
A platform for action

Report from the national roundtable on responding to violence against culturally and linguistically diverse women and their children



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Foreword

We are pleased to present *A platform for action*, the report from the national roundtable on responding to violence against culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women and their children – the first of its kind in Australia.

The roundtable placed violence against CALD women and their children in the national spotlight and has provided us with a deeper understanding of the barriers CALD communities face when tackling this issue.

This report is the result of discussions with community and business leaders, specialists from domestic violence and sexual assault services, academics, and key stakeholders from a range of cultural backgrounds and communities.

It provides us with a starting point for taking action and creating a future free from violence.

This change starts with each of us, but is only achievable if we all work together - governments, business, communities and individuals.

Together, we can ensure the safety of women and children of all backgrounds, cultures and religious beliefs.

The Hon. Christian Porter MP
Minister for Social Services

Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash
Minister for Women and Minister for Employment

The Hon. Craig Laundy MP
Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Definitions of violence against women

Violence against women can be described in many different ways, and laws in each state and territory have their own definitions. The United Nations *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* observes that the term 'violence against women' means:

"...any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."

Domestic violence refers to acts of violence that occur between people who have, or have had, an intimate relationship. While there is no single definition, the central element of domestic violence is an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling a partner through fear, for example by using behaviour which is violent and threatening.

It includes physical, sexual, psychological and emotional and financial abuse. In most cases, the violent behaviour is part of a range of tactics used to exercise power and control over women and their children, and can be both criminal and non-criminal.

Family violence is a broader term that refers to violence between family members, as well as violence between intimate partners. It involves the same sorts of behaviours as described for domestic violence.

Physical violence includes slaps, shoves, hits, punches, pushes, being thrown down stairs or across the room, kicking, twisting of arms, choking, and being burnt or stabbed.

Sexual assault or sexual violence includes rape, sexual assault with implements, being forced to watch or engage in pornography, forced prostitution, and being made to have sex with friends of the perpetrator.

Psychological and emotional abuse can include a range of controlling behaviours such as isolation from family and friends, continual humiliation, threats against children or being threatened with injury or death.

Financial abuse can include control of another person's money or other assets. It can involve, for instance, stealing cash, not allowing a victim to take part in any financial decisions or preventing a victim from having a job.

Introduction

This platform for action arises from the first national roundtable on responding to violence against culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women and their children. The roundtable was held in Sydney on 7 August 2015 and was an initiative under the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (the National Plan).

Under the *Second Action Plan 2013–2016: Moving Ahead* of the National Plan, Commonwealth, state and territory governments committed to deepening our understanding of diverse experiences of violence. This includes the experiences of women and children from CALD communities.

The roundtable was convened by the then Minister for Social Services, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, and the then Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women, Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash. The then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services with special responsibility for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, also attended the roundtable along with ministers for women's safety from the states and territories. They were joined by a diverse and impressive group of eighty-five community and business leaders, specialists from domestic violence and sexual assault services, academics, and other key stakeholders from a range of cultural backgrounds and communities.

The roundtable aimed to share insights and experiences, identify priority areas for action, and provide a pathway for all participants to walk together towards positive change. Discussions considered four main topics:

- how to better support CALD women
- how to better support children and young people
- how to better engage CALD men
- how to drive whole-of-community action.

The agenda for the roundtable is provided at [Appendix A](#). A list of participants is provided at [Appendix B](#).

Discussions also drew on the *Hearing her voice: report from the kitchen table conversations with culturally and linguistically diverse women on violence against women and their children*. The *Hearing her voice* report outlined issues and perspectives specific to CALD women and communities based on consultations held around Australia. As noted in the report, CALD women are less likely than other Australian women to report violence or to leave a family violence situation, and often face additional barriers in accessing support services.¹

Following the roundtable, participants shared practical examples of ‘what works’ in reducing violence against CALD women. They agreed these examples should be incorporated into the roundtable record.

This report reflects the key insights provided by participants at the roundtable as a platform for action by governments, business, communities and individuals. It also provides input to the Council of Australian Governments agenda to reduce violence against women and their children and informs the future directions of the National Plan. The report focuses on the following priorities:

- addressing gender inequality
- recognising the diversity of CALD communities
- connecting services on the ground
- using culturally appropriate education strategies
- empowering communities and fostering leadership
- working with men and boys to change behaviour
- creating safe and supportive workplace environments
- improving research, data and sharing of information.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) would like to thank all those who participated in the roundtable and who are quoted in this report.

¹ *Hearing her voice: kitchen table conversations with culturally and linguistically diverse women on violence against women and their children, Commonwealth of Australia (Department of Social Services), 2015*. This report is available at: <http://plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au/>

Opening remarks

Opening the roundtable, Minister Morrison affirmed the strong commitment of all Australian governments to act on violence against women, which he described as a scourge on the community. The Minister said:

“All sections of our community – and people from all backgrounds, cultures and religious beliefs – must unite in ensuring that women and their children are safe.”

The Minister noted this was the first time a roundtable on violence against CALD women and children had been held. Listening to participants' views and experiences would provide valuable insights to Government, including the Council of Australian Governments agenda to reduce violence against women and their children and the National Plan. He encouraged all participants to be optimistic about the possibility of change.

Minister Morrison also announced funding for a diversity data project to improve national data and information on the prevalence and the experiences of violence for diverse groups, including CALD women. Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety will review existing knowledge and gaps in data and information and present options for obtaining better information.

Minister Cash launched a pre-departure information pack for new arrivals coming to Australia to be with their partners. The pack provides information on Australia's laws in relation to domestic and family violence, sexual assault and forced marriage, on family violence visa provisions, and on support services available in Australia. The pack is available in multiple languages. Minister Cash observed CALD women can be more vulnerable to violence and less able to find assistance.

“Violence against women must not be tolerated in any community.”

The roundtable heard from three keynote speakers, Dr Eman Sharobeem, Ms Khadija Gbla and Ms Joumanah El-Matrah, who generously shared personal experiences of surviving violence or supporting CALD women in need of assistance.

“I used to pray to die, but now I pray to live and make a difference.”

Senator Fierravanti-Wells acknowledged the work done in communities over many years by roundtable participants and other leaders in CALD communities. She affirmed the value of candid, grass-roots insights into issues of violence and their cultural overlays. She observed that there are linkages between family violence and other complex phenomena such as radicalisation.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells particularly encouraged innovative thinking to empower women and build resilience in CALD families and communities.

“Now it is time to act.”

1. Addressing gender inequality

Participants agreed that, while the context for violence against CALD women and children are complex, its foundation is gender inequality. They pointed to key documents such as the United Nations *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, which states that,

“...violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women.”²

The majority of perpetrators of violence against women and their children are men and unequal power relationships between men and women support inequality, discrimination and violence.

Addressing community attitudes

To reduce violence, participants felt entrenched community attitudes around gender inequality need to be addressed.

“Gender equality is the thread in everything we discuss.”

These attitudes include cultural norms that accept men exerting their power over women and encourage women to keep marriages and other family and community relationships intact at the expense of their own safety. They also include attitudes that violence is a private matter to be resolved within families or communities only. Domestic and family violence, sexual assault and harmful cultural practices such as dowry demands, forced and underage marriage and female genital mutilation were of particular concern and highlighted the relationship between inequality and abuse. From the discussion, it was clear that such cultural norms need to be questioned and reframed if violence is to become a thing of the past.

² United Nations General Assembly, *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, 20 December 1993.

Particular concern was expressed for situations in which gender inequality and cultural norms facilitate victim blaming. The fear of being ostracised was felt to lead women and children to remain silent about their experiences of violence and prevent them from seeking help to escape a violent situation. In some cases, for instance, women's disclosures about family violence and sexual abuse are followed by community harassment and violence.

