

Queensland's Framework for Action – Reshaping our approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domestic and family violence

We respectfully acknowledge the First Nations people in the state of Queensland, and acknowledge the cultural and spiritual connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have with the land and sea. We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people as two unique and diverse peoples, with their own rich and distinct cultures, resilience and strengths. We specifically acknowledge the unique history and cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of Australia.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We honour the legacies of Elders as we strive to strengthen the culturally responsive and inclusive framework that will guide our engagement with First Nations People. We commit to working with the Elders, community representatives and industry leaders in the spirit of partnership, reconciliation and mutual respect.

We are dedicated to the inclusion of both systemic and cultural knowledge and values as critical factors in the development, implementation and evaluation of strategies, policies and programs that we adopt.

Our approach

The Queensland Government is committed to implementing all the recommendations for government in the landmark Not Now, Not Ever report of the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland.

In leading the significant reform to achieve a Queensland free from domestic and family violence, the Queensland Government committed to three foundational elements in the *Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016-2026* (DFVP Strategy):

1. shifting community attitudes and behaviours
2. enhancing service responses
3. strengthening justice system responses.

Our actions to address domestic and family violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are underpinned and guided by these foundational elements and supporting plans.

The DFVP Strategy acknowledges the need for targeted responses to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domestic and family violence, with relevant initiatives included in the first and second action plans. However, as the findings of the *Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board's 2016-17 Annual Report*, community and stakeholder feedback, and a significant body of previous consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, research and data have shown, more needs to be done. The principles, strategies and new actions outlined in this plan align with the key messages we have heard.

Addressing domestic and family violence needs us all to work together in the spirit of reconciliation: Government, community and individuals. To achieve real change, we all need to challenge behaviours and attitudes that normalise, permit, excuse and condone violence in all communities, including violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

Our vision

A Queensland free from domestic and family violence.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities living free from violence and enabled and supported to undertake healing.

Our commitment

The Queensland Government is committed to a new way of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities in the spirit of reconciliation to address the causes, prevalence and impacts of domestic and family violence.

We commit to changing the way we do business, and how we work in partnership and support Queensland's First Nations families and communities to design, develop and deliver actions to address domestic and family violence.

We commit to continuing to listen and be guided by the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and to working together to determine how we can affect real change for families and communities.

We commit to working in partnership with communities towards a Queensland where:

- *relationships in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities impacted by domestic and family violence become healthy and respectful*
- *communities identify what they need to help end domestic and family violence in their local communities*
- *community-driven organisations with specific cultural and domestic and family violence expertise are recognised, supported and prioritised to deliver services for families experiencing domestic and family violence*
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and men can access support that meets their cultural and safety needs in addressing domestic and family violence and its impacts, without being re-traumatised in the process.*

We acknowledge and recognise:

- that the nature of domestic and family violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has different causes, including impacts of colonisation and inter-generational trauma, and requires a different approach from current mainstream domestic and family violence responses
- the significant work already being undertaken by communities and community-controlled organisations that are acting to prevent and respond to domestic and family violence
- the need to take whole-of-family and whole-of-community approaches in responding to domestic and family violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including specific approaches and initiatives for men and women and measures to protect vulnerable community members, including people with disability
- the need for strengths-based, locally-led, culturally informed and healing approaches
- the need to work in partnership at all levels – individual, family, community, state and national to achieve change.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domestic and family violence reform landscape

Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities

- Working towards:
 - Keep Communities Safe
 - Give all our Children a Great Start
 - Keep Queenslanders Healthy
 - Create Jobs in a Strong Economy
 - Be a Responsive Government.

Domestic, family and sexual violence prevention

- Delivering the domestic and family violence prevention reforms through the *Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016-2026* and Action Plans
- Developing the *Queensland Sexual Violence Prevention Framework* to provide a strong, cohesive and evidence-based approach to preventing and responding to all forms of sexual violence, including DFV-related sexual violence.
- Implementing Queensland's plan to respond to domestic and family violence against people with a disability including the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women with disability impacted by domestic and family violence.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities

- Developing and implementing the *Local Thriving Communities* reforms
- Implementing the *Supporting Families, Changing Futures* reforms, *Our Way: a generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017-2037* and the *Changing Tracks* action plans
- Implementing the forthcoming *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan*, with a focus on early intervention and housing access including for more vulnerable groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders facing domestic and family violence issues
- Implementing the *Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2021, Moving Ahead* strategy and the *Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy*.

