



EVAWQ Media Release 2/9/21:

We Demand Action at the Women's Safety Summit.

We know what needs to happen, and now is the time for the Federal Government to commit to action.

[Ending Violence Against Women Queensland](#) (EVAWQ) is a peak body that brings together the sexual violence, domestic and family violence, refuge and women's health sectors and works to end men's perpetration of violence against women, children and people of diverse genders.

EVAWQ's submission to the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children can be read [here](#).

EVAWQ is proud to be a signatory to the [joint letter](#) addressed to the National Federation Reform Council Taskforce on Women's Safety, including the [12 actions](#) it outlines.

We have seen some progress made throughout the years, but drastic change is still needed to improve women's safety in Australia. Men's violence is still the biggest health risk factor for women aged 25-44, young women aged 15-19 are [five times more likely](#) to be victims of sexual violence than any other age group and the statistics on sexual assault of women in aged care is frightening. The [Fourth National Plan](#) was set to see tangible results in reducing violence against women and their children. These targets have not been met, and violence is as prevalent as ever.

Change is possible and can be achieved by actioning recommendations from the sector, who work directly and indirectly with people who experience gendered violence and men who choose to use violence.

Specific issues and solutions we need the government to action:

- Expanded funding and implementation of primary prevention, with an evidence-based approach. Primary Prevention needs to be well-funded at national, state and local levels. *Our Watch* has been integral to establish a solid foundation for primary prevention work in Australia at the national level and its funding needs to continue. Federal funding needs to support each state to have their own primary prevention agency, to embed, develop, coordinate and drive primary prevention of violence initiatives on the ground. There also needs to be significant funding investment in place-based primary prevention delivery by specialist sector and community organisations. Primary Prevention remains the single most important goal to reduce violence against women and their children.

There needs to be a significantly expanded focus on sexual violence, especially amongst young people. Comprehensive consent and healthy relationships education can help stop both young people from perpetrating violence and becoming victims of violence. We support calls for each school to have a fully funded position to deliver evidence-based consent, respectful relationships, sexuality and sex positive concepts, gender equity and diversity inclusion. There is well supported evidence this approach prevents the occurrence of gendered violence.

It is essential that the next National Plan prioritises programs and policies led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations, with government-funded delivery to be implemented by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations



across prevention, early intervention and response. We support the call from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for the development and implementation of their own National Plan to address family and sexual violence, acknowledging the unique the strengths of culture and connection to land, alongside the ongoing impact of colonisation requiring a unique plan to address the needs and strengths of our First Nations Peoples.

The Fifth National Plan must recognise that different life experiences and backgrounds require different responses and resource safe, inclusive community led services to ensure marginalised people and children receive appropriate support. Priority groups include people living with a disability, culturally and linguistically diverse people and the LGBTIQ+ community.

To appropriately address the impacts of domestic and family violence on growing homelessness issues across the Nation, the Fifth National Plan needs to prioritise provision of increased housing access to address homelessness. This includes prioritising increased affordable and accessible housing for women and children fleeing domestic violence and a commitment to make temporary accommodation available to people perpetrating abuse so that families can stay at home safely and are not dislocated from their own schools, networks and communities.

QUOTES

“It is time for commitments to funding and action from the federal government. The sector has the answers we just need the government to take leadership and commit to resourcing the solutions.” Emma Iwinska, EAWQ President and CEO at Women’s Health Queensland. ceo@womenshealth.org.au

“The new National Plan must have strong governance including a National Partnership agreement with clear and measurable targets to ensure accountability. It’s time for action.” Amie Carrington, EAWQ Board Member and CEO at the Domestic Violence Action Centre. ceo@dvac.org.au

“It is imperative that we have focused national action on how men who choose to use violence in their relationships are being held to account, beyond a criminal justice response. Intervention approaches need to address complexity and drivers of violence, while success needs to be measured on how we are removing the burden and systematic re-victimisation from victim survivors.” Beck O’Connor, EAWQ Management Committee Member and CEO DVConnect. media@dvconnect.org

“Women and children experiencing domestic and family violence have a basic human right to live free from violence with support to rebuild their lives. The housing crisis in Queensland has exacerbated the lack of safe, affordable housing options. This has resulted in women and children not being able to exit refuges. The national plan must address this issue.” Susie O’Brien, EAWQ Management Committee Member and Manager of Lutheran Services Domestic and Family Violence Service susie.obrien@lutheranservices.org.au