"I couldn't believe he could put me in hospital and yet everyone is blaming me."

The intersections between gender inequality, ethnicity, visa status, age and sexual identity were also recognised. Participants were of the view that the risk of violence is exacerbated where it occurs in combination with other factors such as poverty, disability and prejudice. In the extended family units in which many CALD women live, family violence can intersect with other forms of abuse such as elder and carer abuse. When such additional factors come into play, violence can be more complex, damaging and difficult to escape.

Supporting equality

Participants called for women to be given practical, sustained help so that they are equipped with tools and the knowledge to use them, and have support from services that can "walk beside them". Where this support is effective, women are more able to find their voices and empower themselves. They felt services should not only seek to address experiences of violence but also support women in their aspirations for themselves and their children.

Women's Health & Family Services

Western Australia

Domestic violence services provided by Women's Health & Family Services include a Multicultural Women's Advocacy Service (MWAS) which is a metropolitan wide, specialist CALD service for women, with or without children, who have experienced family and domestic violence.

MWAS seeks to support clients to achieve their longer term goals related to employment, education, training, health and wellbeing for both themselves and their families. For example, women are assisted to complete certificate courses in environments where they feel safe and which have been sensitised to the challenges they are experiencing. Clients completing these courses have gone on to find employment, pursue further study and start their own businesses. Others have participated in parenting programmes which help them understand how violence may have affected their children and repair their capacity to parent.

It was recognised that tackling the underlying issue of gender inequality and achieving behaviour change will require communities, governments, business and other institutions to work together to achieve long-term change. For instance, participants felt CALD communities should be prepared to look critically at culture, rather than assuming it should remain static and allowing certain cultural practices rooted in gender inequality to harm future generations. Governments could support and facilitate change by ensuring that all government funded services and all organisations or communities that receive government funding are required to show a measurable commitment to gender equality and women's leadership.

Multicultural Centre for Women's Health

Victoria

The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health builds the capacity of immigrant and refugee women to take leadership roles in their communities and workplaces, to promote gender equality, and provide guidance and leadership to their communities with respect to violence against women.

Programmes are developed in consultation with immigrant and refugee women and are delivered in an outreach capacity, in a range of languages and using accredited bilingual, bicultural women educators. The diverse experiences and needs of immigrant and refugee women are centralised, tailoring different programmes for women from different cultural and language communities, ages, geographical needs and educational levels. The progress and outcomes are that women's health and leadership programmes are delivered in an ongoing way throughout the year.

Attendees suggested a community campaign that addresses gender inequality, promotes respectful relationships and treats violence against women as a mainstream issue is also needed. This could be similar to drink-driving campaigns, with messages nuanced for diverse communities.

Key messages could include:

- gender inequality is a thing of the past
- domestic and family violence is not a private issue – it is an issue for communities, religious faiths, businesses and workplaces
- Australia is a country with both gender equality and multiculturalism. It values diversity, and also has laws that prohibit violence against women.

2. Recognising the diversity of CALD communities

The need to acknowledge the diversity of CALD communities when developing initiatives to reduce violence against women was a key theme from the roundtable. Migration, cultural, religious and other issues can influence the ways in which women and children experience violence and how their communities respond. Discussions highlighted that a nuanced understanding of communities and their specific contexts is required, rather than a one size fits all approach.

Understanding diversity

Attendees observed there are more than 275 cultural and ethnic groups recognised in Australia, and this figure is growing.³ For these communities, their specific ethnicity, culture, religion and country of origin can be critical identity markers. In addition, each community has its own unique composition, depending on the migration history of its members.

“The reality with CALD communities is there is diversity within diversity.”

A particular challenge is the isolation of many CALD women, who do not consider themselves part of a specific CALD community or part of the broader Australian society. Rather, they consider themselves individuals or members of families only. This lack of social connection can be exacerbated by factors such as temporary or unresolved visa status and ineligibility for support services. Discussions also highlighted the difficulties for women and children experiencing violence in regional and remote areas in Australia, where long distances and limited services and communication technology can create additional complexity.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011), *Australian standard classification of cultural and ethnic groups (ASCCEG)*, cat no. 1249.0.

Responding to diversity

Where mainstream services fail to respond effectively to diversity, this becomes a key barrier for CALD women who are in need of support. In some cases, mainstream services fail to understand the cultural context of the violence CALD women are subjected to, and in others the women feel they have been treated unfairly or disrespectfully.

“It’s very difficult for a mainstream organisation to understand a culture of family, tradition, community, honour and shame.”

Participants emphasised that a range of strategies are available to mainstream services to ensure they provide culturally appropriate support.

Central Domestic Violence Service

South Australia

The Central Domestic Violence Service (CDVS) ensures that it provides responsive services to CALD women by:

- ensuring diversity within its staffing structure - currently 30 per cent of CDVS domestic violence staff are from a CALD background and/or are bilingual or multilingual
- making appropriate partnerships and referrals with other CALD services
- providing access to and use of interpreters
- providing access to brokerage monies for clients needing specialist services
- developing a culture within the organisation that encourages diversity and the right to choose.

Participants observed that some CALD communities are reluctant to raise awareness about the issue of violence in their community. This is due to fears that the broader Australian community will view them negatively. While attendees were adamant that culture cannot be used as an excuse for violence, they also felt that cultures are sometimes stigmatised by the broader community in ways that are unhelpful.

“Blaming culture is a way of shirking our responsibilities to intervene.”

It was also noted that some perpetrators of violence manipulate these fears to portray themselves as the victims of racism, claiming “others are picking on me” rather than taking responsibility for their actions.

A combination of community taboos and fears of a backlash against the community can prevent progress. Encouraging women to speak more openly and being prepared to make progress from small beginnings is important for achieving momentum.

Migrant Resource Centre (Southern Tasmania)

Tasmania

The Migrant Resource Centre of Southern Tasmania has held two gatherings in conjunction with Glenorchy City Council, Hobart Women's Shelter and other relevant service providers, to discuss health and wellbeing, including family violence. The gatherings included women from the following communities: Afghan and Hazara, Karen, Nepali Bhutanese, Iranian, Sudanese, Ethiopian, Congolese and Iraqi.

In 2015, the growing confidence of women who had attended the first gathering in 2014 and the follow-up meetings enabled more discussion on violence.

This is still a taboo subject for many to even acknowledge or to understand what constitutes violence. It is still kept within communities at times, even for those who have been living in Australia for longer than five years. These gatherings will continue in 2016.

Drawing on culture and values

In addition, attendees recognised that cultural and religious values can be a source of strength and resilience for individuals, families and communities. Culture encompasses important aspects of life such as values, rules to live by, feelings, thoughts and a sense of self. Affirming positive cultural and religious values can encourage community members to recognise unhealthy power relationships and speak out against violence and abuse.

"You must treat people with justice. That's your duty and one that exists for all human beings."

For women and children experiencing depression, low self-esteem and feelings of hopelessness as a result of abuse, cultural and religious celebrations, storytelling and the arts can promote healing and hope. In addition, they can provide connections with others in the Australian community, in turn reducing isolation.

Kuraby Mosque

Queensland

Under the auspice of the Kuraby Mosque in Brisbane, Dr Nada Ibrahim, Professor Mohamad Abdalla and Mr Dylan Chown are undertaking the Muslim Women's Leadership Programme (MWLP) in Brisbane. This programme is establishing an ongoing project to address domestic violence in the Muslim community. The project will be undertaken in partnership with Aunty Debra Bennett from the Aboriginal community and the Islamic Women's Association of Queensland.

