COAG 2016 national summit

Reducing violence against women and their children

Brisbane, 27-28 October 2016

Outcomes and reflections

Acknowledgements

As co-hosts of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Summit on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children, we would like to extend our thanks to those who contributed to its success.

This was the first time COAG has come together with community experts and leaders to discuss an issue of shared interest in a frank and open way. The result was a broadening of perspectives, a forging of new connections, and a reaffirmation of a shared commitment to improve the safety of women and children.

We would like to thank the First Ministers and Women’s Safety Ministers who shared their recent successes, and participated actively in the roundtable discussions. We would also like to thank the more than 150 delegates who contributed ideas, findings, examples and insights. In particular, we would like to thank Virginia Haussegger for her role as Master of Ceremonies, and the eight facilitators of the roundtable discussions — Professor David Lacey, Ms Maria Hagias, Ms Julie McKay, Ms Mary-Ann O’Loughlin, Ms Andrea Mason, Ms Joumanah El-Matrak, Ms Megan Mitchell, and Ms Kate Hawkins.

To those who made submissions to the online roundtables on our website, we are grateful for your contributions. It is pleasing that so many people were able to contribute to the national conversation and share their insights and experiences.

The connections, ideas and experiences that have been shared through the Summit will be invaluable in informing our policy approaches and building positive outcomes for women and children in Australia.
It is our hope that one day, through our collective efforts, violence against women and their children will be eradicated from our communities.

The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP

The Hon Annastacia Palaszczuk MP
Introduction

The COAG National Summit on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children was the first of its kind. It brought COAG together with practitioners, academia, survivors, business and civil society in their shared efforts to address violence against women and their children. At the Summit, COAG and Women’s Safety Ministers joined with more than 150 experts and leaders to take stock of progress, consider best practice, and reaffirm their commitment to this issue. A full list of Summit attendees is at Appendix 1.

“We when pool together in a common cause, Australians can overcome any hurdle” — Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP

The theme of the Summit was Connect.Act.Change. Violence against women is not an issue governments can solve on their own. It permeates all aspects of our society. Many innovative solutions, from prevention through to recovery, are forged in small scale interventions — in community health centres, schools, and women’s centres, and by police, lawyers and business people.
Providing a forum to share practices and ideas was highly valuable to all, and a reminder to governments that through collaboration, the answers can be found to even the most complex of policy challenges.

Australia has made great inroads to addressing violence against women and their children. Community awareness and investment in the issue has never been higher. It is crucial that we do not lose the momentum gained over the past two years, and continue to unite our efforts. The issue remains forefront on COAG’s agenda.

“Domestic and family violence cannot, and will not, stay in the shadows” - The Hon Annastacia Palaszczuk, Premier of Queensland
Reviewing progress and profiling best practice

At the Summit, First Ministers shared examples of best practice in their jurisdictions via a national showcase. These presentations highlighted the significant will and action being taken across the country to stop the violence, hold perpetrators to account and provide support to victims and survivors; whilst also acknowledging that there is still much more to be done.

Summit participants then broke into eight roundtable discussions. The roundtables focused on new and emerging arenas of violence, diverse experiences of violence, and new and innovative ways of addressing the issue. The topics discussed were:

1. Technology-facilitated abuse (led by the Commonwealth)
2. Organisational best practice (led by Queensland)
3. Innovative use of technology (led by South Australia)
4. The effect of domestic violence on children (led by New South Wales)
5. Diverse experiences of domestic violence (led by the Commonwealth)
6. Indigenous insights and experiences (led by the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory)
7. Using behavioural insights to reduce domestic violence (led by New South Wales)
8. Family violence and the court system (led by Victoria)

“Every woman and child in Australia should be safe at home, safe on the streets and safe online” – Senator The Hon Michaelia Cash, Minister for Women

COAG and Women’s Safety Ministers launched the Third Action Plan 2016-2019 of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 (the National Plan) as the roadmap of priorities and actions for Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to implement over the next three years. The National Plan is the 12 year, national framework under which all jurisdictions are working together to increase women’s safety in Australia. The Third Action Plan marks the halfway point of this National Plan and builds on the achievements of the First and Second Action Plans. The plan can be accessed online on the National Plan website.

