



**Government
of South Australia**

15MSW/137

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Higher Education and Skills**

**Minister for Science and
Information Economy**

**Minister for the Status
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Ms Megan Mitchell
National Children's Commissioner
Australian Human Rights Commission
Email: kids@humanrights.gov.au

Dear Ms Mitchell

Thank you for your email of 1 May 2015 concerning your research into the ways children are affected by family and domestic violence.

Children's experience of domestic violence is truly a horrendous notion to comprehend and I am heartened to see that research is being undertaken to understand and work in this difficult space.

The South Australian Government is committed to addressing violence against women and their children. There have been a number of significant achievements as part of the South Australian Women's Safety Strategy which has been in place since 2005.

South Australia also remains committed to the National Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children and recently made a submission to a Social Development Committee's inquiry into domestic and family violence and I have attached a copy of that submission for your consideration.

I draw your attention particularly to initiatives that provide an interface between domestic violence prevention and child protection such as MAPS (the Multi-Agency Protection Service, p5 of the submission), the Family Safety Framework (p8) and the Information Sharing Guidelines (ISGs, p12). Should you have further queries please contact the Acting Director, Office for Women, Ms Fiona Mort on telephone 8303 0962 or email fiona.mort@sa.gov.au.

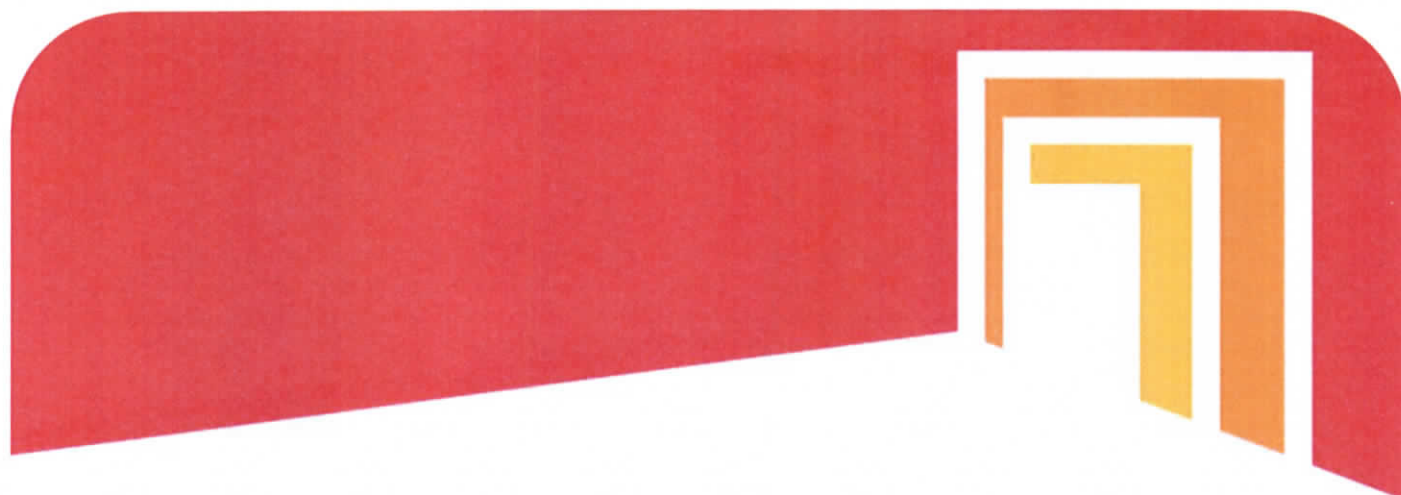
I look forward to the tabling of your research in Federal Parliament at the end of the year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Gail Gago", written over a circular stamp.

HON GAIL GAGO MLC
5 / 4 / 2015

Attch



**Social Development Committee — Inquiry into Domestic and
Family Violence**

Submission from the South Australian Government

February 2015

Introduction

Violence against women is prevalent, serious and preventable. Women experience violence in public places, at work and at home. As part of its commitment to a safer community, the South Australian Government has implemented a strategic and comprehensive approach to violence against women since 2005. The most recent phase of this approach is *A Right to Safety 2011 – 2022*.

Through this Strategy significant reforms have been implemented encompassing early intervention, community awareness, law reform, system improvements and efforts aimed at the prevention of violence against women.

This submission:

- provides an overview of the South Australian approach and key reforms undertaken as examples of the importance of ongoing leadership and commitment and whole of community action to address this issue.
- outlines new initiatives being progressed to further develop and enhance existing reforms.
- highlights the importance of national and cross jurisdictional approaches to ensure consistency across borders, particularly in remote communities, and the important role that the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 - 2022* has played in facilitating this work since 2011.
- raises concerns about the impact of the federal government's 2014 budget cuts.

OVERVIEW OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S APPROACH

Since 2005 the South Australian Government has demonstrated strong leadership in responding to violence against women. This strong leadership has harnessed efforts to build:

- consistent responses across services and systems;
- community understanding of, and involvement in, responding to violence against women; and
- local community actions to prevent violence against women before it occurs.

South Australia's strong leadership has been reaffirmed with the Premier's release of Taking A Stand in response to the Coronial findings into the death of Zahra Abrahamzadeh in October 2014. As part of Taking A Stand the Premier recognised the role of men in preventing violence against women and achieving gender equality.

Taking A Stand builds on South Australia's *Women's Safety Strategy 2005 – 2010* followed by *A Right to Safety 2011 – 2022* which is driven by the following beliefs:

- All forms of violence against women are unacceptable.
- All forms of violence including the threat of violence against women are fundamental violations of human rights.
- Women have the right to be safe from violence and to live free from the fear of violence.
- Women have the right to live in a safe community that promotes and supports their health and well-being.

Initiatives are implemented across four key directions:

Prevention

Primary prevention of violence against women is about stopping violence before it occurs. Work under this direction involves changing the social and cultural conditions that support violence against women to occur to ensure women are safe and free from violence in South Australia.

Secondary prevention, or early intervention, targets individuals and groups that demonstrate early signs of violence (such as controlling behaviours), with the aim of preventing these behaviours escalating into violence.

Service Provision

Work under this key direction is focused on ensuring services meet the needs of women experiencing violence, and their children, through joined up services and systems.

Protection

Women who experience or fear violence must be able to seek protection and have access to effective legal remedies. The perpetrators of violent acts against women must be held accountable for their behaviour. The criminal justice system's response to violence against women is pivotal to a broad community understanding that violence against women is unacceptable.

Performance

Professional performance and accountability are critical to the success of the strategy.

Governance

The Minister for the Status of Women is the lead Minister for this approach and chairs a Chief Executive Group which brings a strategic perspective to the way in which government delivers responses in South Australia. This group includes the:

- Chief Executive, Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Commissioner of Police
- Chief Executive, Attorney-General's Department
- Chief Executive, Department for Correctional Services
- Chief Executive, Department for Health and Ageing
- Chief Executive, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion
- Chief Executive, Department for Education and Child Development
- Executive Director, Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation.

Violence against Women

A Right to Safety defines violence against women as a human rights issue in line with the United Nations and the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children. Violence against women includes domestic and family violence and rape and sexual assault. A Right to Safety recognises that rape and sexual assault may also occur within the scope of domestic and family violence.

A copy of A Right to Safety 2011 – 2022 is attached (Attachment A).

South Australia's Commitment

South Australia continues to build on its strong reform agenda through new initiatives including:

- The Multi Agency Protection Service;
- Domestic Violence Serial Offender Database;
- Perpetrator pays system for intervention programs; and
- Data-keeping system to capture data relating to deaths occurring in a domestic violence context.

In October 2014 the Premier released Taking a Stand: Responding to Domestic Violence. Taking a Stand is a whole-of-government response to the findings of the State Coroner in the inquest into the tragic death of Zahra Abrahimzadeh. Three direct policy responses are outlined in Taking a Stand:

- Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Service;
- Early Warning System; and
- White Ribbon accreditation for government departments.

The Multi Agency Protection Service

The Multi Agency Protection Service (MAPS) is a new partnership between South Australia Police, the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion, the Department for Education and Child Development, the SA Health and the Department for Correctional Services. South Australia Police leads this initiative that provides a gateway for the participating agencies to raise cases where there are domestic violence and child protection concerns.

MAPS establishes a process for the gathering and sharing of information and for multi-agency action planning to reduce risk and harm at early points of intervention and complements the Family Safety Framework.

