

NATIONAL PLAN TO

**REDUCE VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN
AND
THEIR CHILDREN**

National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions



An initiative of the Council of Australian Governments

Why we need National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions

Domestic, family and sexual violence happens in Australia every day.

Domestic, family and sexual violence is overwhelmingly committed by men against women and their children.

To address this serious problem, we must intervene effectively with men who use domestic, family and sexual violence in order to end their violence now and prevent it in the future.

How we hold perpetrators of domestic, family and sexual violence to account can change the future for men who use violence and for the women and children who experience their violence.

We must remove the burden from women and children to protect themselves and place the responsibility for their safety firmly back onto our systems and services.

We must keep men who use violence firmly in view of our systems so the right people can intervene at the right time to hold them accountable, and ensure they face consequences for their violence.

We must provide opportunities that enable perpetrators to take responsibility for their violence, change their violent attitudes and behaviours and address any factors that may be amplifying their risk of violence.

This must include opportunities for perpetrators from diverse cultures, communities and circumstances to engage with programmes and services designed to meet their needs.

All Australian governments are clear that to do better we must set standards at a national level so we are working toward achieving consistent results.

That is why we are establishing the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions (the National Outcome Standards.)

Each part of our perpetrator accountability system must be part of the solution, including our police, courts, corrections, perpetrator and offender programmes and services, child protection agencies and a range of community services.

All these parts of the system will be connected to the National Outcome Standards because it is only when they are working effectively together that we will get the best results.

The National Outcome Standards will not prescribe operational practices or set professional practice standards. Instead, the Standards and their associated performance indicators will consistently guide and measure the actions our governments, community partners and systems take, and the outcomes they achieve when intervening with male perpetrators of domestic, family and sexual violence against women and their children.

Australian governments are committing to the National Outcome Standards because we know how important it is for women and their children to be safe, and live free from violence.

Development of the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions

The *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (the National Plan) was endorsed by all Australian Governments through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and released in February 2011. The National Plan is being delivered through four three-year action plans and the *Second Action Plan: Moving Ahead 2013- 2016* affirms the commitment by the governments to establish a set of National Outcome Standards.

The collaborative work our governments are undertaking to develop the National Outcome Standards is an ambitious and complex task involving targeted consultations with a range of government and non-government stakeholders in every state and territory.

In April 2015, COAG agreed to consider a set of National Outcome Standards before the end of 2015. COAG also agreed to the objective and key principles that will underpin the National Outcome Standards.

The objective and key principles are based on foundational work commissioned under the National Plan, including the 2012 Urbis literature review of perpetrator programmes and findings from the series of national consultation forums and dialogue interviews undertaken in 2013-14 by Reos Partners.

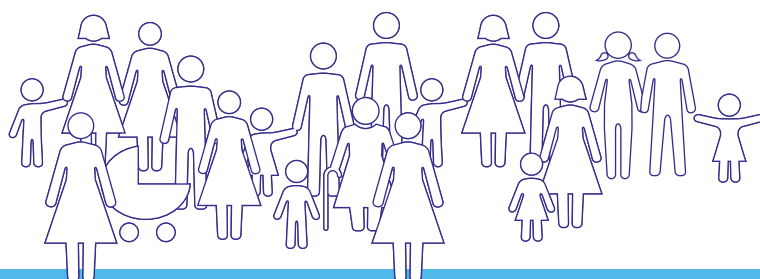
In order to learn more about the perpetration of violence against women and their children, the Commonwealth Government is providing \$3 million to Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS). The funding will be used by ANROWS to establish a dedicated perpetrator interventions research stream, which will strengthen the evidence base and support jurisdictions to implement the National Outcome Standards.

The Commonwealth Government will also provide \$4 million in funding to be shared among state and territory governments to assist them in implementing the National Outcome Standards.