National initiatives and advocacy

- Council of Australian Governments *Closing the Gap* reforms
- National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*; *Stop it at the Start* campaign, and *2018 COAG Summit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statement*
- 2018 Warawarni-gu Guma Statement: Healing Together in Ngurin Ngarluma*
- First People's Disability Network Australia's *Ten priorities to address disability inequity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities for the National Disability Strategy and National Disability Insurance Scheme*

Our core principles

Community safety is prioritised

Government and communities work collaboratively and in partnership

Self-determination, community leadership and community driven action are central to success and sustainability

Education, prevention and early intervention are critical to mitigate the risk of domestic and family violence

Initiatives are place-based and community led, designed and delivered

Programs and services are strengths-based, trauma informed and healing focused

Culture and cultural capability are valued

Accountability, transparency, flexibility and honesty underpin all action taken

Our strategies and actions

Our strategies

1. Work in partnership with communities to utilise the knowledge and experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Community leadership and participation (including Elders) is critical to the successful design and implementation of programs to prevent and reduce violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities.

Programs and initiatives should be designed in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities, and community-controlled organisations.

Existing initiatives supporting the Framework

- Continuing to listen to and work in partnership with existing advisory bodies, including the Domestic and Family Violence Implementation Council (DFVIC) and DFVIC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group, Queensland First Children and Families Board, and DATSIP Policy Leaders Forum.
- Embedding learnings from current place-based, community-led and co-designed initiatives, including:
 - the Safe at Home project and co-design activities to establish a Strong Women's Group in Doomadgee and support women to stay safe in their homes
 - the family-led decision making model being implemented across the state to ensure culturally safe responses to child safety matters.
- Ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are given opportunities to actively participate in the design, implementation and review of existing programs and initiatives.
- Continuing to support the domestic and family violence high risk teams through the domestic and family violence senior project officer roles to facilitate communication and input from local communities and to ensure responses are culturally appropriate and targeted to meet local community needs.
- Rolling out stage three of the Empowering Families Innovation Fund in 2019, which is proposed to include a focus area around community-led approaches to address child and family and/or sexual violence.
- Supporting restorative justice programs operating in the remote communities of Mornington Island and Aurukun, which aim to reduce levels of violence in the community by establishing locally based and operated, culturally inclusive mediation and peace-keeping services.
- Continuing to deliver Positive Futures, a culturally specific program designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders to help them address aspects of their offending behaviour, which may include problematic substance use.

In 2019-21, we will:

- Support three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (urban, regional and remote/discrete) in each year to develop community-led domestic and family violence action plans.
 - This will include:
 - empowering communities to identify the services and programs that are working and should be enhanced or scaled up
 - working with communities to redesign services that aren't working, so that they can better meet local needs and priorities
 - providing funding for a dedicated officer to support communities to do this work and develop their local action plans
 - taking account of the specific needs of women with a disability
 - In remote/discrete communities, this work will be aligned with the development of co-designed Local Thriving Communities Plans and community safety plans (with specific alcohol-related actions and community leadership).
- Work with one additional remote/discrete community to develop a Domestic and Family Violence Social Reinvestment Project, based on identified community goals, and reinvestment of savings.
- Actively engage with communities and local courts to facilitate recognition of appropriate community based and designed programs responding to perpetrators, victims and families, to encourage referral to these programs.
- Identify programs and local initiatives currently underway across the state that are showing promising outcomes, and look at how these can be supported, replicated or scaled up.
- Develop and tailor the domestic and family violence cultural connector roles to facilitate active participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the design, implementation and review of actions and strategies outlined in this framework.
- Develop a Queensland implementation plan with targeted strategies to support the Closing the Gap refresh, which will include a focus on the impact of domestic and family violence. The new formal partnership arrangements as part of the COAG process highlight that the design, input and advice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is critical to achieving success.

2. Deliver programs and holistic wrap-around services that are stress and trauma informed, and culturally appropriate

Domestic and family violence cannot be addressed in isolation and requires a holistic, wrap around approach incorporating secondary services such as housing, health, healing and substance abuse. Culture and the impact of intergenerational grief, stress and trauma must be a central focus of programs that help address family healing.

- Continue funding and support for:
 - 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific DFV services
 - 14 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander shelters and crisis accommodation services – the majority in remote/discrete communities
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men's support services (Walking with Dads) in central and northern Queensland.

- Support culturally safe perpetrator interventions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women, informed by community-focused research and frameworks such as the Healing Foundation's *Towards an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Violence Prevention Framework for men and boys*.
- Establish a new community-controlled family wellbeing and safety advice and referral service.
- Establish and employ specialist domestic and family violence workers in the community-controlled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services across the state.

