

Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council

Communique – 7 August 2026

The Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council (the Council) was convened virtually today, bringing together Commonwealth and state and territory governments to drive national progress on gender equality and ending gender-based violence.

The Council welcomed new and returning members:

- The Hon Caitlin Tough MLA (Australian Capital Territory)
- The Hon Alice Rolls MP (South Australia)
- The Hon Jo Palmer MLC (Tasmania)
- The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP (Victoria)
- The Hon Sonya Kilkeny MP (Victoria)

Countering resistance and building support for gender equality including through advancing women's economic empowerment

Women's economic equality and addressing gender attitudes and stereotypes are critical pillars of gender equality. Recognising this, the Council discussed opportunities to ensure women's recognition in the Australian Honours and Awards System and improve women's experiences in male-dominated industries.

Women's recognition in the Australian Honours and Awards system

The Council emphasised the importance of ensuring women's achievements and contributions, including their leadership, service and impact across diverse sectors and communities, are visible, valued and reflected in national recognition processes.

Ministers discussed opportunities to identify potential nominees, support high-quality nominations and address barriers that may limit women's nominations in the Order of Australia (General Division).

The Council agreed to a range of actions over the next 12 months to increase women's nominations, including leveraging existing recognition programs, engaging with representatives on the Council for the Order of Australia to understand jurisdictional level opportunities, and working with key community networks.

Women's experiences in male-dominated industries

The Council acknowledged that occupational gender segregation and the underrepresentation of women in male-dominated industries are drivers of the gender pay gap and economic inequality,

which undermine economic growth and contribute to national skills shortages in essential industries in Australia.

Ministers shared jurisdictional approaches to improve women's experiences in male-dominated industries, including implementing codes and standards to improve culture, targeted programs, target setting and providing financial incentives.

The Council agreed to engage with relevant ministers, including respective Skills and Training, Employment and Workplace Relations and Infrastructure Ministers, to consider opportunities to scale occupational gender segregation initiatives in future work.

Continued response to the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches to end domestic, family and sexual violence

The Council continues to oversee the response to the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches. Ministers recognised the women and children who have lost their lives to violence in recent weeks and months and reinforced that all government's must continue to take every action to prevent and respond to violence and to support victim survivors.

Intersections between alcohol and family and domestic violence

The Council recognises alcohol can increase the frequency and severity of gender-based violence and reaffirmed the importance of progressing Rapid Review recommendations and National Cabinet commitments related to alcohol-related harm prevention.

Ministers heard from the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) on key barriers and solutions to prevent alcohol-related FDSV. Ministers discussed progress on driving reforms within their jurisdictions and the importance of working to ensure decisions on alcohol regulation are evidence-based and appropriately consider impacts on women's and children's safety.

The Council agreed to:

- Strengthen alcohol-related harm prevention in Australia's response to gender-based violence through the development of the Second Action Plan.
- Continue to consider and advocate for reforms to minimise alcohol-related harm and engage with relevant ministerial colleagues to progress reforms.
- Report back to the Council on action taken within 12 months.

National Family and Domestic Violence Risk Assessment

Ministers discussed progress on the National Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) Risk Assessment Framework, incorporating the national risk assessment principles, responding to a National Cabinet commitment made following the 2024 Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches.

The Framework aims to bring consistency to risk assessment and management, and support information sharing and better-informed decisions about safety and risk.

Men's Behaviour Change

Ministers noted the Commonwealth in consultation with jurisdictions will progress and finalise the National Standards for Men's Behaviour Change as a priority in 2026, drawing on work already underway in jurisdictions, and come back to the Council for agreement. This will include how governments will use the National Standards to improve practice and national consistency in men's behaviour change interventions across Australia.

Continued progress and delivery under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 and development of the Second Action Plan

Second Action Plan progress report and early consultation findings

Ministers acknowledged the extensive engagement underway to inform the Second Action Plan. Insights from all consultations show strong support for a nationally coordinated approach focused on prevention, early intervention, recovery, accountability and improving outcomes for victim-survivors, including children and young people. Ministers acknowledged the significant contribution of all who have participated in consultations to date. Ministers recognised the generosity of those who shared their experiences and expertise and confirmed that these insights will continue to inform development of the Second Action Plan.

Ministers also discussed options to strengthen national coordination, accountability and reporting for the Second Action Plan, while maintaining flexibility for jurisdictions to respond to local priorities and circumstances. Ministers agreed to progress to validation to test and refine priorities, actions and implementation arrangements.

Ministers also noted ongoing work to progress in a connected way related national reforms including Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices and Safe and Supported. Ministers discussed the progress made on shared priorities agreed at the joint Ministers' meeting on 20 February 2026.

Ministers noted that at the recent Standing Council of Attorneys-General meeting it was agreed that the Commonwealth would consider options to enhance media reporting standards on family, domestic and sexual violence, as part of the Second Action Plan.

Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to working together to end violence against women and children and noted the opportunity presented by the Second Action Plan to focus national effort on the actions that will deliver the greatest impact to reduce violence, building on progress to date.

Our Ways Strong Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander National Peak Body for Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence

The Council met with Olga Havnen, Chief Executive Officer of Our Ways Strong Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander National Peak Body for Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence.

Ms Havnen provided an update on the establishment of Our Ways Strong Together and the development of the action plan under Our Ways - Strong Ways - Our Voices. Ms Havnen acknowledged the important role of the organisation in providing national leadership, advocacy, and advice, strengthening shared decision-making, and representing the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations working to prevent and respond to family, domestic and sexual violence. Minister Plibersek and other ministers noted the importance of a strong, community-led approach to driving implementation and improving outcomes with First Nations families and communities.

Attendees

- Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher (Commonwealth)
- The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP (Commonwealth)
- The Hon Rebecca White MP (Commonwealth)
- The Hon Ged Kearney MP (Commonwealth)
- The Hon Caitlin Tough MLA (Australian Capital Territory)
- The Hon Jodie Harrison MP (New South Wales)
- The Hon Amanda Camm MP (Queensland)
- The Hon Fiona Simpson MP (Queensland)
- The Hon Alice Rolls MP (South Australia)
- The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP (Victoria)
- The Hon Sonya Kilkenny MP (Victoria)
- The Hon Jessica Stojkovski MLA (Western Australia)

The Hon Robyn Cahill OAM MLA (Northern Territory), the Hon Jinson Charls MLA (Northern Territory), the Hon Katrine Hildyard MP (South Australia), the Hon Jo Palmer MLC (Tasmania) and the Hon Simone McGurk MLA (Western Australia) sent their apologies. Minister Cahill, Minister Charls and Minister Palmer were represented by Senior Officials.

The Commonwealth Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner, Ms Micaela Cronin, attended the meeting in an ex-officio capacity.