DRAFT
Domestic and Family Violence
PREVENTION STRATEGY
2015–2025

Queensland’s reform program to end domestic and family violence
Making the elimination of domestic and family violence a priority

Each and every Queenslander has the right to feel safe, and be safe, especially in their own home. Domestic and family violence is a violation of this basic human right.

Domestic and family violence affects people of all ages, faiths, and circumstances across the Queensland community, whether people live in our cities or in rural and regional areas—it ruins families, destroys childhoods and is an unacceptable burden on our society.

Experiencing abuse at the hands of a partner, family member or relative can result in devastating emotional and personal costs that cannot be measured. The effects are far reaching, impacting on victims, their children, extended families, friends, co-workers and, ultimately, on our communities.

Domestic and family violence is a major cause of homelessness and has significant long-term impacts on the health and wellbeing of victims. Children who live with domestic and family violence are at greater risk of abuse. They can suffer serious impacts on their health, emotional wellbeing, ability to learn and ability to develop positive relationships with others and may be at heightened risk of alcohol misuse, drug dependency and criminal behaviour later in life.

The Queensland Child Death Case Review Committee report for 2013–14 identified domestic and family violence as an issue for 71% of cases involving the death of a child with recent involvement with the child protection system.

Domestic and family violence not only has personal impacts, including long-term impacts on victims’ capacity to be economically independent and secure, it also costs the Queensland economy between $2.7 billion and $3.2 billion annually. As a workplace issue, Access Economics found domestic violence costs employers across Australia about $175 million annually.

Making the elimination of domestic and family violence a priority recognises our human rights and will reduce homicides in Queensland, make our workplaces more productive, free up significant economic resources for other priorities and contribute significantly to making our homes and communities safer and free from violence for all women, men, children and families.
Understanding domestic and family violence

The causes and contributors to domestic and family violence are extremely complex and are founded in cultural attitudes and behaviours, inequality, discrimination and personal behaviours and attitudes.

Significant research has been undertaken and continues to be pursued to understand the nature of domestic and family violence, and the causes of increasing incidence and severity.

However, what is already well known is that while men can be, and are, victims of violence, coercive control and domestic and family violence homicide, undeniably, the majority of those subjected to domestic and family violence are women.

The 2012 Personal Safety Survey indicates that one in six Australian women has experienced physical abuse at the hands of a current or former partner compared with one in 19 men. One in four Australian women have experienced emotional abuse in an intimate relationship compared with one in seven men.

Domestic and family violence is recognised in the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010–2022 as one of the two main forms of violence against women in Australia, the other being sexual assault.

There are other particular groups and individuals that are more vulnerable to domestic and family violence than others in the community. We know these individuals and groups may experience domestic and family violence in a different way to other Queenslanders, or face additional challenges when attempting to get the protection and support they need.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience domestic violence and family violence more often than other Queensland women, and are more likely to be seriously injured. They are also more likely to experience family violence from a broader range of extended family relationships.

The impact of past trauma is a contributing factor for violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and for other situational factors that contribute to violence, including poverty, unemployment, drug and alcohol use, and poor health.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse communities who experience domestic and family violence also face additional barriers, including lack of English language proficiency, lack of knowledge or understanding of Queensland’s laws against domestic and family violence, dependence on a violent spouse for their visa status, and distrust of police and government authorities based on past trauma. Victims with few connections outside their cultural community are particularly vulnerable to social isolation.

People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI) also experience violence.
in their relationships. In addition to the types of violence and abuse experienced within straight relationships, abusive partners or family members may threaten to ‘out’ victims as a method of control. People identifying as LGBTI may be deterred from seeking help due to past experience of discrimination or other unhelpful service responses.

While older people also experience violence within couple relationships, they are more vulnerable to abuse from other family members and from carers. The World Health Organisation defines elder abuse as behaviour that causes harm or distress to an older person within a relationship where there is an expectation of trust. This may involve physical violence, psychological abuse, financial abuse, social isolation, sexual abuse or neglect. Older people face particular barriers to seeking help for elder abuse, including physical disability, diminished cognitive functioning, lack of awareness that their experiences amount to abuse, and social isolation.

