

Committee: UN WOMEN

State: Australia

Agenda(\*): Elimination of the Raising Domestic Violence During Covid-19 Pandemic

[Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia) refers to both the [continent of Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia_%28continent%29) and to the [Commonwealth of Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Australia), the [sovereign country](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_sovereign_states). The continent of Australia, the world's smallest [continent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continent), is in the [Southern Hemisphere](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Hemisphere) and borders both the [Indian Ocean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Ocean) and the [Pacific Ocean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Ocean). Australia is a highly [developed country](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Developed_country), with the world's [twelfth-largest economy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_%28nominal%29). It has a [high-income economy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Bank_high-income_economy), with the world's [tenth-highest per capita income](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_%28nominal%29_per_capita). Australia is a [regional power](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regional_power), and has the world's [thirteenth-highest military expenditure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_military_expenditures). [Immigrants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration_to_Australia) account for 30% of the country's population, the [highest proportion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_sovereign_states_and_dependent_territories_by_immigrant_population) among major [Western](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_world) nations. Having the eighth-highest [Human Development Index](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_Human_Development_Index), and the ninth-highest ranked [democracy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy_Index) globally as of 2020, Australia [ranks highly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_rankings_of_Australia) in quality of life, health, education, [economic freedom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_freedom), [civil liberties](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_liberties), and political rights, with all its major cities faring exceptionally in global comparative [livability](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Most_livable_cities) surveys. It is a member of international groupings including the [United Nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations), the [G20](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G20), the [Commonwealth of Nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Nations), [ANZUS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ANZUS), [AUKUS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AUKUS), [Five Eyes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_Eyes), the [Quad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quadrilateral_Security_Dialogue), the [OECD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OECD), the [WTO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Trade_Organization), [APEC](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia-Pacific_Economic_Cooperation), the [Pacific Islands Forum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Islands_Forum) and the [Pacific Community](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Community).[1]

Domestic abuse, also called "domestic violence" or "intimate partner violence", can be defined as a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Domestic abuse can be mental, physical, economic or sexual in nature. Incidents are rarely isolated, and usually escalate in frequency and severity. Domestic abuse may culminate in serious physical injury or death.[2] Since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data and reports from those on the front lines, have shown that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has intensified.[3]

For instance; Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) has given a graphical summary of how Covid-19 has affected domestic violence:



Have the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions increased the number of clients seeking assistance for a domestic or family violence matter.[4]

Two-thirds of respondents (67%, n = 212) reported new clients seeking their help for the first time during the COVID-19 crisis (see Figure 3). This is significant, indicating that pandemic conditions coincided with the onset and increase in the rate of domestic violence, as indicated by national (Boxall et al., 2020; Pifzner et al., 2020) and international studies (Boserup et al., 2020; Bouillon-Minois et al., 2020; Bradbury-Jones & Isham, 2020; Bradley et al., 2020; Chandan et al., 2020; Froimson et al., 2020; Kofman & Garfin, 2020; Mazza et al., 2020). These survey results are also consistent with the increases of domestic violence experienced by Australian women reported by the AIC (Boxall et al., 2020).



Has the COVID-19 Pandemic had any particular impact on any of the above clients?[4]

The Australian Government’s National Plan to prevent domestic violence:

The Australian Government’s central initiative designed to address domestic violence is the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children—endorsed by COAG in February 2011. The federal Department of Social Services (DSS) works together with the Office for Women (OfW) within the Department of the Prime Minster and Cabinet to implement the National Plan in partnership with the state and territory governments.

The National Plan has established an ambitious ‘framework for social change’ and sets out six national outcomes to be delivered over a 12-year period: communities are safe and free from violence; relationships are respectful; Indigenous communities are strengthened; services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence; justice responses are effective; and perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account. The National Plan is to be driven by a series of four three-year action plans over the 12 years—so far two actions plans have been produced.

The First Action Plan 2010-2013–building a strong foundation, published in 2012, outlined ‘how all Australian governments and the community will work together to lay the groundwork for the future and sets the scene for the life of the National Plan’. It focused on ‘primary prevention, attitudinal change and building a solid evidence base’. The first action plan had four priorities: building the evidence base; building primary prevention capacity; enhancing service delivery; and strengthening justice responses. The first in a series of planned progress reports, Progress Report to the Council of Australian Governments 2010–2012 (published in May 2013), detailed some of the progress made by the first action plan such as the establishment of a National Plan Implementation Panel in April 2012; an agreement to establish a National Centre of Excellence in 2013; the development of respectful relationships education projects across the country; and many other initiatives and intervention programs in the states and territories. The Progress review of the first action plan (May 2014), acknowledged further progress made through the establishment of the National Centre of Excellence to Reduce Violence (now ANROWS—see below); the foundation work to develop a National Data Collection and Reporting Framework; the completion of the ABS Personal Safety Survey 2012 (released in December 2013) and progress made on a new National Survey of Community Attitudes to Violence against Women (NCAS).