A critical feature of the service is the co-location of partner agencies. This enables the integration of information from multiple sources and the development of a shared knowledge base to inform timely action. Currently MAPS referrals come from SAPOL only, but when fully implemented the service will extend to include referrals about domestic violence and child protection concerns from all partner agencies. This will enhance the capacity to intervene earlier and contribute to preventing the escalation of risk and harm.

Domestic Violence Serial Offender Database

The Domestic Violence Serial Offender Database is hosted and managed by the Domestic Violence Gateway, the primary entry point to women's domestic and Aboriginal family violence services in South Australia. This database will enable the recognition of domestic violence serial offenders who are identified by individual women's domestic and Aboriginal family violence services, and improve risk management of key services involved in the Family Safety Framework information sharing and risk assessment processes.

Perpetrator Pays System for Intervention Programs

A perpetrator pays system for intervention programs will be introduced and Courts will be given sentencing power to require perpetrators to bear the financial burden of the program. The intention of this system is that perpetrators take greater personal responsibility for their behaviour and contribute to the provision of programs across South Australia.

Data-keeping system to capture data relating to deaths occurring in a domestic violence context

In partnership with the Coroner's Office, the position of Senior Research Officer (Domestic Violence) works to research and investigate open and closed coronial deaths with a domestic violence context in South Australia. This work provides a unique opportunity, through collaboration with the Coroners Court, to capture a range of previously unavailable data in relation to domestic violence. This will assist in identifying the factors which are most prevalent in or unique to domestic violence related deaths and contribute to the development of an evidence base about domestic violence, to support the development of preventative strategies. Data will be available across all coronial investigations involving domestic violence deaths as well as those which result in an Inquest.

Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Service

Commencing in 2015, the Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Service will provide a greater level of support within the court system for victims of violence by providing assistance to help women deal successfully with courts systems and increase their access to justice. Legal officers will provide free and confidential support and advocate on behalf of women who may have difficulty applying for an intervention order or reporting a breach of an intervention order.

Early Warning System

The State Government will introduce an early warning system, which will provide a circuit breaker in instances where a domestic violence service provider does not believe the most appropriate responses to their clients have been implemented. It is designed to increase accountability and provide an escalation point where there have been process flaws or gaps in the response of a government agency to domestic violence.

White Ribbon Accreditation

All South Australian Government departments will obtain White Ribbon Workplace accreditation and build upon existing domestic violence workplace policies already in place in all government departments.

It is intended that this program will serve as an example for non-government organisations and businesses to also achieve White Ribbon accreditation.

South Australian Initiatives

Since 2005, South Australia has maintained a strategic focus on changing the underlying assumptions and attitudes about women's roles and place in our communities which lead to violence against women. It is the fundamental approach of the Women's Safety Strategy and A Right to Safety to prevent violence against women before it occurs.

A Right to Safety also focusses on strengthening existing response systems. The South Australian Government has improved information sharing between relevant services and developed a common risk assessment approach to violence against women.

Over 24 specific initiatives have been undertaken since 2005 aimed at system improvement, law reform, improving community awareness and changing attitudes about women.

Many of the changes made since 2005 address the need for attitudinal change to achieve primary prevention of violence against women and recognise the need for the collaboration of governments, non-government organisations and the community in ending domestic and family violence.

Snapshots of these are outlined below.

Rape and Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Law Reform

The *Criminal Law Consolidation (Rape and Sexual Offences) Amendment Act 2008* and the *Statutes Amendment (Evidence and Procedure) Act 2007* were passed in April 2008 following a comprehensive consultation process. These laws provide a clearer definition of sexual offences including rape, persistent sexual abuse of a child, and consent. The new laws also ensure that the criminal justice system is more sensitive to the needs of victims of rape and sexual assault. Cases involving sexual offences against children are given priority unless there are exceptional circumstances and victims of rape and sexual assault are protected from cross examination by the accused in person.

In 2009 the *Intervention Orders (Prevention of Abuse) Act* was passed. Commencing in 2011 this Act reformed domestic violence laws by:

- Expanding the definition of abuse;
- Expanding the definition of relationships;
- Providing police powers to issue interim intervention orders;
- Including measures to assist victims of abuse either leave home safely or stay in their home (measures such as removal powers and/or tenancy orders); and
- Ensuring all relevant public sector agencies are notified of orders being issued immediately.

Family Safety Framework

The Family Safety Framework seeks to ensure that services to families most at risk of violence potentially resulting in serious injury or death are dealt with in a more structured and systematic way, through agencies sharing information about high risk families and taking responsibility for supporting these families to navigate the service system.

The Framework involves Family Safety Meetings, held fortnightly at the local level focusing on individual high risk cases and common risk assessment, to ensure consistency in the assessment and actioning of high risk cases. Initially trialled in the Holden Hill, Noarlunga and Port Augusta policing boundaries in 2007, the Family Safety Framework now encompasses all of South Australia. Since November 2013 Family Safety Meetings are held in 19 regions¹ throughout metropolitan and regional South Australia on an ongoing basis:

- six locations across the metropolitan area (Holden Hill, Noarlunga, Elizabeth, Port Adelaide, Sturt and Adelaide Eastern); and
- 13 regional locations (Gawler/Barossa, Adelaide Hills, Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Limestone Coast, Murray Bridge, Berri, Port Lincoln, Coober Pedy, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, Ceduna, Whyalla and Fleurieu/Kangaroo Island).

The Family Safety Framework has also been implemented in Alice Springs and work has commenced in New South Wales for the implementation of Safety Action Meetings, which are similar in focus to the Family Safety Framework.

Cross-border Justice Scheme

Acknowledging the regional affiliations and mobility of people within the cross-border region of South Australia, Northern Territory and Western Australia known as the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Lands, systems and service integration have been strengthened across the borders to improve the safety of Aboriginal women and children. The Cross-border Justice Scheme includes:

- legislation introduced in 2009 to reduce the significance of borders on criminal justice responses to offending;
- cross-border referral protocols for the Family Safety Framework between South Australia and Alice Springs, Northern Territory;
- a Cross-border Intelligence Desk located in Alice Springs to improve the health safety and wellbeing of families and children in the NPY Lands through improved intelligence and information sharing among South Australia, Western Australia and Northern Territory police and other agencies;
- NPY Women's Council Domestic and Family Violence Service which provides crisis response, case work, advocacy and community education services to women affected by domestic violence across the region; and
- a Cross-border Family Violence program which provides a behaviour change program for offenders in the region.

¹ This state wide extension of the Family Safety Framework reflected the Coroner's recommendations in relation to the Heyward, and Wyatt and Robinson inquests.

Supporting the specialist women's domestic and Aboriginal family violence services

In partnership with the Office for Women and the Domestic and Aboriginal Family Violence Service Sector, the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion has undertaken a significant reform of the sector. The reform process aimed to create a state-wide strategic response to women and their children who are victims of domestic violence. The reform also aimed to complement legislative reforms and provide support to women and their children to remain in their homes whenever it is safe to do so.

With the reform came significant new investment in domestic and Aboriginal family violence support and accommodation services, including an increase in funding of \$15 million to the sector and an additional 120 stimulus properties. Outcomes include:

- consistent services for victims of domestic and Aboriginal family violence across the State;
- a state-wide Domestic and Aboriginal Family Violence Gateway Service complemented by a weekend, public holiday and after hours service through the Homelessness Gateway Service to provide 24 hour, 7 day a week telephone information, advice, support and assessment and referrals to regional services;
- Domestic Violence Safety Packages to provide advice and safety products to women who are victims of violence to enable them to remain safely in their own homes;
- a state-wide Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Domestic Violence service to provide specialised support to women and their children from CALD backgrounds complemented by an 8% target for women and their children from backgrounds for all regional domestic violence services; and
- 120 new stimulus housing properties for women and their children who are victims of domestic violence.

The current Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) sector comprises 40 government and non-government organisations providing 75 programs through 97 service outlets across the State. The Domestic and Aboriginal Family Violence Services account for 21 of these programs. According to Homeless 2 Home Database (H2H) data from July 2013 to June 2014, 38% of people have experienced domestic and family violence across all specialist homelessness services.

Intervention Orders Response Model

As part of the implementation of the Intervention Orders (Prevention of Abuse) Act 2009 an across Government intervention response model was established. This model provides the basis for intervention responses within the context of intimate partner relationship and includes intervention programs for perpetrators of domestic violence and support for women through the Women's Safety Contact Program (WSCP). The WSCP aims to increase the safety of female protected persons who have experienced domestic or Aboriginal family violence and who are not otherwise engaged with a support service. The program provides a worker to support women (and their children), monitor their safety and levels of risk and refer women to complementary services for support if appropriate. This includes referral to the Family Safety Framework in local regions.