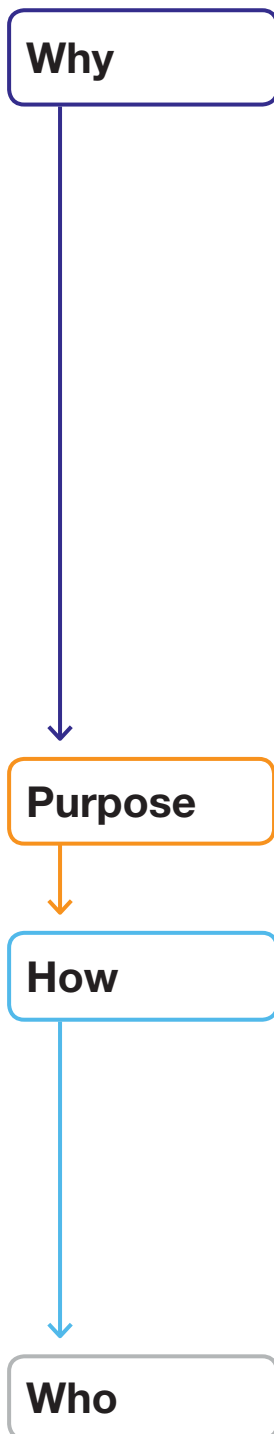
The National Outcome Standards and their accompanying framework and scope will form the basis of further targeted consultations with key community, academic and sector stakeholders.

A range of National Outcome Standards implementation materials will be developed for Ministers' consideration in 2016, based on the results of the stakeholder consultations.

For a glossary of terms used in the National Outcome Standards go to the National Plan website: www.plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au.



Framework



Problem

Domestic, family and sexual violence crimes are being committed in Australia every day.

Domestic, family and sexual violence is overwhelmingly committed by men against women and their children.

Men who use violence can become invisible within the system that is supposed to hold them to account, creating a lack of confidence in current systems to support and protect victims.

Often women and their children find that responses to the men who use violence against them do not meet their needs or suit their circumstances undermining their willingness to seek and accept assistance.

Objective

Women and their children are safe and live free from domestic, family

National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions will guide and measure the consistent actions our governments, community partners

Guiding Principles that will underpin the National Outcome Standards

1. Women's and children's safety must be at the centre of interventions with perpetrators of domestic, family and sexual violence.
2. Systems and services intervening with perpetrators must help women and their children who experience violence to feel confident they will be believed, responded to, supported and protected when they speak up against and report violence.

Scope

Targeted Perpetrator Interventions are those that engage with a perpetrator directly because of his violence, or risk of perpetrating, domestic, family or sexual violence.

This includes systems, structures and services which make decisions or orders that directly relate to perpetrators' interactions with the women and children against whom they have used violence. It also includes programmes and services targeted at working with the perpetrator to enable him to change his violent behaviours and attitudes.

There are a range of services and programmes that are not directly targeted at addressing the perpetrator's violence but instead engage

Women and their children in some communities, including Indigenous and culturally diverse communities, and women with disability, can be more vulnerable to these types of violence and some are experiencing it at higher rates.

Siloed and inconsistent approaches across jurisdictions, structures, systems and services seriously limit their ability to reduce perpetrator violence and the severity of harm for victims.

Inadequate and poorly targeted perpetrator interventions are a persistent barrier to achieving accountability and lasting behaviour change.

Community acceptance of domestic, family and sexual violence allows perpetrators to continue their violence.

This is unacceptable.

and sexual violence.

and systems take, and the outcomes they achieve, when intervening with male perpetrators of family, domestic and sexual violence.

3. Perpetrators must be held to account and face consequences for their violence.
4. Systems and services must work together to intervene effectively with perpetrators to stop their violence in the short and long term.
5. Perpetrator interventions are evidence-based and take into account individual, community and life circumstances.

with a perpetrator to address other associated issues that can amplify the impact of his violence or affect his readiness to change.

Mainstream services play an important role in maintaining women's and their children's safety while other services engage directly with the perpetrator. The role of these services can include identifying and responding to clients experiencing domestic, family or sexual violence and clients perpetrating these forms of violence.

