence & Aboriginal Family Violence Services
- Consistent service responses across regions
- Stronger regional connection and focus
- Increased sector profile within every region
- Improved/more sustainable client outcomes

Similarly in New South Wales, the NPAH funds have provided for the development, or expansion, of programs and responses providing accommodation and support for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence so that they can live a life free from violence and abuse. The value of the projects is clearly demonstrated in an evaluation of the NPAH funded projects provided support to women and children experiencing domestic and family violence in NSW. The evaluation found: *the "projects were highly successful in establishing sustainable housing options for vulnerable women and children. Interviews with clients and service providers clearly demonstrate that for many women the pressure to return to the DV perpetrator due to lack of affordable housing and/or minimal personal or practical resources to manage complex and overwhelming stresses, was significantly ameliorated by the provision of the projects' close support and timely brokerage."*<sup>5</sup>

If no further commitment is made to funding post 30 June 2014, AWAVA member organisation CWDVS SA believe that we will witness the following outcomes:

- Dismantling of a whole service system across South Australia

<sup>5</sup> NSW Homelessness Action Plan Extended Evaluation (2013) Available at <http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/388D987B-35FA-4AA6-A931-2CA4FFD82BFA/0/LongTermAccommodation.pdf> (p.37)

- 30% funding cut across all programs
- Significant impact on service responses to women and children affected by domestic and family violence due to significant funding reductions – which will result in not meeting the demand for services and women and children remaining in unsafe households.
- Significant impact on service responses across the homelessness sector that limits the positive outcomes for those affected by homelessness and domestic and family violence

This is shared by other states and territories.

Women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence often face lengthy and fragmented processes when attempting to access safe and affordable housing. The processes involved include moving between various types of accommodation that lacked security of tenure and/or failed to provide a sense of safety. The lack of stability generated through constantly relocating can impact directly on the ability of women and children to attain a life free from violence. With growing numbers of vulnerable people facing difficulty in securing access to affordable rental housing, and high turn away rates from specialist homelessness services including women's refuges, AWAVA firmly believes that we cannot afford to lose vital services funded through the NPAH. This situation is urgent. Funding is only until 30<sup>th</sup> June and experienced and skilled staff are already looking for other work due to the insecurity of this funding.

### 2.3 Resource and strengthen specialist women's services

This needs to be taken up by the Commonwealth Government as a matter of urgency in order to meet increased demand for women's specialist services. In response to the growing evidence base on rising demand for women's specialist services, **AWAVA submits that funding for services needs to reflect the growing demand for services.** With growing numbers of women accessing specialist women's services AWAVA calls for the long-term, sustainable, adequate resourcing of these vital services that respond to, prevent the reoccurrence of, and prevent violence. Because of the deep complexity of domestic and family violence and sexual abuse and the use of power and control by the perpetrator, it may take many women a long time to leave relationships that are violent - if they are able to leave at all - and the reasons for this are multifaceted, varied, and complex. Women accessing refuges, sexual assault services, health services, counselling services, and legal services may need to access services many times before they can achieve safety and feel empowered to rebuild their lives. Therefore ongoing access to services should be viewed as a positive intervention. Specialist women's services are an integral part of the whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach that the *National Plan* is underpinned by. They understand the nature and dynamics of domestic and family violence and why such violence is primarily perpetrated against women and children and strongly support holding perpetrators to account. Specialist Women's Services are trained and skilled to assess risk, to prepare safety plans for women and children at risk, and to work collaboratively with Police and other service providers to manage risk. They are fundamental in ensuring that violence does not reoccur; facilitating women's access to the justice and health system, providing ongoing emotional and practical support to women, and therapeutic processes to deal with trauma and recovery. These services enable women to feel empowered to rebuild their lives following violence including facilitating entry or re-entry to education and/or training. *"Evidence suggests that National Action Plans which have ongoing resourcing for programs of work are most effective in terms of incremental change and value for Investment"* (UN Women, 2012: 70).