The MWLP is a 12-week programme underpinned by a strength-based approach and the Muslim community's terms of reference and utilising the Yarning Circle Framework. It supports abused women to build upon their strengths so that they can live more positive and enriched lives that begin with healing the trauma of the violence; thereby reducing their isolation and reintegrating them into society as a way forward.

The programme incorporates the culture, faith and herstories of the participants, role plays, creative arts and crafts, traditional food and storytelling to link these women to services that initiate a process of economic independence, social support and mental wellbeing.

Participants felt that to reduce violence, governments and other key institutions should become familiar with the variety of cultures in Australia and devise flexible approaches to respond to the diversity of communities. Only by acknowledging the rights and diverse experiences of those experiencing violence can culturally sensitive and holistic responses be developed.

3. Connecting services on the ground

Participants agreed on the need to connect services on the ground and make better use of existing services and programmes. Due to the number of interrelated factors affecting CALD women and children experiencing violence, clients often need multiple services to assist them. Women may have a limited understanding of how to navigate a complex service system and fall through service gaps. Service delivery needs to be better integrated, comprehensive and collaborative. This requires leadership, coordination and stronger links between agencies.

Enhancing service integration

Attendees saw scope to build linkages between mainstream domestic and family violence and sexual assault services and specialist CALD services. They suggested building mutually supportive connections between mainstream services and small, expert CALD services, enabling the sharing of expertise and resources.

“Support what already exists and resource mainstream and specialist CALD services to work together.”

Finding mechanisms for effective collaboration improves the capacity of all services and agencies to address the needs of CALD women and children.

Similar suggestions were made regarding collaboration between the family violence sector, community legal services and settlement services. Participants observed that newly arrived women and communities often feel comfortable accessing settlement services and English classes, which provide a familiar environment. However, these services may have limited expertise in family violence and associated issues such as accessing justice. Strategies to integrate services can be even more effective when linked with assertive outreach into communities.

Top End Women's Legal Service Inc.

Northern Territory

The Top End Women's Legal Service Inc. (TEWLS) has a specific CALD Women's Project, which targets migrant women and women from refugee and refugee-like circumstances. Under this project, TEWLS runs a legal advice clinic for women attending the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) at Charles Darwin University.

As part of its relationship with the AMEP, TEWLS works closely with the AMEP case manager to ensure quick responses to referrals. TEWLS also provides information sessions to classes and participates in numerous events involving CALD communities.

Common legal issues arising for CALD women include domestic violence, separation and immigration. TEWLS has seen numerous women on temporary spousal visas that require extensive support to address housing, legal, health, safety, visa and financial issues. Women on spousal visas are fearful of being deported should they leave a violent relationship. TEWLS works closely with these women to ensure that they are able to access the help they need without adding more stress to an already difficult situation.

Participants observed the CALD and settlement services sectors could partner with other services, such as those within the homelessness sector, to meet client needs and ensure messaging around violence against women is consistent. This would require a general improvement in resourcing and capability of existing services that come into contact with newly arrived families. Homelessness can be a particular issue for CALD women and children. Crisis accommodation may be inappropriate or not able to accept women with older male children or large families. Women may also spend long periods in crisis accommodation due to difficulties accessing the private rental market, having fewer friends and family to assist and isolation from the community when they disclose violence.

"I lost everything. I was homeless and had no family. Nobody supported me."

Such strategies are particularly effective when close connections are also made with mainstream welfare and other services.

Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service

New South Wales

To assist CALD women experiencing homelessness, the Immigrant Women's Speakout Association established the Homeless Multicultural Women Integrated Support Service (HoMWISS) in February 2015.

This service responds to the need for a specialist CALD service that addresses homelessness for migrant and refugee women who are single and those with children. At present, 98 per cent of clients are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless due to domestic and family violence. Referrals to HoMWISS are from government service agencies such as Centrelink, Legal Aid, and services funded by the Department of Family and Community Services. The project also receives referrals from support services in different areas of community work and organisations.

HoMWISS uses a wrap-around approach in managing cases of CALD women who are escaping domestic and family violence. Project officers undertake co-case management with other support services, such as accommodation and health services for women. The clients who are successful in their applications for permanent residency through family violence provisions are able to access the full range of services, including the Centrelink crisis payment and long-term therapy for trauma. Project officers also work with individual CALD women to assess and create safety action plans, plan self-care and reclaim self-confidence and self-esteem. The majority of women have been successful in reclaiming their self-confidence and are able to find paid employment or shared private rental.

Addressing service gaps

According to participants, there are particular gaps in the services for CALD children and adolescents who experience or witness violence. In some cases, the needs of young people are viewed as secondary and the impact of violence on them is not well assessed or addressed. Participants recommended that police responses to family violence incidents include a nominated officer who is tasked with focusing on the children who may be present while other officers speak to the victim and the perpetrator. They stated that the welfare of children must be a priority and suggested home visits by existing services could be increased to improve visibility of children's health and wellbeing.

“Services not doing home visits means nobody even sees the children.”

In addition, there is a need for therapeutic resources that specifically address the experiences of children and young people.

inTouch Multicultural Centre against Family Violence

Victoria

With 30 years of experience working with CALD communities on family violence issues, inTouch provides a range of innovative, culturally tailored programs and services across the whole continuum of family violence.

"CALD Communities Leading the Way to Respectful Relationships" is a Crime Prevention Award winning model of engaging CALD communities in primary prevention work.

inTouch Legal Centre is the first of its kind in Australia, with multi-lingual family violence case workers and lawyers working together; together with "in language, in culture" family violence support, court advocacy programs and immigration support, the Legal Centre is one of the components within inTouch's culturally tailored crisis intervention model

Post-crisis intervention focuses on group and individual therapeutic work with women. As of recently, inTouch has expanded its work with children through the development of The Empty Jar a children's therapeutic book and resource pack. It's a story Sunni, a young girl who has already experienced many changes. Migrating to Australia, she finds herself facing yet another challenge when her mother separates from her father. Sunni and her younger brother Mali are afraid of moving to a new home and a new school but find ways to overcome their fears.

This resource provides practitioners with strategies to help children tell their story to an empathetic listener, to find words to express their emotions and to find a place for difficult emotions and thoughts. It provides the opportunity to help children identify their strengths and get the support they need to overcome their experience of trauma. It also encourages compassion and understanding within a wider audience for new and small Australians.

The roundtable also discussed the need for services to offer support to women to achieve financial independence. When separating from violent partners or other family members, women can struggle to access Australian financial institutions and government agencies. In addition, financial recovery can be part of a broader process of recovery from violence. Ongoing financial struggles can lead women to form new relationships which are also violent or be an incentive to arrange forced marriages for financial gain and family security. Some attendees suggested learning programmes that combine work experience, English tuition and industry mentoring could have a particularly strong impact. In addition, financial literacy is a key, practical life skill that can assist CALD women to regain control of their lives and care for their children.

Zahra Foundation Australia

South Australia

Zahra Foundation Australia supports South Australian women and children to become economically independent. In collaboration with the Central Domestic Violence Service and other state based domestic violence services, Zahra Foundation aims to specifically address the financial abuse and disadvantage often experienced as a result of domestic and family violence. The Foundation does this through the provision of small grant opportunities to support women through crisis, as well as delivering tailored financial literacy programmes that provide pathways for women into further education and employment.

Currently, CALD women represent approximately 25 per cent of the domestic violence sector's client group. Zahra Foundation aims to ensure that its programmes are both culturally appropriate and accessible to all women. Zahra Foundation will continue to roll out programmes and services to women across South Australia in 2016.

