



Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2

Taking stock, evaluating and reviewing, and building on what works: 2022-2025



Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACCO	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation
Action Plan 1	Action Plan 1: Changing Attitudes, Intervening Earlier and Responding Better (2018-2021)
Action Plan 2	Action Plan 2: Taking Stock, Evaluating and Reviewing and Building on What Works 2022-25
AGD	Department of the Attorney-General and Justice
ANROWS	Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety
CAWG	DFSV Cross Agency Working Group
CRAT	Common Risk Assessment Tool
DFV	Domestic and Family Violence
DFV Act	Domestic and Family Violence Act NT (2007)
DFV Justice Review	Review of Legislation and the Justice Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Northern Territory (AGD)
DFSV	Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence
DFSV-ICRO	Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence – Interagency Co-ordination and Reform Office
DFSV Framework	Northern Territory Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework: 2018-28
DOE	Department of Education
FSF	Family Safety Framework
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Queer/Questioning
MBCP	Men's Behaviour Change Program
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NCAS	National Community Attitudes Survey (ABS)
NT	Northern Territory
NTCOSS	Northern Territory Council of Social Service
NTPS	Northern Territory Public Service
ODFSVR	Office of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction (TFHC)
PSS	Personal Safety Survey (ABS)
RAMF	Northern Territory Domestic and Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management Framework
SVPRF	Northern Territory Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework
TFHC	Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities

Acknowledgements

Aboriginal acknowledgement

The Northern Territory Government respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this country and recognises their continuing connection to land, water and community on which we work, live and meet. We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their cultures; their Ancestors and Elders past and present, and all the leaders of today and future generations. Please note while we use the term 'Aboriginal' we respectfully acknowledge that it is inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people.

Victim survivor acknowledgement

We acknowledge the women and children who have suffered and died in the Northern Territory as a result of domestic, family and sexual violence. We are committed to honouring the lives of those killed, learning from these tragedies and translating those learnings into action so as to prevent future harm. We acknowledge the disproportionate impact of violence on women in the Northern Territory, particularly Aboriginal women. We acknowledge the courage and dignity of all those who stand against domestic, family and sexual violence, who take action to challenge the violence, and who hold people who use violence accountable.

Acknowledgement of contributors

We acknowledge all the people and organisations who work tirelessly every day in the Northern Territory to prevent and respond to domestic, family and sexual violence. Their significant commitment, skill, experience and wisdom underpins work that is of core value to our communities.

The process of developing Action Plan 2 was done in partnership with government and non-government agencies and individuals. We acknowledge and appreciate the time and effort taken by all who provided their considered opinions and ideas. We have done our best to honour your hard work through the actions developed. We sincerely thank the people who have taken the time to contribute to the development of Action Plan 2, including those who took time to contribute through the DFV Justice Review, the Theory of Change workshops and the 2021 Action Plan 2 consultation process. In particular we thank the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Cross Agency Working Group members, representing the following agencies, networks and organisations:

- Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory
- Barkly Family Safety Network
- Big Rivers Local Reference Group
- Central Australian Family Violence and Sexual Assault Network

- Darwin Domestic and Family Violence Network
- Department of the Attorney-General and Justice
- Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet
- Department of Education
- NT Health
- Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities
- NT Correctional Services
- NT Council of Social Service
- NT Legal Assistance Forum
- NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services
- Top End Remote Safe House Network

Emergency contacts

Get help for domestic, family and sexual violence in the Northern Territory by following this link to available services: nt.gov.au/gethelpDFSV



If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call the police on 000 for emergency assistance.

The language used in this plan

We acknowledge that no single set of terms suits all situations and people. No exclusion or harm of people is intended in the terms used in this plan. We use inclusive language while acknowledging that evidence indicates that domestic, family and sexual violence is primarily perpetrated by men against women. We also acknowledge that people of diverse sexualities and gender identities are impacted by gender-based violence, often in complex and intersecting ways. Language used in this document reflects the language of key national frameworks, as well as the terminology in the Northern Territory's domestic and family violence Risk Assessment and Management Framework. This Plan uses the terms "person who commits DFV" rather than "perpetrator" or "offender" to refer to the person who uses violence, abuse or coercive control against a current or former intimate partner, or a member of their family or household, regardless of whether they have been convicted of a crime. This term separates the behaviour from the person and recognises the potential for people to change their behaviour. This Plan uses the term "victim survivor" to describe a person against whom DFSV has been perpetrated including a child or young person. The term is often used to recognise a victim survivor's agency and individual capacity. These terms differ slightly to those used in the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework, and reflect the emerging evidence and stakeholder and practitioner preference in the Northern Territory.

Minister's foreword

The Northern Territory continues to work together to improve women's safety and reform the domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) system.

The Northern Territory has the highest rates of DFSV in the nation. We know the devastating toll this takes on victim survivors, their families, communities, frontline services and first responders. DFSV affects people of all ages and backgrounds, but predominantly affects women and children, and in the Northern Territory, Aboriginal women and children are the most impacted.

Action Plan 2 of the Northern Territory Government's 10 year Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) Reduction Framework; Safe, respected and free from Violence 2018 – 2028 provides us with a clear and coordinated direction for action across the domains of primary prevention, early intervention, response and recovery, and systemic reform.

It builds on Action Plan 1 and the significant work of the reform program to date. This includes substantial investment and transformation in the areas of community-led prevention projects, victim survivor support services, workforce development, men's behaviour change programs, shared risk assessment and management processes, and extensive legal reforms.

To address DFSV, we need to commit to long term and systemic change. We know change takes time and sustained effort, and while there is still much more work to be done to challenge the attitudes, behaviours and drivers of DFSV we are determined to maintain our focus.

Despite our focus and efforts to date, DFSV continues to inflict devastation and heartbreaking loss of life within our communities. For those who survive this violence, there is deep trauma to overcome as they recover and rebuild their lives.

DFSV is preventable and its impacts can be reduced. Eliminating DFSV is not an insurmountable challenge. When we work together, in a coordinated way, with a shared understanding and a shared plan, we can achieve our vision of a Northern Territory that is safe, respected and free from violence. This requires the joint responsibility and commitment of all levels of government, all government agencies, all services, all Aboriginal and community-controlled organisations, all sporting groups, all faith communities, the business community and all individuals. This is why we are supporting significant investment in a new coordinated mechanism to build on the achievements of the DFSV Interagency Coordination and Reform Office, to achieve a joined-up approach and to build a strong evidence base.

Family safety for Aboriginal women, children and men is a particular priority, and we recognise that Aboriginal community-controlled services and community led initiatives are critical to supporting and healing for Aboriginal communities impacted by DFSV. With the new Aboriginal Advisory Board on DFSV providing me with sound and insightful advice, I am certain that Aboriginal community led solutions will be enhanced.

I am proud that the new investment in Action Plan 2 supports activity in some of the most critical areas – programs for people who choose to use violence, housing responses for victim survivors, therapeutic responses for children who are victim survivors in their own right, and Aboriginal-led prevention solutions.

This plan has been informed by consultation with victim survivors, frontline workers, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, non-government service providers, sector peak bodies, the DFSV Cross Agency Working Group, and government agencies. It is based on research and evidence, specialist expertise and lived experience from those who have courageously and generously shared their personal stories. It is also based on the tragic learnings from the women and children who have suffered and died in the Northern Territory as a result of DFSV.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the development of this Plan. I look forward to continuing to work with you all as we build on our ongoing commitments and work to eliminate DFSV.

The Hon Kate Worden MLA
Minister for the Prevention of
Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence



1. Introduction

Domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) is a serious and widespread issue and is a key priority for the Northern Territory Government to address. DFSV is also preventable, and its impacts can be reduced.

The Northern Territory Government’s work to prevent and respond to DFSV is guided by the [Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018-2028 Safe, respected and free from violence](#) (the DFSV Framework). The DFSV Framework articulates our shared commitment to a future where all Territorians can live safe and free from violence, seeks to challenge and change the social and cultural attitudes, values and structures that support violence. This 10-year strategy to reduce the prevalence and impact of DFSV represents a long-term commitment to invest in the continuum of prevention and early interventions to address the drivers, break the cycles of violence, and improve responses to DFSV when it occurs.

The DFSV Framework is implemented through 3 consecutive Action Plans, developed in collaboration with key stakeholders across government agencies, non-government organisations (NGOs), Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCO), and the community.

Action Plan 2 outlines the second stage of the Northern Territory Government’s 10-year path towards achieving the DFSV Framework’s vision and outcomes. This document sets out actions commencing in 2023, and builds on the significant investment and achievements from [Action Plan 1: Changing Attitudes, Intervening Earlier and Responding Better \(2018-2021\)](#).

The DFSV Framework and Action Plans recognise that preventing, responding to and reducing DFSV is a responsibility that is shared across all government agencies, non-government organisations, and the community, and requires cross agency and cross community responses. Our approach is aligned with the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032, to which the Northern Territory is a signatory.

Preventing and responding to DFSV is a long-term journey of reform at a local, national and international level and requires leadership, sustained investment and commitment at all levels. There are, unfortunately, no ‘quick fixes’. This is one of the most complex problems confronting the Northern Territory Government and the Northern Territory community.

Ten year implementation approach

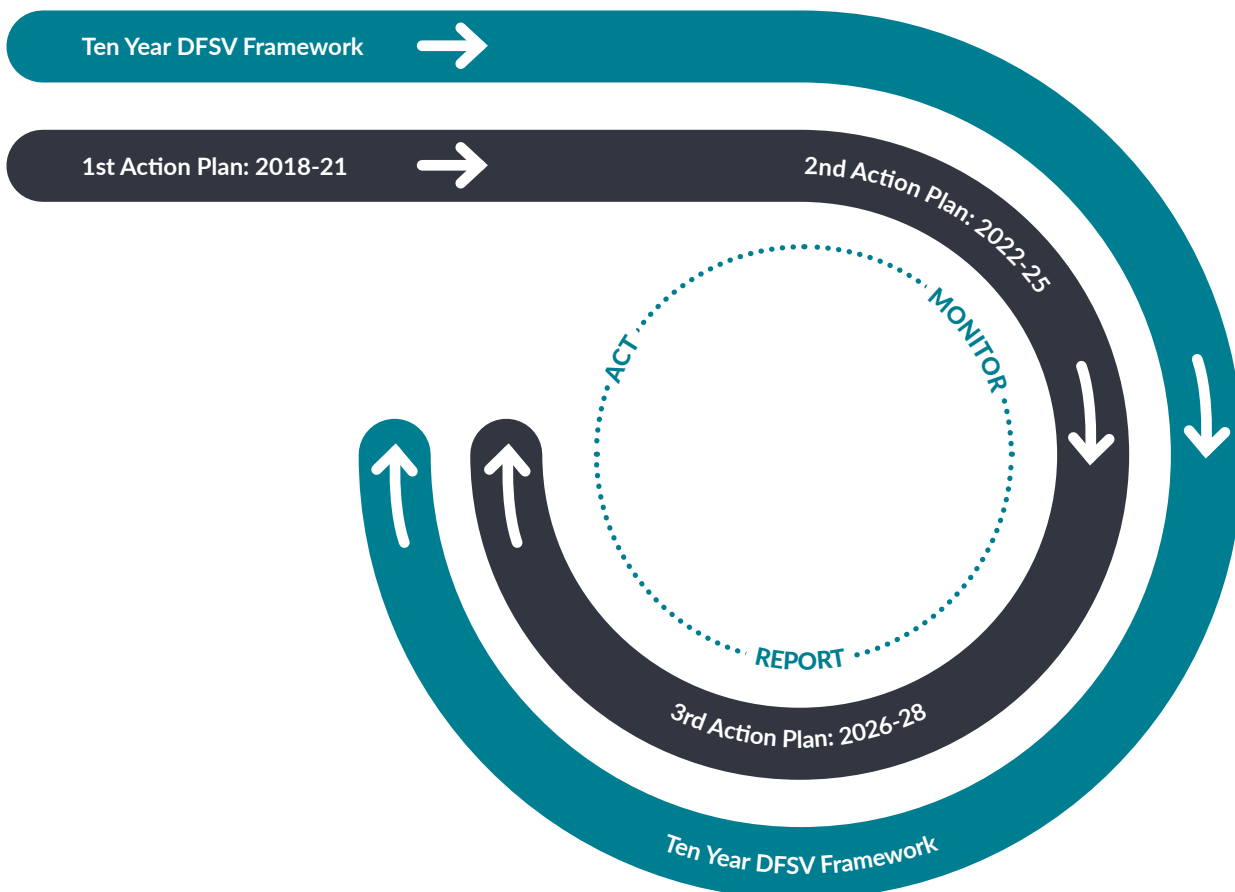


Figure 1 - Northern Territory DFSV Framework and Action Plans

2. Background

2.1. A common understanding of DFSV

The model definition of **domestic and family violence** (DFV) is behaviour by a person towards a current or former partner or a family member (including a child) that is physically or sexually abusive; is emotionally or psychologically abusive; is economically abusive; is threatening; is coercive; or in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes them to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing of themselves or another person.¹

In addition, DFV against a child includes behaviour that indirectly exposes a child to violence directed at other family members, for example, by witnessing or overhearing violence. It is inherently abusive and harmful for a child to be exposed to a family member using violence against another family member.²

An important feature of DFV is that it is often a pattern of abuse (both physical and non-physical) over time in which a person aims to control and dominate an intimate partner, ex-partner or family member. This control and dominance is central to understanding what DFV is, and how to address it. The power and dominance contribute to keeping people trapped in violent relationships. This is referred to as coercive control.