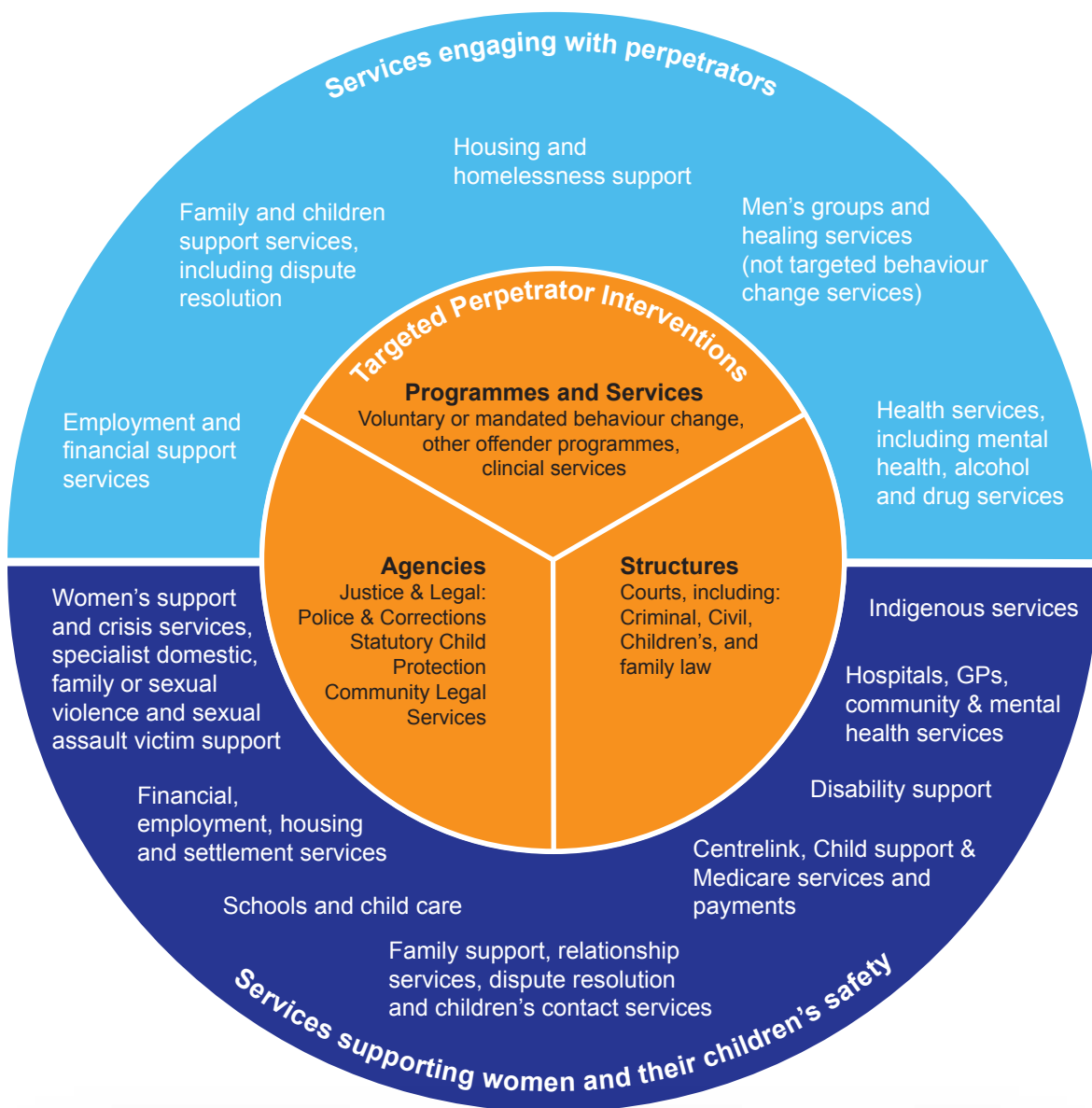
The services often work with other parts of the perpetrator accountability system to monitor and manage the victim's risk of experiencing further violence from the perpetrator. The supporting services include but are not limited to women's support and crisis services.

Scope

The National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions

1. Women and their children's safety is the core priority of all perpetrator interventions
2. Perpetrators get the right interventions at the right time
3. Perpetrators face justice and legal consequences when they commit violence
4. Perpetrators participate in programmes and services that change their violent behaviours and attitudes
5. Perpetrator interventions are driven by credible evidence to continuously improve
6. People working in perpetrator intervention systems are skilled in responding to the dynamics and impacts of domestic, family and sexual violence

These standards apply to **targeted perpetrator interventions** (including the programmes and services that interact with perpetrators, the agencies that guide the interventions and the structures that support them), **services engaging with perpetrators** and **services supporting women and their children's safety while the perpetrator engages with the accountability system**.



Broader Elements Beyond the Scope of the National Outcome Standards

- | | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Primary Prevention | Policy and Legislation | Local Communities | Family and Friends |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|

Targeted Perpetrator Interventions

Targeted perpetrator interventions are those that engage with a perpetrator directly because of his violence, or risk of perpetrating, domestic, family or sexual violence.

This includes agencies, structures, programmes and services which make decisions or orders that directly relate to perpetrators' interactions with the women and children against whom they have used violence. It also includes programmes and services targeted at working with the perpetrator to enable him to change his violent behaviours and attitudes.