Participants called for enhancements to existing services such as interpreting and translating services. They felt that interpreting services require more investment to meet rising demand. Interpreters should receive training and other supports in relation to family violence and sexual assault in order to address concerns about professional standards and address the risks of vicarious trauma, burnout and other issues. In addition, a wider pool of interpreters is needed to address fears that interpreters will know the perpetrators and other members of the community and may not be impartial. There is often a preference for a female interpreter, especially in situations of sexual assault, and these are not always available for small language groups or in regional areas.

Attendees expressed particular concerns about ineligibility of some women for support services and welfare payments. In particular, women on partner visas or dependents of temporary visa holders who separate from their violent partners are generally not eligible for income support payments. They are also generally ineligible for public housing and homelessness programmes and for subsidised medical visits and public transport. Family violence services that support these women and their children are often absorbing significant costs for which they are not specifically funded.

Discussions also highlighted significant concerns for the welfare of service providers and staff that support victims of violence in a complex and challenging environment. Examples were shared of workers opening up their homes to CALD women escaping violence and the impacts this had on the workers. There were comments that working in the sector is a job of passion and burnout.

“You have dedicated your whole life to the system, to making a difference – and you watch the system fail over and over again.”

Improving resourcing

In making these observations, participants provided clear feedback that additional resourcing is needed. Currently, services for women and children escaping violence are not funded for all the clients they are attempting to support. Collaboration and coordination of effort can be labour-intensive and this needs to be factored into funding of services.

In addition, attendees felt funding allocations should be reconsidered to reflect the diversity of Australia’s population. They observed that CALD communities make up a significant and growing proportion of the population, with one in five Australians speaking a language other than English at home. In addition, some CALD women can have higher risk factors for violence, be vulnerable to more severe violence, and require more support.⁴ As a result, funding distributions should be at least proportionate to the share of Australia’s population that comes from CALD backgrounds, including resourcing of CALD-specific services.

They also noted that, while it is important to fund large organisations to deliver services, smaller grass roots organisations should also be provided with sustainable funding so that they can deliver more targeted initiatives and help build the capacity of communities. Attendees observed that small

⁴ K Webster (2015), *2013 National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey: Attitudes towards violence against women among people born in non-main English speaking countries*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne.

organisations can provide significant value for money, especially in local areas. CALD-specific and specialist services and organisations often do not know how or where to apply for funding and need more guidance. Some participants noted that, where government funding is not available, crowd funding is an option for CALD communities and can help to ensure that initiatives are community owned.

Multicultural Information Network Service

Queensland

The Multicultural Information Network Service (MINS) is a CALD specialist organisation servicing refugees and other vulnerable migrants in the Gympie and Noosa area. MINS is funded by the Department of Social Services under settlement services to support eligible clients to become self-reliant and participate in Australian society, with a focus on fostering social participation, economic wellbeing, independence, personal wellbeing and community connectedness.

Domestic and family violence is an issue which is commonly reported by clients in these regions. MINS provides information sessions and workshops which cover topics such as family relationships, laws in Australia and domestic violence. MINS also provides casework to clients and refers them to specialist domestic and family violence services where needed.

Discussion groups also expressed concerns that the competitive way in which government funding is determined promotes competition between services rather than encouraging them to work together. According to some participants, a better way of working together could be informed by the concept of “collective impact” introduced by the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* in 2011. This concept is based on organisations abandoning individual agendas in favour of a collective approach to deeply entrenched social problems.⁵ Participants suggested that mainstream family violence and sexual assault services, specialist CALD services and CALD community groups could, for instance, apply for funding together, so that efforts to reduce violence have more significant impacts. They regarded collective impact approaches as a creative way to reduce competition and promote systemic approaches and innovation.

⁵ Kanier, John & Kramer, Mark (Winter 2011) “Collective Impact”, *Stanford Social Innovation Review*: 36-41.

4. Using culturally appropriate education strategies

Culturally appropriate education strategies received strong support from the roundtable. Participants agreed new arrivals may have limited or no understanding of Australia's law in relation to violence against women or the services available to assist. In addition, longstanding CALD communities require education and support. They felt education should occur in all life stages, in places where CALD people frequent, and from people they trust. They emphasised that culturally nuanced primary prevention campaigns and initiatives have a greater impact in CALD communities than mainstream messages.

Educating new arrivals

For new arrivals, pre-migration information and existing settlement programmes can be used to send a message that violence against women and children is unacceptable. The early months and years of settlement are a significant period of adjustment for new migrants and are an opportunity to educate individuals, strengthen families and build resilience. Participants welcomed the release of the Commonwealth Government's pre-departure information pack as a positive step in educating men and women coming to Australia to be with their partners, however they urged further action on arrival. There is a particular need for education, not only on family violence and sexual assault, but on complex forms of abuse such as forced and underage marriage or female genital mutilation.

“If they are not educated about Australian laws, new arrivals will be taught only by people from already settled communities, some of whom encourage illegal practices.”

Attendees recommended support under Humanitarian Settlement Services and other settlement programmes should be extended to include greater information and skills development for clients. Settlement services should aim to explain Australian law and rights, explore issues of differing expectations regarding gender roles, and ensure that clients have the skills to access support services. This prevention work needs to be accompanied by training for settlement workers to help them respond appropriately to disclosures about violence. Such enhancements could be linked to strategies supporting broader settlement goals such as employment, English language and social connection so that women are more empowered and less isolated.

“We need to move beyond information provision and into skills development.”

Access Community Services Ltd

Queensland

Access Community Services Ltd has established the South East QLD CALD Families and Domestic Violence Taskforce in collaboration with key multicultural agencies across the region. The taskforce aims to deliver evidence-based strategies for addressing domestic violence among CALD populations. It will contribute to national, state and regional strategies by developing a blue print for action that will respond to the identified gaps and develop effective systems that meet the needs of this vulnerable cohort. Through our research and community feedback, Access Community Services has implemented programmes to educate families about healthy relationships. These include:

- **Women of Worth:** The WOW Women’s Group meets regularly to develop new skills and knowledge around women’s issues, participate in group activities and learn about available services and referral pathways
- **The Spice Exchange:** A social enterprise for refugee women to participate in a social business, learn employability skills and develop the confidence to initiate their own small business. Women are employed and trained in the production, marketing and distribution of a range of international spice blends and condiments unique to their cultural origins.

There was recognition, however, that settlement programmes have a specific and limited focus on new arrivals on certain visas. Australia has well established ethnic communities that have been living here for decades and also require education and support. In addition there are many people who are living in Australia on skilled or temporary visas who are not targeted by settlement services. There is a need for a wider variety of organisations to take up the challenge of educating communities and promoting healthy and respectful family relationships.

Australasian Centre for Human Rights & Health

Victoria

Supporting migrants to learn new social norms, cultural values and laws is an area of work being undertaken by the Australasian Centre for Human Rights & Health (ACHRH) through the Mutual Cultural Respect programme.

The ACHRH's programme acknowledges there is often no avenue to learn about issues which can cause difficulties - for example, not being aware of the seriousness of domestic violence as a criminal offence. Gender equality and freedom for women in social arenas can be confusing for new migrants. For migrant women who enjoy new found freedoms this may give rise to backlash and violence in the home where such freedom is deemed unacceptable.

As part of the programme, interactive discussion groups are held around real life case histories. The cases are designed to bring out the differences in the social and cultural ways of all ethnic groups present in the room and are compared and contrasted with mainstream Australian culture in a respectful and fun-filled atmosphere. This programme reflects upon the multicultural way of life in Australia. At the conclusion of each course, participants are given links to useful websites, telephone numbers and brochures. This programme is designed for all migrants irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity and their time Australia.

Communicating effectively

Participants saw value in communication campaigns aimed at both men and women in CALD communities. Such campaigns should strengthen social norms against violence and provide information about where to find help. They should also inform them how to take action when witnessing abuse of women and children.