Sexual violence refers to sexual activity that happens where consent is not freely given or obtained, is withdrawn, or the person is unable to consent due to their age or other factors. It occurs any time a person is forced, coerced or manipulated into any sexual activity. This can include sexualised touching, sexual abuse, sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment or intimidation, and forced or coerced watching or engaging in pornography. This includes child sexual abuse. Sexual violence can be non-physical and include unwanted sexualised comments, intrusive sexualised questions, or harassment of a sexual nature.

Sexual violence occurs both within a DFV context (that is, between intimate partners and between family members) or outside of a DFV context (that is, between acquaintances, strangers, friends, work colleagues and within institutions such as schools, religious or sporting bodies, and aged care homes). The majority of sexual violence occurs within the DFV context³ and co-occurs with other forms of DFV. It may be used as a tactic of DFV and is part of a pattern of coercive control.⁴

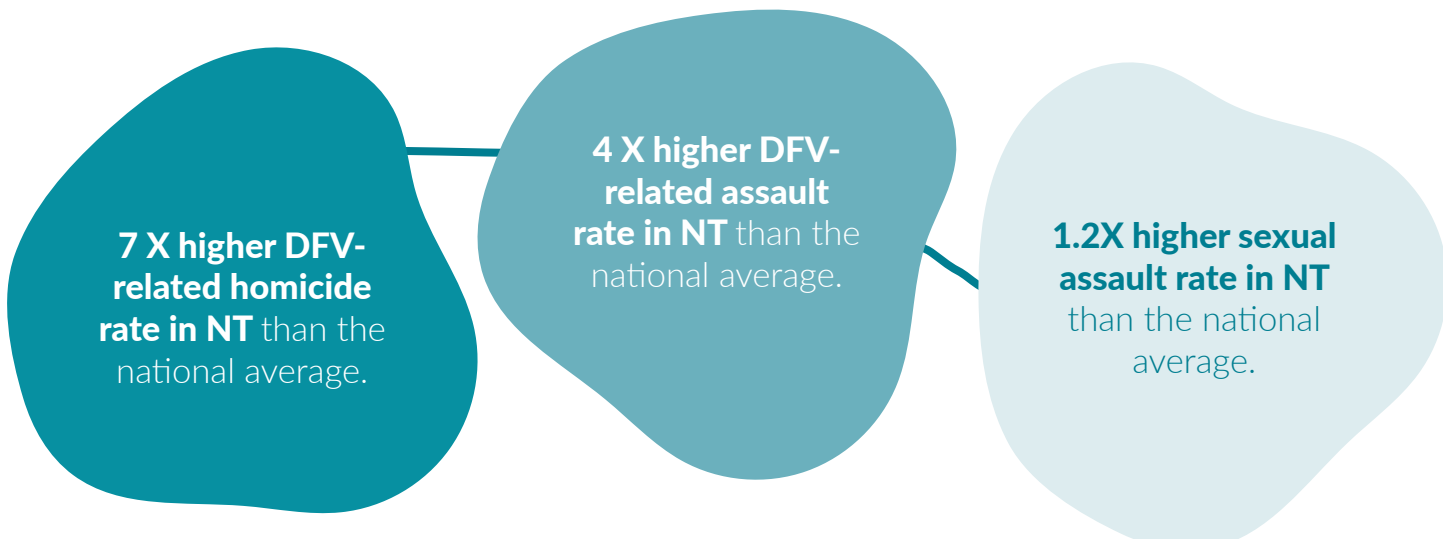
DFSV can take a number of forms. Behaviours that may constitute DFSV include physical violence, sexual violence, psychological and emotional violence, stalking and intimidation, violence against pets and property, technology-facilitated abuse, reproductive coercion and abuse⁵, economic abuse and coercive control. Coercive control can exist without physical or sexual violence being present, and physical or sexual violence can also exist as part of a pattern of coercive control.⁶

2.2. The size of the problem

DFSV is a serious, prevalent and life-threatening problem. People of all ages and backgrounds, including children and older people, all cultural groups, all genders, all sexualities, and all abilities experience DFSV. However, the evidence is very clear that DFSV is strongly gendered, and that, in the Northern Territory and elsewhere, DFSV is predominantly, but not exclusively, perpetrated by men against women and children. Men can also be victim survivors of DFSV, with the significant majority of male victim survivors experiencing DFSV committed by other male family members.

The rate of DFSV in the Northern Territory is higher than in any other state and territory, noting that the data only includes crimes reported to police so is likely to under-estimate the actual level of offending.

- The DFV-related homicide rate in the Northern Territory is **7 times higher** than the national average.
- The DFV-related assault rate in the Northern Territory is **4 times higher** than the national average.
- The sexual assault rate in the Northern Territory is **1.2 times higher** than the national average.
- Since the age of 15, the percentage of women in the Northern Territory who had experienced physical violence, and the percentage who had experienced sexual violence was **37% and 27%**, respectively. This is higher than in any other state or territory.⁸
- Furthermore, the rates are increasing. The reported DFV-related assault rate in the Northern Territory increased by **27% between 2019 and 2020**, and a further **12% between 2020 and 2021**.⁹



While DFSV affects people across all population groups, the evidence shows that Aboriginal women and children experience disproportionate rates of violence, and that violence they experience is more severe and more complex in its impacts, as a result of the intersection between the multiple drivers of violence associated with gendered inequality, the ongoing impacts of colonisation, and systemic racism.¹⁰ Violence against Aboriginal women is perpetrated by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men.

- Aboriginal women living in the Northern Territory are over **8 times** more likely to be assaulted than either non-Aboriginal women or non-Aboriginal men, and over **3 times** more likely to be assaulted than Aboriginal men.¹¹
- Seventy-five **Aboriginal women have been killed** by a current or former intimate partner in the Northern Territory over the last 2 decades.¹²
- Aboriginal people accounted for **88% of the DFV-related assault victim survivors** in the Northern Territory in 2021, and 79% of these were women.¹³
- Aboriginal women are **32 times more likely to be hospitalised** and 11 times more likely to be killed due to DFSV than non-Aboriginal women.¹⁴
- Since 2000, there have been 173 DFV-related homicides in the Northern Territory. The **173 DFV-related homicides** includes 103 women, 94 of whom were Aboriginal, and 75 of whom were killed by a current or former partner.¹⁵

The majority of violent crime in the Northern Territory is caused by DFV, and DFV has a high rate of repeat offending.

- **63% of assaults** in the Northern Territory are DFV-related.¹⁶
- **63% of prisoners** are held for DFV-related offences.¹⁷
- DFV matters represented **37% of all criminal matters** finalised in Northern Territory courts in 2021-22.¹⁸
- Every week in the Northern Territory, there are on average **69 DFV-related criminal matters** finalised in the courts, and 82 applications for Domestic Violence Orders.¹⁹
- Data shows **77% of defendants found guilty** of a DFV-related offence have a prior violent offence, and **72% have a prior DFV offence**.²⁰

The most recent statistics from the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) showed that, compared to the rest of Australia, the Northern Territory had a significantly lower understanding of the gendered nature of violence against women, contrary to the empirical evidence from PSS, court and police data. 57% of Northern Territory respondents compared to 41% of Australian respondents believe that domestic violence is committed by both men and women equally.²¹

2.3. Impacts of DFSV

DFSV has profound and long-term impacts on victim survivors' health and wellbeing, on families and communities, and on our society generally. These consequences include acute and chronic health impacts, such as depressive, anxiety and alcohol use disorders; early pregnancy loss; physical injury and homicide; and suicide and self-inflicted injuries.

DFSV has serious, long-term and distinct consequences for children and young people. It can, for example, impact their mental and physical health, social, emotional and neurological development, sense of security and attachment in relationships and ability to cope and adapt to different situations and contexts. Often children exposed to DFSV have contact with other systems, including but not limited to youth justice and child protection systems. Responses to DFSV in policy, service design and service delivery must consider the unique needs and experiences of children and young people, and recognise that children and young people are victim survivors of DFSV in their own right.

The cost of DFSV to the community is substantial. Nationally, the economic cost of violence against women (who are victim survivors of the overwhelming majority of DFSV cases) has been estimated to be at least \$21.7 billion in one year, and approximately \$362 billion over a lifetime.

A conservative estimate of the costs of DFSV to the Northern Territory has been calculated at over \$450 million in 2020-21. This figure could be close to \$600 million if it included the additional estimated cost of underrepresented groups in available prevalence data (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, pregnant women, disabled people, the homeless) and the impact of DFSV on the courts, police and corrections systems in the Northern Territory.

75 Aboriginal women have been killed by a current or former intimate partner in the Northern Territory over the last 2 decades.

63% of prisoners are held for DFV-related offences.

3. DFSV is preventable

DFSV is not inevitable or intractable. It is preventable. Furthermore, its impacts can be reduced.

While there is no single cause of DFSV, there are certain factors that consistently predict – or drive – it. In Australia and elsewhere, significant work has occurred to identify the 'drivers' of DFSV and how to address these drivers to prevent DFSV.²⁵ There is substantial evidence that gender inequality and rigid gender stereotypes are key drivers of DFSV. DFSV is more prevalent and severe where there are high levels of gender inequality. Gender inequality creates the conditions where DFSV can occur, is tolerated, justified and/or condoned.

Gender inequality intersects with other forms of inequality, influencing the experience, risk, and dynamics of DFSV, as well as the need for distinct service responses. For example, the experiences and intersecting needs of Aboriginal people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, refugees and migrants, people with disability, older people, people who identify as LGBTIQ+, people living in regional and remote areas, sex workers, and people who have been incarcerated, must all be considered in our policy approach. These complex experiences intersect with gender inequality and result in unique and often compounding forms of oppression, discrimination and violence.

In addressing Aboriginal family safety, it is important to recognise the ongoing discrimination and inequality faced by Aboriginal people as a driver of, and context for, DFSV. The ongoing impacts of dispossession, colonisation, structural disadvantage, culture destruction, racism, intergenerational trauma, and the fracturing of families and communities, are key contributors to Aboriginal people's experience of DFSV.²⁶

Aboriginal people and communities across the Northern Territory have consistently identified the problem and enormous impact of DFSV on their lives and wellbeing, especially on Aboriginal women and children. DFSV is not part of Aboriginal culture, and Aboriginal communities have also identified the important roles that Aboriginal men play in modelling positive and respectful relationships with women and children, each other and the broader community, and the critical importance of Aboriginal culture and cultural strengthening as a protective factor against violence.²⁷

While we all have a responsibility to work together to prevent violence against Aboriginal women and children, it is recognised that the solutions must be led by Aboriginal people and communities, in line with the principles of self-determination,

community control and community leadership. The Northern Territory Government is committed to self-determination and the priority reforms of Closing the Gap, including a commitment to transfer decision making, control and resources, where appropriate, to Aboriginal communities and ACCO.²⁸

Drivers of DFSV are further reinforced by factors which influence the severity and frequency of violence. One of the key reinforcing factors in the Northern Territory is high levels of harmful alcohol use across all parts of the community.²⁹ On its own, alcohol does not explain violence. It cannot be simplistically seen as a 'cause' of violence, both because violence occurs where alcohol is not involved and because many people consume alcohol but are never violent.³⁰ However, across Australia, for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, alcohol can weaken people's capacity for positive and respectful behaviour, thereby contributing to the likelihood and severity of violence.

Other social factors, like homelessness, insecure housing, financial insecurity, disadvantage, and interactions with the justice and child protection systems, do not cause DFSV but they may contribute to vulnerability, compound the conditions for violence, increase the severity of violence, and make it harder for victim survivors to seek help.³¹

Responding to the drivers of violence, as well as the reinforcing factors, must be central to our policy responses to DFSV.

There are specific levers that government can use to effect change. The evidence shows that when we apply these levers we will see change. These levers provide the rationale for the DFSV reforms in the Northern Territory.

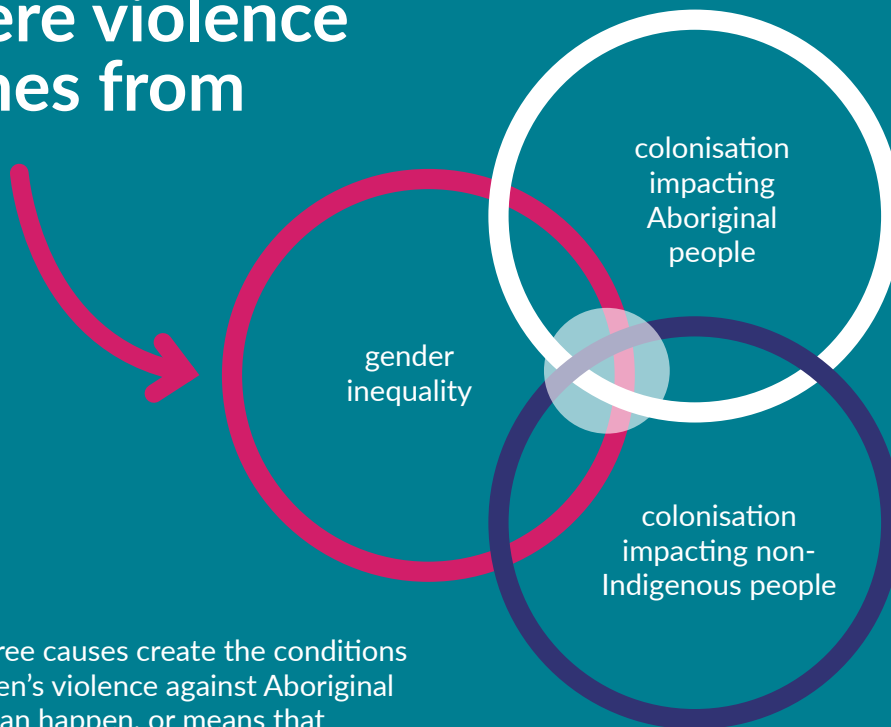
Our theory of change, outlined in the Northern Territory DFSV Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan (MEAP), involves a focus on actions in these key areas:

- Increasing our efforts in primary prevention and early intervention to build community understanding of DFSV and shift attitudes and behaviours. This includes Aboriginal community led solutions, and a focus on programs for people who commit DFV.
- Maintaining and improving supports for victim survivors to reduce the impacts of DFSV, and keep pace with growing demand.
- Supporting a coordinated response that values an evidence based, continuous improvement approach, underpinning the success of all other proposed reforms.