People with disabilities also are highly vulnerable to domestic and family violence and both men and women with disabilities are victims of domestic and family violence at much higher rates than men and women without impairments. Women with disabilities experience higher levels of sexual abuse and people with disabilities can also experience ‘disability-related’ abuse such as withholding of care, denial of access to disability aids and threats of institutionalisation. They can face additional barriers to seeking help for domestic and family violence including dependence on the perpetrator for basic needs such as access to food and medication, lack of ability to earn income, and inability to communicate with support services.

Understanding the gendered nature of domestic and family violence and the factors that contribute to increased vulnerability is vital in designing and delivering effective responses and reforms.
Why is there a need for a strategy?

Domestic and family violence is not a new issue. There has been a great deal of action and commitment over many decades. Despite this effort, the reported rates and severity of domestic and family violence continue to rise.

The Queensland Government is committed to taking action to eliminate domestic and family violence. However, we recognise that domestic and family violence must be everyone's concern and both government and the community have a responsibility to work together. Together we must stop the behaviour and attitudes that trivialise, excuse or perpetuate domestic and family violence.

A strategy that brings all of Queensland together in partnership is needed to enhance our efforts. A comprehensive, planned and articulated approach to change will help to guide and motivate these partners to do better, to provide responsive services and to drive cultural change.

The strategy will draw on the dedication, practice, wisdom and long-term vision of those service providers who have been working tirelessly to support victims and create change over the last 30 years and will build on those strategies that have been effective in delivering results while challenging practices where adjustment or change is needed. Fresh and innovative responses will also be put in place, for example, to increase women's economic independence as a protective factor.

The Queensland Government is also developing a plan for the prevention of violence against women. The plan will have a clear objective to eliminate all forms of violence against women including domestic and family violence and sexual assault. A comprehensive domestic and family violence strategy is needed to partner with this plan to ensure action is taken across the community in a coordinated and cohesive way to keep women safe in their homes and in public.

What is domestic and family violence?

Domestic and family violence occurs when one person in an intimate, family or informal carer relationship uses violence and abuse to maintain power and control over the other person. Broadly, under Queensland law, it includes behaviour that is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically or economically abusive, threatening, coercive or aimed at controlling or dominating another person through fear. The violence and abuse can take many forms ranging from physical, emotional and sexual assault though to financial control, isolation from family and friends, threats of self-harm or harm to pets or loved ones, checking on whereabouts or stalking.

Under the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012, intimate personal relationships include married and de facto spouses, parents of a child, people who are, or were engaged, and people in couple relationships, including same sex couples. Family relationships exist between two people who are related by either blood or marriage, including extended or kinship relationships where a person is regarded as a relative. Informal care relationships exist where one person is dependent on another person for help with essential daily tasks, such as dressing or grooming, meal preparation, grocery shopping or arranging medical care, where care is provided without payment.
Building on recent achievements

Ending domestic and family violence is a long-term journey of reform. The women’s movement in particular has led the movement to prevent domestic and family violence and to promote gender equality for many decades. The national focus on violence against women presents a powerful opportunity for Queensland to build on the existing momentum and commitment to achieve practical and sustainable solutions.

Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence

The Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, chaired by the Honourable Quentin Bryce AD CVO, was established by the Queensland Government on 10 September 2014. The Taskforce was charged with defining the domestic and family violence landscape in Queensland and recommending ways the Queensland Government and community might reduce the incidence of this form of violence. The Taskforce was also requested to make recommendations to the government to inform the development of a domestic and family violence strategy to achieve a long-term vision.

The Taskforce report, Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland was presented to the Premier of Queensland, the Honourable Annastacia Palaszczuk MP on 28 February 2015. The report contained 140 recommendations for change with a focus on providing practical solutions under three themes: changing culture and attitudes, implementing an integrated service response and improving the law and justice system.

At the core of the Taskforce report was the recognition that the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of the Queensland community are directly related to the ongoing cycle of domestic and family violence. The report reiterated that women and children of all ages remain the primary victims of domestic and family violence. While men can also experience violence of this nature, domestic and family violence remains a gendered issue in that it has an unequal impact on women. The Taskforce report issued a number of challenges to different groups within the Queensland community to take a stand against domestic and family violence with a strong message for all Queenslanders that each and every person can make a difference.
The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010–2022, endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), envisages that Australian women and their children will live free from violence in safe communities. It targets two types of violence against women—domestic and family violence and sexual assault. The national plan sets out six national outcomes for all governments to deliver over a 12 year period. The national outcomes are:

1. Communities are safe and free from violence
2. Relationships are respectful
3. Indigenous communities are strengthened
4. Services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence
5. Justice responses are effective
6. Perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account.