A range of approaches were suggested, including community forums, printed materials and electronic media. Attendees suggested social media and online resources could be used to engage young people, while ethnic media is needed to reach older community members. They recommended encouraging CALD communities to design and disseminate campaign materials to help ensure messaging is owned by the community and delivered in a culturally sensitive and targeted manner.

Attendees recommended displaying information materials in community locations specific to CALD men and women such as the local community centre or at cultural and social events. They felt information should be distributed in places where CALD women might commonly go, including hairdressers, beauticians and retail outlets. They noted women in some CALD communities are rarely alone and information should be provided through general practitioners. They observed training about family violence should be made available to doctors and mental health professionals so they are able to recognise, respond and refer clients to specialised support.

Participants also saw a need to establish participation opportunities or “learning by doing” through other key services relating to major life stages.

“Start generational change with young parents.”

Attendees identified the potential to educate families through:

- CALD-specific pre-marriage counselling
- CALD-specific pre-natal education, parenting and family relationship programmes
- mainstream programmes held in CALD-friendly settings.

A further suggestion was the introduction of mentoring programmes, both for individuals and for communities. Established community members could assist both newly arrived individuals and communities to adapt to changes in family relationships in Australia.

Promoting healthy relationships

There was strong support for a focus on education of CALD young people about healthy relationships. They saw a need for positive education of young people, both to intervene early in the formation of male attitudes and to encourage girls to understand their rights. In some cases, children and young people are told to remain silent about violence as it is framed as a family and cultural issue that should remain private even when their own safety is at risk. Schools were highlighted as the most important site for education of children, as CALD children may rarely attend extra-curricular activities.

Participants welcomed the incorporation of Respectful Relationships into the national curriculum. They noted the meaning of concepts such as 'respect' can vary across cultures and that such concepts are not static. They also felt it is important for CALD young people to understand issues of sexual consent and build their capacity to negotiate sexual intimacy and prevent unwanted sexual activity. They suggested further materials be developed to which CALD children and youth from different cultural backgrounds can relate.

“With this group of CALD young people, it is very important to start educating early on.”

Most participants wanted engagement with children before disrespectful and violent behaviour begins and before the problem escalates. Some felt that children as young as five years old could be introduced to basic concepts such as not hurting or bullying others. This would create a foundation for education on more complex issues such as responding to disrespectful behaviour towards women and girls, violence in the home, sexual assault and female genital mutilation.

5. Empowering communities and fostering leadership

The need to empower CALD communities in order to achieve sustainable progress on reducing violence was a key theme of the roundtable. Overall, participants felt that communities should develop strategies rather than being directed by government. Due to the diversity of CALD communities, community leaders need to consult with their communities to assess what works best and find ways to build community connections and momentum.

“Strategies should be supported by government – not owned by government.”

Diversifying leadership

There is an accompanying need to foster leadership and to recognise the diversity of leaders that exist within communities, including women and young people. Formal leadership roles within CALD communities tend to be exercised mainly by older men. Participants felt that each community should have influential and respected leaders from a range of backgrounds – male, female and youth – who are able to speak out against violence and instigate change. They noted that concepts of community leadership need to continue to evolve so that CALD women and young people are able to contribute to their community’s conversation on how to reduce violence. They considered CALD women and young people should be given equal opportunities to contribute to decision-making and exercise leadership.

Suggestions for fostering female leadership included considering the potential role of a peak body for CALD women’s safety or a CALD women’s advisory group. This would assist in empowering CALD women nationwide, channelling and coordinating their efforts and ensuring their voices are heard by government. Members of the group would need to come together and meet regularly, including at the state and territory level. It was agreed that such a body would need clear terms of reference, secretariat support and strong governance.

There were calls for communities to recognise and embrace emerging CALD youth leaders speaking out against violence. Participants felt they should be recognised, not only as future leaders, but as leaders right now due to the active roles they are playing in both their CALD communities and wider Australian society.

“We need to hear more from young people, including in policy and decision making.”

There is also a need for initiatives that specifically train and empower CALD young people with the knowledge, skills and confidence to act as leaders. They noted the significant evidence that young people can change negative attitudes through peer education and support and can effectively challenge unhelpful beliefs within their families and communities.

Educating existing leaders

Participants acknowledged that existing community and religious leaders have a critical role in preventing violence and supporting victims. Education and support for community leaders and people in key professional roles is needed for them to recognise, respond to and champion action against violence. Women often confide in leaders as a first point of contact and for ongoing advice and leaders need to know how to respond effectively. Attendees also noted their role in sustaining the positive community connections that underpin effective responses to violence. Women and children need to be able to stay connected with their communities, and not be shunned. Men need to have positive roles to play, rather than being shamed. Communities need to be strengthened to respond to violence, rather than further splintered.

In addition, leaders can play a broader role in establishing a community consensus against violence, promoting healthy relationships and encouraging violent men to change their behaviour. Engagement with leaders needs to be more proactive and consistent, as this area has been characterised by stop-start approaches and small local projects.

“Continuity of engagement is important. There are too many one-off initiatives.”

Lebanese Muslim Association

New South Wales

The Lebanese Muslim Association is an example of an organisation which has engaged with community leaders and the broader community to address domestic violence. In 2014, they produced a domestic violence awareness campaign which aimed to confront the misconceptions of some people, both Muslim and non-Muslim, that family and spousal abuse is tolerated within Islam.

This campaign involved the production of two videos. The first featured statements from Muslim community leaders about the prohibition of domestic violence in Islam, demonstrating a united position against domestic violence. The second was a short dramatic representation of a domestic violence occurrence, which aimed to shift the narrative from victim blaming to changing attitudes towards violence happening in the home. The videos were published on YouTube and other social media sites.

The campaign also featured Friday sermons around Australia addressing the issue of domestic violence, during White Ribbon week. This campaign was met with much support from the Muslim and non-Muslim community. It brought to light that domestic violence is not a women's issue only, but one that affects society as a whole.

Empowering individuals

An important role can also be played by those with no formal leadership or decision-making role. For example, in faith communities, those who are not clergy, religious or lay ministers or teachers are also influential and persuasive. Women of faith ought to be included in engagement with faith communities in addition to predominantly male clergy. There can be value in drawing upon multi-faith and inter-faith networks and organisations as there are many commonalities. Recognising that all members of a community can take action will help to ensure that communities become and remain supportive and safe environments.

Anglican Diocese of Melbourne

Victoria

The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne with www.thinkprevent.com has developed Active Bystander training for congregations in order to prevent violence against women and their children. In many situations there are numerous people - friends, families, teachers and clergy – who can intervene in an act or pattern of abuse. This offers an opportunity to address behaviours before violence has been perpetrated in the first place.

The Active Bystander project teaches concrete bystander intervention skills for use in the most difficult situations. The project also provides the context necessary to empower participants to be proactive bystanders and creates a safe space for participants to learn from one another. The training is highly replicable, allowing faith organisations to utilise the curriculum long after the initial training.

Through the delivery of this training, there has been increased awareness, where participants have shown decreases in belief in myths surrounding violence against women and increases in knowledge. Active Bystander Intervention is a key tool to prevent violence against CALD women and children but participants must be provided with a robust theoretical framework, active learning experiences to build skills and peer norm groups to encourage helping together. It should be combined with whole-of-organisation efforts, including policy changes and involvement of leadership as active bystanders.

6. Working with men and boys to change behaviour

There was considerable discussion about the strategies needed to engage with CALD men and boys on the subject of violence. Participants recognised that there is not a single model that can work in all communities, but advocated for holistic approaches encompassing prevention, early intervention, crisis responses and men's behaviour change programmes. They felt CALD men need to own the issues and find ways for men and boys to become part of the solution.