Men's violence against Aboriginal women is at increased risk due to three key causes:

1. **Women and men not being equal**
2. **The harm colonisation continues to do to** Aboriginal people, including
3. **The power and benefits that society gives** **non-Indigenous people** over Aboriginal people

This is where violence comes from



These three causes create the conditions where men's violence against Aboriginal women can happen, or means that people don't take men's violence against Aboriginal women as seriously, or they think men's violence against Aboriginal women is normal.

Figure 2 - This is where violence comes from, from Girls Can Boys Can (Tangentyere Council) Project Handbook, reprinted with permission from M Corbo and Dr. C. Brown

4. The Northern Territory DFSV Framework

The [Northern Territory Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018-2028: Safe, Respected and Free from Violence](#) (the DFSV Framework) articulates a shared vision and commitment for a future where Territorians are safe, respected and free from violence wherever they choose to live, work, learn and play.

The overarching vision of the DFSV Framework is pursued through 5 key outcomes. Activities within the DFSV Framework, including actions under Action Plan 2, are organised under 4 key domains that reflect the public health approach to DFSV, and are aligned to the organising principles in the [National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032](#).³² Each action contributes to addressing one or more of the domains, since the domains are interconnected.

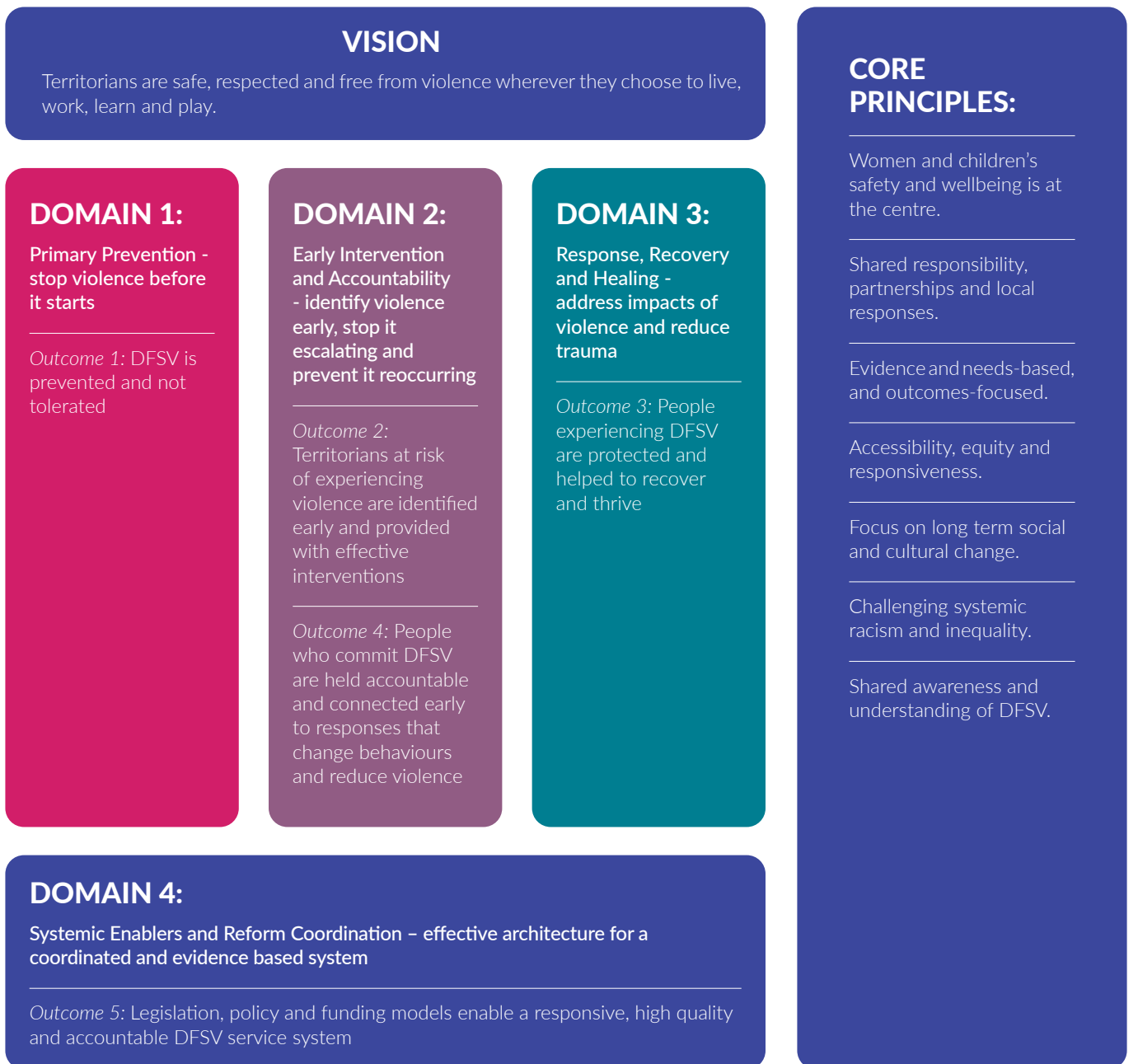


Figure 3 - NT DFSV Framework vision, domains and outcomes

4.1. Principles

The DFSV Framework outlines 7 overarching principles that underpin and guide our approach. These principles underpin our practice and reinforce that is not just what we do, but how we do it. It is vital that practices and work to end DFSV in the Northern Territory is in keeping with, and underpinned by, these shared and collective values and principles.

Women and children's safety and wellbeing is at the centre:

The safety and wellbeing of women and children is always the first consideration. Cultures, practices and beliefs that justify the use of DFSV are not tolerated.

Shared responsibility, partnerships and local responses:

DFSV is everyone's concern, and responsibility for ending it is shared between the government, non-government and community sector. Efforts to prevent and respond to violence emphasise partnerships, local control and decision-making. Community leaders and groups champion and drive change.

Evidence and needs-based and outcomes-focused:

All efforts to prevent and respond to violence are based on the evidence of what works. Success and performance measures are used routinely to evaluate the outcomes for program participants and service users. Programs and services are responsive to emerging evidence, changing needs and improving practice.

Accessibility, equity and responsiveness:

Services are accessible, equitable and responsive to intersectional need. Government and the non-government sector work together to meet the needs of victims and perpetrators in regional and remote communities, Aboriginal communities, culturally diverse communities, among people in same-sex relationships and people with disability.

Focus on long term social and cultural change:

Changing attitudes, ending violence and challenging its causes is a long-term endeavour that requires enduring effort. Commitment and accountability to the long-term vision of this strategy will be maintained through sustained leadership at the highest levels of government, non-government, local community and the private sector.

Challenging systemic racism and inequality:

DFSV reforms acknowledge that the current challenges facing Aboriginal children and families result from a history of injustice and racism that remains embedded within the laws, policies and practices of our society, systems and institutions.

Shared awareness and understanding of what creates domestic, family and sexual violence while also understanding and paying attention to the effect of other forms of discrimination and inequality.

5. Action Plan 1 – setting the foundations for reform

The Northern Territory Government has worked in partnership with the non-government, community, Aboriginal community controlled, and private sectors over many decades to prevent DFSV and reduce its impacts. Collectively, we have made significant progress in building a more effective system to respond to DFSV.

The focus of [Action Plan 1: Changing Attitudes, Intervening Earlier and Responding Better \(2018-2021\)](#) was to set the foundations for the Northern Territory’s strategic approach to preventing and responding to DFSV.

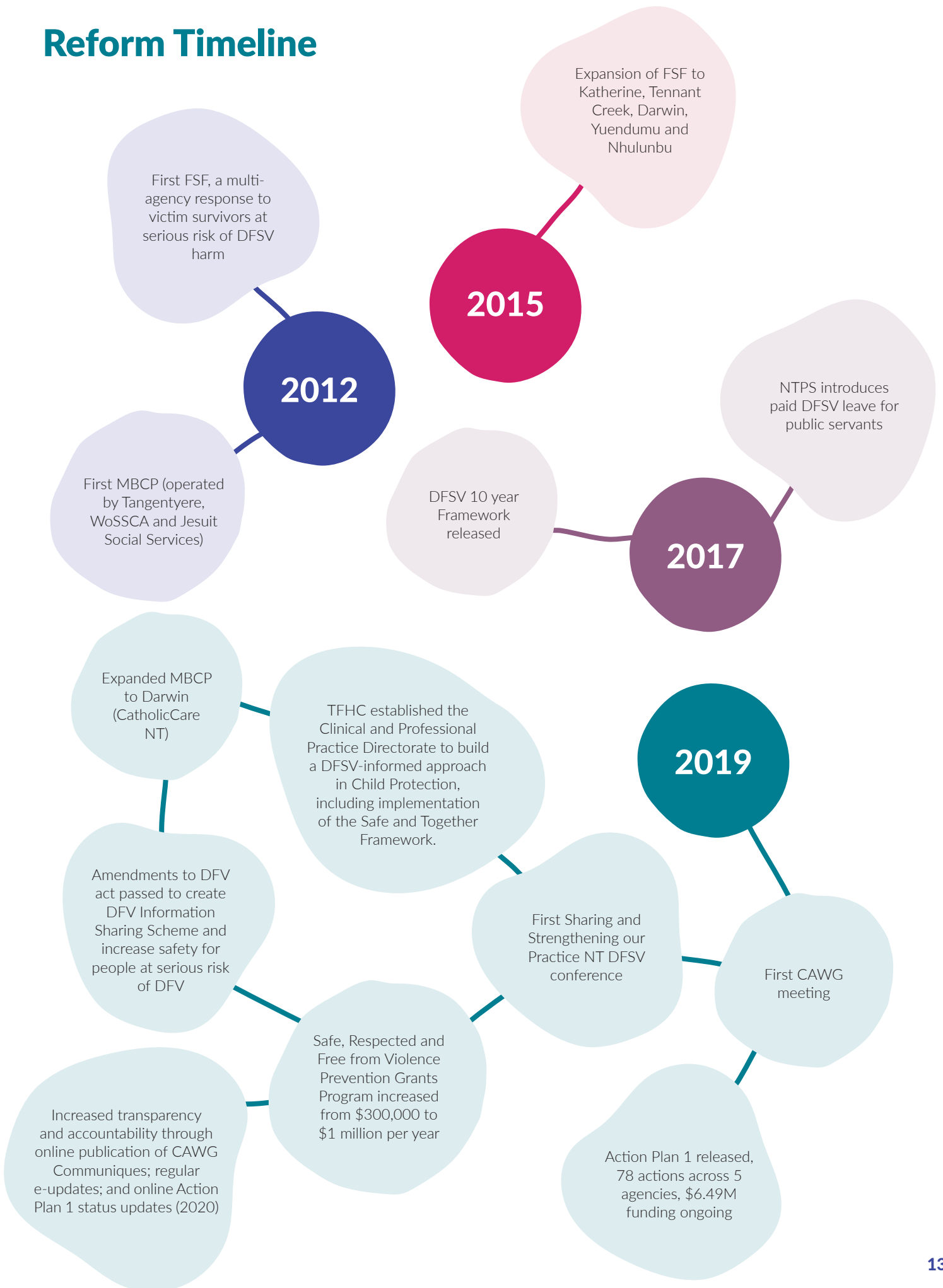
Action Plan 1 comprised 78 actions implemented by the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities; Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services; and the departments of Health; Education; and the Attorney-General and Justice. Based on agency reporting, the actions are all completed or ongoing, with the status of each action published online.