Research and investigation of domestic violence related deaths

A Senior Research Officer (Domestic Violence) position, in partnership with the South Australian Coroner's Office, was established in 2011 to research and investigate open and closed deaths related to domestic violence. The position identifies domestic violence issues, contexts and relevant service systems while investigating the adequacy of system responses. This advice forms part of the Coronial brief and builds the capacity of the Coronial Inquest to explore and inquire into system responses to domestic violence. It also recommends improvements with a preventative focus. As at 1 July 2014 this position had conducted file reviews and investigations on over 100 homicide, suicide and multiple fatality deaths reported to the Coroner. These reviews have contributed to four Coronial Inquests which have had a specific domestic violence context, resulting in a total of 30 Coronial recommendations aimed at improving domestic violence responses in South Australia.

Establishment of violence against women collaborations focused on cultural and attitudinal change at the local level

Violence Against Women Collaborations develop local regional responses to women experiencing rape and sexual assault, domestic and family violence, and homelessness due to violence. The primary purpose of Violence Against Women Collaborations is to build community capacity to prevent and reduce the incidence of violence against women in local regions by working to create cultural and attitudinal change within the community, addressing the underlying causes of the violence. Sixteen collaborations have been established to date and each identifies the key issues and priorities in their own regions.

For example, the Western Adelaide Violence Against Women Collaboration, which commenced in May 2012, has held successful White Ribbon events in 2012 and 2013 and has now developed a partnership with Adelaide United Football Club to deliver White Ribbon activities throughout 2014. The first activity was at the Adelaide United final home game on 4 April 2014. The game had a theme of White Ribbon. Collaboration members attended, giving away White Ribbon promotional materials and were available to talk to people attending the game. Survivors of family violence tossed the coin at the start of the game after a brief message about violence against women.

Domestic Violence Workplace policies across the South Australian Public Sector

Workplaces have been identified as key environments in which to undertake preventative action to reduce violence against women and to support women who are experiencing or escaping violence. Workplaces can play an effective and important role in supporting women to remain safe, stay in work and to access specialist support services.

Violence against women can have significant impacts on the workplace. Workplaces can be used as places for perpetrators to harass women and to locate their whereabouts. The perpetrator may also harass colleagues of victims.

It can affect an employee's work performance, cause poor physical and mental well-being, lead to time off work and in some cases can result in termination of employment.

South Australian Government Departments are implementing or have implemented Domestic Violence Workplace policies, after endorsement from the Premier, modelled on that developed by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI). A copy of this policy and guidelines are available at <http://www.officeforwomen.sa.gov.au/womens-policy/womens-safety#work>.

The adoption of domestic violence workplace policies helps employees to think about and recognise the ongoing and widespread impacts domestic violence can have on victims. In such a way the policies also have a role to play in the primary prevention of violence by condemning domestic and family violence as well as supporting victims.

It is intended that roll out of domestic violence workplace policies throughout government will be an example to non-government organisations to also adopt such policies. The DCSI policy available on line is suggested as a basis for non-government workplaces to use as a template for their own policies.

Information Sharing Guidelines

The 2008 Information Sharing Guidelines (ISG) for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and their families defined a process for information sharing that promoted earlier and more effective service coordination in response to risks to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

In 2013 the South Australian Cabinet directed that the scope of the ISG should be broadened to include information sharing for all vulnerable population groups, including all adults, irrespective of their status as parents or caregivers, where there are threats to safety and wellbeing. It was also decided to relocate responsibility for the ISG to Ombudsman SA. This decision enables service providers to apply the expanded ISG to all clients with whom they work and aligns information sharing practice across both adult and child services. More information is available at <http://www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au/isg/>.

Family Court Support Program

The Family Court Support Program is a free and confidential service offered by the Women's Information Service, a part of the Office for Women, which provides trained volunteers to accompany women to the Adelaide Family Court. Launched in 2005, the Program recognises that many women have experienced domestic violence and are also unfamiliar with the court process. The Program volunteers can:

- provide information about the Family Court and its processes;
- liaise with security staff at court during proceedings;
- sit with women before and during the hearing;
- offer a listening ear throughout the day at court; and
- introduce women to the Women's Information Service where staff can provide women with information and referrals about other issues, including: domestic and sexual violence, housing options, financial matters and health and wellbeing.

The Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum

This curriculum is used across Government and non-government schools in South Australia and is taught from the early years to the senior years. At all age levels the curriculum focuses on four themes, two of which are 'the right to be safe' and 'relationships'. These two themes allow for age appropriate learning about trust, the use and abuse of power, the meaning of feeling and being safe, and rights and responsibilities in respectful relationships. One of the key aims of the curriculum is that all children and young people learn to recognise, model and expect respectful relationships in all of their interactions with others.

Gender Equity

It is vital to recognise that violence against women occurs in a cultural context which often views women's work, women's voices and women's abilities as less important than men's. While this context is not always overt it is important to recognise and support women's abilities and achievements to change the cultural values and perceptions about women's roles in our society that allow domestic violence to occur. Addressing these issues is critical to preventing domestic violence before it occurs.

Equity is an issue for men to engage with

Men's participation in progress towards gender equity is critical to ensure a fair and equitable society for all. Men have an important role to play in changing the culture that supports violence against women. Men can call out sexism where they see it, educate other men and boys on the importance of gender equity, and breakdown expectations of both genders.

In 2011 the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity convened a group of key South Australian business leaders to tackle gender equity challenges. The Chiefs for Gender Equity recruits male CEOs and Managing Directors of prominent SA companies across key industry sectors, to actively advance gender equity across those sectors. The aim is to lead attitudinal change and to increase the participation of women in senior positions and as well as boards and committees.

The Chiefs represent a broad range of industries including Banking, Legal, Engineering, Property, Resources, Media, and Accounting/Consulting. The Chiefs are committed to providing leadership to drive gender equity in and for South Australia, in industry and in business.

Women's Leadership

Recognising the role of gender inequity in creating the culture that supports violence against women to occur, these specific initiatives have been complemented by work in South Australia aimed at improving women's participation in leadership and employment, particularly non-traditional occupations.

Through the inclusion of women in leadership targets in South Australia's Strategic Plan, there has been a significant increase in women's participation as members and chairs of government boards and committees and as executives in the South Australian Public Service.

Women's participation in Government Boards and Committees

	1 April 2004	1 February 2015
Members	33.68%	47.9%
Chairs	23.83%	40.30%

Women's participation as Executives in the South Australian Public Service

	2004	June 2013
Public Sector	33.6%	67.3%
Executives	29.4%	43.8%

Women's Economic Status

Ensuring women have access to flexible working options and ongoing employment both full and part time ensures that women are economically independent and financially empowered to end violent relationships. Women are then less likely to experience homelessness as a result of domestic violence and are able to support themselves and their families.

Increasing women's workforce participation is good for women socially and financially; it also increases opportunities for women to participate in careers traditionally dominated by men, thereby changing the dominant culture of these workplaces, and increases the leadership opportunities for women.

Flexible work options

The implementation of the *Public Sector Act 2009* embedded flexible working conditions in legislation for the first time.

As part of the 2014 election campaign, it was announced that public sector Chief Executives would be made personally responsible for ensuring that flexible work options are available to staff who need them.

Flexible working options ensure that women are able to work in a way that suits their needs and allows women to take part in the workforce, thereby supporting their economic independence.

Men also need to be encouraged to utilise flexible workplace arrangements not only for their own benefit but also to enable them to share in caring responsibilities and enable their partners to have the benefit of greater workplace participation.

Flexible Workplace Futures is a change project that has been completed by the Office for the Public Sector in partnership with the Equal Opportunity Commission, and which aims to increase the use of flexible working arrangements for public sector employees, to create a more sustainable workforce. This project will help the State to prepare for an ageing population, enable people to work longer and address the changing workforce and sector requirements.

The project focuses on having a real and positive impact on public sector workplaces, as flexible working arrangements are an attractive proposition for both staff and the government.

The State Government is pleased to note that many private organisations are adopting flexible work options and encourages many more to do the same. The following companies have implemented various options for staff:

- Telstra – All Roles Flex

This is a company-wide approach whereby flexibility is now considered the starting point for all roles. Telstra are the first large company in Australia to implement such an initiative, and

are committed to ensuring their employees are able to balance work with other responsibilities.

Telstra is also White Ribbon Workplace accredited.