"We as men need to accept that this is a men's issue."

Using strength-based approaches

According to participants, prevention activities with CALD men should adopt positive, strength-based approaches that encourage men to take on constructive roles in their families and communities rather than focusing on deficits. They cautioned against labelling men and characterising them as inherently violent. Instead, they suggested messaging should emphasise the positive social and family roles that men play as employers, leaders, fathers and partners. Many men are willing and able to listen and take action to prevent violence and support women and children. It was suggested messaging should appeal to values and beliefs about how to be a good man. Men can be asked to reflect, for instance, on what kind of fathers they want to be and what their legacy will be. Traditional concepts associated with masculinity can be informed by values of respect and gender equality and by recognising the diversity of male experiences and identities.

Such approaches have been found to work particularly well with men who are newly arrived in Australia and men from new and emerging communities. These men may need specific support to adjust to changing family and gender roles on arrival in Australia. They generally have a strong desire to keep family members together and are potentially responsive to programmes that resonate with their desire for resilient family relationships and healthy children.

Australian Migrant Resource Centre

South Australia

Since 2013, the Australian Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC) - formally the Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia - has delivered a customised programme to men from new arrival communities. It aims to raise awareness of gender-based violence, its impact on women, men, families and the settlement process.

The training covers Australian laws and the National Plan as well as the role of men in preventing gender-based violence. It adopts a participatory approach and applies a cultural lens to ensure men are actively engaged in discussion and encouraged to reflect on their values base and cultural contexts to recognise supportive factors around family wellbeing and safety. This has resulted in strong positive responses and recognition of the critical role that men play in preventing gender-based violence in their communities.

Training has been delivered throughout metropolitan and regional areas of South Australia. A number of men have gone on to become White Ribbon Ambassadors or have used their learnings to develop community-based initiatives promoting violence prevention messages.

AMRC is also working on a community development project known as *Empowering Circles*. This project establishes local CALD community groups of men, women and young people to be trained to organise education and anti-family violence messaging as well as other prevention, intervention strategies within their new arrival communities in metropolitan Adelaide and regional South Australia.

Participants agreed there is a need for more conversations and “street talk” about the role of men and boys in preventing or perpetuating violence. These talks could take place in a range of settings including workplaces, schools, sports grounds, community events, religious occasions, at barber shops and other places that CALD men go. Previous observations about educating young people in schools and communicating with adults in culturally appropriate settings particularly applied to men and boys. In addition, they wanted to see male champions and role models from a variety of backgrounds influencing men to accept that violence is not a private matter, and to examine their attitudes and behaviours towards women. They also wanted to see young male leaders trained and supported to advocate with their peers.

It was suggested that community and religious leaders working with skilled facilitators could organise forums and talking circles so CALD men can share their viewpoints and stories in a non-judgmental environment. If these forums are conducted sensitively and inclusively, they could encourage honest discussions about loss of identity, lack of employment, experiences of racism, substance abuse, trauma and mental health challenges. Roundtable participants were clear these experiences are not an excuse for violence but form part of the context in which violence may occur or begin to escalate and therefore need to be shared and understood.

“It needs to be a conversation and not a lecture – men need to be heard, too.”

In relation to early intervention and crisis support, participants identified the need for more collaboration between services and CALD community leaders. There was a view that, in order to refer men, community leaders need to have confidence that service providers will provide culturally appropriate support. In turn, services need to be able to trust that community leaders will help keep men accountable and women and children safe.

“Trust and respect with community leaders needs to work both ways.”

Changing behaviour

Attendees observed that changing behaviour requires more than communication campaigns and providing information; it requires policy and programme responses. Participants expressed significant concern about how few options are available to hold perpetrators effectively to account and support behaviour change. They observed that men who use violence can change if given the right support and tools. However, there are few culturally appropriate perpetrator programmes for CALD men. To address this, mainstream perpetrator programmes and other behaviour change programmes can use interpreters, individual sessions and other methods to make their services accessible to CALD men. They can also learn to work cross-culturally with a range of people from diverse communities. However, they may still struggle to adequately address culturally-specific perspectives, pre-migration experiences and settlement issues in these settings.

inTouch Multicultural Centre against Family Violence

Victoria

After establishing the first language-specific (Vietnamese) CALD men's behaviour change programme in 2009, inTouch has been successful in exploring and establishing an Arabic men's behaviour change programme.

In the 15 week session, the first three sessions are dedicated to pre-migration experiences, issues of torture and trauma, settlement challenges and exploring belief systems. This is the unique feature of inTouch's men's behaviour change model. Issues that can be contributing factors to family violence are addressed and challenged in the first three sessions so participants can further engage in the behaviour change model.

Participants observed more funding is needed to improve the accessibility and effectiveness of behaviour change programmes and to meet rising demand. Programmes are not available in all locations, especially in regional and rural areas, and waiting lists fill up quickly. In addition, some programmes are relatively short or insufficiently linked with other interventions to be effective. Attendees felt more funding was needed to meet rising demand. In addition, programmes could be improved by having male and female facilitators from a range of cultural backgrounds and who prioritise the safety of women and children.

7. Creating safe and supportive workplace environments

At the roundtable, participants discussed how workplaces can better support women experiencing violence. While the issues are often framed in terms of how workplaces can support employees experiencing violence at home, roundtable attendees recognised violence and abuse can also occur in the workplace. They called on employers and business leaders to have conversations about respectful relationships, create workplaces that are ethical and supportive, champion action against violence, and support women and children who are experiencing violence.

Recognising the impacts

Participants agreed that violence, often viewed as a private or family matter, may also be a workplace issue. Some industries have a heavy drinking culture or other characteristics which may exacerbate family violence. Perpetrators of violence often use workplace resources such as phones and email to carry out abuse. There are impacts on workplaces when women are experiencing violence, including disruption to work, effects on productivity and prolonged leave taken to recover from injuries. There are also positive benefits for employers who support their employees, such as improved employee wellbeing and productivity, higher morale and retention of skilled employees.

Attendees noted CALD women are generally over-represented in low-paid and insecure employment. These workplaces can have a higher prevalence of workplace violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault. In unsafe workplaces, community education may be needed.

Asian Women at Work Inc.

New South Wales

Asian Women at Work Inc. (AWatW) has been working to empower migrant women in low-paid and precarious employment since 1995. It has been successful in securing community projects which focus on women's safety at work, home and in community spaces. It has been running self-defence classes (karate, aikido and arnis) in Blacktown, Bankstown, Cabramatta and will be expanding to Hurstville and Auburn. This project includes community safety information sessions where the police are invited to talk about violence and how they handle the issue.

AWatW has also compiled kits to raise awareness about violence against women in Chinese, Vietnamese and English. These kits will be made available to all groups organised by AWatW and will be integrated into the settlement kit that is distributed to newly-arrived migrant women workers. The kits will be handed out when AWatW do workplace visits and will also be distributed at community festivals.

Championing change

Attendees acknowledged that businesses and business leaders with a strong sense of corporate responsibility can not only support their own employees, but also make a broader contribution. Engaging employers can create important allies and partners for preventing violence and reduce pushback in relation to issues such as leave entitlements.

“Corporates need to say, ‘we will not tolerate this’.”

Participants observed that small and medium businesses can be more resistant to implementing measures to support victims of violence. However, they felt all workplaces could provide a supportive environment to talk about violence, establish clear policies and procedures to support safety, make provisions for flexible leave, and train staff to recognise signs of violence and refer victims to support. It was suggested that a toolkit could be developed by government to provide guidance on how best to support their employees.