### 2.4 Continue to strengthen the evidence base and build on existent data and knowledge

AWAVA welcomes the various initiatives under the National Plan and the First Action Plan to strengthen the evidence base of violence against women issues. Whilst acknowledging the various initiatives being implemented by the ABS, and the NCE, it is important to stress the value of qualitative research such as “case studies of victims’/survivors’ experiences of violence and the systems designed to respond to it”. This can provide insight into where policy and programming attention needs to be directed. As per UN Women’s good practice standards on national plans: “*National Action Plans should include measures to enhance independent and qualitative research on violence against women, across prevention, service, police and justice strategy areas*” (UN Women, 2012: 28). For example, Spain’s *National Plan to Heighten Awareness and Prevent Gender-Based Violence: Conceptual Framework and Main Lines of Intervention (2007-2008)* mandates a variety of stakeholders to undertake interdisciplinary research “to analyse the causes and consequences of gender-based violence (for example, a study on disability as a consequence of gender-based violence)” (UN Women, 2012: 29). AWAVA recommends that the Commonwealth Government also **make use of existing data and acknowledge the value of pre-existing evidence and practice wisdom**. There are assumptions that we have almost a blank slate on the evidence base on violence against women and that there is need to start evidence gathering from here forward; this is not at all correct.

## **2.5 Implement the outcomes of the *Stop the Violence Project: Improving Service Delivery for Women and Girls with Disabilities* project (STVP)**

The October 2013 [National Symposium](#) on the Stop the Violence Project built on the key activities and findings of the STVP Project, resulting in six key thematic areas plus two key future mechanisms to support the development of good policy and the provision of good practice in service provision to address and prevent violence against women and girls with disabilities. The six key thematic areas are: 1) Information, Education and Capacity Building for Women and Girls with Disabilities; 2) Awareness Raising for the Broader Community; 3) Education and Training for Service Providers; 4) Service Sector Development and Reform; 5) Legislation, National Agreements and Policy Frameworks; 6) Evidence Gathering, Research and Development. AWAVA Member Organisation Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA) recommend that the two key mechanisms recommended by the STVP as being critical for progressing reforms under these six thematic areas are:

1. The establishment and development of a **Virtual Centre for the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls with Disabilities**,
2. The establishment of a **National Women with Disabilities Expert Panel on the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls with Disabilities**.

WWDA and AWAVA are therefore strongly advocating that that **these two key mechanisms**, which represent cost-effective and practical initiatives, be incorporated into the Second Action Plan. AWAVA joins WWDA in strongly recommending that work to address the widespread and systemic issue of violence against women and girls in institutions be prioritised in the Second Action Plan. Violence against women and girls in institutions in Australia has consistently been identified as an urgent issue requiring national leadership, and a national public policy response. This was reinforced by participants at the National STVP Symposium, where there was unanimous and unequivocal consensus calling for urgent action on this issue. Most recently, in October 2013, the *United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) expressed its deep concern at the high rates of violence perpetrated against women and girls with disabilities and recommended that Australian Governments act urgently to:

1. address and investigate, without delay, violence, exploitation and abuse experienced by women and girls with disabilities in institutional settings;
2. include a more comprehensive consideration of women with disabilities in public programmes and policies on the prevention of gender-based violence;
3. ensure access for women with disabilities to an effective, integrated response system; and,
4. commission and fund a comprehensive assessment of the situation of girls and women with disabilities in Australia.

These recommendations echo and build on similar recommendations made to Australia in recent years from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (2010); the Human Rights Council (2011); the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2013); and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) (2012).

## **2.6 Build outcome and ‘measures of success’ connections between *The National Plan and the Road Home***

The Commonwealth Government needs to consider the disconnect between the National Action Plan and homelessness policy implementation at National and jurisdictional levels e.g. women and children escaping from domestic violence services are not prioritised to be fast tracked into community housing through jurisdictional implementation plans and therefore women and children are unnecessarily entering the homelessness service system resulting in them being the greatest structural driver of homelessness in Australia. AWAVA can provide more insight into this.

## **2.7 Strengthen efforts to address domestic and family violence as a workplace issue**

The Commonwealth Government can demonstrate leadership by strengthening efforts to address violence as a workplace issue. AWAVA submits that non-violent norms and gender equal relationships and behaviours should be promoted in workplace, in line with the theme for action set out in VicHealth’s framework, *Preventing violence before it occurs*.