- Identifying and applying learnings from the evaluation of the co-designed integrated service response to domestic and family violence trial in Cherbourg to inform future initiatives and programs.
- Continuing to work with mainstream domestic and family violence services, shelters and child and family services to enhance their cultural capability in providing support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.
- Ensuring the healing strategy developed under Our Way addresses the impacts of domestic and family violence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.
- Ensuring that service enhancements and place-based trials for youth sexual violence are culturally appropriate, trauma informed and recognise the impact of domestic and family violence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people; particularly the place-based trial in a discrete community.
- Delivering place based work that builds community harmony and safety, such as current initiatives in Aurukun, which include:
 - the Aurukun Restorative Justice Project for peacemaking and mediations
 - developing the Aurukun Statement of Community Values and Education Campaign to identify and embed agreed values and behaviours which promote safety
 - providing support to adult and youth detainees returning to community through the Aurukun Justice Reintegration Program.
- Establishing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Rehabilitation and Healing program to deliver culturally sound, trauma informed rehabilitation program to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in the Townsville Correctional Centre.

- Develop a language policy to preserve and maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's languages to support wellbeing and cultural enrichment.

3. Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and community controlled organisations to deliver the services needed

Community focused, driven and managed organisations should be prioritised to deliver services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing domestic and family violence. Programs and initiatives should engage the current capacity and capability of the community and of community-controlled organisations, and operate from a strengths-based approach and cultural perspectives. Mainstream services that also provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must be able to demonstrate genuine cultural capability and will be held accountable.

- Continuing investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services to deliver Family Wellbeing Services, which include a capacity building component.
- Continuing investment in new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific domestic and family violence services by community-controlled organisations (e.g. the establishment of new services in Mackay, Palm Island and Townsville in 2018-19).
- Continuing to work with Community Justice Groups in discrete communities to develop culturally appropriate domestic and family violence justice responses and build local authority structures.

- Prioritise community-controlled and community-focused organisations for any new funding and initiatives to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domestic and family violence, and ensure that procurement processes embed Indigenous perspectives, knowledge and values.
- Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations to respond to people in their communities experiencing domestic and family violence
- Support community-led initiatives to build community capacity around domestic and family violence, for example by supporting and nurturing Elders Groups.
- Provide culturally safe, accessible and welcoming support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who access mainstream domestic and family violence services. Responses by mainstream services will be strengthened by:
 - tasking the new statewide domestic and family violence workforce capability and capacity building service to prioritise cultural capability training and support for these services
 - ensuring all domestic and family violence and family support procurement processes that involve service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people include a specific, mandatory criterion on demonstrating cultural capability prior to receiving funding and commencing service delivery.

4. Improve our approach to monitoring and evaluating changes in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families experiencing violence

Monitoring and evaluation are the mechanisms through which we understand the implementation of, and outcomes achieved by, initiatives that aim to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families live free from violence. Monitoring and evaluation will allow us to identify those initiatives that are successful, effective and meaningful in addressing issues of violence, and make changes to, or cease, those activities that are inefficient or ineffective.

- Evaluating the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Sexual Violence place-based trial (commencing in 2019-20) and using findings to inform future initiatives.
- Monitoring and evaluating progress against the Youth Justice Strategy, in recognition that many young people in contact with the youth justice system have been exposed to domestic and family violence.
- Tracking progress against the Keep Communities Safe priority, which includes a target to reduce the rate of Queenslanders who are victims of crime (including victims of domestic and family violence).
- Leveraging existing governance structures to oversee and track progress and outcomes achieved by domestic and family violence prevention activities against clear indicators.

- Task a dedicated body to oversee and track progress on addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domestic and family violence as part of the governance framework for the domestic and family violence reform program.
- Design and implement a plan to track progress and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families experiencing violence. The plan will:
 - map what data is currently being collected to identify gaps
 - identify what questions and indicators meaningful to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
 - establish the process through which initiatives will be monitored and evaluated.
- Establish a process through which initiatives will be monitored and evaluated in partnership with communities, including annual reporting.
- Ensure that evaluation and monitoring of initiatives is informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and knowledge, and the experiences of women as primary service users.

We will continue to embed our new approach into future initiatives through:

- A focus on family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the Third Action Plan 2019-20 to 2021-22 of the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016 to 2026
- A focus on family and community safety in the *Our Way* Strategy's Second Changing Tracks Action Plan (2020-22)
- The *Local Thriving Communities* reforms to find solutions to complex issues of concern in remote and discrete communities
- Evaluation, monitoring and continuous improvement through a detailed evaluation framework to assess the impact of the plan