The national plan focuses on preventing violence by raising awareness and building respectful relationships in the next generation. As well as focusing on prevention measures, it will support women who have experienced violence to rebuild their lives as quickly as possible as part of a community wide response.

COAG has agreed to take urgent collective action in 2015 to address the unacceptable level of violence against women. A national domestic violence order scheme will be agreed where domestic violence orders will be automatically recognised and enforceable in any state or territory of Australia. Work is progressing on a prototype national information system that will enable courts and police in different states and territories to share information on active domestic violence orders. Queensland has agreed to trial this system.

COAG will consider national outcome standards to ensure perpetrators are held to account at the same standard across Australia. COAG will consider strategies to tackle the use of technology to abuse against women and to ensure women have adequate legal protections against this form of abuse. COAG has also agreed to jointly contribute $30 million for a national campaign to reduce violence against women and their children.

COAG will be assisted with this work by the COAG Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence Against Women, chaired by the former Victorian Police Chief Commissioner, Mr Key Lay APM. The Deputy Chairs are Ms Rosie Batty, 2015 Australian of the Year and Ms Heather Nancarrow, Chief Executive Officer, Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety. Queensland’s Edward Mosby has also been appointed to the Advisory Panel. With a wealth of experience in dealing with Indigenous domestic and family violence through the Helem Yumba Central Queensland Healing Centre, Mr Mosby is well placed to advise on the safety of victims and families and working with perpetrators in a culturally appropriate way.
International agreements

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* contains human rights standards and customs agreed to by nations of the world. These agreements promote, at the most basic level, the right of each and every individual to live free from violence of all kinds, including physical, sexual and psychological.

In December 1993 the United Nations *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women* was adopted without vote, in recognition that in order for women to experience the full benefits of principles enshrined in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, it must also be a priority to eliminate violence perpetrated against them.

Queensland’s Stronger Families Reforms

Queensland’s Stronger Families reforms, developed in response to the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry, include a strong focus on improving service responses for children and their families who are impacted by domestic and family violence. Where appropriate, the government will look for opportunities to further align the child and family reform with reforms in the domestic and family violence area in recognition of the connectedness between harm to children and domestic and family violence.
**Vision**
A Queensland free from domestic and family violence

**Key outcome**
All Queenslanders feel safe in their own homes and children can grow and develop in safe and secure environments

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<tr>
<th>Supporting outcomes</th>
<th>Measuring outcomes</th>
<th>Partner strategies</th>
<th>Foundational elements</th>
<th>Action areas</th>
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<tr>
<td>Queensland communities are safe and foster zero tolerance of domestic and family violence</td>
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<td>Partner strategies include: Prevention of Violence Against Women Plan, Women's Strategy and The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022, Safer Queensland Crime Prevention Strategy, Stronger Families child and family reform program, Sexual Health Strategy, Policy to tackle alcohol-fuelled violence, Community Services jobs, skills and industry development strategy, Advance Queensland.</td>
<td>Community attitudes and behaviours</td>
<td>Demonstrate strong leadership and governance</td>
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<td>Victims and their children are safe and supported to recover</td>
<td>Victims and perpetrators stop using violence</td>
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<td>Integrating service responses</td>
<td>Form community partnerships</td>
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<td>Perpetrators stop using violence</td>
<td>Victims and perpetrators feel supported in the justice system</td>
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<td>Strengthening justice system responses</td>
<td>Empower community action</td>
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<td>Queensland community, business and government leaders are taking action and working together</td>
<td>Queensland’s workplaces and workforces challenge attitudes that contribute to violence against women and are able to effectively support people affected</td>
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<td>Grow local networks to support communities</td>
<td>Develop models of integrated services and commence roll out across Queensland</td>
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<td>Respectful relationships and modelling non-violent behaviour in the home are embedded in education</td>
<td>Queensland’s workplaces and workforces challenge attitudes that contribute to violence against women and are able to effectively support people affected</td>
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<td>Enable change to be driven by communities</td>
<td>Expand and fully roll out needs-based integrated services</td>
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<td>Strengthen justice responses to protect/empower victims and hold perpetrators to account</td>
<td>Continue to tailor integrated support services</td>
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<td>Embed awareness and change within the law and justice system</td>
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<td>Evaluate justice and court responses for future reforms</td>
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**2015–16 Action Plan**