- People's Choice Credit Union – Domestic Crisis Leave

The South Australian People's Choice Credit Union offers 20 days' unpaid "domestic crisis" leave for staff who experience "physical, sexual, verbal or emotional abuse by a family or household member".

- OZ Minerals & Beach Energy

Together, OZ Minerals and Beach Energy formed a unique cross-industry collaborative partnership through an innovative career development program specifically for women called Leading My Career. The program involves a series of tailored workshops which are further supported by mentoring.

All mentors are at senior management or executive level and have a strong commitment to providing advice and guidance assisting women achieve their professional goals.

Women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)

Recognising the key role that science, research and innovation play in supporting our economy, Investing in Science includes seven key pillars of action that complement the government's seven strategic priorities. The action items under these pillars include a focus on increasing women's participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

The Office for Women worked extensively with the then Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology to ensure that there is a focus on women throughout the STEM Australia website (www.stemaustralia.org.au). The Office for Women has also developed a web community specifically for women. 'Women in STEM' focuses on how to attract and retain women in STEM employment and includes information on mentoring and support networks for women, access to programs for young women and how to address stereotypes and the myth that women are not interested in STEM.

We are also working with Australia's leading gender experts and with leaders in science as advocates for change to ensure that the importance of women's participation in STEM is communicated at all levels by those who are most respected in their fields.

Initiatives are focused on ensuring that the STEM workforce is sustainable and affects real change. One way to achieve this is by addressing the many barriers women face in study and at work.

Prevention in workplaces and industries

Prevention is generally defined as any intervention that seeks to prevent violence before it occurs. A prevention focus will usually aim to change the underlying community attitudes and behaviours which tolerate violence against women and their children.

Key to changing these attitudes is engaging non-government businesses and industry in promoting gender equality and ending domestic and family violence.

Local governments, health and community services can all have a strong impact on changing cultural norms that tolerate domestic and family violence. Government initiatives such as developing domestic violence workplace policies and achieving White Ribbon accreditation for all departments act as an example of the kinds of changes these groups can make to promote prevention and cultural change.

White Ribbon accreditation assists to build community and workplace understanding of domestic and family violence and its impact from a victim's perspective. This understanding is crucial for supporting victims but White Ribbon accreditation is also important for encouraging and facilitating perpetrators' access to supports that help them change violent behaviours and attitudes. Maintaining employment can be a significant motivator for change.

Sports and recreation clubs can play an important role in ending the sexist peer cultures that sometimes exist in male dominated sports which can be associated with attitudes and behaviours which tolerate domestic and family violence. Government programs such as the Violence Against Women Collaborations can work with traditionally male sports and recreation clubs in their local area to build a positive and violence free sporting culture in South Australia. Examples include the work done by the Western Adelaide Violence Against Women Collaboration with the Adelaide United Football Club (as outlined above).

Media and the arts also have a role in challenging the behaviours and attitudes which tolerate domestic and family violence. Media and the arts can both challenge and support these attitudes through representations of women in popular culture, advertising and art. Social media offers a new messaging system for challenging the norms and attitudes which reinforce old fashioned views about women and their roles in the community. Currently the State Government is running a social media based body image campaign aimed at young women and girls. The campaign is being run by the Women's Information Service, part of the Office of Women, to promote a wide range of positive body image messages for women and overcome the current objectification of women's bodies in the media and popular culture.

Naming violence against women in a consistent way is also crucial for changing community attitudes. It is important that domestic and family violence is regarded as a serious matter and is not undermined by the use of terms like "domestic dispute". The value of this approach in shifting community attitudes can be seen from the campaign to change language and attitudes to the 'king-hit' punch because of the serious injuries and death that have occurred.

Educating key professionals such as those working in health, in the media and human resources is important for developing awareness and capabilities to intervene and prevent domestic violence. Prevention efforts also require research partnerships with researchers and universities in a range of areas to ensure the effectiveness of efforts to shift community attitude and behaviours.

OurWatch

OurWatch is a not for profit foundation created to engage and raise awareness in the community on the prevention of violence against women and their children.

The South Australian Government became a member of OurWatch in August 2014, alongside the Federal, Victorian and Northern Territory governments.

OurWatch with its aim to drive cultural and attitudinal change to prevent violence against women and their children from the ground up will enhance South Australia's prevention efforts. Utilising community engagement and advocacy to drive this change, OurWatch will build community leadership and drive change across our institutions.

A specific example of this is the OurWatch National Media Engagement Project. This project aims to develop a range of initiatives to engage positively with media and survivors of sexual assault, domestic and family violence to improve the reporting of violence against women and their children, and increase understanding of primary prevention approaches and the attitudes and beliefs underpinning the issue.

National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022

The South Australian Government has strongly supported the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022* (the National Plan) and reflected this in A Right to Safety.

Collaborative work such as that being undertaken with the Northern Territory and New South Wales governments in relation to the Family Safety Framework improves cross-jurisdictional mechanisms to protect women and children, a key objective of the National Plan.

This collaborative work ensures that women and their children are protected through implementation of similar protocols for their safety. Through improving cross-jurisdictional mechanisms to protect women and children we are fostering partnerships and enabling consistency in service provision across jurisdictions.

It is also critical that consistent data is collected across jurisdictions in order to identify improvements in strategies and service delivery. Jurisdictions currently collect and report different administrative data on the experience and perpetration of violence against women and their children through systems such as policing, justice, corrections, health and community services. These systems are often not 'linked-up', meaning the individual pathways of women and their children experiencing violence, and of perpetrators, cannot be tracked across systems. This presents a considerable barrier in determining which interventions are most effective in supporting and protecting women.

Data is also often not comparable across jurisdictions, due to different data definitions and collections. Making data consistent, and developing a national picture around administrative data, is important in better understanding the incidence and experience of violence against women.

Building the National Data Collection and Reporting Framework, an initiative to achieve this consistency being undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics requires commitment at all levels of government.

South Australia has also included a specific target in South Australia's Strategic Plan modelled on that of the National Plan to achieve a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women through to 2022. This target uses data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey and is included as the target for A Right to Safety.

South Australia has committed ongoing financial support for Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety recognising the importance of building the evidence base and continuing to improve responses through a national research agenda.

Australia's National Organisation for Women's Safety

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) provides a central point for researchers, policy makers and practitioners in the fields of domestic, family and sexual violence to link up and provide evidence-based responses to reduce domestic, family and sexual violence. ANROWS is a key component of the National Plan.

The South Australian Government has committed funding to ANROWS for 3 years from 2013/14 alongside all state and territory governments and the Federal Government. In 2013/14 South Australia contributed \$112,500, an amount based on our population size.

ANROWS' National Research Program includes 20 projects which will be delivered at different times over the next two years. Each project will address a gap in current evidence on violence against women and their children and aligns with the gaps identified in the ANROWS' National Research Agenda.

Linkage to other national strategies

Outcome 3 of the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009 -2020*, to which South Australia is a party, focuses on addressing risk factors for child abuse and neglect. This strategy notes that major parental risk factors that are associated with child abuse and neglect need to be addressed in individuals and reduced in communities. A particular focus is sustained on key risk factors of mental health, domestic violence and drug and alcohol abuse. In South Australia, children's centres have provided opportunities to work with families experiencing domestic violence and provide developmentally supportive environments for children.

Council of Australian Governments (COAG)

The Prime Minister recently announced that the 2015 COAG agenda will focus on the problem of violence against women at a national level. This work will build on that undertaken through the National Plan and the Commonwealth is seeking the agreement of States and Territories to prioritise the implementation of a national Domestic Violence Order scheme. The scheme would see an Order issued in one jurisdiction recognised in all, which is especially important for women and their children regularly crossing borders or forced to move by an abusive partner.

The South Australian Government supports this announcement and will work with all jurisdictions toward achieving the scheme and continuing to support the priorities under the National Plan.

Impact of the federal budget

South Australia has many partnership arrangements which affect domestic violence services - which Federal Government and States Governments come together to support. Previously the South Australian and Federal Government have worked collaboratively in the policy area of domestic violence to understand what policies and practices are most effective for reducing violence against women. The most recent federal budget, however, signals no further funding for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness after 2014/15, which will significantly affect the provision of homelessness services including women's domestic violence services. The sector has raised concern that this will have a devastating impact on some of our most vulnerable citizens.

From July to December 2012, an estimated 157,236 clients Australia-wide were provided assistance by specialist homelessness agencies. Of those, 13,947 were clients of the South Australian Specialist Homelessness Services sector.

Children aged 0 to 14 years as clients in their own right accounted for 24% of all clients in South Australia, compared to 21% nationally. The number of children registered was over 3,900.