Discussions at the Summit aligned with the Third Action Plan’s focus on prevention and early intervention, providing greater support and choice, responding to children living with violence, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children, concern about sexual violence and technology-facilitated abuse, and holding perpetrators to
account. This alignment confirms that the national agenda for women’s safety is heading in the right direction.
Online participation

The interactive website for the Summit contains Summit news and updates, and invited submissions from individuals and organisations to the “online roundtables” — the eight topics discussed in depth at the roundtables at the Summit.

Prior to the Summit, a series of discussion papers across the roundtable topics were published on the website to inform discussion and provide focus questions for delegates and the public to consider. Over 100 online contributions were received via the website on the roundtable topics.

During the Summit, the opening addresses and the First Ministers’ Plenary Showcase were livestreamed via the website and received over 1,000 views.

The Twitter hashtag #coagvawsummit was used extensively, to an audience of over 2.9 million and with over 5 million impressions.

“There is nothing more important that we could be doing in Australia right now, than taking action to address family and domestic violence” – Hon Quentin Bryce AD CVO
Roundtable One: Technology-facilitated abuse

Technology-facilitated abuse encompasses a wide range of behaviours by perpetrators using communications technology to control, abuse, harass, punish and humiliate women. This can include distributing intimate images without consent via digital platforms, restricting access to finances or methods of communication, accessing or modifying private information or correspondence, and alienating the victim from support networks through the use of technology.
The Summit roundtable identified a number of key insights and suggested actions, summarised below.

- There is significant overlap between domestic violence and technology-facilitated abuse.
- Technology-facilitated abuse is a power and control tactic used by abusers, but it takes many different forms. It can include using spyware on a victim’s phone to track them and publishing intimate photos of them without their consent.
- Frontline workers who deal with women and children victims see technology facilitated abuse on a daily basis.
- In the case of the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, rapid responses are needed to remove abusive content.
- Governments should harmonise legislation across jurisdictions.
- Education programs should deliver information to different audiences, including online.
- Collaboration should be fostered between social media enterprises, technology companies, governments and the domestic and family violence sector.
- Research into technology-facilitated abuse, and the experience victims have in addressing this abuse, should be undertaken.
- Parallel responses are needed – to educate, to hold perpetrators to account, and to remove the abusive content in a timely manner.

“We are building new communities of interest that have not worked together before” – Professor David Lacey, Managing Director, ID Care; facilitator of Technology Abuse Roundtable
Some of the main themes and ideas from online submissions included:

- The impact of technology-facilitated abuse on women’s lives is significant.

- Some service providers report that young women are overtaking older women as the largest group accessing services, in part because of the role technology is playing in the abuse being experienced.

- Greater research is required. The limited research so far has focused on a small number of states and has focused largely on service providers.

- There are inconsistencies in criminal laws.

- There is an urgent need for training to enhance police attitudes and evidence gathering capabilities.
Roundtable Two: Organisational best practice

Organisations across all sectors, including government, business, and non-government can play a significant role in creating cultural change to ensure the safety of women and children and ending domestic and family violence. Some organisations have led by example by delivering comprehensive and innovative workplace responses, targeting internal employees and external customers. Many organisations face similar challenges and opportunities in addressing this type of violence.

The Summit roundtable identified a number of key insights and suggested actions, summarised below.

- Gender equity needs to be the foundation of any workplace responses to domestic and family violence.
- Domestic and family violence workplace policies are important as one component of a comprehensive workplace response.
- Partnerships with domestic and family violence service providers help drive best practice workplace responses.
- Nationally-consistent standards and tools relating to workplace responses to domestic and family violence should be developed.
- Information and resources should be shared to drive effective workplace responses to domestic and family violence.
- Workplace responses to support perpetrators seeking to change behaviour should be extended.
- Jurisdictions should collaborate to determine how to better measure outcomes, such as measuring the number of workplaces that have domestic and family violence policies in place.
Specific paid leave is recommended for people affected by domestic and family violence.