Including, but not limited to, interventions made by:

Agencies

Justice & Legal including:
Police
Corrections
Community legal services
Statutory Child Protection

Structures

Criminal courts
Civil courts
Children's courts
Family law courts

Programmes and services

Voluntary or mandated behaviour change programmes and other offender programmes and clinical services targeting perpetrators

Services Engaging with Perpetrators on their Associated Issues

There are a range of **services and programmes** that do not directly target the perpetrator's violence but instead **engage with a perpetrator to address other associated issues** that can amplify the impact of his violence or affect his readiness to change.

Including, but not limited to, interventions made by:

Mental health services
Alcohol and Other Drug services
Housing support

Specialist homelessness services
Employment services
Financial support and assistance
Family support

Family relationship services
Family dispute resolution
Children's contact services
Men's groups and healing services (not targeted behaviour change services)

Services Supporting Women and their Children's Safety while the Perpetrator Engages with the Accountability System

Mainstream services play an important role in **maintaining women's and their children's safety while other services engage directly with the perpetrator**. The role of these services can include identifying and responding to clients experiencing domestic, family or sexual violence and clients perpetrating these forms of violence.

The services often work with other parts of the perpetrator accountability system to monitor and manage the victim's risk of experiencing further violence from the perpetrator.

The supporting services include but are not limited to women's support and crisis services.

Including, but not limited to, interventions made by:

Women's support sector

Women's support and crisis services
Specialist domestic, family or sexual violence and sexual assault victim support

Health

Hospitals
General Practitioners
Community health services
Mental health services

Human services

Centrelink, Child Support & Medicare services and payments

Education

Schools
Child care

Other connecting mainstream services or systems

Family support
Family relationship services
Family dispute resolution

Children's Contact Services
Disability Support
Settlement services
Indigenous services
Employment services
Housing services
Homelessness services
Financial support services

Headline Standards

Women and their children are safe and live free from domestic, family and sexual violence because interventions with perpetrators meet the following standards

Standard

1

Women and their children's safety is the core priority of all perpetrator interventions

Women and their children's safety is the reason why our systems must intervene effectively against perpetrators. Effective perpetrator interventions must give women and their children confidence that they will be supported and protected if they report violence and must minimise any trauma women and their children experience as a result of their involvement with perpetrator interventions (for example during the court process and during the conduct of programmes and case management).

Perpetrator interventions must include elements focused on assessing, monitoring and responding to changes in the perpetrator's risk of committing further violence against the women and their children who have experienced his violence. Effective programmes for perpetrators must also have in place mechanisms that provide opportunities for victim/survivors to access ongoing partner contact, family or other support services wherever appropriate.

Perpetrator interventions must have regard to the needs of women and their children from diverse cultures, and communities and circumstances so they can help all victim/survivors get suitable support whenever they are involved with the perpetrator accountability system.

Standard

2

Perpetrators get the right interventions at the right time

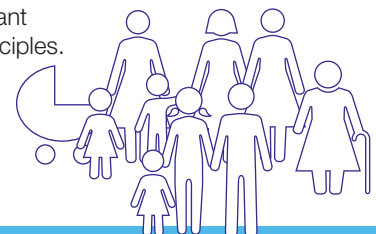
Our systems and services must play an effective role in ending perpetrators' violence by working together at every opportunity to identify, keep sight of and engage with perpetrators.

It is imperative that our systems and services share relevant information about perpetrators and victims wherever possible*, including information on victim/survivor safety and perpetrator risk. This information must be used to help the perpetrator accountability system to respond in integrated ways so that the right parts of the system can engage with the perpetrator at the most effective times to reduce the risk of him committing violence and minimise the impacts of any violence that does occur.

We must ensure that we intervene swiftly with perpetrators as soon as an instance of their violence is identified in ways that stop their violence and give the perpetrator opportunities to change his violent behaviours and attitudes.

Perpetrator interventions must be designed to respond effectively to perpetrators from diverse cultures, and communities and circumstances at all the key points of engagement with them in the perpetrator accountability system. Effective interventions with perpetrators must include specific responses suited to ending as early as possible the violence of perpetrators who are engaging with the system for the first time as well as responses suited to minimising harm from persistent re-offending.

* Sharing of information must remain consistent with all relevant legislation, including information privacy provisions and principles.