Consistent with the national trend, South Australian clients were predominantly female (59%), where female clients aged 18 to 44 years were the biggest demographic group - forming 59% of all female clients and 35% of all clients.

25% of South Australian clients identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (23% nationally) compared with 3% in the population as a whole.

Approximately, one in three (33%) people who approach Specialist Homelessness Services are people escaping domestic violence.

The South Australian Specialist Homelessness Services sector is comprised of 40 providers, who provide 75 programs across 97 services outlets. The majority of these providers are not-for-profit organisations who assist people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, to overcome the complex and multiple barriers they face to access and maintain stable and secure accommodation. Providing someone with a house without the right supports in place can repeatedly lead to homelessness.

The reform of South Australia's Homelessness Service System begun in 2009/10 and undertaken as a partnership between the South Australian Government and homelessness services resulted in:

- consolidation and standardisation of services across regions;
- higher level of collaboration amongst service providers;
- services assisting more people and less turn away rates;
- decrease in clients returning – leading Australia;
- an increase in individuals and families in supportive housing and better case management systems;
- reduction in rough sleepers; and

- development of Homeless 2 Home Database ensuring collaborative responses and minimised anxiety in re telling stories.²

If the federal government does not continue with the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (which is not in the forward estimates), Commonwealth and State contributions amounting to 30% of current funding for homelessness and domestic and Aboriginal family violence services are at risk.

This will place further burden and risk on individuals and families at a time of need and in particular compromise the essential support that women and their children rely on when they are experiencing domestic violence. For example, the Central Domestic Violence Service in South Australia currently supports women and children in 90 accommodation options including crisis, transitional and supportive housing. A 30% reduction, while not necessarily reducing the number of crisis, transitional and supportive housing options, will have a significant effect on the level of support that can be provided to ensure women and their families successfully transition to independence in the shortest time possible.

Given domestic violence is so highly prevalent among families with child protection concerns, the impact of funding cuts to the homeless sector and to the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness are expected to place additional strain on the capacity of child protection services to work in collaboration with homelessness services. Child protection services are already experiencing a reduction in capacity of homelessness services to co-work, particularly in areas of low socio-economic status and intergenerational disadvantage. Homelessness services, including women's domestic violence services, are crucial to providing the interconnected service response required to address the complex nature of domestic violence. Without adequate investment there will be less opportunity to intervene early to prevent the escalation of risk, and more resources will be required at the tertiary service level.

² http://www.dcsi.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/14617/Evaluation-of-South-Australian-Homelessness-Reforms-Report-FINAL-OCTOBER-2013.pdf

THE NEXT PHASE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S WOMEN'S SAFETY STRATEGY 2011-2022

A RIGHT TO SAFETY



Government of South Australia
Office for Women

A RIGHT TO SAFETY DEFINES VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AS A
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE AND USES THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION
ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
[1993] DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AS FOLLOWS:

ANY ACT OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE THAT RESULTS IN,
OR IS LIKELY TO RESULT IN PHYSICAL, SEXUAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL
HARM OR SUFFERING TO WOMEN, INCLUDING THREATS OF SUCH ACTS,
COERCION OR ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY, WHETHER
OCCURRING IN PUBLIC OR PRIVATE LIFE.



The Office for Women acknowledges that we are on Kaurna land and pays respect to the traditional owners of this land. All women and children and indeed the whole community have the right to live safely, free from all forms of violence.

PREMIER'S STATEMENT

Too many women suffer from violence in our community. At a time when we encourage our girls and young women to have the highest ambitions and aspirations, women's lives continue to be lost and damaged through violence. It deeply affects women who experience and fear it, and hurts their children, families and communities.

It can and must stop. For this to happen, violence against women must be everybody's business – to change our attitudes and culture across the community.

But as a State Government, we have a special responsibility. That is why we have released this Strategy, *A Right to Safety*.

It builds upon on the reforms undertaken through the *Women's Safety Strategy* to improve our legislation and services and to strengthen community understanding of the effects of violence against women. It has also has a stronger focus on early intervention and prevention – to stop this violence from occurring in the first place.

Our Government will work to ensure that all South Australians can live free from the fear and suffering that violence causes. And I have made a personal commitment as a White Ribbon Ambassador to never commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women.

I encourage all South Australians to do the same – so that our women, young and old, can live with confidence in their own safety.



Jay Weatherill

Hon Jay Weatherill MP
Premier of South Australia



MINISTER'S STATEMENT

Violence against women is unacceptable. It is a consequence of continuing inequality between women and men, and it is also a barrier to achieving equality.

Violence against women has been present in our communities for a long time and is sadly embedded in some of our attitudes, behaviours, and social structures. Many incidents of violence are still ignored or go unreported because they are deemed to be a 'private matter'.

Government reforms to date have been focused on strengthening our legislation and services so that women receive a timely and respectful response. They also aim to increase awareness that responding to violence against women involves the whole community. The first *Women's Safety Strategy* achievements are outlined in this publication, and include the establishment of the *Family Safety Framework* and the reform of South Australia's domestic violence and rape and sexual assault laws.

Our new Strategy, *A Right To Safety*, reaffirms our continuing commitment to these reforms while also focusing on addressing the factors that contribute to violence against women, such as unequal power relationships between women and men, gender stereotyping and discrimination.

Respect for women is a fundamental and essential starting point for this work, in order to effect a cultural change in attitudes which in turn will effect a change in behaviour.

As Minister for the Status for Women, I am committed to working with our partners to ensure that all women in South Australia can live safely and free from violence.



Hon Gail Gago MLC
Minister for the Status for Women

❧ INTRODUCTION ❧

Violence against women is prevalent, serious and preventable. Women experience this violence in public places, at work and at home and it has a profound and devastating effect on the women themselves, their children and families and the whole community.

As part of its commitment to a safer community, the South Australian Government released the *Women's Safety Strategy* in 2005 outlining its vision to reduce violence against women through a more strategic and comprehensive approach.

Through this Strategy significant reforms have been implemented encompassing early intervention and community awareness initiatives, law reform and system improvements.

These include:

❧ Don't Cross the Line

An anti-violence community awareness campaign. In addition to the media campaign, community groups have been funded to undertake education and awareness raising with groups of young people.

❧ The Focus Schools Program

Builds on the success of the Share Project [2003-2005] aiming to improve the sexual health, safety and wellbeing of young South Australians. A significant component of the program focuses on respectful relationships.

❧ Family Safety Framework

A strategic and pro-active way of addressing domestic violence in South Australia. It aims to ensure that services to the families most at risk of

violence are provided in a more structured and systematic way, through agencies sharing information about high risk families and taking responsibility for supporting these families to navigate the service system. The *Family Safety Framework* [FSF] has been developed and implemented in 11 regions across South Australia.

❧ Sustainable Economic Futures

A research project to identify and document barriers and supports for women living in situations of domestic violence whilst working or seeking employment.

❧ A RIGHT TO SAFETY DEFINES VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AS A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE AND USED THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN [1993] DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AS FOLLOWS: ANY ACT OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE THAT RESULTS IN, OR IS LIKELY TO RESULT IN PHYSICAL, SEXUAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM OR SUFFERING TO WOMEN, INCLUDING THREATS OF SUCH ACTS, COERCION OR ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY, WHETHER OCCURRING IN PUBLIC OR PRIVATE LIFE. ❧

INTRODUCTION

☛ South Australia Police [SAPOL] domestic violence strategy

An overarching corporate framework which provides the foundation and sets a clear direction for SAPOL's response to domestic and Aboriginal family violence. SAPOL has also developed a domestic violence policing response and investigation approach which aims to improve safety for victims and hold perpetrators accountable.

☛ Reform of rape and sexual assault and domestic violence legislation

Provides greater protection to victims and holds perpetrators of violence more accountable.

The reforms improve the response of the criminal justice system to rape, sexual assault and domestic violence.

☛ Establishment of a position in the Coroner's Office

To research and investigate domestic violence related deaths.

Women's Safety Strategy reforms

The companion document *Women's Safety Strategy Achievements Report 2005-2010* provides more information about the initiatives shown below and illustrates the extension of the reform agenda.