Some of the main themes and ideas from online submissions include:

- All organisations have a role to play in stopping violence before it starts – changing the attitudes, cultures and behaviours that can lead to violence.
- There is a need to address underlying causes of inequality, such as unconscious bias, gender stereotyping, role modelling and social norms around gender.
- Workplaces, sporting clubs, local councils, arts and media outlets can play a role in promoting equality and respect, and by doing so they help to create cultural change across the community.
- Comprehensive workplace responses include domestic and family violence policies, visible leadership, training and capability development, partnerships and evaluation.
Comprehensive workplace responses enable access to support services and advice that can empower victims to make safe choices for themselves and their children, including leaving a violent relationship in a safe and sustainable way.
Roundtable Three: Innovative use of technology

There are significant opportunities to harness the possibilities of technology in ways that work to prevent violence, educate the community, and support women as part of their safety planning. Many jurisdictions are piloting initiatives that use technology and are engaging technology companies in the process.

The Summit roundtable identified a number of key insights and suggested actions, summarised below.

- Advances in technology should be used to enhance data sharing and integration across agencies and jurisdictions. This would enhance service delivery and avoid women having to tell their story multiple times.

- Workforce capacity around technology in the women’s safety sector needs to be strengthened in order to increase understanding and trust of new technology.
Many jurisdictions are piloting initiatives and there should be a way to bring them together to establish best practice. Existing initiatives should be evaluated and mapped in a way that can be shared across organisations.

Technology should be used to monitor perpetrators’ behaviour.

We need to engage businesses, including information and communication technology companies, as part of the solution.

A group of experts across a range of industries could be established to map existing initiatives, with a view to building on these and avoiding duplication across jurisdictions.

Some of the main themes and ideas from online submissions include:

- GPS tracking technology provides many opportunities to improve holding perpetrators to account.

- Principles should be followed when developing apps which claim to assist survivors, including accurate descriptions of the product and around safety and privacy issues.

- Apps have been developed to support safe communication and information sharing between post-separation parents.

- Apps for use on tablets can provide enhanced accessibility to services and information for people with disability.

- Video link services can help to overcome the trauma associated with victims attending court and the difficulties of women in regional and remote areas accessing services.

- Confidential online reporting tools can assist with report taking and connecting women with services. Digital collection of information also provides the opportunity to better share information across agencies and jurisdictions.
Roundtable Four: The effect of domestic violence on children

The negative impact of domestic and family violence is well recognised, including in relation to children. Children may experience domestic and family violence as direct victims, bystanders or as witnesses - they may be used as tools of manipulation by the abuser, forced to watch or participate, encouraged to spy, be blamed and required to intervene to stop the violence. Children may be exposed to domestic violence in utero, with pregnancy noted as being a time of increased risk of violence for women. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the risk of exposure to domestic and family violence is far greater.
The Summit roundtable identified a number of key insights and suggested actions, summarised below.

- Children should be at the centre of system design and services must be attuned to their needs, as well as be developmentally and culturally appropriate. The views of children and young people need to shape the parts of the system that affect them.

- Children should be provided with child-focused and trauma-informed services to better address their needs, which differ to those of adults.

- Data should better capture the impact of domestic violence on children.

- Commonwealth, state and territory systems of child protection and domestic violence should be brought together to ensure the needs of children are met.

- Information sharing protocols and standards should be established across state, territory and Commonwealth service systems and, at a broader level, the intersections between the systems need to be mapped.

- Front line service providers should be educated about trauma-informed approaches and the impact of domestic violence on children.

- Different approaches are required in rural and regional areas.
Some of the main themes and ideas from the online submissions include:

- Collaboration is needed across child protection, family law and domestic violence sectors, as well as across jurisdictions, to provide timely and adequate responses to children.

- All jurisdictions should examine existing child risk assessment practices to build a common framework that supports cross-jurisdictional and interagency collaboration to respond to risk.

- There is a need to acknowledge the impact of trauma as a result of domestic violence on children’s development and that trauma has long-term implications.