Participants highlighted the role of senior women managers in establishing safe workplace environments. They also praised the Male Champions of Change model, under which a committed group of business leaders have used their influence to champion gender equality and support for women experiencing violence.

Telstra

National

Telstra is represented by its CEO on the Male Champions of Change group, and has taken an integrated approach to domestic and family violence.

In 2014, the company introduced its Family and Domestic Violence Support Policy to support Telstra employees experiencing the effects of family and domestic violence. Through this policy, Telstra provides employees up to 10 days paid leave each year, in addition to other leave entitlements.

Telstra, in partnership with the Women's Services Network (WESNET), now supports 'Safe Connections'. Through this programme, Telstra provides 5,000 smart phones annually, along with \$30 pre-paid recharge cards and technology safety tips, for distribution through partner agencies, including women's refuges, shelters and safe houses.

Telstra also provides \$1 million in mobile pre-paid recharge cards each year to help people affected by domestic violence to remain connected, and has removed silent-line fees for customers experiencing domestic or family violence.

The good work being undertaken by White Ribbon in workplaces was recognised. However, participants agreed that more workplaces and business leaders need to take a stand against violence. Some felt there was scope to draw more creatively on corporate goodwill. For example, businesses that are marketed towards women may be willing to support initiatives to improve women's safety and wellbeing. Attendees suggested hairdressers, beauticians, chemists and retail outlets may be willing to be a distribution point for information or undertake training to recognise signs of violence and refer clients to support services. Others may be willing to contribute financial support for fundraising initiatives as they do for causes such as breast cancer.

8. Improving data, research and sharing of information

Participants agreed on the need to improve data, research and sharing of information on ‘what works’ in order to implement evidence-based strategies. Well targeted and participatory research is crucial to fully understand the complexities of violence against women and achieve behaviour change. There is also a need to draw on knowledge that already exists about and among CALD women and communities.

“We need better evidence on what works, for whom, and under what conditions.”

Developing data

Attendees noted there is currently no uncontested national data available on the prevalence of violence against women and children from CALD backgrounds. The Personal Safety Survey, for example, shows women from non-main English speaking countries as less likely than Australian born women to report having experienced physical violence or sexual assault. However, it is not known whether this reflects actual rates of violence, being less able or willing to report, or other factors.⁶ The announcement of Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety diversity data project was regarded as an important first step in reviewing existing knowledge and data gaps.

Participants observed that without reliable data, it is difficult to know which issues are the most pressing and what specific actions should be taken from reports. They suggested analysis of crime data (such as data on homicides) and hospital admissions data may assist in targeting initiatives and services to those most at risk of experiencing violence.

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013), *Personal Safety Australia 2012, cat no. 4906.0*, accessed 13 August 2015, <<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf.4906.0>>.

There is also a need to continue to collect qualitative data to better understand the lived experience of violence for CALD women and children and its long term impacts.

Attendees observed that while particular data sets have their limitations, they can still play a significant role in illuminating particular issues that need attention, clarifying the nature of the problems to be addressed, and identifying those affected.

Domestic & Family Violence Crisis Lines of Australia Network

National

A Domestic and Family Violence Crisis Lines of Australia Network report has collated and analysed the statistics of women contacting crisis lines who did not hold permanent residency within Australia. Statistics in the report were an amalgam of all state-wide crisis services across Australia and all identifying client information was removed.

The ramifications for victims of domestic and family violence who do not hold permanent residency within Australia have been found to be profound and severely increasing the impact of domestic violence on women and their children, including:

- limited or no access to public housing assistance or financial assistance from the federal government
- limited or no access to funded refuges who cannot accept more than one or two women or families without income
- limited or no access to medical assistance or to education
- increased financial dependence upon the abuser
- increased vulnerability to an abusive partner by way of threats of deportation
- increased vulnerability to an abusive partner by way of threats to remove the children
- increased vulnerability to domestic and/or sexual slavery
- increased risk of death and/or disability.

Pursuing research

Participants called for more research to inform interventions. They suggested participatory research can be more useful than traditional academic research in increasing understanding of the nature and dynamics of violence in order to address it. Participatory approaches can have added benefits in empowering the subjects of research to contribute and document their own perspectives.

Multicultural Centre for Women's Health

Victoria

The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) works together with key researchers to bring the experiences and voices of immigrant and refugee women into the shared knowledge base. MCWH gathers and conducts research on issues relating to violence against immigrant and refugee women. MCWH centralises the experiences of immigrant and refugee women in the way we conduct research, and we engage the skills of women bilingual interviewers to ensure that a diversity of women's voices, in a mix of languages, are heard.

MCWH publishes reports and papers, sharing expertise on women's experiences of violence, intersectional approaches to violence against women, best practice in prevention programmes, and engaging men and boys in violence prevention.

The recent research project, ASPIRE: Analysing Safety and Place in Immigrant and Refugee Experience, is a collaborative project with the University of Melbourne and the University of Tasmania. It was funded by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS). The ASPIRE project is a participatory research project working with communities in eight metropolitan and regional locations in Victoria (five) and Tasmania (three). The project has gathered evidence about immigrant and refugee women's concerns and experiences of family violence.

Attendees felt research is especially needed to inform behaviour change programmes for CALD men. They observed there is no established consensus on what motivates men to acknowledge they need to change and what motivates CALD men in particular. They recommended action research be established within existing behaviour change programmes and that social marketing research may assist in improving understanding of how to change attitudes and behaviour. They also suggested interviewing and surveying CALD men to determine what motivates them to change and what kinds of programmes can meet their needs.

Sharing information

The greatest desire was for more effective evaluation of programmes and more sharing of information about the findings. Many strategies and programmes appear promising; however, without high quality evaluation it is difficult to establish a solid evidence base on what works well. Participants stated funding bodies, as well as those undertaking activities, need to recognise evaluation as an integral part of activities rather than as an add-on.

There is also a need to draw on knowledge that already exists. Participants observed that the roundtable itself collectively represented significant knowledge and experience of both issues and successful approaches to violence in CALD communities. Governments can assist by facilitating the sharing of knowledge and establishing communities of practice.

Concluding comments

In closing the roundtable, and on behalf of ministers present, Minister Cash described the event as “the breakthrough day that women have been talking about for years”. She affirmed the commitment of governments to national messaging about violence against women being unacceptable and the education of young people in schools about respectful relationships. She noted the need to work particularly with men and boys.

Minister Cash thanked all present for their ideas, insights and resolve, noting that the kitchen table conversations with CALD women and the roundtable were just the beginning of an ongoing national conversation and commitment.

“Change is possible – it has to be.”