PREVENTION

- 2008 *Don't Cross the Line* Campaign
- 2009 Community Education Grants
- 2010 Prevention activities with specific sectors

SIGNIFICANT AND SUSTAINED REDUCTION IN VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- 2011 SASP Target

PUBLIC AWARENESS

- 2005 Community Education Grants and support for key events
- White Ribbon Day

LAW REFORM

- 2008 Rape and Sexual Assault
- 2009 Domestic Violence Intervention Orders [Prevention of Abuse] 2009

SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT

- 2006 *Family Safety Framework*
- 2009 Domestic and Aboriginal Family Violence Sector Reform including *Staying Home, Staying Safe*
- 2010 Integrated Response Model including the Abuse Prevention Program
- 2011 Coroners Position

CONTINUING THE REFORM AGENDA AND FOCUSING ON PREVENTION

A *Right to Safety* outlines the next phase of our work to reduce violence against women through the continuation and embedding of these reforms while also focusing our efforts on the prevention of violence against women.

A Right to Safety recognises that violence against women is a human rights issue and outlines South Australia's commitment to the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children*.

VicHealth's *Preventing Violence Before It Occurs – A Framework and Background Paper to Guide the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women in Victoria*¹ found broad international agreement that the key drivers of violence against women are:

- unequal power relations between women and men
- adherence to rigid gender stereotypes
- broader cultures of violence.

Preventing violence against women requires changes in culture, society and social norms and involves everyone. Working with men is a critical part of this work. While most men do not perpetrate violence against women, violence against women is perpetrated predominately by men.

Men who do not perpetrate violence against women have a positive role to play in ending such violence, through shaping the attitudes and behaviours of children and other men, including peers, colleagues and friends.

THE WEATHERILL LABOR GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT:

- ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ARE UNACCEPTABLE.
- ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE INCLUDING THE THREAT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ARE FUNDAMENTAL VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS.
- WOMEN HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE FROM VIOLENCE AND TO LIVE FREE FROM THE FEAR OF VIOLENCE.
- WOMEN HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIVE IN A SAFE COMMUNITY THAT PROMOTES AND SUPPORTS THEIR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING.

¹ VicHealth, 2007.

CONTINUING THE REFORM AGENDA AND FOCUSING ON PREVENTION

Women and the women's movement in particular have led the prevention of violence against women for many decades. They have provided the leadership and direction for significant social change and have dedicated their skills, time and resources to ending violence against women.

A Right to Safety aims to support men and boys to play a more significant role in preventing violence against women to complement and strengthen the leadership women have provided to date.

Preventing violence against women recognises that just as violence against women is a consequence of continuing inequality between men and women, it is also a barrier to achieving equality. The tools available to affect change in gender equality are therefore integrally relevant to tackling violence against women. As a result *A Right to Safety* outlines South Australian initiatives to address gender inequality through increasing women's participation in the workforce, in leadership roles and ensuring that government policies and programs are informed by gender analysis.

In this work our decisions will continue to be guided by:

- ✿ The safety, health and wellbeing of women, children and young people subjected to violence must be the first priority in every response.
- ✿ Violence against women requires a range of responses that recognise women's diversity, unique backgrounds and experiences.
- ✿ Those who use violence against women must accept responsibility for their acts.
- ✿ The promotion of gender and racial equity and the importance of challenging negative stereotypes based on disability, sexuality or ethnicity underpin all responses to violence against women.
- ✿ The prevention of violence against women requires strong government and community leadership and commitment.
- ✿ Acts of criminal violence against women must be treated as such.
- ✿ Responses to violence against Aboriginal² women will acknowledge the legacy of past failures and the need for new collaborative approaches to preventing violence against Aboriginal women.
- ✿ Services and support for women living in regional and remote communities are addressed in the development of initiatives and programs.
- ✿ Programs developed to respond to violence against women should be evidence based and subject to continuous quality evaluation.

² The term Aboriginal is used to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in South Australia.

✿ CONTINUING THE REFORM AGENDA AND FOCUSING ON PREVENTION ✿

Responses to Aboriginal women will recognise:

- ✿ The right to be free of family violence and live in a safe environment.
- ✿ Responses to family violence need to recognise the diversity across Aboriginal communities.
- ✿ Locally based 'Whole of Community' ownership of issues and solutions.
- ✿ Community development approaches at the core of planning and implementation.
- ✿ Partnership building between governments and communities and across portfolios.
- ✿ Holistic approaches when identifying and responding to family violence.
- ✿ Restoration of community harmony through cultural, spiritual and social healing.
- ✿ Recognition of our shared history and the impact of past practices.





CONTINUING THE REFORM AGENDA AND FOCUSING ON PREVENTION

The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children³ outlines that:

- "...nearly all Australians [98 per cent] recognise that violence against women and their children is a crime,⁴" the prevalence of violence against women, however, continues to be unacceptably high.
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics *Personal Safety Survey* released in 2006 reported that one in three Australian women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15, and almost one in five have experienced sexual violence. according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics,⁵ In 2005, over 350,000 women experienced physical violence and over 125,000 women experienced sexual violence.⁶
- The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reported in 2006 that Indigenous⁷ women and girls are 35 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence related assaults than other Australian women and girls.⁸ Reported in a study commissioned by the Commonwealth Government in 2009.

- Violence against women and their children was estimated to cost the Australian economy \$13.6 billion in 2008-09. Without appropriate action to address this issue, an estimated three-quarters of a million Australian women will experience and report violence in the period of 2021-22, costing the Australian economy an estimated \$15.6 billion.⁹

³ Council of Australian Governments, 2011.

⁴ VicHealth, 2009.

⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006.

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006.

⁷ Indigenous is the term used in this report to refer to Aboriginal women and girls.

⁸ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2006.

⁹ KPMG, 2009.

LINKAGES

INTERNATIONAL

Under the United Nation's *Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* [CEDAW], Australian governments have an international legal requirement to take:

"All appropriate measures [to] modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of women and men, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for women and men".

A Right to Safety responds directly and systematically to this obligation.

NATIONAL

The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children released in February 2011 following endorsement from the Council of Australian Governments [COAG] brings together government efforts across the nation to make a real and sustained reduction in the levels of violence against women.

The National Plan is underpinned by the belief that involving all governments and the wider community is necessary to reducing violence against women.

Consistent with *A Right to Safety*, the National Plan directs efforts to ensure our responses to victims reflect best practice and that perpetrators are held

accountable for their actions, while also working to prevent violence against women in the longer term. *A Right to Safety* outlines the reforms we will drive as part of our commitment.

Recognising that violence against women does not occur in isolation from other issues faced by women, their children, families and communities; linkages with other COAG reform agendas will be strengthened.

Key linkages include:

- **National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness**

Recognising the significant interaction between women's homelessness and domestic violence.

- **Protecting Children is Everyone's Business National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020.**

This framework is aimed at reducing child abuse and neglect in Australia over time.

- **Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage**
Working to reduce the gap in life expectancy and life opportunities between Indigenous and non Indigenous Australians.

- **National Health Reform**

Working with the health sector through doctors, nurses, specialist and allied staff as they are often an early point of contact for women who have experienced domestic or Aboriginal family violence or sexual assault.



LINKAGES

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

South Australia's Strategic Plan [SASP] 2011 drives performance across government and the community. It outlines a future shaped by choice, not chance and expresses South Australia's values and priorities.

The plan includes a specific target to reduce violence against women.

◆ **Target 18: Violence against women**

A significant and sustained reduction in violence against women through to 2022.

The inclusion of this target in the Plan acknowledges that responding to and preventing violence against women is complex and requires whole of government and community involvement. This work involves response agencies such as sexual assault services, women's domestic and Aboriginal family violence services, police, courts, corrections, health, housing and child protection. It also involves policies and agencies that contribute to the prevention of violence against women through cultural and attitudinal change regarding discrimination and inequity; to empower women; and to promote non-violent and equitable communities and organisations.

As a result A Right to Safety is supported by:

- Anti discrimination legislation such as the *South Australian Equal Opportunity Act 1984* and the role of the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity

Legislative and policy changes including:

- Amendments to sexual assault rules of evidence and rape and sexual assault legislation through the *Criminal Law Consolidation [Rape and Sexual Offences] Bill 2008* and Statutes Amendment [Evidence and Procedure] Bill 2007.
- Amendments to the *Victims of Crime Act 2001* including the establishment of the Commissioner for Victims Rights.
- The passing and enacting of the *Intervention Orders [Prevention of Abuse] Act 2009*.
- South Australia Police's Domestic Violence Strategy.

Policies that aim to reduce gender inequity such as:

- *South Australia's Strategic Plan [SASP]*
Commitment to sex disaggregated data to report on key targets.

¹⁰ Indigenous is the term used in this document to refer to Aboriginal people.