- Child-focused approaches within a framework of early intervention and prevention are also required, and could include prevention programs within schools.

- Ongoing training for professionals such as police, court and judicial officers, is required so that all services are equipped to recognise and respond properly to children experiencing domestic violence.

- Raising awareness of the impact of domestic violence on children and young people will help to make it easier for children to recognise and disclose domestic violence. Providing multiple avenues for children to disclose abuse is also crucial.

- The rate of domestic violence against children with disability needs to be recognised in developing responses to children more broadly.
Roundtable Five: Diverse experiences of domestic violence

Domestic and family violence occurs at all levels of society. Everyone, regardless of their culture, religious belief, disability, sexual orientation, socio-economic status and gender, has a right to be safe. As noted in the COAG Advisory Panel’s final report on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children, women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, women with disability or people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI), face a heightened risk of experiencing violence. The impacts of this violence can be more severe and prolonged for these groups due to social isolation, communication barriers, dependence on others and/or limited access to appropriate mainstream and specialist services. These impacts may be exacerbated for those who experience multiple, intersecting types of disadvantage and discrimination.
The Summit roundtable identified a number of key insights and suggested actions, summarised below.

- Mainstream services should have specialists with an understanding of the challenges and circumstances of women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds women and women with disability who are experiencing family or domestic violence.

- Violence experienced in diverse communities is not sufficiently captured by the commonly-used terminology “violence against women” and “domestic and family violence”.

- Women from diverse groups should be educated to better understand their human rights.

- Targeted information should be developed for CALD women experiencing violence or abuse, which recognises that power and control look different in different communities.

- Women with disability living in institutional settings and experiencing abuse or violence have major challenges in reporting and gaining support.

- Lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transsexual, queer and intersex people who are experiencing violence face barriers in finding appropriate support services.

- How we respond to male victims has to be integrated with our response to women as primary victims.

- Practical inclusion strategies to improve system responses should be developed, rather than placing the onus on the person experiencing violence or abuse.

- Frontline services should be supported with training and information to appropriately respond to the needs of diverse groups who are experiencing violence.

- Sustainability of funding should be supported for services which provide support to diverse groups.
Some of the main themes and ideas from the online submissions include:

- Some factors compounding the effects of violence on CALD women include extended family hierarchies; lack of access to information and services on financial literacy; and deportation threats being made to stop women reporting or leaving.

- Some CALD communities use church halls for cultural activities and this could provide an entry point for information for women experiencing violence.

- Women with disability can experience violence in various segregated places, including day programs, group homes, institutions, and workshops.

- Funding is needed for crisis accommodation that meets the needs of women with disability and to provide personal care if it is required.

- Designated funding schemes are needed for women with disability whose access to domestic and family violence services depends on also accessing attendant care.

- There should be adequate services and counselling for women in prison.

- Risk assessment frameworks in each Australian state and territory need to better reflect the unique circumstances of risk experienced by persons from diverse communities including ATSI, CALD and LGBTIQ, children, adolescents, older people and people with disability.
Roundtable Six: Indigenous insights and experiences

The incidence of family violence in Indigenous communities is disproportionately higher than in non-Indigenous communities. The particularly high rates of family violence experienced by Indigenous people stem from a number of interrelated factors, including cultural loss and disruption caused by colonisation and dispossession, the removal of Indigenous children from their families, inter-generational trauma and systemic disadvantage and discrimination. Experiences of childhood abuse and neglect have resulted in entrenched generational trauma manifested in a variety of forms, including violence, alcohol and drug misuse and misuse of cultural authority.

The Summit roundtable identified a number of key insights and suggested actions, summarised below.

- Parliamentarians should show their support to end violence against women in the Indigenous community by linking arms to send the message from Commonwealth Parliament: No more to family violence.
- All initiatives and responses must be Indigenous led and culturally appropriate.
• Each response needs to be tailored to each community and focused on collaboration.

• The initiatives need to be grassroots and community led.

• The role of men needs to be re-established to avoid them feeling disempowered and without a purpose in the community.

• Place-based legal and wrap around services in rural and remote areas should be provided.