3

Perpetrators face justice and legal consequences when they commit violence

Legal, civil and community justice responses to perpetrators are a powerful tool that can interrupt and address violence against women and their children.

This standard shifts the burden from women and their children to protect themselves and places that responsibility firmly back onto our justice and legal systems. It puts systems in the position of being accountable for ensuring that perpetrators face appropriate justice and legal consequences for their violence; that perpetrators understand what those consequences mean; that the victim/survivor is informed about the consequences that the perpetrator faces; and that the system responds effectively to perpetrators who do not comply with the mandatory justice and legal consequences and sanctions placed on them (for example an intervention order or an order to attend a behaviour change or other offender programme).

Justice and legal systems accountability involves making systems competent at engaging effectively with perpetrators from diverse cultures, communities and circumstances and facilitating a sense of justice for all victim/survivors.

4

Perpetrators participate in programmes and services that enable them to change their violent behaviours and attitudes

Behaviour change programmes, other offender programmes and clinical services aimed at enabling perpetrators to stop their violence can play an important role in the perpetrator accountability system.

This standard is about inviting or mandating men to engage with and complete programmes designed to enable them to take responsibility for their violence and work towards changing their violent behaviours and attitudes. Providing targeted interventions sends a message to the community that perpetrators of violence can change.

To respond effectively to all perpetrators, perpetrator programmes and services must be adaptable for perpetrators from diverse cultures, communities and circumstances, and engage effectively with perpetrators with diverse needs.

This standard also highlights the role of perpetrator programmes and services in helping to keep the perpetrator visible to the accountability system regardless of whether he achieves attitude and behaviour change. This enables the perpetrator accountability system to maintain risk and safety monitoring of the perpetrator so the system can intervene if necessary to prevent further violence.

It is important that victim/survivors are assisted to understand that the perpetrator's participation in a behaviour change programme is not guaranteed to result in him stopping his violence. It is also important to inform victim/survivors that even without behaviour change, the perpetrator programme can play an important role in maintaining their safety.

Programmes and services for perpetrators should integrate with sectors, such as the mental health, or the alcohol and other drug sector, to help perpetrators to address factors that are directly linked to their offending or to their readiness to respond to programmes and services. Perpetrator interventions must also include mechanisms for providing victim/survivors with access to ongoing partner, family or other support services wherever appropriate, particularly women and their children who have not had contact with support services before.

5

Perpetrator interventions are driven by credible evidence to continuously improve

The evidence base for perpetrator interventions is not yet comprehensive. The perpetrator accountability system and interventions are in the early stages of development with an evidence base emerging over time.

This standard supports evidence-based and evidence-building practices within the agencies, structures, services and programmes that make up the perpetrator accountability system. There is a need to ensure the consistent evaluation of programmes and services and to utilise the available Australian and international evidence base to strengthen new and existing interventions.

Evaluative processes must be built into perpetrator interventions to build the evidence base for 'what works', promote innovation based on evidence, and actively engage in continuous improvement.

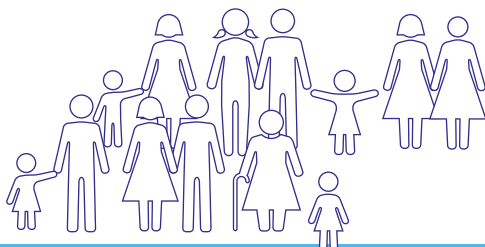
6

People working in perpetrator intervention systems are skilled in responding to the dynamics and impacts of domestic, family and sexual violence

A range of people, both generalist and specialist professionals and practitioners, can have a significant impact in addressing and reducing violence against women and their children through their interactions with perpetrators.

People working in the perpetrator accountability system require support and access to professional development opportunities enabling them to understand the dynamics of domestic, family or sexual violence, including gender dynamics, intervene safely and appropriately with perpetrators, and understand the impact interventions can have on women and their children who experience the perpetrator's violence.

We must build workforce (and community) capability to provide interventions that are effective with perpetrators from diverse cultural and community circumstances. This standard gives effect to the need for broad development of competencies in working with perpetrators from diverse backgrounds.





To find out more about the National Plan and the National Outcome Standards, go to www.plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au

If you are experiencing domestic and family violence, or have experienced sexual assault, seek support by calling:

000 if you, a child, or another person is in immediate danger

1800RESPECT – the national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service on **1800 737 732** or chat online at www.1800RESPECT.org.au

Relationships Australia – **1300 364 277**

Mensline – **1300 789 978**

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