## **2.8 Strengthen efforts to mainstream gender equality and equity through teacher training and throughout the Australian Education Curriculum**

AWAVA welcomes the development of the Australian Curriculum. We are pleased to have had the opportunity to comment on the *Draft Australian Curriculum, Civics and Citizenship: Years 3-10* and on the *Draft F-10 Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (HPE)* wherein we made a range of recommendations throughout the submission highlighting several areas of the curriculum in which the inclusion of gender equality messages could be strengthened and enhanced.

Pedagogy is a crucial consideration for the effective implementation of the Australian Curriculum. The [Australian Education Union Policy on Gender Equity 2008](#) states: the “implementation of gender policy is most effective when teachers are able to act on their own awareness of the problem. Effective curriculum development can only occur if teachers are involved in the properly resourced planning, implementation and evaluation of programs” (2008: 10). We reiterate priority areas of improvement as stated in our previous submissions by highlighting key focus areas:

- Stronger inclusion of a gender lens and gender equality messages throughout the curriculum
- Teacher education must be prioritised for the effective delivery of the curriculum addressing gender equality and Respectful Relationships education

- Drawing on gender examples throughout the curriculum in the delivery of the curriculum and within section elaborations
- Elaborations and examples to include reference to people and events from diverse gender/sexuality identities and groups
- Emphasis on the importance of self-awareness in relation to diversity competence
- Greater emphasis on thinking-skills development and critical literacy approaches rather than knowledge
- The articulation and tracking of an aligned and integrated cross-curriculum approach within the documentation
- That on-going government sponsored initiatives such as the *Safe and Supportive School Communities* project and discussions be undertaken by ACARA to harness expertise in the area of social/gender justice education, both from academics and practitioners in the field

### 2.9 The need for vulnerable witness protection in Family Law

The extent of family violence in the family law system is significant. Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), in their study, *Allegations of family violence and child abuse in family law children's proceedings (2007)*, identified that over half of the family law files they examined contained allegations of family violence. It is also well recognised that some violent and controlling perpetrators will use litigation against their former spouses as a way to continue to control and/or punish them after separation. There are currently no specific provisions in family law that prevent perpetrators of violence, who act for themselves without a lawyer, from cross-examining the victim of violence. Similar legal protections exist in State law in criminal jurisdictions for sexual offences and in domestic violence legislation. Being cross-examined by their own abuser has devastating emotional and psychological consequences on victims of violence. It is only fair and just that vulnerable witnesses in family law be protected.

See also: [http://www.wlsa.org.au/media\\_releases/perpetrators\\_of\\_abuse\\_allowed\\_to\\_cross-examine\\_their\\_victims\\_in\\_family\\_law\\_trials/](http://www.wlsa.org.au/media_releases/perpetrators_of_abuse_allowed_to_cross-examine_their_victims_in_family_law_trials/)

### 2.10 Strengthen Cultural Competency

It is essential that initiatives proposed under the Second Action Plan are inclusive of the specific needs of diverse groups and do not reinforce race or class-based or other stereotypes. For example, Denmark's *Action Plan to Stop Men's Domestic Violence against Women and Children* (2005–2008) includes an information campaign aimed at ethnic minority women- "in their own language and mandates for the production of five short films in several languages to inform them about women's shelters, legal counselling and the procedure with the police and authorities" (UN Women 2012: 14).

## QUESTION THREE

### 3. What types of other initiatives could benefit from a national focus?

#### 3.1 Domestic and Family Violence as a protected attribute in anti-discrimination laws

We commend the leadership shown at the federal level to extend the National Employment Standards to provide the right to request flexible work arrangements for workers experiencing domestic violence as well as employees who provide care or support to a member of their immediate family, or a member of their household, who requires care or support because of experiencing domestic violence. To further assist

survivors/victims of domestic violence to increasingly participate in the workforce and broader community there needs to be stronger legislative protections. AWAVA fully supports the inclusion of domestic violence as a protected attribute in commonwealth anti-discrimination laws as recommended by the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee.<sup>6</sup>