• Police should work more closely with traditional owners.

Some of the main themes and ideas from the online submissions include:

• The responses and initiatives need to be built from an Indigenous worldview.

• Alcohol-fuelled violence and foetal alcohol spectrum disorders need to be addressed.

• The introduction of targeted, community-driven Alcohol Management Plans that are adequately resourced is one strategy that has been found to be effective in reducing alcohol-related injuries.
• It is important to identify leaders in communities and support them to develop locally appropriate responses that are independent of government and political cycles.

• Greater training should be provided for police officers in the dynamics of domestic violence.

• A more consistent, yet locally flexible, approach to the delivery of services is needed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children experiencing violence.
Roundtable Seven: Using behavioural insights to reduce domestic violence

‘Behavioural insights’ is based on the premise that people are not always the rational, self-interested decision-makers described in standard economics textbooks. We know from our own lives that we often fail to do what’s best for us, despite our best intentions - whether it be exercising more, saving money or eating healthily. We can use this understanding of how humans really behave in everyday life to help design and implement better policies and services. The application of behavioural insights goes hand-in-hand with an experimental approach to designing policies and services. Randomised controlled trials (RCTs) are a valuable tool to generate the evidence needed to learn what works and what does not. This evidence-based approach enables government to adapt their policies so that they steadily improve both in terms of quality and effectiveness.

The Summit roundtable identified a number of key insights and suggested actions, summarised below.

- Behavioural insights challenge the conventional economic paradigm that people are rational and act with self-interest. It gives us an opportunity to rethink our approach to complex social policy issues, like domestic violence.

- Behavioural insights emphasise that, to be effective, interventions to change behaviour need to be easy, attractive, social and timely (EAST).

- Using randomised controlled trials, wherever possible, when implementing interventions, helps provide robust evidence of impacts on behaviour.

- In New South Wales, a trial is underway which aims to increase court attendance by perpetrators. Perpetrators are sent a text message as a reminder (some are worded more positively, others more formally). Interim results are showing an 11 per cent increase in court attendance overall.
• Collaboration across jurisdictions could help to increase sample sizes for tests of interventions, which would improve the basis for randomised controlled trials.

• Jurisdictions working together will also help to build the understanding of the merits of behavioural insights among the women’s safety sector.

Some of the main themes and ideas from the online submissions include:

• Behavioural insights can have many applications to reduce violence against women and their children, including by:
  o exploring what works in shifting behaviours, aspirations and expectations;
  o teaching respectful communication skills; and
  o targeting and preventing alcohol abuse.

• Behavioural insights interventions should draw on the expertise of specialist services in devising interventions for women and children.
Roundtable Eight: Family violence and the court system

The intersection of the Commonwealth family law system and the State and Territory child protection and family violence systems can give rise to confusion for those families navigating between them. Improving the intersection between the family law, child protection and family violence systems will require significant coordination and collaboration between jurisdictions.

The Summit roundtables identified a number of key insights and suggested actions, summarised below.

Five priorities for reform were agreed:

1. Protecting victims through all court proceedings, including imposing a bar on direct examination by perpetrators in any family law or family violence proceedings. This includes giving victims the ability to give evidence remotely or by alternate means, and funding for adequate legal assistance in all jurisdictions.

2. Victims only having to tell their story once throughout their court journey, with technology employed to assist them to do so (including video statement evidence).

3. Sharing all court orders relevant to a family between the federal and state family law, child protection and family violence systems.

4. National consistency of key concepts and tools, including a common, dynamic risk assessment framework, shared family violence literacy and common definitions including family violence and best interests of child.

5. Putting children front and centre, including reviewing family law processes to ensure that parental entitlement is not prioritised over the best interests of the child. This includes review of Part VII of the Family Law Act 1975.
Some of the main themes and ideas from the online submissions include:

- There should be national court systems that deal specifically with domestic and family violence.
- There should be better integration of different courts and a better interface with the child protection system and the police.
- Courts should not retraumatise children.
- Children should have a say in decisions, and their safety should be prioritised over contact arrangements.
- “Continuity of service” with a single lawyer who acts for the victim through all legal issues and court proceedings, is a best practice model to follow.
- Training of the judiciary, court staff and legal profession is needed to increase awareness and understanding of domestic and family violence.
- Court access needs to be improved for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people with disability.
- Direct cross-examination in the family law system should be eliminated.
Conclusion

The COAG National Summit on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children harnessed the energy and commitment of Australians from across our community to address an issue of critical and national importance.