**2016–17 to 2018–19 Action Plan**

**2019–20 to 2021–22 Action Plan**

**2022–23 to 2024–25 Action Plan**

Figure 1: Overview of how the strategy will guide action
How will the Strategy operate?

This Strategy sets the direction for ending domestic and family violence in Queensland.

The Strategy outlines a shared vision for Queensland and a set of principles to guide action across the community (see Figure 1 on previous page). The Strategy sets out the plan to achieve the shared vision and how we, as the Queensland community, will get there.

At the centre of the Strategy—its foundational elements—is the recognition that a significant shift in community attitudes and behaviours is required, an integrated response system must deliver the services and support that victims and perpetrators need, and the justice system response will be strengthened to prioritise victim safety and hold perpetrators to account. The reforms that will be put in place will aim to recognise the victim’s perspective, prioritise their safety and reduce the onus on them to take action or to leave.

Effort will be focused on educating front line professionals to help recognise and respond to prevent domestic and family violence, creating safe communities and workplaces that support victims, providing effective services that efficiently wrap around the victim, and ensuring our legal system supports victims and holds perpetrators to account.

The Strategy recognises the need to build support around women and around those who are particularly vulnerable or have specific and complex needs and are therefore at greater risk of violence than others, or face greater challenges in accessing support services.

The success of the Strategy is dependent on the creation of effective working relationships between the government, the community, business and professional sectors, service providers and the legal sector.

Outcomes will be delivered through four action plans over a ten year period. The Strategy and its action plans are designed in a chronological order, recognising the need to continually build on our achievements. The first action plan will be for 2015–16. The three remaining action plans will be three years each.

Each action plan will outline a number of key areas of focus (actions areas) as well as what we want to achieve (signposts) by the end of the action plan. The reforms made under action plans will be monitored and evaluated over time to ensure their ongoing relevance and effectiveness. Subsequent action plans will be able to be modified to address any shortfalls of previous actions plans identified through evaluation.
Our vision

The vision of the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy is:

A Queensland free from domestic and family violence.

Key outcome

The primary long-term outcome of the Strategy is:

All Queenslanders feel safe in their own homes and children can grow and develop in safe and secure environments.

Supporting outcomes

The high-level outcome is underpinned by seven supporting outcomes. These outcomes will help us to understand what we are wanting to achieve. They are aligned with and support the outcomes of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children.

The outcomes are:

• Queensland communities are safe and foster zero tolerance of domestic and family violence
• Victims and their children are safe and supported to recover
• Perpetrators stop using violence
• Victims and perpetrators feel supported in the justice system
• Queensland community, business and government leaders are taking action and working together
• Respectful relationships and modelling non-violent behaviour in the home are embedded in education
• Queensland’s workplaces and workforces challenge attitudes that contribute to violence against women and are able to effectively support people affected.

Foundational elements

The three foundational elements underpinning the Strategy are:

1. A significant shift in community attitudes and behaviours is required
2. An integrated response system must deliver the services and support that victims and perpetrators need
3. The justice system response will be strengthened to prioritise victim safety and hold perpetrators to account.

These foundational elements reflect the themes which shaped the Taskforce report. The Taskforce themes are well recognised by the Queensland community and will continue to shape the long-term strategy to end domestic and family violence.
Guiding principles

The following draft key principles will form the basis of how Queensland, as a community, can work together to end domestic and family violence. These principles have been co-designed with community and business leaders and experts with experience working with victims and perpetrators of violence through the Community Leader Roundtables. The principles will guide all stages of reform and will also be used to help design new approaches, processes or programs.