Including domestic violence/family violence as a protected attribute in anti-discrimination laws will be an important educative tool and help move this issue out of the private sphere into the public sphere. This will also highlight domestic and family violence as a community issue that requires a whole of community response as is consistent with the *National Plan* to reduce violence against women and their children. Our Chairperson Julie Oberin notes: *“How do we protect Australia’s most vulnerable women if there is no specific legislative protection from the discrimination we know they still face in the workplace and when seeking safe, secure and long-term accommodation? If we can include protections in the Fair Work Act and workplace indicators, why not in our discrimination laws? We know that this is absolutely needed for the safety and security of women and their children to find their way out, and stay out of abusive relationships.”*

### 3.2 National Primary Prevention Framework

AWAVA looks forward to the development of a National primary prevention Framework (including an acknowledgement of the interplay between response, intervention, and prevention). The Foundation to PVAW can lead on the development of this project. As per the First Action Plan, the framework must develop best practice benchmarks for work in primary prevention. Furthermore, as per UN Women’s Good practices on National Plans (UN Women, 2012: 31), AWAVA recommends that the development of a National Primary Prevention framework include measures:

1. “Through addressing social and cultural norms, including awareness-raising strategies and sensitization of the media;
2. In key educational, organizational and community settings;
3. Targeting and engaging specific groups, such as men and boys, parents, children and young people;
4. Addressing associated factors which can exacerbate or intensify violence against women.
5. practical, resourced measures for prevention of violence against women across a range of organizational settings, including private and public sector workplaces, sporting organizations, the military, faith and cultural institutions.
6. Support for initiatives targeting factors which exacerbate or intensify violence against women, as part of broader prevention efforts addressing gender inequality and stereotyping. Such secondary factors include, but are not limited to: – Access to firearms; Alcohol and drug abuse; Socio-economic disadvantage and financial stress”.

### 3.3 National Media and Communications Framework

Media play an important role in either reinforcing or challenging the attitudes and norms which contribute to violence against women. Governments must work in partnership with Media to build the capacity of professionals to avoid victim blaming, violence-supportive and sexist messaging and promote gender equality. AWAVA member organisation DV Vic are recognized leaders and experts in the area of media reporting of violence against women. ***We highly recommend that the Commonwealth Government amplifies and harnesses the expertise of DV Vic in developing a National Media and Communications***

<sup>6</sup> The Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, *Report on the Exposure Draft of the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012 (2013)*, Recommendation 3.

**Framework** which will encourage the sensitization of journalists and other media professionals regarding violence against women, through training, guidelines and awards. We hope that the framework will work to strengthen regulatory frameworks with regard to media portrayal of women and violence. It is necessary that such a framework also support advocates such as victims/survivors of violence, male champions, and high-profile people to respond to media enquiries and speak at events on issues of violence against women in order to promote messages of gender equality and non-violence.

### **3.4 The establishment and development of a Virtual Centre for the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls with Disabilities**

We have commented on this in Section 2.5 of this submission.

### **3.5 Supporting the development and use of ICT and social media as a resource for the empowerment of women and girls**

We endorse our member organisation WOMEN'S Services Australia's response: "Supporting the development and use of ICT and social media as a resource for the empowerment of women and girls, including access to information on the prevention and response to violence against women and girls; and... mechanisms to combat the use of ICT and social media to perpetrate violence against women and girls, including the criminal misuse of ICT for sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, child pornography and trafficking in women and girls" (WLSA, 2014: 6-7).

We also note that that online harassment and cyber stalking is deeply traumatising, it potentially affects women's health and their mental and emotional wellbeing. Online harassment, intimidation, and cyber stalking can drive women away from using the internet and the internet, while it has dangers, is also incredibly empowering for women as a platform to share stories and knowledge and an important vehicle for seeking help and collecting evidence against the perpetrator.

### **3.6 Provide ongoing funding for the Family Violence Death Review in all states and territories**

These are critically important mechanisms in the prevention of violence framework and if you can foresee a domestic fatality then you can prevent a domestic fatality. These critical review boards help analyse the lead up to domestic murders providing evidence which can be formed into patterns and risk indicators to be used in prevention frameworks.