Action Plan 1 was underpinned by an investment of \$6.49 million per annum ongoing to support implementation of the significant reforms. This funding is allocated to:

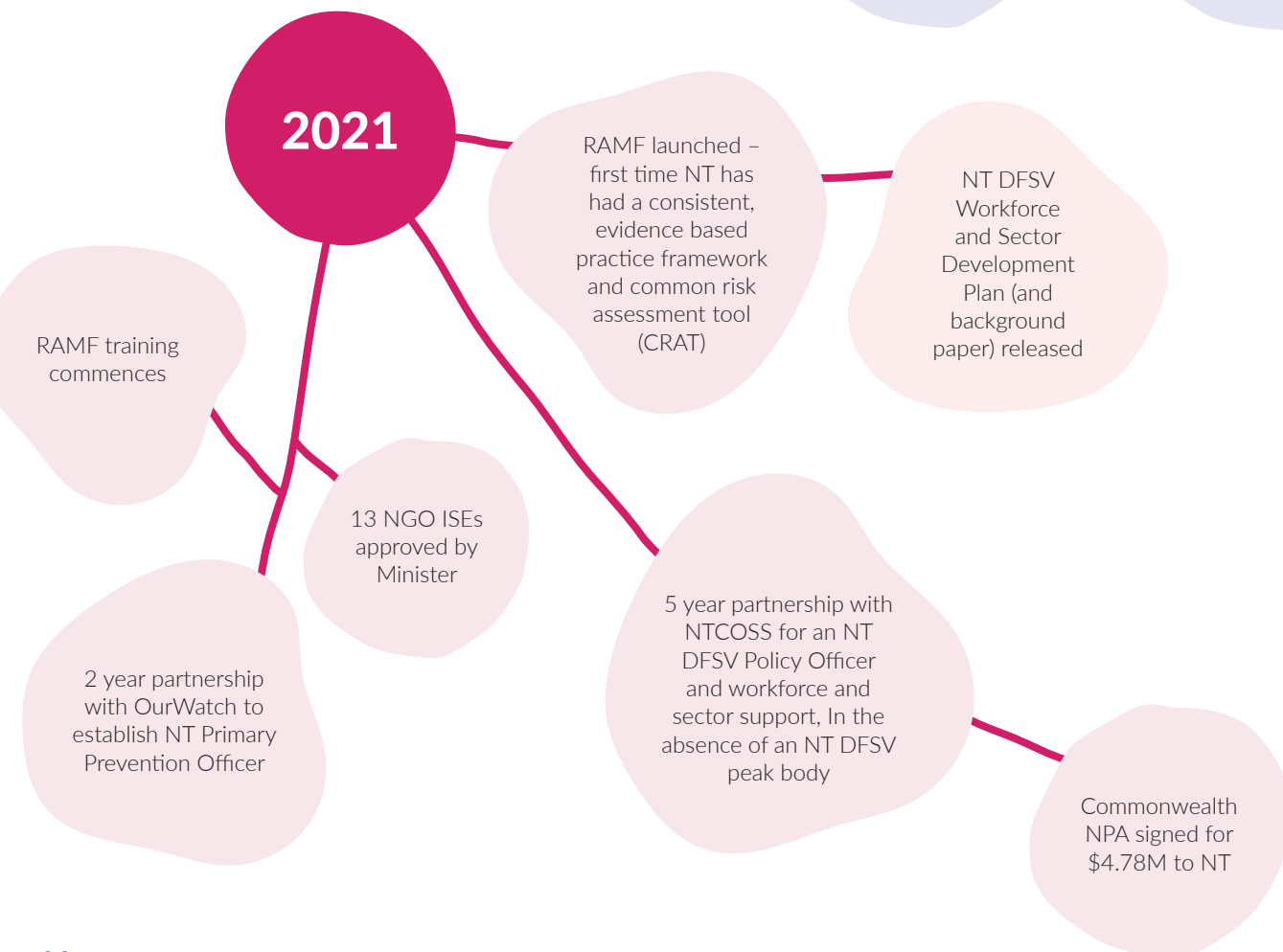
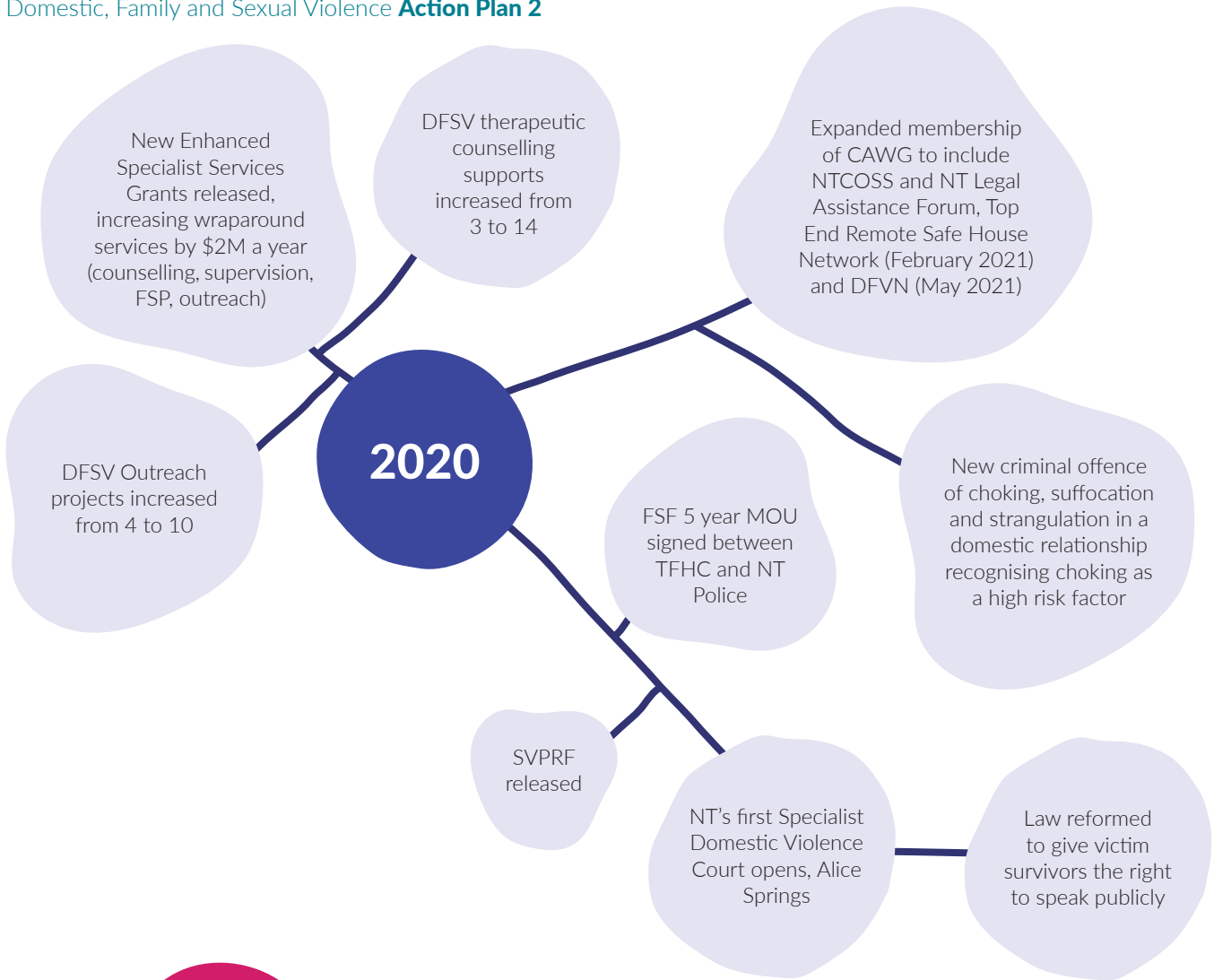
Funding allocation under Action Plan 1	Total funding \$
Enhanced Specialist Services Grants	\$2 million
Implementation of the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework	\$0.3 million
DFSV primary prevention grants	\$1 million
Investment in workforce and sector development in line with the DFSV Workforce and Sector Development Plan	\$0.7 million
Elder abuse responses	\$0.3 million
DFSV community engagement and prevention	\$0.8 million
Men’s Behaviour Change Programs	\$1.14 million
The NO MORE prevention program	\$0.25 million
Total	\$6.49 million

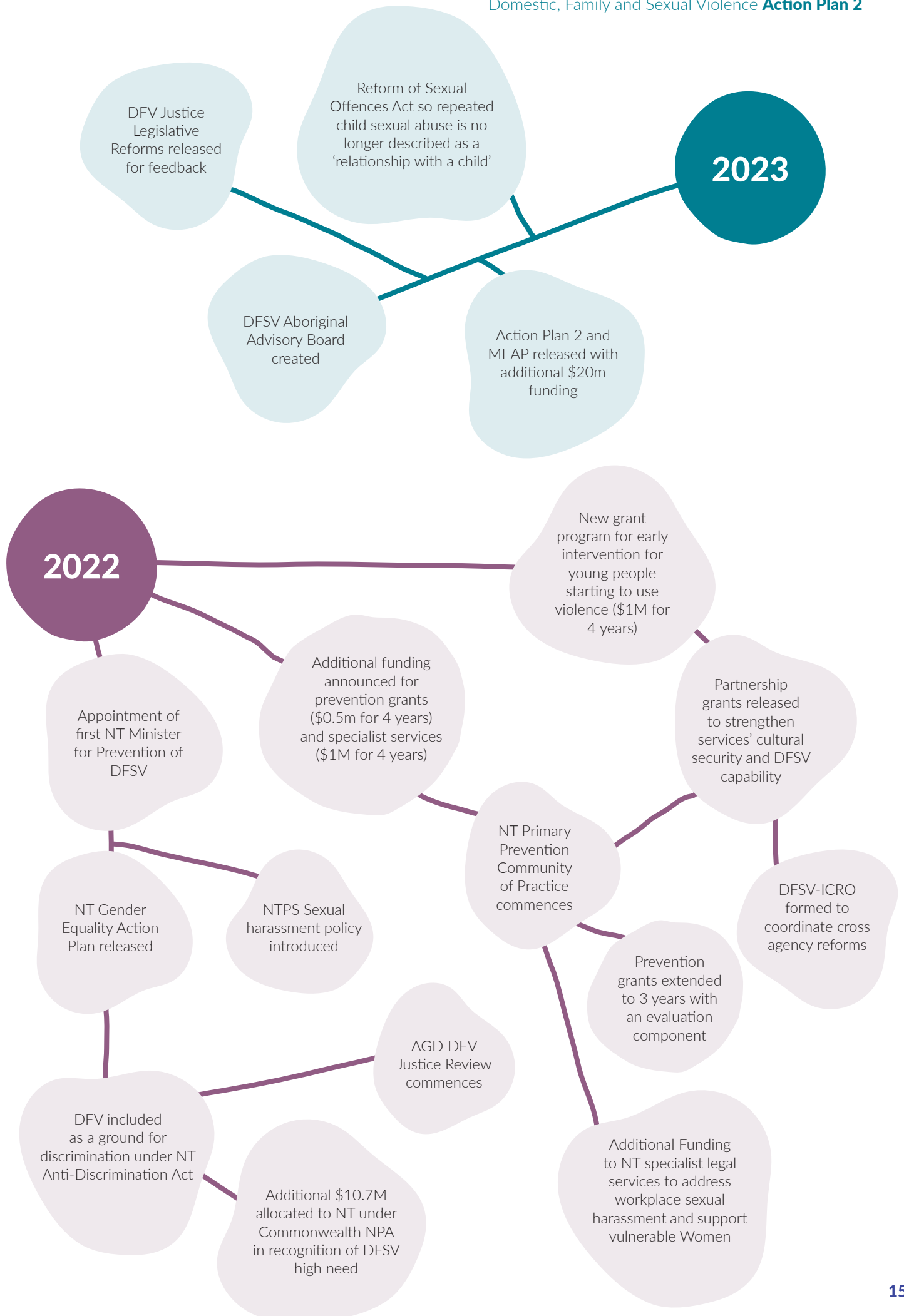
Major initiatives progressed under Action Plan 1, delivered across government agencies and community partners, have set the foundations of the policy, systemic and program architecture for DFSV reform, and inform the momentum for Action Plan 2.

Reform Timeline



Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence **Action Plan 2**





6. Development of Action Plan 2

Despite the foundations set under Action Plan 1, there is always more to be done. Much of the work commenced under Action Plan 1 is ongoing and requires long-term commitment. Implementation of these actions will continue throughout Action Plan 2 and provide the bedrock for continual improvement.

