

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Cross Agency Working Group - Communique

Meeting 19 of the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) Cross Agency Working Group (CAWG) was held in Darwin on 23 May 2023. The meeting was attended by representatives from the:

- Domestic and family violence networks in Darwin, Alice Springs, Big Rivers, Barkly and the Top End Remote Safe House network;
- Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS), Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (Northern Territory (NT) (AMSANT) and the NT Legal Assistance Forum.
- Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (the Department), the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice (AGD), NT Correctional Services, the Department of Education, NT Health, NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services (NTPFES), the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet, and the DFSV Interagency Coordination and Reform Office (ICRO).

Housing and domestic and family violence

Brent Warren, Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO) of Housing in the Department attended CAWG and provided an opportunity for CAWG members to discuss upcoming housing developments and infrastructure, and discuss housing policies and processes as they relate to victim survivors of domestic and family violence.

Guest Presentation – Dr Peter Stephenson, Director of Research and Evaluation Unit, Territory Families, Housing and Communities

Dr Peter Stephenson, Director of the Research and Evaluation Unit in the Department presented to the CAWG on the upcoming review of Action Plan 1 under the DFSV Reduction Framework. The review is being conducted at arm's length of the Office of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction (ODFSVR) and DFSV-ICRO by the Department internal evaluation team. The focus of the review is to understand stakeholder views on Action Plan 1, including barriers, challengers and enablers to its implementation, and satisfaction with the governance arrangements.

Update from the DFSV-ICRO

The Director of the DFSV-ICRO reported on a series of NT Government and Australian Government budget announcements.

Australian Government budget:

- \$159 million to extend the DFSV National Partnership Agreement for a further two years.
- \$262.6 million for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022 - 2023*, of which \$194 million is new funding.
- A further \$250 million was allocated for Central Australia, noting this is not specifically for DFSV.

NT Government budget:

- \$20 million over two years to implement Action Plan 2 under the DFSV Reduction Framework

Katherine Local Reference Group T Tennant Creek Local Reference Group Top End Remote Safe House Network NT Legal Assistance Forum



- This investment covers initiatives aimed to prevent DFSV including reforms in health, justice, policing, support for people who are using violence to change behaviour, and reducing the impacts of violence on victim survivors, including children.

Office of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction (ODFSVR)

The Manager of ODFSVR provided an update on key projects, including Men's Behaviour Change Program evaluation, renewing service funding agreements and the development of standardised key performance indicators for TFHC funded specialist DFV services.

Update from Non-Government Organisation (NGO) members

NGO representatives reported on current activity, including:

- feedback on sentencing reforms being led by AGD.
- practice improvements for referrals and high risk DFSV cases.
- worker training, and sector capacity and capability building.
- the need for additional funding to keep up with demand for services and costs of operating the services, including responding to the budgetary impacts of the recent Fair Work decision to raise the minimum wage.

Update from Northern Territory Government Agencies

NTPFES provided an update on the Family Harm Coordination Project operating in the Central and Southern Desert Region, focusing on reviewing intimate partner domestic violence incidents.

NT Health provided an update on the Children with Harmful Sexualised Behaviours Program which is open for referrals from NTG agencies, with other referrals and training for organisations to commence in 2023-24.

The Department of Education provided an update on the establishment of the Respectful Relationships Advisory Group, including external organisations with relevant expertise.

Next meeting

The next CAWG meeting will be held in August 2023.

For more information about the CAWG, contact the ODFSVR on dfv@nt.gov.au