## **QUESTION FOUR**

### **4. In order to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in addressing violence against women, where is there scope to reduce duplication of programmes and services provided by the Commonwealth and the states and territories, as part of the Second Action Plan**

In answer to this question, AWAVA endorses the response of our member organisation WLSA: "***it is important that any examination of efficiencies resulting in cost-cutting is examined in light of the potential savings by investing in pursuing the agenda of the Second Action Plan***" (WLSA, 2014: 7).

AWAVA would also like to mention that the Commonwealth Government use existing effective national, state and territory peaks, organisations, networks and structures (including the National Women's

Alliances) to communicate information and coordinate early intervention, prevention, and response efforts.

## QUESTION FIVE

### 5. Which vulnerable groups and communities would benefit from an increased focus under the Second Action Plan?

#### 5.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women

We endorse our member organisation WLSA's response: "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women face the barriers of inter-generational trauma and poor health outcomes associated with colonisation and dispossession of land. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander women are 35 times more likely to be hospitalised due to a family violence related assault than non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander women. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people are also overrepresented in the child protection system and the prison system. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander women face unique challenges in family law and other matters due to their large kinship systems (i.e. multiple parties to proceedings, difficulty finding legal assistance due to conflicts of interest, for example). Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people also experience challenges in navigating through a system that does not recognise their traditional laws and does not take their cultural needs into account" (WLSA, 2014: 7).

AWAVA is of the view that specific, culturally appropriate and secure prevention and early intervention activities must be done in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and must acknowledge their leadership on the issue.

#### 5.2. Children

All children are at risk and suffer ongoing damage from exposure to/being subjected to gender-based violence however as the UN states the most vulnerable person in the world is the girl child and more should be done in the Second Action Plan to address the specificity of violence against girls.

#### 5.3 LTBIQ Women

***AWAVA thanks our member organisation DV NSW who have led the development of our response to how LTBIQ women can benefit from an increased focus under the Second Action Plan.***

There is a growing body of evidence relating to the experiences of lesbian, bisexual, trans\*, intersex and queer women and children affected by domestic/family violence but there continues to be a paucity of data collected at state or federal level, an uncoordinated approach to research, service provision and few support options. There's also evidence that whilst the majority of specialist DFV services may believe themselves competent to work with LGBTIQ people, there is also a general lack of understanding about the nature and prevalence of abuse in LGBTIQ relationships (*One Size Does Not Fit All*, 2011. ACON). Services may believe that they are welcoming to LGBTIQ people by simply encouraging their staff to adopting a non-discriminatory attitude but this does not account for the specific support that LGBTIQ people affected by domestic and family may need. Work with LGBTIQ people who use violence in their relationships is still relatively underdeveloped particularly as Behaviour Change models tend to exclude female perpetrators of violence. Whilst progress has been made with the inclusion of gay, bisexual, trans\*

and intersex men in some policies and practice standards, in reality it is difficult to make these mainstream spaces safe for non-heterosexual, cisgendered men. Further research, LGBTIQ community awareness-raising, mainstream and targeted prevention work and cultural competency training is required with mainstream services so that they are equipped to deal with LGBTIQ people and families affected by domestic and family violence (DFV). Whilst domestic and family violence services may not actively discriminate against LGBTIQ clients, in reality there are still relatively few safe options within mainstream services for transgender and gender diverse women or men escaping abuse. This difficulty is furthered impacted when children are involved. Aboriginal and CALD women in same sex relationships may face multiple barriers to support for their relationships in their communities as well as encountering entrenched racism and discrimination within the LGBTIQ community. There is almost no funding for programs, specialist services, policy, research or a support network for LGBTIQ people affected by DFV. There are only two funded responses to LGBTIQ DFV in Australia that we are aware of currently and both are likely to discontinue their work in the next 12 months. ACON's LGBTI DFV Project (funded until May 2014 under the First Action Plan) has successfully tested approaches, produced a number of resources for services and LGBTIQ communities, a campaign model targeting LGBTIQ people and bystanders, delivered training for Police, Health, specialist services and government as well as working with partners on research. Over the same period the NSW Inner City Legal Centre's Safe Relationship Project has been developing best practice approaches to LGBTIQ court support and legal advice with support from the NSW Public Purpose fund. The work from these two funded projects supported members of the LGBTIQ DV Interagency to produce the Second National LGBTIQ DFV Conference in Sydney in September 2013 attended by almost 200 people where there was a significant focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ stories and experiences. A number of LGBTIQ Elders and sistergirls (Aboriginal transgender women) from around the country talked about the violence and discrimination experienced in communities and the impacts of that violence on their intimate relationships. Further research and a deeper understanding of the intersectionality of diverse sexualities and/or genders and diversity of language, culture has also been identified as a key area of need by the *We're Family Too* report which explores family violence and homophobia in NSW's Arabic-speaking communities.