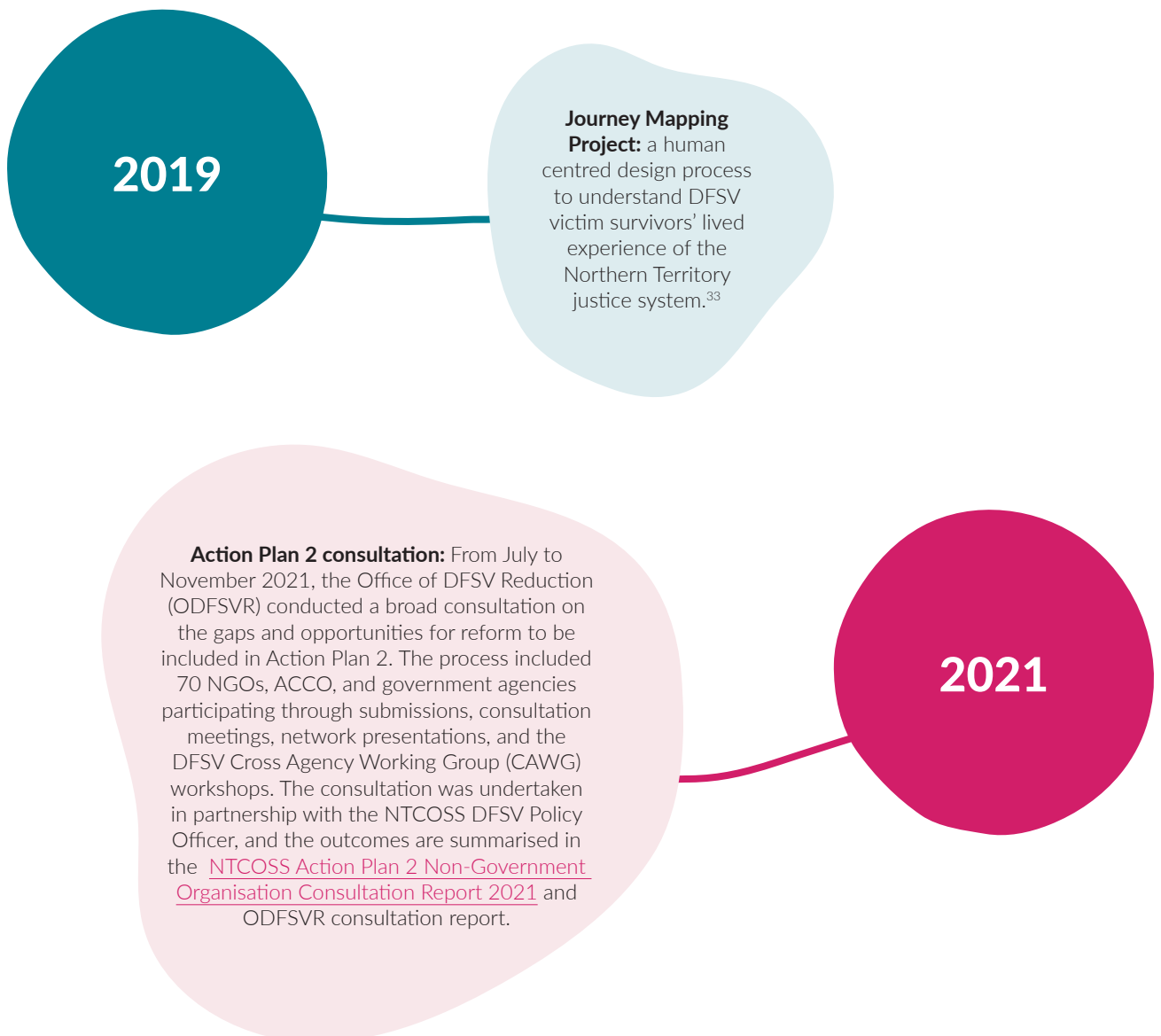
In July 2022, the Northern Territory Government established the DFSV Inter-Agency Coordination and Reform Office (DFSV-ICRO) to work across all agencies, and with our non-government partners, to coordinate our efforts to prevent and respond to DFSV.

Preventing and responding to DFSV is a responsibility that is shared across all government agencies, non-government organisations, and the community, and requires cross agency and cross community responses. Coordination is critical to ensure we are working together to create the systemic reform required, build the necessary infrastructure, and support a

'web of accountability' around people who have committed DFSV, and an integrated system to support victim survivors.

The DFSV-ICRO was tasked with laying out a whole-of-government DFSV reform agenda (under Action Plan 2), including alignment of the Northern Territory's efforts with Territory and national strategies, and ensuring that the work is evaluated and evidence based.

Given that DFSV is a whole-of-government responsibility, Action Plan 2 and its funding was developed collaboratively across agencies to promote a shared and integrated approach. Action Plan 2 has been informed by over 18 months of consultation with non-government service providers, ACCOs, sector peak bodies, government agencies, frontline workers, and victim survivors. The work was also informed by the numerous DFSV consultation and investigation processes that have been undertaken over recent years, including:



Action Plan 2 has also been informed by the established DFSV evidence base, including:

- Our Watch's [Change the Story, Changing the Picture, Counting on Change, Changing the Landscape, Men in Focus](#)
- Research from [Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety \(ANROWS\)](#)
- [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(AIHW\) 2019, Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story, Canberra.](#)
- [ABS 2022, Recorded Crime – Victims, 2021](#)
- [Northern Territory Crime statistics](#)
- [ABS Personal Safety Survey 2023](#)
- [National Community Attitudes Survey 2023](#)
- [The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs Inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence](#)
- Australian Human Rights Commission [Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report \(2020\)](#) and [A Roadmap for Respect](#) – the Government response
- [Wiyi Yani U Thangani \(Women's Voices\): Securing Our Rights Securing Our Future Report \(2020\)](#)

- [Northern Territory Coronial Inquests](#) ³⁴
- [2016-2017 Territory Families Family Safety Framework Review](#)
- [Menzies School of Health Research reports](#)
- Northern Territory DFSV service and system reviews
- [Hopeful Together Strong: Principles of good practice to prevent violence against women in the Northern Territory](#)
- [The Grow Model of family violence primary prevention](#)

A summary of the key gaps and opportunities from these consultations, and review of the evidence, reveals common themes, demonstrating shared and consistent perspectives on reform priorities across the government and non-government sectors. These informed the development of the actions in Action Plan 2.

Some issues, ideas and concerns raised during consultation are not addressed directly by actions in Action Plan 2. This is for a number of reasons, primarily resource availability, a lack of available evidence to justify addressing the issue(s), or because the proposal was outside the scope or principles of the DFSV Framework.

2022

DFSV-ICRO Theory of Change Workshops: The DFSV-ICRO worked with NTCOSS and Dr Chay Brown to undertake wide consultations to inform the development of a logical framework and a theory of change model to underpin the Northern Territory DFSV MEAP for the DFSV framework. The workshop process engaged the specialist DFSV sector, as well as justice, health, youth, housing, ACCO, remote education and other community services. Nine workshops were held from August to October 2022, involving over 300 people, in-person in Darwin and Alice Springs, and online.

Review of Legislation and the Justice Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Northern Territory (DFV Justice Review). The Department of the Attorney General and Justice led a consultation and review process of the Northern Territory's justice responses to DFV. The consultation acknowledged that legislative reform in isolation will not reduce DFV and that non-legislative systemic reforms are also required. Twenty-six systemic reform proposals were identified and were considered as part of the DFSV-ICRO's work. Consultation briefings were held with over 360 stakeholders, with 48 submissions received.

7. Intersection with other strategies

Action Plan 2 sits under the Northern Territory's DFSV Framework, which is aligned with the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032. These strategies progress commitments made under international obligations, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified by Australia in 1980.

Alongside the DFSV Framework's Action Plans are the other DFSV strategies, including the DFV Risk Assessment and Management Framework, the Northern Territory Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework, and the Northern Territory DFSV Workforce and Sector Development Plan. All elements under the DFSV Framework are underpinned by the MEAP.



Figure 4 - The international, national and Northern Territory DFSV policy frameworks

Stopping DFSV requires a systemic approach encompassing primary prevention, early intervention, and tertiary responses. This means all levels of government and community working together towards our shared goals. Preventing and reducing the impacts of DFSV is our collective responsibility and requires a whole of government approach.

Alignment with, and collaboration on, Territory and national reforms in related policy areas is an important pathway to achieve this. The drivers of, and thus the solutions to, DFSV intersect with – and depend upon – addressing issues such as homelessness, gender inequality, alcohol use, children at risk, and justice responses. This is important because we know that:

- DFSV is a significant contributing factor to the incarceration of Aboriginal women and men. Sixty-three per cent of prisoners in the Northern Territory are held for DFV-related offences.³⁵
- DFV has the greatest impact on the burden of disease for women aged 18–44 years than any other risk factor, including alcohol use.³⁶
- Nationally, almost one third of hospitalisations for assault injury are due to DFV.³⁷
- DFSV is the leading cause of Aboriginal children being placed in out of home care nationally (almost 90% of Aboriginal children in out of home care are there because of family violence).³⁸
- DFV is also a strong indicator for children entering the child protection and criminal justice systems.³⁹
- There is a clear correlation between DFV and homelessness, with DFV being the main reason women and children leave their homes and the most common reason for seeking assistance from Specialist Homelessness Services in the Northern Territory (53% of all clients), which is higher than the national level (37% of all clients).⁴⁰
- The Northern Territory has the highest rates of Specialist Homelessness Services clients who have experienced DFV at 201.3 per 10,000 compared to the national rate of 45.2 per 10,000 population.⁴¹
- Alcohol use, while not a cause of DFSV, has been shown to exacerbate the severity and frequency of violence.⁴²

Because of these intersections, the DFSV Framework and Action Plan 2 work alongside a number of interconnected strategies, policies and frameworks that support the prevention of, and response to, DFSV, nationally and in the Northern Territory.

7.1. National level – DFSV specific

The implementation of the DFSV Framework and Action Plan 2 occur within a context of national policies that address DFSV. These have been endorsed by the Northern Territory government and include:

- [The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032](#), (including the First Action Plan 2023-2027, the Outcomes Framework, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2026. The Northern Territory DFSV Framework and Action Plans align with and support our commitments under the National Plan.
- (Proposed) Standalone National Plan to End Violence against First Nations women and children.
- [The National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030](#).
- [The National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#). The agreement sets 17 national socio-economic targets, including Target 13: *by 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced by at least 50%, as progress towards zero*. At the centre of the Closing the Gap Agreement are 4 priority reforms that focus on changing the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:
 - » Formal partnerships and shared decision-making
 - » Building the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sectors to deliver services
 - » Transforming mainstream government organisations
 - » Shared access to data.
- [A Roadmap for Respect: Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces](#) which responds to the 55 recommendations in the Australian Human Rights Commission's Respect@Work report.
- [Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031](#).
- (Proposed) National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality
- (Proposed) Wiyi Yani U Thangani National Plan to achieve First Nations Gender Justice
- (Under development) National Principles to Address Coercive Control
- [The Work Plan to Strengthen Criminal Justice Responses to Sexual Assault 2022-2027](#)
- [National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians \(Elder Abuse\) 2019-2023](#)
- OurWatch national frameworks to support prevention of violence.⁴³

7.2. Other related national strategies

- [The National Housing and Homelessness Agreement](#)
- [The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021–2031](#)
- [The National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017–2023](#)
- [Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031](#)
- [National Women's Health Strategy 2020-2030](#)

7.3. Northern Territory level – DFSV specific

- [Northern Territory Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework 2020-2028](#)
- [Northern Territory Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Workforce and Sector Development Plan](#), which sets out our goals and priority actions to strengthen and support the DFSV workforce and sector, including the establishment of a centralised DFSV Resource Centre to develop, deliver and coordinate training and practice support for workers across the sector.
- [The Northern Territory DFV Risk Assessment and Management Framework \(RAMF\)](#), including the Common Risk Assessment Tool (CRAT) - the consistent, evidence based practice framework for the entire Northern Territory DFSV service system to identify, assess, and manage risk of domestic and family violence.
- [Northern Territory DFV Information Sharing Scheme.](#)
- [The Northern Territory Gender Equality Statement of Commitment and Action Plan.](#)

7.4. Northern Territory level – broader social reform

- [The 10-Year Generational Strategy for Children and Families in the Northern Territory.](#)
- [Everyone Together: Aboriginal Affairs Strategy 2019–2029.](#)
- [Northern Territory Aboriginal Justice Agreement](#) - a partnership between the Northern Territory Government, Aboriginal organisations and Aboriginal Territorians committing to improving justice outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians.
- [Northern Territory Homelessness Strategy](#)
- (Proposed) Northern Territory Alcohol Action Plan 2023-2025
- [Aboriginal Cultural Security Framework, Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities](#)
- [Northern Territory Disability Strategy 2022-2032](#)
- [Northern Territory Health Aboriginal Health Plan 2021-2031](#)
- [Northern Territory Mental Health Strategic Plan 2019-2025](#)
- [Northern Territory Seniors Policy 2021-2026.](#)

8. Key objectives of Action Plan 2

Action Plan 2 focuses on 3 key areas, informed by the consultation, evidence, and mapping process undertaken by the DFSV-ICRO. The theory of change outlined in the DFSV MEAP demonstrates how and why these key objectives work towards achieving DFSV Framework's outcomes and overall vision.

8.1. Focussing on primary prevention and early intervention

Most investment in DFSV in the Northern Territory to date has been in the response and recovery domain, with comparatively little investment in prevention or early intervention.

A refocussing of attention is needed. Strategic increased investment in prevention and early intervention is required to effectively reduce the levels of DFSV in the long term. Any refocusing on primary prevention and early intervention should not come at the cost of investment and focus on response and recovery. If response and recovery are not fully supported, the cycle will continue no matter how much primary prevention work is funded.

Stopping violence is not possible without sustained interventions with people who are using violence. Programs for people who commit DFV are under-developed. Stakeholders are seeking greater accountability and increased access to programs to help change violent behaviours. Significant expansion and coordination is required in programs in both prison and community settings for people who have committed DFV. Expanded DFV programs is an essential component of the implementation of the Government's sentencing reforms, under which courts can sentence offenders to attend DFV and other programs as part of new orders.⁴⁴

8.2. Maintain and improve supports for victim survivors

Increases in primary prevention and early intervention result in additional demand on crisis responses. Investment in response and recovery must be maintained and keep pace with existing and growing demand.

8.3. Support a coordinated response

A coordinated response to DFSV is essential because of the serious risks of DFSV – if problems are siloed, there is a risk that relevant information may be fractured across organisations, under different legislative frameworks and service systems. This may result in unnecessary complexity, confusion, duplication, service gaps or inconsistent practices at best, and serious harm or death at worst. A coordinated response also relies heavily on the involvement of the NGO and Aboriginal community-controlled sectors. Establishing a sustainable DFSV whole-of-government coordination mechanism to lead consistent and evidence-based DFSV policy and practice is central to the success of all other proposed reforms.

