

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

The eighth meeting of the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Cross Agency Working Group (CAWG) was held on Thursday 14 May 2020.

COVID-19 funding

Members were advised that the Australian Government has announced \$150m under a National Partnership Agreement to assist with COVID-19 domestic and family violence (DFV) service responses. The funding will be allocated with consideration of rural and remote loading as well as population.

Territory Families has been in discussion with the DFV services and is developing a project plan which maps priority needs with the funding's objectives: safe and secure accommodation; counselling; outreach; men's behaviour change and perpetrator interventions; and business continuity.

In addition to the recently announced Northern Territory Government enhanced specialist service funding of \$3m to ten DFV services to deliver 35 projects across the Northern Territory, Territory Families has also provided its DFV services with an emergency allocation of up to \$20 000 per service to respond to COVID-19 related demand.

Risk Assessment and Management Framework

Development of the Risk Assessment and Management Framework and Common Risk Assessment Tool is progressing, with universal and specialist service providers testing the draft documents and providing feedback.

The documents are scheduled to be finalised by June 2020 and will be refined over time as learnings from their use are integrated. Implementation of the Framework and Tool will be supported by training, which will align with the Workforce and Sector Development Plan currently being developed.

Network and peak representatives update

At each CAWG meeting the networks and peaks provide updates and raise any questions or issues of concern to the group.

The Domestic and Family Violence Network representative reported that the network welcomed the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework and priority actions as an impressive piece of work and acknowledged this is the first time the Northern Territory Government has developed a structured response to sexual violence.

The NTCOSS representative noted that the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Group, established by NTCOSS to discuss domestic, family and sexual violence issues in relation to the COVID-19 response, will continue to meet as a group post the pandemic.

Family Safety Framework Review

Members were provided an update on progress implementing the recommendations of the Family Safety Framework Review. In summary:

- Territory Families has committed funding for the Family Safety Framework administrative support positions located within Northern Territory Police for five years from July 2019 to July 2023.
- Territory Families entered into an agreement with Women's Safety Services of Central Australia and Dawn House for the community educators to work with Police to ensure Family Safety Framework training continues to be delivered while longer term options for delivery are explored under the Workforce and Sector Development Plan. Online training is currently being trialled in Alice Springs.

Katherine Local Reference Group

Tennant Creek Local Reference Group



- The Family Safety Framework Guidelines are being revised to provide clarity on the process, roles and responsibilities and to align with the Risk Assessment and Management Framework.

Monitoring and reporting

Members were advised the evaluation plan for the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018-2028 is being finalised for CAWG consideration. A monitoring report for Action Plan 1: Changing Attitudes, Intervening Earlier and Responding Better (2018-2021) is also being finalised and will be published on the Territory Families website to demonstrate progress in implementing actions.

Cross Agency Working Group Review Recommendations

Following a 2019 review of the operation and performance of the CAWG, membership will be expanded to include a representative from the Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) and the specialist legal sector. The Northern Territory Legal Assistance Forum has been approached to nominate a representative for the CAWG and the NTCOSS nominated representative (Tessa Snowdon) was welcomed to the group at the May meeting.

It was confirmed that the Central Australian Family Violence and Sexual Assault Network and the Domestic and Family Violence Network will each have two representatives for the CAWG.

Next meeting

The next CAWG meeting is scheduled for August, with the date to be confirmed.

The CAWG will convene a special workshop on 26 June 2020 to discuss lessons learned from implementing Action Plan 1 and to commence discussions on the process for developing Action Plan 2.