#### **5.4. CALD, NESB, immigrant, and refugee women**

Women from CALD backgrounds face a range of issues including additional barriers in accessing justice in the justice system. It is important to note that women from CALD backgrounds do not all have the same needs and it is important to consider how different women from different backgrounds experience disadvantage.

***AWAVA thanks our member organisation DV Vic who have led the development of our response to how CALD, NESB, Immigrant and refugee women can benefit from an increased focus under the Second Action Plan.***

There are increasing numbers of clients entering family violence services on visa classes including tourist and student visas, humanitarian and second applicants, and some temporary skilled visas. Access to health, counselling, family violence and sexual assault services is variable and changeable for women on temporary visas. Each visa category carries different entitlements and these entitlements change regularly. While some agencies will provide a service to all women regardless of visa category, others restrict their services to those on permanent visas. This means that the system is extremely complex, confusing and difficult to navigate, both for service providers making referrals as well as for women when attempting to link into the system. Access to emergency accommodation for this group of

women is very limited; we have occasions, where women on temporary visas sponsored by a spouse have been ineligible for any type of housing or refuge assistance and support as their visa class makes them ineligible for any service as non-residents. Women may have to constantly move in and out of interim accommodation while they wait for family violence refuge places, however access to women's refuge is extremely limited due to lack of exit options. Crisis accommodation services are funded for six weeks support per client and receive no funding to work with clients with no access to income. These women can remain in refuge for extended periods – up to two years in some instances. Issues including lack of housing options, ineligibility for public and community housing and lack of income support all limit the capacity of family violence services to support women without residency rights.

#### 5.4.1 **Strengthening Protections for Vulnerable Women on Visas**

We welcome the changes that have been made to migration law and procedure in line with the ALRC's recommendations in its Family Violence and Commonwealth Laws report. The changes have included broadening the list of acceptable evidence that can be used to demonstrate family violence in relation to the family violence exception to a spousal visa application. We believe the Second Action Plan can build on these achievements by including action items to implement a number of the ALRC's other recommendations including:

- *Broadening the family violence exception to apply to other types of temporary visas where the secondary applicant is a victim of family violence.* This is particularly important given that many women are a secondary applicant to temporary skilled visa application. Women who are victims may be trapped in a violent relationship, afraid to leave due to the uncertain nature of their visa status and the fear of losing their opportunity to gain permanency in Australia. This change would enable a victim to remain in Australia for a period of time to access support services, make arrangements to leave Australia or apply for another visa.

#### 5.5 Older women

Older women constitute a significant proportion of the Australian female population. The overarching message from the OWN NSW Project (the project, Prevention of Violence Against Older Women (September –December 2008), was funded by a NSW Domestic and Family Violence Grant (Office of Women's Policy, NSW Department of Premier's and Cabinet) and supported by the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse) was "that violence against women does not stop at the age of 45. Instead, the violence may become more complex, insidious and debilitating, compounded by factors such as the financial insecurity of single women in their fifties and early sixties, and a culture of silence and stoicism among older women"<sup>7</sup> (McFerran, 2009: 8). Further, The Productivity Commission (2010) has previously recognized, with respect to the not-for-profit Sector, that "*the demand for staff with higher level qualifications is expected to continue growing as clients present with more complex needs and community expectations of standards of care rise*" and that "*the ageing of the population will place substantial additional demands on these labour intensive services*" (Productivity Commission, 2010: 249)<sup>8</sup>.