DOMAIN 1:

Primary Prevention – stopping violence before it occurs

Primary prevention involves whole of population initiatives which aim to prevent violence before it occurs by addressing the underlying drivers. Primary prevention is focused on shifting harmful attitudes, beliefs, systems and structures that drive violence. Because we know the underlying drivers of violence are complex, deeply entrenched and exist at all levels of our society, primary prevention also seeks to work at all levels of society. It is an ambitious, long-term approach, aiming for social transformation on a scale that will create a safe and equal society for all. Actions under this first domain work towards outcome 1 of the DFSV Framework: DFSV is prevented and not tolerated.

What we heard

- More investment is required in primary prevention, especially community and ACCO led initiatives.
- Programs addressing healthy and respectful relationships, and consent, are needed across the lifespan, and especially for children and young people.
- Communities are ready to have conversations about coercive control and jealousy, and need support and resources to lead this work.

What we have already achieved

- Investment in community-led Safe, Respected and Free from Violence Prevention Projects has steadily increased from \$300,000 to \$1.5 million per year, and the grants are now longer term (3 years) with a funded evaluation component. Fifty per cent of these projects are led by ACCOs, and 70% are focussed on Aboriginal community approaches. In addition, Tangentyere Women’s Family Safety Group and Catholic Care NT’s No More campaign are supported to work at the grassroots to prevent violence in Aboriginal communities.
- A partnership with OurWatch, the national policy leader in DFSV primary prevention, is helping to grow the Northern Territory’s prevention capability, and supporting workers through a Community of Practice approach.

Key actions in Action Plan 2

- Education and prevention activities in schools, workplaces and communities.
- Aboriginal-led prevention activities, including a public awareness campaign on safe, healthy and respectful relationships.
- Continuing to build prevention infrastructure and capability in the NT including through the OurWatch Partnership.

DOMAIN 2: Early intervention and accountability – stop violence from escalating and prevent it reoccurring

Early intervention and accountability aims to address the early signs of violence to stop it from commencing, escalating or reoccurring. It includes identifying violence as early as possible, and working to disrupt the trajectories of violence. In order to stop violence occurring, it makes sense that we focus on interventions with people who are committing violence. Actions under this second domain work towards outcomes 2 and 4 in the DFSV Framework: *Territorians at risk of experiencing violence are identified early and provided with effective interventions; and People who commit DFSV are held accountable and connected early to responses that change behaviours and reduce violence.*

What we heard

- A more coherent response is required to support people using violence to change their behaviours. Many men in prison are unable to access programs, and Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCP) in community are struggling to meet the demand. These programs must be evidence based, designed according to shared principles and standards (including the primacy of victim survivor safety), and be culturally appropriate. Healing supports are an important component of these responses.
- The evidence on MBCP effectiveness is still emerging, and research suggests caution in reliance solely on recidivism rates to measure effectiveness. A broader understanding of the purpose and impact of MBCPs is required, and MBCPs should not be seen as the panacea for addressing offending behaviour.
- Young people who are starting to use violence need specialist, trauma informed approaches, focused on healthy relationships and understanding consent.
- Implementation of the RAMF, while progressing, requires greater agency commitment and accountability, and increased resourcing for training, especially in universal services, to improve early DFSV identification.

What we have already achieved

- Investment in 2 MBCPs in Darwin and Alice Springs.
- Legislative reforms to create a DFV Information Sharing Scheme that responds to serious risk, with 13 non-government organisations joining the Scheme as Information Sharing Entities.
- The Northern Territory's first Specialist Approach to Domestic Violence in the Alice Springs Local Court to increase the web of accountability for people who have committed DFV and support for victim survivors.
- The Northern Territory DFV RAMF to provide a consistent, evidence based practice framework, including a CRAT. The RAMF is the lynchpin of an integrated service system that keeps people who have committed DFV accountable, and identifies and supports victim survivors as early as possible. Since January 2021, over 980 Northern Territory workers have been trained in the RAMF, including workers from universal services to support widespread identification of and response to DFSV.
- Established a new grant program for early intervention for young people who are starting to use violence.

Key actions in Action Plan 2

- Expand programs for people who have committed DFV under a cross-agency, evidence-based framework.
- Strengthen the implementation of RAMF and RAMF training across the service system, including through the Northern Territory Health DFV Clinical Guidelines in NT Health.

DOMAIN 3: Response and recovery - To address violence and reduce trauma

Response and Recovery (also referred to as tertiary prevention) involves intervening once the violence is already occurring and aims to support victim survivors, provide safety, reduce the impacts of violence (including trauma), support recovery, and promote long term health and wellbeing. While we do need to increase our efforts in prevention, and early intervention, investment in response and recovery must be maintained and keep pace with growing demand. Actions under this third domain work towards outcome 3 of the DFSV Framework: *People experiencing DFSV are protected and helped to recover and thrive.*

What we heard

- Remote safe houses and other victim survivor services play a critical role as does remote outreach from specialist DFSV services.
- Increased investment in DFSV programs for children and young people is required, including therapeutic responses for those who have experienced DFSV.
- Access to safe, appropriate and sustainable housing is vital in order to reduce the impacts of DFSV and to reduce the bottleneck in crisis accommodation. Housing issues raised include overcrowding, lack of transitional housing, long waitlists for public housing, and the gap in housing for people who have committed DFSV.
- DFSV specialist services are struggling to meet rising costs and demand. In many places, this has resulted in a system that is under great pressure, with reduced capacity to provide vital assistance to victim survivors. Many services are facing, or have already implemented, service cuts.
- Aboriginal law and culture must be recognised as a key supporting factor in healing conflict in Aboriginal communities.
- Improved practice in frontline responses to DFSV victim survivors in health, police, courts and prisons is required.
- The growing misidentification of women who use resistive, defensive or retaliatory violence is a critical issue that needs addressing.
- Healing and therapeutic support programs that are community led and designed, place based, and culturally appropriate are needed, in addition to behaviour change programs, for victim survivors, children, and people who have committed DFSV.

What we have already achieved

- Family Safety Frameworks (FSF) in 6 regions to promote collaborative responses to serious risk.
- Legislative reforms to respond to emerging understandings of DFSV.
- Partnership grants to grow the cultural safety and competency of services.
- The Northern Territory's first Specialist Approach to Domestic Violence in the Alice Springs Local Court to increase the web of accountability for people who have committed DFV and support for victim survivors.
- The shift from an accommodation model only, to providing counselling, outreach and flexible support services as part of wraparound responses to victim survivors.

Key actions in Action Plan 2

- A victim centred response that aims to reduce the impacts of DFSV, including trauma, in particular when interacting with police, health and justice (including the development of Police and DFSV Specialist Co-Responder Pilot).
- Development of a RAMF-aligned frontline tool for police to screen for DFV risk.
- Strengthening of the specialist approach to DFV at the Alice Springs local court.
- A specialist approach to the prosecution of DFSV matters and more support for witnesses providing evidence in DFSV proceedings.
- Delivering therapeutic responses to children as victim survivors of DFSV in their own right.
- Establishing a Housing and DFV Advisory Group, and developing innovative partnerships with the housing and homelessness sector to alleviate blockages in the housing continuum, support victim survivors, and reduce the impacts of DFSV, including homelessness.

DOMAIN 4: Systemic enablers and reform coordination to support continuous improvement and a joined up approach

System Enablers and Reform refers to the legislative, policy and system environments which facilitate DFSV prevention and response. When these are working in alignment, it enables a more effective, collaborative and integrated service system, which benefits victim survivors and increases accountability of people who have committed DFSV. A coordinated response to DFSV is critical to the success of all other reforms. Actions under this fourth domain work towards outcome 5 of the DFSV Framework: *Legislation, policy and funding models enable a responsive, high quality and accountable DFSV service.*

What we heard

- A coordinated and consistent response to DFSV is necessary because of the serious risks of DFSV, which are exacerbated through a siloed approach. A sustainable coordination mechanism should include strong governance, cross agency engagement, and policy congruence. Additionally, transparency of communication is needed for true partnerships, so that all stakeholders are informed, engaged and able to meaningfully participate, including transparency on funding.
- Policies and programs must be informed by and co-designed with people, particularly Aboriginal people, with lived experience of DFSV.
- Evaluation and monitoring has been lacking at both the system and service level, and is critically required for continuous service and system improvement. This includes improved data collection and data sharing. Informing systemic changes through a proper review of DFV deaths, as a key data set, is fundamental to our learning and is an evident gap in the Northern Territory, compared with all other jurisdictions.
- The FSF is an essential component of our safety architecture and requires additional support to strengthen the approach.
- The DFSV workforce faces challenges in specialist staff recruitment and retention. Supporting DFSV capacity and capability in ACCO, and increasing Indigenous employment, needs to be prioritised.
- Specialised training is needed for all workers across the system, and in particular for frontline workers across police, justice, and health.
- Without a peak body, there is no opportunity or mechanism for collective advocacy.
- Adequate resourcing for all initiatives is required to match the breadth of reform.

What we have already achieved

- A strong policy and practice framework.
- A collaborative and representative CAWG.
- Legislative reform to improve information sharing, and respond to new understandings of DFSV dynamics.
- A shared understanding of DFV and a shared, evidence based practice approach to DFV risk assessment and management through the Northern Territory DFV RAMF, supported by training across the service system to over 1000 workers.
- Supporting DFSV workers and strengthening practice and safety through quarantined grant funding for staff supervision and practice management in DFSV crisis accommodation services.
- Five year partnership with the Northern Territory Council of Social Services for a DFSV Policy Officer and workforce and sector support, in the absence of a Northern Territory DFSV peak body.
- Establishment of a DFSV Aboriginal Advisory Board to support community led policy and program development.

Key actions in Action Plan 2

- Establishing a sustainable DFSV whole-of-government coordination mechanism to oversee improvements to our integrated system, including supporting a joined up approach; implementing the MEAP; implementing a systemic DFV Death Review; improved RAMF implementation; strong governance; and supporting the new Aboriginal Advisory Board. This coordinated approach and infrastructure is important across the domains, from primary prevention and early intervention, through to response and recovery.
- Strengthening the operations of the FSF and expanding FSF to Wadeye.
- Implementing new legislative reforms for DFSV.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability

DFSV is a complex problem, and there is no single, stand-alone system that can take responsibility for effectively preventing and responding to it. Instead, a multitude of overlapping systems, involving a broad range of government and non-government agencies working together in a coordinated manner, are required.

If these overlapping systems are not underpinned by strong governance arrangements, DFSV reforms will be ineffective. At the systemic level, DFSV can fall to the margins and fail to attract the policy attention and investment it requires and deserves.

9.1. Monitoring and evaluation

While an evaluation of Action Plan 1 is underway, there has not yet been any formal evaluations of the DFSV Framework. A new focus on monitoring, evaluation and accountability will be a priority in the implementation of Action Plan 2. This will establish an evidence base to guide effective actions for the remaining period of the DFSV Framework, and future actions beyond its lifecycle.

The MEAP is a sister document to the DFSV Framework and its Action Plans. It lays out our evidence-based theory of change (program logic), and how the DFSV Framework and its Action Plans will be monitored, reported against, and how we will measure the impact of our actions. This will inform future decision-making and planning, and improve the DFSV service systems overall in the Northern Territory.

The MEAP itemises which key actions will undergo program or project-level evaluations, and also commits to a mid-point evaluation of the DFSV Framework and Action Plans.

To the greatest extent possible, monitoring and reporting will be aligned with the National Outcomes Framework, currently under development.

It is acknowledged that our ultimate goal (to end DFSV) is a long term one. Change is generational and requires ongoing commitment, investment and monitoring. While it may seem counter-intuitive, demand for services and reporting of DFSV is expected to increase in the medium term as a result of improved responses and prevention efforts under the DFSV Framework.

9.2. Governance and accountability

The DFSV-ICRO, as a cross agency body, will report to the Minister for the Prevention of DFSV, through the Children and Families Standing Committee, which comprises the Chief Executive Officers of the key human services agencies.

The DFSV-ICRO will publish an annual report on the implementation of Action Plan 2 after the end of each financial year. This will include a report card on action progress and any learnings from project and system evaluations.

The DFSV CAWG will continue to drive collaboration, engagement and information sharing, and to advise on the implementation of the DFSV Framework and its action plan. The CAWG reports to the Children and Families Standing Committee, and provides a forum for accountability and transparency for agency representatives reporting on action progress, through a broad membership including government, DFSV specialist services networks, and peaks. As for Action Plan 1, progress in implementing actions under Action Plan 2 will be reported to CAWG by each responsible agency. Agencies may also include status updates in their annual reports.

The newly formed DFSV Aboriginal Advisory Board enables Aboriginal people and organisations to advise the Minister for the Prevention of DFSV on policy and program development, so that DFSV initiatives have cultural authority, are culturally secure, are community-led and locally effective. This is aligned with the priority reforms under Closing the Gap.

Further detail about monitoring, evaluation and accountability, including governance plans, are located in the MEAP.

10. New funding allocation for Action Plan 2

New investment in Action Plan 2 totals \$20 million over 2 years. Where possible, funding for initiatives has been aligned with priorities to be achieved under the existing National Partnership on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses (NPA).⁴⁶ In addition to the new funding itemised in the table below, agencies will progress initiatives within existing resources.