Appendices

Appendix A: Agenda for the national roundtable

	8:15 am	<i>Registration (for seating by 8:50 am)</i>
1	9:00 am	<p>Welcome and introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome to Country
2	9:10 am	<p>Understanding the challenge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The challenge before us • Lived experience of CALD women – CALD women speakers • Our challenge today
	9:50 am	<i>Break</i>
3	10:00 am	<p>Responding to the challenge - Building on the kitchen table conversations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we better support CALD women and their children? • How can we better engage CALD men? • How can we drive whole-of-community action?
	11:45 am	<i>Break</i>
4	12:00 pm	<p>Taking the initiative - The pathway ahead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting on initiatives and ways to build and sustain the momentum • Agreeing key areas for action
5	12:35 pm	Next steps and close
	12:45 pm	<i>Official Roundtable photograph and informal photographs with participants</i>
	1:00 pm	<i>Shared lunch Prayer space provided</i>

Appendix B: Participants in the national roundtable

Ministers

The Hon Scott Morrison MP

Minister for Social Services

Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash

Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women and Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection

Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells

Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney-General and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services

The Hon Prudence (Pru) Goward MP

Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Medical Research, Assistant Minister for Health, Minister for Women, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, NSW

The Hon Andrea Mitchell MLA

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Mental Health; Disability Services; Child Protection, WA

The Hon Jacquie Petrusma MP

Minister for Human Services, and Minister for Women, TAS

The Hon Bess Nungarrayi Price MLA

Minister for Local Government and Community Services, Minister for Housing, Minister for Parks and Wildlife, Minister for Men's Policy, Minister for Women's Policy and Minister for Statehood, NT

The Hon Fiona Richardson MP

Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, and Minister for Women, VIC

The Hon Gail Gago MLC

Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and the Information Economy, Minister for the Status of Women, and Minister for Business Services and Consumers, SA

The Hon Shannon Fentiman MP

Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety, and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, QLD

The Hon Yvette Berry MLA

Minister for Housing, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Women, and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Social Inclusion and Equality, ACT

Other participants

Name	Organisation	Jurisdiction
Associate Professor Mohamad Abdalla	Griffith University	QLD
Ms Maha Abdo OAM	United Muslim Women Association Inc.	NSW
Mr Luke Ablett	Maribyrnong City Council	VIC
Mr Arman Abrahamzadeh	Zahra Foundation Australia	SA
Mr Paris Aristotle AM	Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council	VIC
Ms Maya Avdibegovic	inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence	VIC
Ms Mary Awata	Anglicare SA	SA
Ms Dewani Bakkum	Settlement Council of Australia	NSW
Ms Marguerite Baptiste- Rooke	Multicultural Community Services of Central Australia	NT
Ms Cecilia Barassi-Rubio	Immigrant Women's Support Service	QLD
Ms Moo Baulch	Domestic Violence NSW	NSW
Ms Kalisi Bese	Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre	QLD
Mr Mahesh Ram Bhandary	Kildonan UnitingCare	VIC
Ms Lina Cabaero	Asian Women at Work Inc.	NSW
Ms Louise Carter	Anglicare North Coast	NSW
Mr Bruce Chan	BaptistCare	NSW
Ms Kerry Chikarovski	Chikarovski & Associates	NSW
Ms Sandy Chong	Council of Small Business Australia	NSW

Name	Organisation	Jurisdiction
Ms Miriam Cocking	Seniors Information Service Inc.	SA
Ms Jane Corpuz-Brock	Immigrant Women's Speakout Association	NSW
Ms Andrea Creado	Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Centre	WA
Dr Rhonda Cumberland	Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand	VIC
Ms Sahar Dandan	Lebanese Muslim Association	NSW
Ms Libby Davies	White Ribbon Australia	NSW
Ms Sky de Jersey	Settlement Council of Australia	NSW
Mr Joe De Luca	Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory Inc.	NT
Mr Jihad Dib MP	Member for Lakemba	NSW
Ms Geraldine Doney	Centre for Refugee Research, University of New South Wales	NSW
Air Commodore Henrik Ehlers AM	Department of Defence	ACT
Ms Fatima Elcheikh	Lebanese Muslim Association	NSW
Ms Joumanah El-Matrah	Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights	VIC
Ms Khadija Gbla	SHine SA	SA
Ms Vivi Germanos-Koutsounadis	Ethnic Child Care, Family and Community Services Co-operative	NSW
Ms Anne Hollonds	Our Watch	VIC
Ms Alison Howarth	Domestic & Family Violence Crisis Lines of Australia Network	NSW
Bishop Philip Huggins	Anglican Diocese of Melbourne	VIC
Dr Nada Ibrahim	Community advocate	QLD
Ms Nihal Iscel	Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre	WA
Ms Lauren Jauncey	Australia Post	VIC

Name	Organisation	Jurisdiction
Ms Donella Johnston	Australian Catholic Bishops Conference	ACT
Ms Gail Ker OAM	Access Community Services Ltd	QLD
Ms Yasmin Khan	Qld Eidfest Association Inc.	QLD
Ms Maryam Khazaeli	Domestic Violence Prevention Council	ACT
Mr Ken Lay APM	Council of Australian Governments Advisory Panel	VIC
Ms Judith Levitan	Jewish Alliance Against Family Violence	NSW
Dr Gillian Long	Migrant Resource Centre (Southern Tasmania) Inc.	TAS
Dr Peter Lucas	University of Tasmania	TAS
Ms Heather Malerbi	Department of Health and Human Services	TAS
Ms Sandya Manickam	White Ribbon Australia	NSW
Ms Vahedeh Mansoury	Southern Adelaide Domestic Violence Service	SA
Ms Melba Marginson	Victorian Immigrant & Refugee Women's Coalition	VIC
Ms Alana Matheson	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry	ACT
Dr Dina McMillan	McMillan Consulting Group	VIC
Ms Justine Mickle	Melaleuca Refugee Centre	NT
Dr Adele Murdolo	Multicultural Centre for Women's Health	VIC
Ms Shila Nair	Shakti Community Council Inc. & Member Orgs	NSW/NZ
Ms Heather Nancarrow	Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety	NSW
Mrs Sheba Nandkeolyar	Multiconnexions	NSW
Mrs Juliana Nkrumah AM	NSW Police Force	NSW

Name	Organisation	Jurisdiction
Ms Julie Oberin	Australian Women Against Violence Alliance	ACT
Dr Manjula O'Connor	Australasian Centre for Human Rights & Health	VIC
Ms Beata Ostapiej-Piatkowski	Multicultural Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing Inc. – Harmony Place	QLD
Ms Enaam Oudih	Relationships Australia	SA
Ms Nalika Padmasena	The Aged-care Rights Service	NSW
Mr Mark Painting	National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd	ACT
Ms Florence Parker	Filipino Communities Council of Tasmania	TAS
Ms Soo-Lin Quek	Centre For Multicultural Youth	VIC
Ms Eleonora Raffo	South West Sydney Legal Centre	NSW
Ms Diana Rahman	Canberra Multicultural Community Forum (CMCF) Inc.	ACT
Mr Troy Roderick	Telstra	ACT
Mr Fayssal Sari	Bulldogs Rugby League Club	NSW
Ms Cath Scarth	Adult Multicultural Education Services	VIC
Mr Parsuram Sharma-Luitai	Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia	VIC
Dr Eman Sharobeem	Immigrant Women's Health Service	NSW
Ms Ruth Sims	West African Women's Group Inc.	WA
Ms Yolanda Strauss	Womens Health and Family Services	WA
Ms Nicola Street	Australian Industry Group	NSW
Ms Irene Tavutavu	The National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council	SA

Name	Organisation	Jurisdiction
Ms Eugenia Tsoulis OAM	Australian Migrant Resource Centre (formally the Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia)	SA
Ms Milenka Vasekova-Safralidis	Migrant Women's Support Service Inc.	SA
Ms Melanie Warbrooke	Top End Women's Legal Service Inc.	NT
Ms Karen Willis OAM	Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia	NSW
Ms Carla Wilshire	Migration Council Australia	ACT
Ms Pauline Woodbridge	North Queensland Domestic & Family Violence Resource Service	QLD
Ms Wafa Zaim	United Muslim Women Association Inc.	NSW

Links

A copy of this report, accessible information on the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* and documents translated into a range of community languages can be found on the DSS website at www.dss.gov.au/nationalplan.

Do you need help?

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic and family violence or sexual assault, get help by calling:

The police on **000** if you, a child, or another person is in immediate danger

1800RESPECT – **1800 737 732**

Do you need an interpreter?

Call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on **131 450**.

Contact us

If you would like more information on the national roundtable, please email CALD.womens.safety@dss.gov.au. Please note if you wish to remain anonymous, your confidentiality will be respected.