#### 5.6 Women in prison

<sup>7</sup> Ludo McFerran (2009) *The disappearing age: a discussion paper on a strategy to address violence against older women*. Available at <http://www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/PDF%20files/Topic%20Paper%20Disappearing%20Age.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Productivity Commission (2010) *Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector* Available at <http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/study/not-for-profit/report>

AWAVA endorses our member organisation Women's Legal Services response (2014: 9): Many of our members provide legal assistance to women in prison who are a particularly vulnerable group; many of whom have experienced multiple disadvantage including sometimes shocking childhood trauma, neglect and abuse. Depending on the openness of prison authorities, it can be difficult to access the group adequately and there are always issues of funding to be able to do this. For women in prison, especially where they have been the primary carers to their children, access to their children through family law and child protection processes is critically important and can help with their stability and recidivist rates on release.

## **5.7 Women with Disabilities**

Apart from the various recommendations throughout this submission with regards to women with disabilities, AWAVA also endorses our member organisation Women's Legal Services response (2014: 8): "In some instances the legal system has limited capacity to provide practical assistance as the law is only effective if current levels of social support are strengthened. For example, if a woman with a disability is suffering domestic violence from her spouse but her spouse is her carer, obtaining a domestic violence protection order might not assist her because she will have no one to provide ongoing personal care. She may be unable to leave because she can't physically call the police, she has communication difficulties, there is no refuge that is disability accessible or can provide the level of care required and there are real concerns about the woman's ability to obtain suitable long-term accommodation".

## **QUESTION SIX**

### **6. How can we better engage our leaders and broader civil society to address the attitudinal and cultural change required to reduce violence against women and their children?**

The focus must remain on the learnings from the UN and messages must be consistent with redressing gender inequality and how it complexly interacts with other social inequalities. AWAVA as the National Women's Alliance focusing entirely on supporting the implementation of the National Plan and redressing all forms of violence against women and their children can be engaged more effectively to help with the Second National Action Plan. The Commonwealth Government needs to recognise that increased awareness and better systems responses causes increased demands on crisis services and that in the interim until demand reduces front line services such as police, courts and women's specialist domestic and family violence services and sexual assault services must be strengthened to prevent 'turn away' which increases the risk to the women and children who seek help.

**6.1** Commit to the timely and robust sharing of information and knowledge with NPIP and establish Advisory Groups, which are the conduits between civil society and Government.

**6.2** A one size fits all policy will not work in addressing attitudinal and cultural change. Violence against women is not just a 'women's issue' or an issue for specialist women's services. Therefore specific communicative strategies are required to ensure all stakeholders (leaders, communities, businesses, etc.) understand the importance of eliminating violence against women and take specific and focused prevention and implementation responsibility.

6.3 The Commonwealth Government should consider *maximising/leveraging the Ambassador for Women and Girls Ms. Natasha Stott Despoja, AM for awareness raising on violence against women*. Ms. Stott Despoja is also the Chair of the Foundation to Prevent Violence Against women and is thus perfectly positioned, by way of her credentials, experiences, commitment to work with specialist women's services and a variety of stakeholders to drive the requisite community awareness which is needed for the success of the National Plan.

## Annex A

Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA) Member Organisations:

1. Women's Services Network, WESNET
2. Women With Disabilities Australia, WWDA
3. Association of Women Educators, AWE
4. National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence, NASASV
5. Australasian Council of Women and Policing, ACWAP
6. Australian Women's Health Network, AWHN
7. Coalition of Women's Domestic Violence Services of South Australia, CWDVS SA
8. Domestic Violence Victoria, DV Vic
9. National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence Northern Territory, NASASV NT
10. National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence ACT, NASASV ACT
11. National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence Tasmania, NASASV Tas
12. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance NATSIWA
13. Network of Immigrant and Refugee Women Australia, NIRWA
14. Domestic Violence NSW, DV NSW
15. National Union of Students, Women's Officer
16. Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network, QDVSN
17. Women's Council For Domestic & Family Violence Services Western Australia, WCDFVS WA
18. Women's Essential Service Providers Tasmania, WESP Tas
19. Women's Legal Services Australia, WLSA