



## Women's Safety Taskforce

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14 December 2020

### Meeting Outcomes

On 14 December 2020, the Minister for Women, Senator the Hon Marise Payne, and the Minister for Families and Social Services, Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, co-chaired the first meeting of the National Federation Reform Council Taskforce on Women's Safety. This was the sixth meeting of Women's Safety Ministers in 2020, acknowledging that women's safety remains a priority for all governments, especially through the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **The newly established Women's Safety Taskforce reaffirmed its commitment to women's safety**

Ministers welcomed the National Federation Reform Council's endorsement of the Women's Safety Taskforce's Terms of Reference at its meeting on 11 December 2020. The Women's Safety Taskforce will oversee implementation of the Fourth Action Plan under the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (the National Plan) and funding under the COVID-19 Domestic Violence Support Package. The Taskforce will also be responsible for developing and implementing the next National Plan, which will commence in 2022. The terms of reference for the Taskforce are available [online](#).

Ministers noted that the Women's Safety Taskforce will meet at least twice a year, and agreed to hold its second meeting early in 2021.

#### **Development of the successor to the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children is underway**

Ministers reflected on the significant work that Australian governments, community organisations and individuals have undertaken under the National Plan to ensure fewer women experience violence and more women and their children can live safely. Ministers agreed that continuing and building on these efforts and achievements through the successor to the National Plan is a priority for all Australian governments.

Ministers discussed areas of focus for the successor to the National Plan, including primary prevention and addressing the drivers of violence, early intervention, crisis response, sexual violence, and working with perpetrators. Ministers agreed that women experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence should remain a priority focus for the successor to the National Plan. Ministers also expressed interest in how the successor to the National Plan can better acknowledge children as victims in their own right and address the intersection of violence, discrimination and disadvantage. Ministers agreed that collecting data and measuring the impact of interventions was important for the successor to the National Plan, noting the need to better understand the difference between increased prevalence and increased reporting.

The successor to the National Plan will be informed by the findings from the House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence, targeted consultations and data presented by states and territories. The successor to the National Plan will also ensure alignment with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.





## **Ministers are committed to supporting women on temporary visas experiencing violence**

Ministers welcomed an update on the Commonwealth's ongoing and additional support for women on temporary visas experiencing family or domestic violence, and particularly those who are unable to access social services and welfare payments due to their visa status. Noting the ongoing risk to this vulnerable cohort of women, further consultation on options to assist this cohort is underway, being led by the Minister for Families and Social Services. Ministers also discussed the importance of data to fully understand the impact of COVID-19 on women on temporary visas experiencing violence.

Ministers also welcomed the continued work of the Department of Home Affairs to ensure that information on support available for women on temporary visas, including Special Benefit payments, is clear and accessible, including through their revised website and community outreach through their Community Liaison Officer Network.

## **Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fourth Action Plan is on track**

Ministers endorsed the first Annual Fourth Action Plan National Progress Report, which details progress against each of the more than 160 initiatives being delivered by all Australian governments under the Fourth Action Plan of the National Plan. Ministers were pleased to note that COVID-19 has only had a modest impact on progress, with the majority of initiatives on track or completed.

The first Progress Report is available on the [plan4womenssafety website](#).

## **Exploring options to address the serious matter of coercive control is a priority for all jurisdictions**

Ministers acknowledged that all jurisdictions are committed to addressing the issue of coercive control. Ministers specifically noted the work of NSW to establish a NSW Parliament Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control to inquire and report on coercive control in domestic relationships and make recommendations on how the issue should be addressed in NSW.

Ministers agreed that the issue of coercive control is an important area of concern and that jurisdictions should continue to share information, data and resources as they progress work to address coercive control. It will be important to consider broader awareness and education as well as legislative responses to address this form of control and violence.

*Help is available if you, or someone you know, is experiencing violence.  
In the case of an emergency call 000. For information, support and counselling  
contact 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732) or visit [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au).*