LINKAGES

SASP targets to improve women's participation in leadership roles

◆ **Target 30: Boards and committees**

Increase the number of women on all State Government boards and committees to 50% on average by 2014, and maintain thereafter by ensuring that 50% of women are appointed, on average, each quarter.

◆ **Target 31: Chairs of boards and committees**

Increase the number of women chairing State Government boards and committees to 50% by 2014.

SASP targets to improve women's participation in employment

◆ **Target 52: Women**

Have women comprising half of the public sector employees in the executive levels [including Chief Executives] by 2014 and maintain thereafter.

◆ **Target 13: Work-life balance**

Improve the quality of life of all South Australians through maintenance of a healthy work-life balance.

- *Women at Work* which aims to encourage women to access training in high-demand, high growth, non-traditional industries, such as mining, defence and construction.
- *South Australia's Women's Health Policy and Action Plan 2010 - 2011.*
- Policies to promote Aboriginal health and wellbeing such as the *Aboriginal Health Care Plan 2010 – 2016.*
- Policies addressing disadvantage, and promoting diversity and inclusion, such as *Keeping Them Safe*, the South Australian Government's program to reform child protection services and systems; *youthconnect South Australia's Youth Strategy 2010-2014*; and *South Australia's Homelessness Strategy 2009 - 2013.*



OUR APPROACH

PARTNERING WITH THE COMMUNITY

UN Women

In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created *UN Women*, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

Over many decades, the UN has made significant progress in advancing gender equality including through landmark agreements such as the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* and the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* [CEDAW].

Gender equality is not only a basic human right, but its achievement has enormous socio-economic ramifications. Empowering women fuels thriving economies, spurring productivity and growth.

South Australia is partnering with UN Women on its *Towards Universal Access: Emergency Services for Responding to Violence against Women and Girls*. This initiative aims to achieve universal access for all women and girls who have experienced gender-based violence to a core set of emergency and immediate services.

Alliance Network

Recognising the impact of violence against women on the whole community, this network, modelled on *South Australia's Strategic Plan Alliance Network*, will seek to engage non-government and private sector organisations to sign-up to *A Right to Safety*. In signing up, organisations will outline the way in which they will contribute to reducing violence against women.

Supporting Regional Collaboration

Violence Against Women Regional Collaborations will be established across South Australia to support and bring together service providers, advocates and interested organisations to develop regional approaches to respond to and prevent violence against women. These collaborations will support organisations to prioritise issues on violence against women through the development of Regional Alliance Plans.

OUR APPROACH

WITH AND FOR EVERYONE

The Role of Men and Boys

Most men do not use violence towards women. Recognising this *A Right to Safety* seeks to engage non-violent men in ending violence against women, and shaping the attitudes and behaviours of children and other men, including peers, colleagues and friends.

Children and young people

A Right to Safety recognises that women can experience violence across their lifespan. Many attitudes, beliefs and behaviours are formed in childhood and adolescence, and this is a crucial time to educate and build skills around gender equality and respectful relationships.

A Right to Safety also recognises that physical abuse, emotional maltreatment, neglect, sexual abuse and witnessing family violence are forms of child abuse and neglect. In April 2009, COAG endorsed *Protecting Children is Everyone's Business - National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009 - 2020*. This framework is aimed at reducing child abuse and neglect in Australia over time. *A Right to Safety* will work together with South Australia's response to *Protecting Children is Everyone's Business - National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009 - 2020* to bring about positive change for women and their children experiencing violence.

Incorporating diversity and inclusion

Violence against women occurs across the South Australian community, however, some groups are less likely to be reached by whole-of-population strategies; have limited access to services or settings and/or have specific needs that 'general' strategies do not account for. Additionally, the women in these groups are often at increased risk of violence.

A Right to Safety aims to prevent and respond to violence against all women, including those who are marginalised or in hard-to-reach groups. We will ensure that all our strategies incorporate diversity and consider the needs of different groups.

For example, the issues relating to violence against older women must be viewed in the context of an ageing population and shifting family relationships. Similarly, where children and young people are the target groups, it is important that adults and community leaders provide guidance and positive role modelling.

A Right to Safety recognises the high incidence of violence experienced by Aboriginal women and their children, and aims to focus on ways to strengthen communities to prevent violence. *A Right to Safety* recognises the role of the annual *State Aboriginal Women's Gathering* and will utilise these Gatherings as key strategies to engage, support the rights of Aboriginal people and ensure that solutions are appropriate for specific local circumstances.

OUR APPROACH

Through the *State Aboriginal Women's Gathering* we recognise the importance of communities creating and building their own solutions to prevent violence. We will support this by encouraging women to have a stronger voice as community leaders, providing leadership opportunities for Aboriginal women and supporting Aboriginal men to reject violence.

Women with disabilities experience violence at a significantly higher rate, and in different forms, than other women, and they have greater difficulty in accessing support services. Women and girls with disabilities also experience challenges to leadership and skill development based on gender and disability discrimination.

Refugee and immigrant women can face language and cultural barriers to accessing services or strategies. They are also more likely to be killed as a result of family violence.¹¹

Same-sex attracted women experience both sexist and homophobic violence, discrimination and stereotyping. Some of the 'contributing factors' to violence against women [around unequal power and gender stereotyping] are shared in part with those for homophobic violence. To be effective, prevention strategies need to examine issues of gender and power, and explicitly challenge homophobia and gender stereotyping.

OUR FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Target

A significant and sustained reduction in violence against women through to 2022.

New Governance Arrangements

New governance arrangements are aimed at ensuring high level leadership and a strategic perspective through a team of State Government Chief Executives.

Chief Executive's Group

This Group chaired by the Minister for the Status for Women is responsible for:

Strengthening the capacity of agencies to respond to the needs of women who experience violence and those at risk through improving existing service provision and developing 'joined up' service provision across agencies where appropriate and practical.

¹¹ Dimopoulos, D & Assafiri, H, 2004.

OUR FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Identifying opportunities to promote *A Right to Safety* priorities through the national reform agenda and through significant state level policy vehicles and strategies, and industry in the state.

Advancing *A Right to Safety* objectives through strategic engagement and partnerships with Commonwealth Government agencies and with state-level strategic leadership mechanisms.

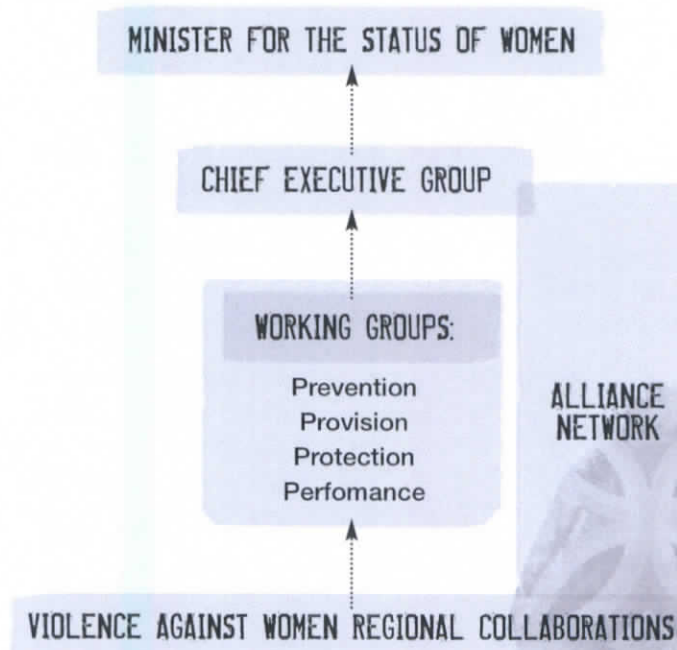
Developing future strategic directions and priorities for *A Right to Safety*, having regard to the *National Plan*

to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children and its supporting three-year Action Plans.

The Chief Executives group will be supported by four working groups aligned with our key directions.

Membership will include non government organisations and networks and government agencies.

These new governance arrangements complement the involvement of existing partners and the building of new alliances through the Alliance Network and violence against women regional collaborations.