- Domestic and family violence is not acceptable.
- Denigration and disrespect of women is not acceptable.
- All Queenslanders deserve to be equally valued and respected regardless of age, gender, identity, culture, religion, education, impairment, health or race.
- All Queenslanders have the right to live in respectful, supportive and safe relationships and to feel safe and secure in their homes.
- The safety of victims is paramount.
- Domestic and family violence is everyone’s concern and eliminating it is everyone’s responsibility.
- Community leaders and groups can champion and drive change.
- Practical solutions are required to support victims and perpetrators.
- Education of children and young people is key to achieving generational change in behaviour.
Opportunities for action

Governments and the community have come a long way in addressing domestic and family violence. There have been great improvements in raising awareness, refining responses and focusing more on prevention. Yet, despite this tireless action, Queenslanders, and especially women and children, continue to be unsafe in their homes. The impact of domestic and family violence has devastating impacts for those directly involved.

However, the impact extends well beyond the victim, with the financial and human costs being shouldered by the Queensland economy. The moral and human, as well as the economic imperatives to act are great. For these reasons, each and every Queenslander has a role to play in addressing domestic and family violence.

To complement its own commitment and effort, the Queensland Government is calling on individuals and communities, businesses, industry groups, churches and all frontline service providers, to be part of the solution and to lead the charge using their profiles, influence and numbers to help reduce the incidence of domestic and family violence in our community.

Action plans

Tangible outcomes can only be achieved with practical actions driving change. Four action plans will be created to provide the blueprint to guide government and the community. The action plans will help to realise the objectives of the strategy over a 10 year period and achieve the vision of a Queensland free from domestic and family violence.

The action plans will be designed to establish the solid structures in systems, services and the law to guide reform, and will set the timeline for implementation culminating in a fully realised strategy.

The first action plan covers a 12 month period where a significant amount of reform work will occur within an intensive timeframe to create the grounding for the future. The three remaining action plans will each cover three years and will progressively build on achievements of the previous plan.

Each action plan will be defined by key action areas. These action areas will describe what we hope to achieve by the end of each action plan. Initial action areas are provided in this Strategy to guide reform but will need to be tailored for action plans based on progress of previous stages.

Specific initiatives, programs and actions will be detailed under each key action area. This structure will help the government and the community to understand how activity in each action plan contributes to the achievement of the strategy's vision.
First Action Plan (2015–16)

Through the first action plan we will be seeking to establish the foundations for the Strategy, and create the necessary framework for the projects that will drive change over the longer term.

A number of high-priority actions focussed on shorter-term goals complementing the overall strategic direction will be implemented. Initially focussed on creating a positive environment for fostering change, phase one actions and initiatives will provide a strong base for subsequent action plans as well as starting to create momentum for change in the community.

Action areas

The action areas for this action plan describe what we hope to have achieved by the end of the first year. The action areas proposed for the first Action Plan (2015–16) are:

- **Demonstrate strong leadership and governance**—position government to lead the change to systems and culture by: progress changes to the law and systems that seek to support victims and hold perpetrators to account; champion cultural change in the public sector workforce and work with employers to promote supportive workplaces and advocate for Queenslanders in the National Agenda.

- **Form community partnerships**—work with service providers, community networks, community leaders, schools, business and individuals to form the partnerships across the community needed to effectively change our culture and systems.

- **Identify needs-based services for victims and perpetrators**—audit existing services to identify where there are gaps across the state and across service types.

- **Strengthen justice responses to protect and empower victims and hold perpetrators to account**—reform the laws, processes and systems in place for police and courts and identify opportunities for cultural change.

- **Build the evidence base**—develop the mechanisms to record and analyse the incidents of domestic and family violence, the contributing factors and system failures that can be improved.

Signposts

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<th>Attitudes and behaviours</th>
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<tr>
<td>Partnerships formed with the Queensland community</td>
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<th>Integrated response</th>
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<td>Tools to support integrated responses developed</td>
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<th>Justice system</th>
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<td>Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board established</td>
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Second Action Plan (2016–17 to 2018–19)

The second action plan will build upon the foundations laid in the first action plan and will seek to actively move the community towards being a society where fewer people find excuses for violent behaviour, fewer people blame victims and where all members of the community are empowered to take action to stop the violence.