The Second Action Plan 2013–2016: moving ahead was released in June 2014 and reported on progress to date—such as the establishment of the Australian National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS), the Foundation to Prevent Violence against Women and Children and The Line social marketing campaign that aims to encourage young people to challenge gender stereotypes and break the cycle of violence. However, the second action plan expressly aims to build on this progress by increasing community involvement, intensifying the focus on diverse communities and improving perpetrator-based responses and programs. Accordingly, the second action plan includes five ‘national priorities’: driving whole of community action to prevent violence; understanding diverse experiences of violence; supporting innovative services and integrated systems; improving perpetrator interventions and continuing to build the evidence base. The second action plan also notes progress and consultation processes to date such as the expected completion of the National Survey on Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women and Children; the completion of the ABS Personal Safety Survey 2012 and an impending update in 2016; progress made in building the National Data Collection and Reporting Framework in partnership with the ABS; and impending annual national round tables of key experts and national conferences to be held in 2015 and 2016. A National Domestic Violence Summit was subsequently held on 8 December 2014 and the 2013 National Survey of Community Attitudes to Violence against Women (NCAS) was launched in September 2014.

Also released in June 2014 was an independent Evaluation Plan for the National Plan, produced by healthcare consultancy Health Outcomes International.[[146]](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1516/DVIssues%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn146%22%20%5Co%20%22) This report sets out how the plan will be evaluated over its 12 year lifespan. Under the evaluation plan there will be three-yearly reviews of the action plans; annual progress reporting; evaluation of key national activities under the plan; and analysis of available data. Commonwealth, state and territory ministers responsible for reducing domestic violence will oversee the evaluation process supported by government officials in collaboration with key stakeholders. An independent expert was also to be engaged at each evaluation phase to conduct reviews, collate evaluation reporting and conduct reviews of consultations.

Other progress and initiatives since June 2014 include:

* The Foundation to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children, chaired by Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls, Natasha Stott Despoja, launched the anti-violence campaign ‘Our Watch’ on 5 September 2014.
* The ANROWS research program 2014–16 is launched to ‘build the knowledge base’ around domestic violence in October 2014.
* New Zealand and Australian police commissioners gather at a ‘Stand Together’ event against violence in Parliament House on 24 November 2014.
* An advisory panel on violence against women is announced in January 2015. Founding members are to be retiring Victorian Police Commissioner, Ken Lay, and 2015 Australian of the Year and anti-domestic violence campaigner, Rosie Batty. In addition a national Domestic Violence Order (DVO) scheme is to be established. The DVO scheme was subsequently agreed to at the COAG meeting in April 2015. The full membership of the Advisory Panel to reduce violence against women was provided in May 2015.
* A National Awareness Campaign to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children is announced with a commitment of $30.0 million to be funded jointly with the states and territories over three years. The 2015–16 Budget papers outline that the states and territories will contribute $15.0 million towards the total of $30 million for the National Awareness Campaign to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (subsequently agreed to at the COAG meeting in April 2015). The Australian Government will provide the remaining $15.0 million, together with a further $1.7 million for administration costs. It is envisaged that the campaign will ‘drive nation-wide change in the culture, attitudes and behaviours that underpin violence against women and their children’.
* An increase of $4 million in funding for the 1800RESPECT hotline is announced in May 2015.
* ‘Our Watch’ awards to recognise excellence in media coverage of violence against women.
* An annual progress report (2014–15) of the Second Action Plan was released by the Government (29 June 2015).[[159]](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1516/DVIssues%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn159%22%20%5Co%20%22) The report acknowledged that ‘there is still a long way to go’, but outlined further progress, including consultations with leaders from indigenous, disability and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.
* In August 2015, the Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee released Australia’s first parliamentary report on domestic violence in Australia.[[160]](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1516/DVIssues%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn160%22%20%5Co%20%22) The Committee made 25 recommendations, including the need to provide sufficient resources for increased demand for services.
* In September 2015, Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, announced a Women’s Safety Package.[[161]](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1516/DVIssues%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn161%22%20%5Co%20%22) The package includes $100 million in funding for measures such as:
* $12 million for innovative technologies, for example GPS trackers for perpetrators,
* $5 million for safer technologies including safe phones for women,
* $17 million for programs like the Safer in the Home to install CCTV etc.,
* $5 million to expand 1800RESPECT online phone line and counselling,
* $2 million for Mensline to support perpetrators to not re-offend,
* $3.6 million for cross border sharing of intelligence between agencies,
* $5 million to expand Safer Schools and respectful relationships resources and
* Funding specifically to support Indigenous women and women from CALD backgrounds.
* In November 2015, Our Watch, VicHealth and ANROWS released change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia, an initiative under The National Plan.[5]

We believe that the most important reason of domestic violence is the lack of education. If we would like to find a solution to this problem, we need to educate and inform people about how to cope with domestic violence during the Covid-19 period. We can demonstrate advices about eliminating domestic violence on billboards in the streets. TV channels can televise sample videos about this. Online warning systems will work during this process. We can only achieve this by bringing technology to wider segments of society. We should be aware of the necessity of justice and healing from trauma and we need governmental regulations to overcome this problem.

References:

1 : <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia>

2 : <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/what-is-domestic-abuse>

3 : <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>

4 : <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ajs4.183>

5: <https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1516/DVIssues>

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