Action	Lead Agency	Initiative	2023-24 (\$M)	2024-25 (\$M)	TOTAL (\$M) ⁴⁷
1.3	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)	Aboriginal community-led DFSV prevention initiatives, designed and delivered by Aboriginal communities	0.4	0.4	0.8
2.1b	AGD	Expand programs (correctional settings) for people who have committed DFV under a co-designed evidence-based Framework.	1.91	1.91	3.81
2.1c	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)	Expand programs (community settings) for people who have committed DFV under a co-designed evidence-based Framework.	2.46 NPA	2.86 NPA	5.32
2.2a	AGD	Strengthen Specialist DFV Court at the Alice Springs Local Court – Registrar component	0.15	0.15	0.30
2.2b	(and TFHC (DFSV-ICRO for 2.2b)	Strengthen the Specialist DFV Court Model- victim survivor support component (TFHC (DFSV-ICRO))	NPA	NPA	
2.2c		Strengthen the Specialist DFV Court Model- representation component	0.32	0.32	0.64
2.2d		Strengthen the Specialist DFV Court Model- training component	0.1	0.05	0.15
2.2e		Strengthen the Specialist DFV Court Model- evaluation component	0.18		0.18
3.1	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)	Strengthen specialist services responses to child victim survivors	NPA	NPA	
3.2	AGD	Provide culturally-safe, gender-specific, trauma-informed DFSV counselling and healing options for women in prison	0.5	0.5	1
3.3	TFHC (Housing)	Embed a specialist DFV outreach worker at visitor accommodation, and improve DFSV Housing coordination	0.28	0.28	0.56
3.5	AGD	Specialist DFV Prosecutions and witness assistance supports	0.85	0.85	1.70
3.6	Police	Police and DFSV Specialist Co-Responder Pilot Develop a co-responder pilot with victim support organisations working alongside police and responding to DFSV incidents	NPA	NPA	
4.1a	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)	Whole of government DFSV coordination mechanism	1.60	1.55	3.15
4.1b		DFV Death Review	0.15	0.15	0.30
4.1c		RAMF review and Expansion	0.38	0.13	0.51
4.1d		Evaluation	0.15	0.2	0.35
4.1e		Aboriginal Advisory Board	0.08	0.08	0.16
4.2	Police & TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)	Strengthen the FSF through enhanced intelligence support and expanded regions	0.47	0.47	0.93
TOTAL			9.97	9.89	19.86

11. Action Plan 2 (summary form): Taking stock, evaluating and reviewing and building on what works 2023-2025

- 1 DOMAIN 1:** Primary Prevention - stop violence before it starts
- 2 DOMAIN 2:** Early Intervention and Accountability - identify early, stop violence escalating and prevent it reoccurring
- 3 DOMAIN 3:** Response, Recovery and Healing - address impacts of violence and reduce trauma
- 4 DOMAIN 4:** Systemic Enablers and Reform Coordination - effective architecture for a coordinated and evidence based system

Note that actions usually fall under more than one domain, since domains are intersecting. This reflects the reality that prevention, early intervention, response and recovery, and systemic enablers and reform, do not represent a linear progression.

The full version of Action Plan 2, with action descriptions, is available online.

New/ continuing	#	Action	Funding	Lead Agency	Domain			
					1	2	3	4
New	1.1	Implement respectful relationships education in educational settings	Existing resources	Department of Education	1			
New	1.21	Community Awareness Campaign - Safe, healthy, respectful relationships - what do they look like?	Existing resources	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)	1			
New	1.3	Establish and implement an Aboriginal led DSV prevention initiatives fund	\$0.8M over 23-24 and 24-25	Aboriginal Advisory Board and TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)	1			
New	1.4	Establish a sexual harassment prevention officer in NT Worksafe	Existing resources	AGD (NT Worksafe)	1		3	
Continuing	1.5a	Continue the Safe, Respected and Free from Violence Primary Prevention Grant Program	Existing resources AP1 - \$1M p.a ongoing	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)	1			
Continuing	1.5b	Expand the Safe, Respected and Free from Violence Primary Prevention Grant Program	\$2M over 4 years (2022 budget) (existing program \$1m p.a ongoing AP1)	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)	1			
Continuing	1.5c	Evaluate the Safe, Respected and Free from Violence Primary Prevention Grant Program	Existing resources	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)	1			4
Continuing	1.6	Continue to support and grow Primary Prevention capability and capacity in the NT through the NT Primary Prevention Community of Practice and the Our Watch Primary Prevention Officer Partnership	Existing funding AP1	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)	1		3	4
Continuing	1.7	Implement the NT-relevant Respect@Work Report recommendations	Existing resources	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)	1			

New/ continuing	#	Action	Funding	Lead Agency	Domain			
					1	2	3	4
Continuing	1.8	Support actions under the NT Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025 that work to address the drivers of gender-based violence	Existing funding AP1 (\$0.3M p.a ongoing)	TFHC (Office of Gender Equity and Diversity)	1			
New	2.1a	Co-design and implement a cross-agency evidence-based framework for programs for people who have committed DFV for the NT	NPA funding ⁴⁹ 22-23: \$2.46M 23-24: \$2.86M	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO), in collaboration with AGD		2		4
New	2.1b	Expand men's behaviour change programs in community settings under the new Framework	NPA funding for regional MBCP including partner contact ⁵⁰	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)		2		
New	2.1c	Expand DFV programs in prison to prisoners on remand or serving sentences less than 2 years	\$1.91M 23-24 \$1.91M 24-25	AGD TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)		2		
New	2.2a	Strengthen the Specialist DFV Court Model at the Alice Springs Local Court – Registrar component	\$0.15M 23-24 \$0.15M 24-25	AGD		2	3	4
New	2.2b	Strengthen the Specialist DFV Court Model at the Alice Springs Local Court – victim survivor support component	NPA funding 2 frontline workers ⁵¹	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO), and AGD			3	
New	2.2c	Strengthen the Specialist DFV Court Model at the Alice Springs Local Court – legal representation component	\$0.32M 23-24 \$0.32M 24-25	AGD		2	3	
New	2.2d	Strengthen the Specialist DFV Court Model at the Alice Springs Local Court – training component	\$0.1M 23-24 \$0.05M 24-25	AGD, and TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)		2	3	
New	2.2e	Strengthen the Specialist DFV Court Model at the Alice Springs Local Court – evaluation component	\$0.18M 23-24	AGD		2	3	4
Continuing	2.3	Evaluate the existing Men's Behaviour Change Programs	Existing resources AP1	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)		2	3	4
New	2.4a	Implement the RAMF within NT Police	Existing resources	NT Police		2	3	4
New	2.4b	Develop and implement a frontline tool for police to screen DFV risk, in alignment with the RAMF	Existing resources	NT Police TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)		2	3	4
New	2.4c	Set, enforce and monitor annual targets for NT Police risk assessment and management training	Existing resources	NT Police		2	3	4
New	2.4d	Improve and enhance the response to DFSV through undertaking a review of the General Order – Domestic and Family Violence	Existing resources	NT Police		2	3	

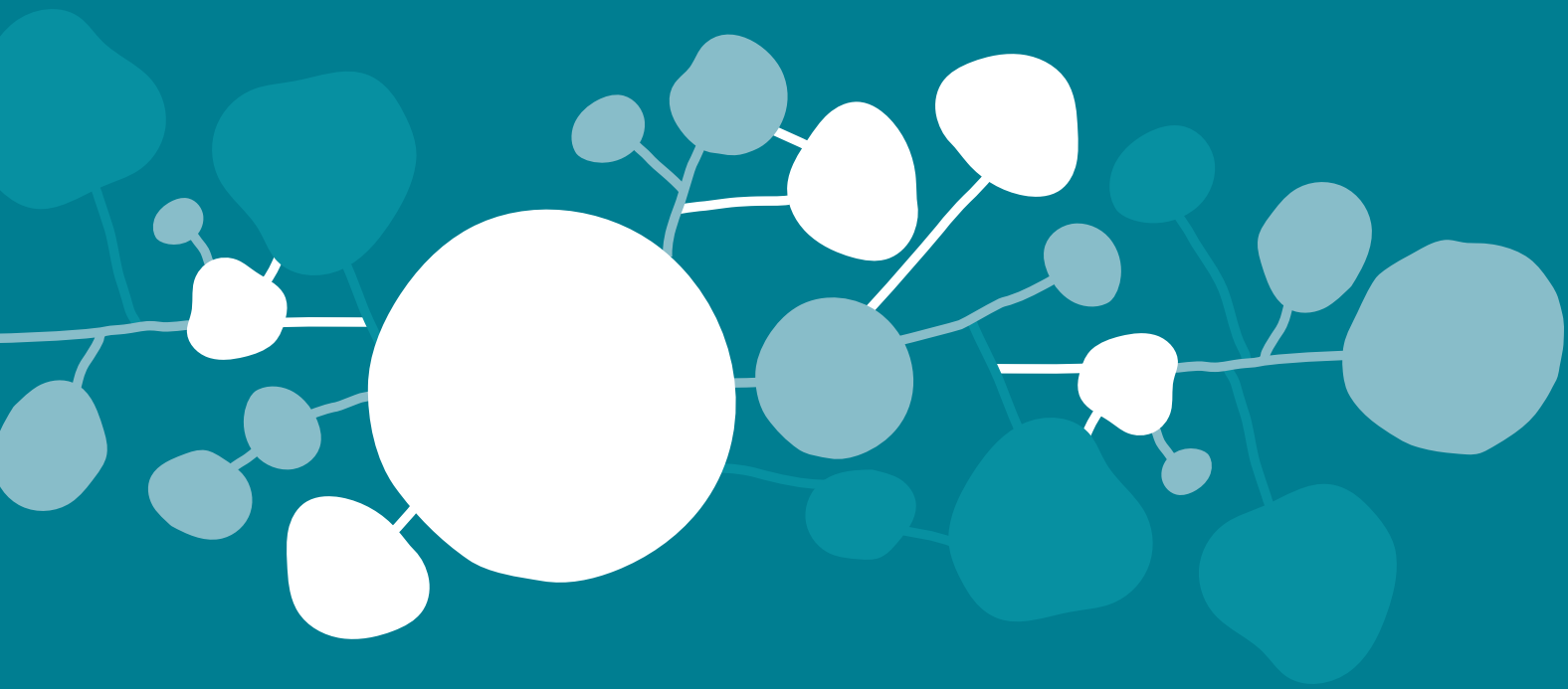
New/ continuing	#	Action	Funding	Lead Agency	Domain			
					1	2	3	4
New	2.5	Implement the RAMF within NT Health	Existing resources	NT Health		2	3	4
New	2.6	Implement the RAMF within TFHC	Existing resources	TFHC		2	3	4
New	2.7	Implement the RAMF within DoE	Existing resources	DoE		2	3	4
New	2.8	Implement the RAMF within AGD	Existing resources	AGD		2	3	4
Continuing	2.9	Support RAMF implementation in universal services	NPA funding	TFHC (DFS-V-ICRO)		2	3	4
Continuing	2.10	Establish a new DFSV secondary prevention (early intervention) grant program to support young people who are starting to use violence	\$4M over 4 years From 2022 budget	TFHC (DFS-V-ICRO)		2	3	
Continuing	2.11	Strengthen the understanding and response of disability and seniors' specialist services to DFSV including abuse of older persons (elder abuse)	Existing funding AP1 (\$0.3M p.a ongoing)	TFHC (Office of Disability, Office of Senior Territorians)		2	3	
New	3.1	Strengthen the response of specialist services towards child victim survivors to reduce the impacts of DFSV, increase their safety, and assist recovery	NPA funding – minimum 6 positions ⁵²	TFHC (DFS-V-ICRO)–		2	3	
New	3.2	Provide DFSV counselling for female prisoners	\$0.5M 22-23 \$0.5M 23-24	AGD			3	
New	3.3a	Embed a specialist DFV outreach worker at visitor accommodation	\$0.15M 23-24 \$0.15M 24-25	TFHC (Housing)			3	
New	3.3b	Improve intersections between Housing and DFSV Policies and Programs	\$0.13M 23-24 \$0.13M 24-25	TFHC (DFS-V-ICRO and Housing)			3	
Continuing	3.3c	Pilot and evaluate a DFSV Housing Pathways Transitional Accommodation program	NPA funding	TFHC (DFS-V-ICRO and Housing)			3	
Continuing	3.3d	Undertake research into DFSV victim survivors' housing pathways	NPA funding	TFHC (DFS-V-ICRO and Housing)			3	4
New	3.4	Improve DFSV responses in NT hospitals and health settings	Existing resources	NT Health			3	
New	3.5	Implement a DFV Specialist Prosecutor and additional witness assistance supports	\$0.85M 22-23 \$0.85M 23-24	AGD			3	