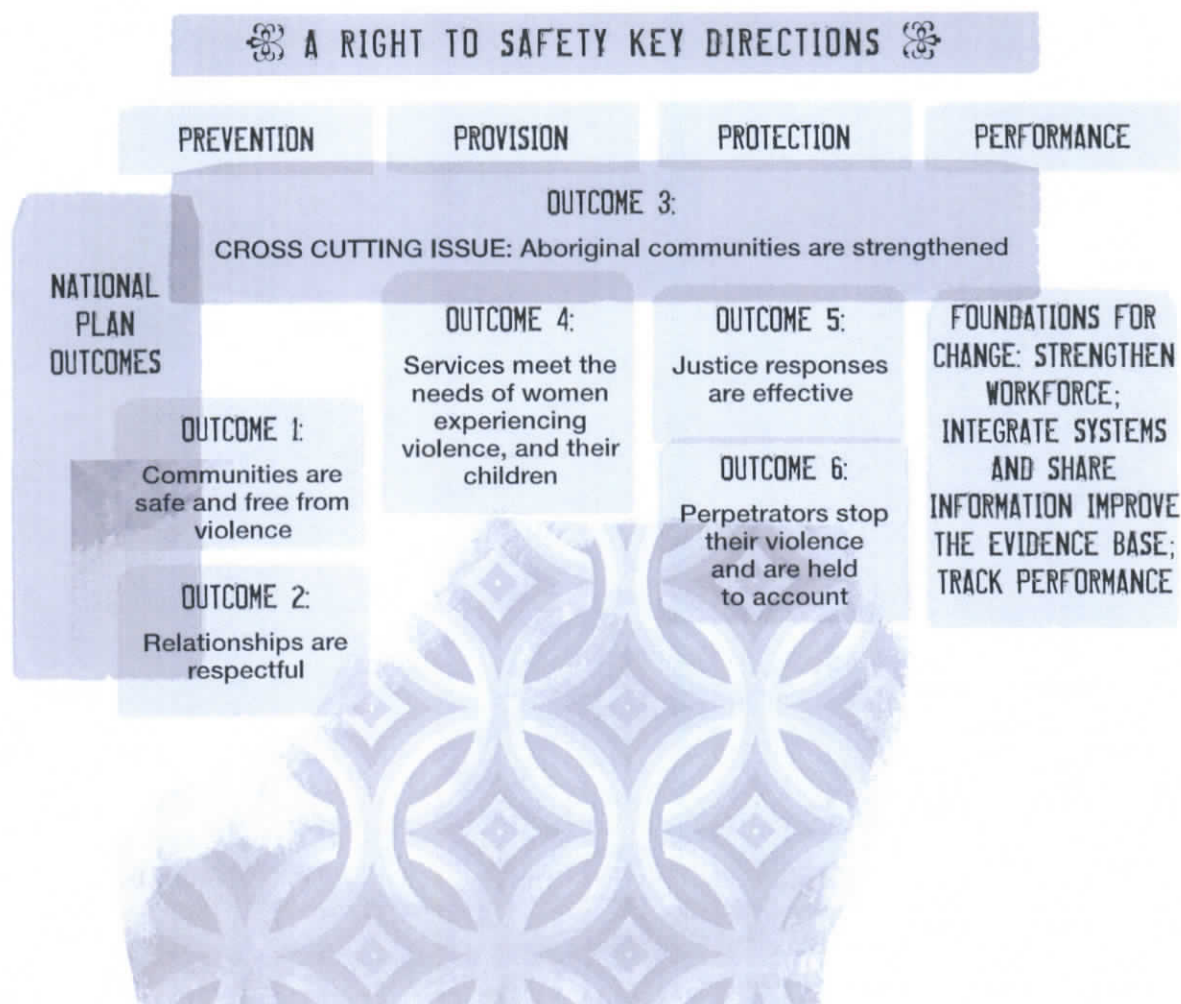
OUR FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Our Actions:

Building on our strong foundation

A Right to Safety focuses on continuing our reforms and building on the current work being undertaken on the prevention of violence against women. It also outlines the South Australian Government's

commitment to work with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments on national priority projects through the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children*. Actions aimed at strengthening Aboriginal communities are included across all of our key directions.



OUR FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Key Directions



PREVENTION

The prevention of violence against women includes any law, policy, program or activity aimed at reducing the level, fear or impact of violence against women or changing community perceptions of violence against women. Prevention is about stopping violence before it occurs. This involves changing the social and cultural conditions that support violence against women to occur.

Outcome

- Women are safe and free from violence in South Australia.

Actions

1.1 Promote and support South Australian communities to not tolerate violence against women

- Encourage schools, community, sporting and business groups to prevent, respond to, and speak out against violence.
- Build primary prevention into the work of school, community agencies, sporting groups, local government and business groups.
- Change community attitudes and behaviours through the *Don't Cross the Line* campaign.
- Promote positive media representations of women.

1.2 Promote respectful relationships

- Build on young people's skills to develop respectful relationships.
- Increase awareness of, and education on, cyber-safety issues.
- Encourage broader societal and cultural change that promotes respectful relationships.
- Actively engage men to promote gender equality and to speak out against violence.

1.3 Promote gender equality

- Improve gender sensitive policy development processes across government.
- Improve women's economic participation and independence.
- Develop workplace measures to support women experiencing and escaping from domestic violence.
- Improve the participation of women, in particular Aboriginal women, in leadership positions.
- Build and support legal literacy among migrants and refugees on Australian law and gender equality principles.

OUR FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION



SERVICE PROVISION

There are numerous government, non-government and community services available for women who have experienced violence.

They provide assistance and support for women to move forward in their lives and reflect the diversity of women's experiences and circumstances with a range of options.

Outcome

- Services meet the needs of women experiencing violence, and their children, through joined up services and systems.

Actions

2.1 Enhance the first point of contact to identify and respond to needs

- Deliver high quality integrated national helpline and online support services which meet national benchmarks through the National Plan.
- Improve early identification of violence against women through routine home visits and screening tools for antenatal, maternal and child health services.
- Work in partnership with UN Women on their universal access to emergency services initiative.

2.2 Ensure women are supported across the service system

- Reduce the need for victims to retell their story through improved information sharing and integrated case management.
- Extend the use of best practice risk assessment and management frameworks to identify and respond to violence against women.
- Improve and expand cross-agency support for women and children to remain safely in their homes and communities while the perpetrator is removed.
- Increase the number of families who maintain or secure long term safe and sustainable housing post-violence.

2.3 Improve responses to the diversity of women

- Work with remote communities to include specific actions in relation to violence against women in community safety plans.
- Improve the cultural competence of mainstream and specialist services.

OUR FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION



PROTECTION

Women who experience or fear violence must be able to seek protection and have access to effective legal remedies. The perpetrators of violent acts against women must be held accountable for their behaviour. The criminal justice system's response to violence against women is pivotal to a broad community understanding that violence against women is unacceptable.

Outcome

- Men who use violence are held accountable and supported to change their behaviour.

Actions

3.1 Hold perpetrators accountable

- Implement strong domestic violence and sexual assault legislative responses to offending.
- Enforce attendance at mandatory domestic violence and sexual assault perpetrator programs.
- Through the National Plan, contribute to the development of national minimum standards for domestic violence perpetrator programs and ensure programs for sex offenders continue to adhere to evidence-based best practice.

3.2 Strengthen legal frameworks and instruments

- Improve cross-jurisdictional mechanisms to protect women and children through a national approach to domestic and family violence protection orders.
- Adopt best practice investigation and prosecution of sexual assault and domestic and Aboriginal family violence.
- Enhance responses to domestic violence through research and investigation into domestic violence related deaths.

3.3 Intervene early

- Identify potential services and settings to engage men and boys at risk of using violence.



OUR FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

4 PERFORMANCE

Professional performance and accountability are critical to the success of the strategy. We are committed to reporting annually on our progress. This annual report will reflect our commitment to the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children* and will provide an overview of the implementation of key projects. Actions in this key direction are aimed at supporting the actions outlined in the previous key directions.

Outcomes

- Women are safe and free from violence in South Australia.
- Services meet the needs of women experiencing violence, and their children, through joined up services and systems.
- Men who use violence are held accountable and supported to change their behaviour.

Actions

4.1 Strengthen the Workforce

Through the National Plan, we will:

- Work with jurisdictions on the development of a national workforce agenda.
- Promote the uptake of multidisciplinary training for professionals to improve the consistency and responsiveness in the handling of family violence cases.

- Promote the update of multidisciplinary training for professionals to improve the consistency and responsiveness in the handling of sexual assault cases.

4.2 Build the evidence base

Through the National Plan, we will:

- Support the establishment a National Centre of Excellence to bring together existing research, as well as undertake new research under an agreed National Research Agenda.
- Commence work on developing nationally consistent data definitions and collection methods as part of a National Data and Reporting Framework.

4.3 Track our performance

Through the National Plan, we will:

- Publicly report on an annual basis on the implementation of *A Right to Safety*.
- Regularly report through *South Australia's Strategic Plan* on progress towards **Target 18: Violence against women.**

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