Bringing together our country’s leaders, experts and community representatives in a robust and productive dialogue, participants have forged new partnerships and shared ideas for action that they will carry forward into the future.

Participants called for strong and effective partnerships across government and non-government sectors to collaborate and share information across jurisdictions and systems.

It was recognised that workplaces and the corporate sector have a critical role in supporting victims of violence, addressing underlying attitudes in our communities and fostering innovative solutions to complex challenges.

Further, there should be ‘no wrong door’ for women and children to access appropriate, trauma-informed support that considers their individual needs, keeps them safe and helps them to rebuild their lives.

These key messages from the Summit are aligned with and echo the growing evidence-base of recent reports and inquiries on the issue of violence against women in Australia.

To take these outcomes forward, this report will be used by Women’s Safety Ministers and senior government officials to inform the implementation of the Third Action Plan of the National Plan, which was launched at the Summit.

“The cultural change we seek is radical; to change how people think and behave in their own homes” – Yvette Berry MLA, ACT Minister for Women
The ideas and information shared will also be a valuable source for identifying future areas for collaboration and policy direction, through the Fourth Action Plan and beyond.

Outside of the Summit, it is critical that partnerships continue to be forged across our communities to drive reform on this issue. We all need to work together to overcome the challenges, achieve gender equality and to eliminate violence against women and their children.

See Appendix 2 – COAG Summit Communique.

“Violence against women represents the massive social justice issue for not only women, but our whole country” – Hon Jay Weatherill, Premier of South Australia
Appendix 1

COAG NATIONAL SUMMIT ON REDUCING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN

ATTENDEES

Hon Malcolm Turnbull  Hon Annastacia Palaszczuk MP
Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash  Hon Shannon Fentiman
Hon Michael Baird MP  Hon Dame Quentin Bryce AD, CVO
Hon Pru Goward MP  Ms Libby Davies
Hon Daniel Andrews MP  Ms Natasha De Silva
Hon Fiona Richardson MP  Ms Janine Dureau
Hon Jay Weatherill MP  Ms Faiza El-Higzi
Hon Zoe Bettison MP  Ms Joumanah El-Matrah
Hon Dale Wakefield MLA  Ms Susan Fahey
Hon Will Hodgman MP  Ms Melanie Fernandez
Hon Jacqui Petrusma MP  Ms Catherine Fitzpatrick
Hon Sandra Nelson MLA  Ms Joanne Fletcher
Ms Yvette Berry MLA  Ms Carolyn Frohmader
Ms Katie Acheson  Ms Mia Garlick
Mr Greg Aldrige  Ms Annette Gillespie
Ms Rowena Allen  Ms Dianne Gipey
Ms Jennifer Armstrong  Ms Maria Hagias
Ms Maya Avdibegovic  Magistrate Kate Hawkins
Dr Brian Babington  Mr Lachlan Heywood
Ms Muriel Bamblett  Commissioner Darren Hine AM
Ms Mary Barry  Ms Jennifer Hoffman
Ms Rosie Batty  Ms Vicki Hovane
Ms Moo Baulch  Ms Kate Jenkins
Mr Graeme Bayles  Ms Hetty Johnston
Mr Adrian Beresford-Wylie  Rtd Revd Dr Chris Jones
Mr Terry Boland  Ms Lynnice Keen
Ms Gabrielle Borggaard  Commissioner Reece Kershaw
Ms Antoinette Braybrook  Mr Charlie King OAM
Prof Ngiare Brown  Mrs Denise Kostowski
Ms Jackie Burke  Ms Mahashini Krishna
Mr Tarang Chawla  Prof David Lacey
Mr Adam Check  Ms Vicki Lachlan
Prof Donna Chung  Ms Rosemary Larkin
Mr Michael Costigan  Ms Natalie Lewis
Ms Bettina Daganbarr  Ms Karni Liddell
Ms Libby Lloyd AM
Ms Alison Macdonald
Ms Di Macleod
Ms Emily Maguire
Ms Diane Mangan
Dr Rob Manwaring
Ms Andrea Mason
Ms Corina Martin
Ms Robyn Martin
Ms Jill Maxwell
Dr. Hannah McGlade
Ms Corri McKenzie
Ms Kathryn McMillan QC
Ms Janise Mitchell
Ms Megan Mitchell
Ms Sherrilee Mitchell
Mr Paul Monsour
Ms Anne Moore
Mr Gerry Moore
Ms Kate Moore
Mr Mark Morrissey
Mr Edward Mosby
Ms Heather Nancarrow
Ms Linda-Ann Northey
Ms Julie Oberin
Mr Colman O’Driscoll
Ms Kim O’Neill
Ms Louise Pascale
Ms Janette Phelan
Mayor Troy Pickard
Ms Torna Pitman
Ms Bess Price
Mr John Pritchard
Mr Chris Redmond
Prof Helen Rhoades
Judge Ray Rinaudo
Dr Wendell Rosevear OAM
Mr Mathew Rowell
Ms Christina Ryan
Ms Joan Salizzo
Ms Elizabeth Shaw
Ms Miriam Silva
Ms Jenny Smith
Ms Chrystina Stanford
Commissioner Grant Stevens
Ms Natasha Stott-Despoja AM
Magistrate Colin Strofield
Ms Deborah Tsorbaris
Dr Niki Vincent
Ms Karyn Walsh
Ms Jacqui Watt
Ms Vicky Welgraven
Ms Marcia Williams
Ms Mirjana Wilson
Ms Pauline Woodbridge
Ms Andree Wright
Detective Superintendent Sue Young
Appendix 2