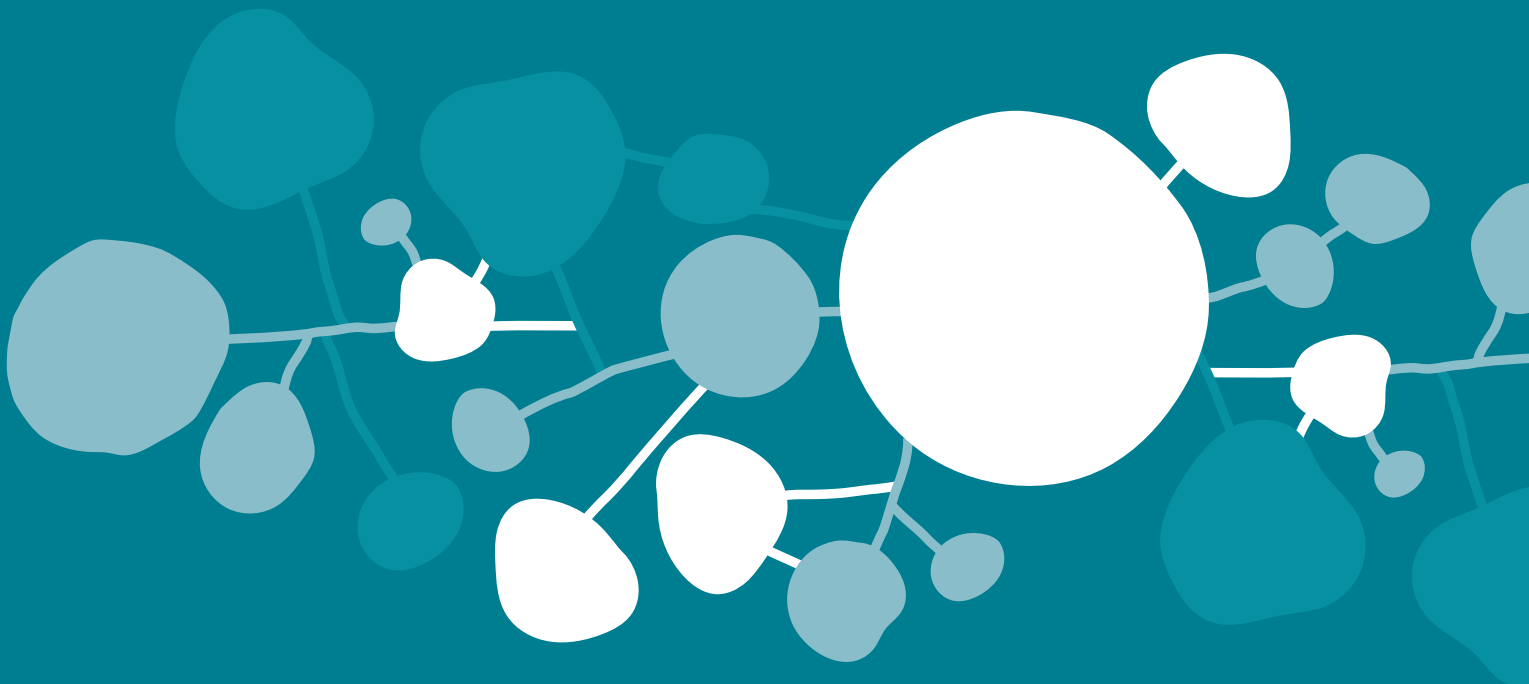
New/ continuing	#	Action	Funding	Lead Agency	Domain			
					1	2	3	4
New	3.6	Develop and trial a DFSV co-responder model within NT Police	Existing resources (NT Police component) NPA funding (Victim survivor component) – 2 workers	NT Police and TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)			3	
Continuing	3.7	Increase funding for Enhanced Specialist Services Grants	New funding \$1M p.a for 4 years from 22-23 (2022 Budget)	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)			3	
New	3.8	Consider DFSV risks in emergency response and recovery planning and activities, to support planning and response to DFSV during emergencies	Existing resources	TFHC			3	
Continuing	3.9	Support NTPS to lead the way on DFSV responses in NT workplaces	Existing resources	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)			3	4
Continuing	3.10	Provide crisis accommodation and wraparound supports (including outreach, counselling, Flexible Support Packages) to DFSV victim survivors	Existing resources	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)			3	
Continuing	3.11	Establish culturally safe, Aboriginal-led, community-based, specialist sexual assault service(s) to build local and regional capacity to respond to victim survivors of sexual assault	Existing resources	NT Health			3	
Continuing	3.12	Improve capability at the Ruby Gaea Darwin Centre Against Sexual Violence, which provides support and counselling to women and children who have experienced sexual violence	Existing resources	NT Health			3	
New	4.1a	Establish and maintain a sustainable, DFSV coordination mechanism to lead consistent and evidence-based DFSV policy and practice reform	\$1.60M 23-24 \$1.55M 24-25	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)				4
New	4.1b	Establish and support a DFSV Aboriginal Advisory Board	\$0.08M 23-24 \$0.08M 24-25	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)				4
New	4.1c	Establish and implement an NT DFV systemic death review process	\$0.15M 23-24 \$0.15M 24-25	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)				4
New	4.1d	Undertake a review of the RAMF and RAMF implementation progress	\$0.25M 23-24	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)				4
New	4.1e	Expand the RAMF to respond to practitioner needs	\$0.13M 23-24 \$0.13M 24-25	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)		2	3	4
New	4.1f	Develop and implement a MEAP for the DFSV Reduction Framework and action plans.	\$0.15M 23-24 \$0.2M 24-25	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO) All agencies DTF				4

New/ continuing	#	Action	Funding	Lead Agency	Domain			
					1	2	3	4
New	4.2	Strengthen the FSF through enhanced intelligence and coordination	\$0.47M 23-24 \$0.47M 24-25 NPA (FSF Portal)	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)and NT Police		2	3	4
New	4.3	Develop and publish DFSV data for the NT	Existing resources	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)				4
Continuing	4.4	Continue to strengthen DFV information sharing	Existing resources	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)		2	3	4
Continuing	4.5	Establish the DFSV Resource Centre	Existing resources (AP1 funding \$0.5M p.a)	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)				4
Continuing	4.6	Continue to build workforce capability in DFV risk assessment and management, including for universal service workers	Existing resources AP1 funding	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)		2	3	4
New	4.7	Build DFSV research capacity in the NT	Existing resources	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)				4
Continuing	4.8	Review and reform the Domestic and Family Violence Act and sexual offences legislation so that they provide a sound, responsive and accountable foundation for the system	Existing resources	AGD				4
Continuing	4.9	Training in sexual violence identification and response	AP1 funding SVPRF	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)		2	3	4
Continuing	4.10	Develop DFV practice and service standards for DFV specialist services	Existing resources	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)				4
Continuing	4.11	Sharing and Strengthening Our Practice biannual conference	Existing resources AP1 funding	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)				4
Continuing	4.12	Continue to support DFSV sector development through the NTCOSS DFSV Policy Officer Project and consider the establishment of an NT DFSV peak.	Existing resources AP1 funding	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)				4
New	4.13	Align multi agency risk management approaches to DFSV between FSF, and Child Wellbeing and Safety Partnerships (formerly MACCST) under the RAMF	Existing resources	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)				4
Continuing	4.14	Introduce performance measures for service providers that reflect objectives of prevention, victim safety, and perpetrator accountability	Existing resources	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)				4
Continuing	4.15	Support supervision & practice management support for specialist services	Existing resources AP1 funding	TFHC (DFSV-ICRO)				4

References

- 1 This definition, from section 5 of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic), has been adopted as a model definition of DFV by the Law Council of Australia. While it differs from the definition in the NT's Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007, the AGD DFV Legislative Review proposes that the NT definition be modernised along these lines.
- 2 See section 5(1)(b) of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)
- 3 The ABS Personal Safety Survey (2016) found that, in the most recent incident of sexual assault: The perpetrator was a known person in 87% of incidents; an intimate partner in 52% of incidents; a boyfriend or date in 18% of incidents. For 13% of incidents, the perpetrator was a stranger.
- 4 Northern Territory Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework
- 5 Reproductive coercion and abuse (RCA) includes any behaviour that "interferes with the autonomy of a person to make decisions about their reproductive health." RCA is gendered and shares some of the same structural drivers with DFSV. Evidence suggests that people who reported intimate partner violence are more likely to also report RCA.
- 6 From Northern Territory DFSV Framework
- 7 ABS Recorded Crime Victims 2021 (released on 28 July 2022)
- 8 ABS PSS 2023
- 9 *ibid*
- 10 Our Watch (2018) Changing the Picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children, Our Watch, Melbourne
- 11 ABS 2021 *op cit*
- 12 Personal communication with the Office of the Coroner as at 12 July 2023. Note these figures do not include deaths considered by the Coroner in which there was DFV in the circumstances leading up to the death but it was not identified as being a cause of the death.
- 13 ABS 2021 *ibid*
- 14 AIHW 2006, Family violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Cat no. IHW17 Canberra
- 15 Personal communication with the Office of the Coroner as at 12 July 2023. This includes all open and closed cases. Note that "other family homicides" (ie non-intimate partner homicides) include familial/kin relationships, filicides, parricides and sibicides, and include persons of all ages.
- 16 From DFV Justice Review
- 17 *ibid*
- 18 ABS Criminal Courts data 2021-22, released 3 March 2023
- 19 From DFV Justice Review
- 20 Data from 2019-20 provided by AGD Research and Statistics Unit. Extracted from IJS on 31 July 2020.
- 21 National Community Attitudes Survey 2023. The NCAS also showed that the Northern Territory (as well as Australia as a whole) had significantly improved their understanding of violence against women and their rejection of sexual assault and sexual harassment. The NCAS sample consisted of 19,100 Australians aged 16 years or over, who were interviewed via mobile telephone. The Australian sample included a minimum of 1,000 respondents from each jurisdiction. To meet the minimum criterion of 1,000 respondents, the smaller-population jurisdictions were deliberately "oversampled" compared to their share of the Australian population.
- 22 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2022). Australia's children.
- 23 Estimate calculated by PWC, cited in KPMG 2016, The cost of violence against women and their children in Australia: Final Detailed Report, Sydney
- 24 PWC 2015, A high price to pay: The economic case for preventing violence against women, Melbourne. Note that the estimate of \$362 billion over a life time includes physical violence by a stranger.
- 25 Much of this work has been conducted by Our Watch, the national organisation leading the primary prevention of violence against women, and by Australia's National Research Organisation on Women's Safety. This work has informed the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032, and the NT's DFSV Framework.
- 26 Our Watch 2018, *op cit*
- 27 NT DFSV Aboriginal Advisory Board terms of reference
- 28 Closing the Gap, Everyone Together, Aboriginal Affairs Strategy NT 2019-2029, Aboriginal-Cultural-Security-Framework.pdf (nt.gov.au)
- 29 It is acknowledged that harmful alcohol and other substance use is often a symptom of inter-generational trauma
- 30 OurWatch 2018 *op cit*
- 31 ANROWS (2020) Improving family violence legal and support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: Key findings and future directions (Research to policy and practice, 25-26/2020). Sydney: ANROWS, at p. 6.
- 32 The National Plan includes four domains: prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery and healing. The first two domains explicitly align with the NT Action Plan 2 domains, while the final two national domains are combined in the NT's third domain. The NT includes an additional domain which underpins the other 3: systemic enablers and reform, to highlight the important infrastructure and actions required in this area.
- 33 Richmond, A. (2019). Journey Mapping Workshop Report: Exploring the Voices and Experiences of Victim-Survivors of Domestic and Family Violence in NT Justice System, Prepared for the Domestic Violence Justice Reform Network and published by Dawn House, February 2019
- 34 Inquest into the death of Roberta Judy Curry [2022] NTLC 010; Inquest into the death of HD (name suppressed) [2021] NTLC 029; Inquest into the deaths of Fionica Yarranganlagi James, Keturah Cheralyn Mamarika and Layla Leering [2020] NTLC 022; Inquest into the deaths of Wendy Murphy and Natalie McCormack [2016] NTLC 024; Inquest into the death of Anne Chantell Millar [2005] NTMC 056; Inquest into the death of Jodie Palipuminni [2006] NTMC 083; Inquest into the death of Roselle Nelson [2004] NTMC 088
- 35 From DFV Justice Review
- 36 <http://anrows.org.au/publications/compass/preventable-burden-measuring-and-addressing-the-prevalence-and-health-impacts>
- 37 AIHW (2019), Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019, p.101
- 38 Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) First Nations Women's Safety Policy Forum Outcomes Report, November 2022, Australian Human Rights Commission
- 39 The effect of trauma on the brain development of children | Australian Institute of Family Studies (aifs.gov.au)
- 40 <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/analysis/brief/housing-homelessness-and-domestic-and-family-violence>
- 41 <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-annual-report/contents/clients-who-have-experienced-family-and-domestic-violence>
- 42 <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/hsc.12978>
- 43 <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/change-the-story/>
- 44 Sentencing and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2022, expected to commence in late 2023
- 45 ANROWS <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/perpetrator-interventions-in-australia/>
- 46 Note NPA funding allocations are subject to Commonwealth approvals
- 47 Minor discrepancies are due to rounding
- 48 NT Police component directed to be progressed from within existing resources. Victim survivor specialist component to be progressed under NPA, subject to Commonwealth approval.
- 49 Subject to Commonwealth approval
- 50 Subject to Commonwealth approval
- 51 Subject to Commonwealth approval
- 52 Subject to Commonwealth approval







“Tjulpu Wiltja Tjuta” (bird’s nests), by Yankunytjatjara and Pitjantjatjara artists Iluwanti Ken and Mary Katajuku Pan.

“This is the story of the Patupiri (swallow) who is clever, knowledgeable and skilful. Patupiri builds a safe, strong nest to protect its family against the rain and predators. It uses sticks and branches to build a strong and secure shelter, finding and gathering grass, feathers and mud to make the nest warm and comfortable so that its babies can grow and develop.” Tjala Arts

The swallows’ nests expresses our vision for a future where women and children are safe, and families are supported to thrive. This work, like the basket making art across central Australia and Arnhem Land represents what it takes to make this happen. Innovation, cleverness, local knowledge and relationships, ways of sharing information and skills, helping and working together. These are essential if we are to reduce violence.