COMMUNIQUE

Today in Brisbane at the COAG National Summit on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children, First Ministers met with Women’s Safety Ministers and more than 140 experts and leaders to profile best practice in making Australia safer for women and their children and reaffirm COAG’s commitment to reducing violence against women and their children.

While governments and others have made significant inroads to addressing this issue, there is more to be done. Today brought us closer to integrating our efforts and taking them forward. The insights and learnings shared, along with the connections made, will help us collectively to continue to drive reform in this area to ensure women and their children are safe from domestic violence.

As a further demonstration of commitment, today COAG launched the Third Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022. The Third Action Plan will see more intense effort on prevention and early intervention, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children, greater support and choice, sexual violence, responding to children living with violence and keeping perpetrators accountable across all systems.

2016 marks the half way point in the National Plan. The National Plan is the first plan of its kind to coordinate and guide action across jurisdictions to increase women’s and children’s safety in Australia. It provides a mechanism to drive effort and make investment in reducing domestic, family and sexual violence.

The discussions today focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and diverse communities’ experiences of violence, the gendered nature of family violence, and the impacts of violence on children, ensuring perpetrator accountability, and identifying new and innovative ways of addressing the issue. Participants considered how technology is increasingly being used to perpetrate violence against women, and conversely how technology can empower people to eradicate this violence, as well as better support those at risk. Summit participants also considered the intersection of the Commonwealth family law system and the state and territory child protection and family violence systems.
Throughout the Summit, attention was focused on how to best empower and support those with broader experiences of family violence, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women with disabilities, members of the LGBTI community as well as men.

Today’s Summit forged new and deeper connections between governments and others to progress the collective response to reducing violence. In order to achieve real progress, support and action is needed from all sectors of society.

The Summit also used an innovative online engagement platform (coagvawsummit.pmc.gov.au) which provided everyone with the opportunity to participate in the Summit and to be part of moving the discussion forward.

COAG commits to undertake collective, long-term action and leadership to address family violence and agrees that at its meeting in December 2016 the national actions recommended by the Victoria Royal Commission into Family Violence will be on the agenda.

28 October 2016