Action areas

The action areas for this action plan will need to be developed with the action plan and will need to identify what we hope to have achieved by the end of the action plan. Initial goals should include:

- **Empower community action**—introduce tangible ways for the community to embed a culture of respectful relationships in our schools, transform workplaces into places that support and assist victims and ensure service professionals understand how to identify and safely support victims.

- **Make supportive workplaces commonplace**—foster supportive workplaces through partnering on development of policies and tools, provide opportunities for reinforcing and challenging attitudes, behaviours and gender norms, identify models to promote equitable and respectful relationships and ensuring the Queensland public sector is fully realised as the model for supportive workplaces that do not tolerate domestic and family violence.

- **Develop models of integrated services and commence roll out across Queensland**—using the audit and community input, develop and commence rolling out effective integrated service models that reflect the needs of local communities.

- **Embed awareness and change within the law and justice system**—police, court and registry staff, legal practitioners and magistrates have access to appropriate training and judicial education, professional development packages and best practice guidelines to equip them to effectively respond to domestic and family violence matters.

Signposts

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<th>Attitudes and behaviours</th>
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<tr>
<td>Workplace policies support victims</td>
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<td>Integrated response</td>
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<td>Professionals who have regular contact with victims have been trained in how to respond</td>
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<td>Justice system</td>
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<td>Victims and perpetrators have access to court support services</td>
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Third Action Plan (2019–20 to 2021–22)

To be a truly evolving strategy that can best identify and meet the needs of the community in the prevention of domestic and family violence, the development of the third action plan will need to be highly dependent upon the success of the second action plan.

However, it is clear that the third action plan will need to seek to further embed cultural change and system reform and to start the move away from government led action to community ownership.

Action areas

Action areas to guide initiatives under this action plan will need to build upon successes and ensure momentum toward achieving our vision is not lost:

- **Support communities through local networks**—community groups and networks drive change at the local level, have long-term ownership and create groundswell for change. Primary prevention has become core to the functions of business, sporting groups, community organisations and schools.

- **Continue the roll out of needs-based integrated services**—to support and assist all victims of domestic and family violence to gain independence, safety and ensure long term security is available, including practical support such as budget management, financial literacy, counselling, court support, home safety upgrades, training and employment opportunities.

- **Embed enhanced justice response**—victims feel safe, heard, respected and empowered in all their dealings with the justice system, particularly the first point of contact with a police officer, registry counter officer, duty-lawyer, court support worker or magistrate.

Signposts

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<td>Communities embrace cultural change</td>
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<th>Integrated response</th>
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<td>Integrated support services are available for victims and are designed to meet their needs</td>
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<th>Justice system</th>
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<td>Specialised justice responses are available to support victims</td>
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The fourth action plan is expected to deliver tangible results to prevent domestic and family violence, foster independence, and demonstrate the need for ongoing change by the community beyond the life of the Strategy.

The last action plan will need to acknowledge that building a community free from domestic and family violence is a multi-generational vision, and this strategy, while a significant achievement, is unlikely to fully realise the vision. Action under this theme will ensure that momentum toward achieving the vision continues in a conscientious, evidence-based and coordinated way.

Action areas

The action areas under this action plan will need to be forward looking and set goals for the government and community going beyond the life of the strategy:

- **Enable change to be driven by communities**—the community ‘owns’ the change and perpetuates it across every activity and sphere of life.
- **Further tailor integrated support services**—integrated service models will be evaluated. In addition, identify and trial ways to tailor wrap-around services that complement cultural change and minimise disadvantage for victims.
- **Evaluate justice and court responses for future reform**—the function and processes of police, state and federal courts will be evaluated to identify potential reform to further enhance their effectiveness in dealing with domestic and family violence.

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<td>Integration of support services continue to increase</td>
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<td>Reduction in domestic violence incidents reported to police</td>
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Governance

The governance model for the Strategy is based on forging strong relationships with key community and business leaders who are invested in the future. This approach acknowledges that domestic and family violence is everyone’s concern.

The governance model consists of key mechanisms to drive change throughout the Queensland community and recognises that governance measures are required to ensure that implementation activities occur when they are required and remain aligned with desired outcomes.

Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Council

The Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Council will provide independent oversight of the implementation of the strategy. It will be chaired by an eminent and independent Queenslander and consist of representatives drawn from the Queensland community as well as key sectors including non-government organisations, industry, employer groups, media, education sector, social services sector, legal sector and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Council will be appointed by the Premier and will be a strong advocate for ensuring action on eliminating domestic and family violence in Queensland remains a focus.

The Council will report to the Premier, initially on a six-month basis, on progress achieved with implementation of the reforms. The Council will assess the performance of those taking action to prevent domestic and family violence in Queensland and have a critical role in shaping ongoing implementation. This report will be tabled in Parliament to allow for public scrutiny of progress towards achieving the community vision.

Cross Government Committee

The Domestic and Family Violence Inter-Departmental Committee includes chief executives of government departments with a significant implementation role. The Committee has overseen the development of the Strategy and has built partnerships with key sectors for implementation. It will continue to drive a whole-of-government response to domestic and family violence and provide advice to Ministers and the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Council.
Regional committees

Locally-based committees will be essential for successful implementation of the Strategy. Regional committees will be able to support the integration of services at a local level, based on local needs. Ten regional child and family committees comprising government and non-government human services providers have been established across the seven Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services regions in Queensland to lead local child and family reform initiatives.

Membership of these committees includes: Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (Regional Executive Director is chair), Queensland Health, Queensland Police Service, Department of Education and Training, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, Department of Housing and Public Works, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Commonwealth Department of Social Services (where possible), Commonwealth Department of Human Services (where possible), representatives from local government, and representatives from the non-government sector.

Where appropriate to meet local need, the scope of these committees will be expanded to also implement and monitor local actions under the Strategy. This may involve additions to membership and changes to terms of reference to ensure that domestic and family violence occurring outside of families with children is adequately addressed.
How will we know if we have made a difference?

Evaluation will be vital to identify what has worked and why. Evaluation is critical to ensuring that the reforms outlined in the Strategy are in fact achieving their stated goals.

Without rigorous evaluations there is always the risk of persisting with programs or policies that have a negative or negligible impact. Good evaluations are critical to identifying cost-effective programs that achieve explicitly specified objectives.

Over time, the evaluation of multiple initiatives and their outcomes leads to the emergence of a reliable evidence base that can be readily drawn upon for future policy-making exercises.

The evaluation framework

This document does not provide a detailed evaluation framework as that will need to be developed following the finalisation of the different elements of the Strategy. Instead it provides an overview of the approach to be taken in evaluating implementation of the Not Now, Not Ever report. The purpose of the evaluation approach framework is to enhance our capacity to identify domestic and family violence programs that are successful and effective in addressing issues of violence as well as those that may be inefficient or ineffective.

The evaluation framework will be designed to unpack the impact of the broader reform program as well as specific initiatives. It is proposed that the evaluation framework be comprised of four components. Components one and two will be in direct response to the recommendations of the Taskforce report. Components three and four will help to paint a fuller picture of the impact of our response to domestic and family violence in Queensland.

The framework will include:

1. A structured review of the way in which the Strategy is implemented, giving particular consideration to the governance, resourcing and practices associated with implementation.
2. The initiation of a number of flagship evaluations of initiatives actioned under the Strategy that comprehensively assess the implementation, outcomes and cost-benefits associated with these specific initiatives.
3. Regular reporting on families’ wellbeing and exposure to violence over time as an indicator of our success in responding to domestic and family violence.
4. A capacity building component designed to encourage and support evaluation of initiatives implemented in the Strategy.
Implementation review

It will be important to evaluate how well the reform actions of the Strategy are given real substance to measure the degree to which we are successfully working towards the community vision for Queensland now and in the future. The review will identify what is working well and what needs to be adjusted to achieve the desired outcomes.

General areas of particular focus in evaluating implementation include:

- the effectiveness and efficiency of governance mechanisms relied on to drive the response and resolve issues as they arise
- the resources allocated to implementation (including how, where, and how much)
- the processes and practices underpinning implementation, such as the approach to communicating the goals and objectives of the activity, data collection, evaluation, and the timing of implementation.

Flagship evaluations

A number of flagship evaluations will be progressed under the evaluation framework. They will focus on specific initiatives to answer key questions regarding effectiveness and efficiency, as well as providing recommendations as to how promising initiatives might be improved.

By extensively drawing upon the flagship evaluations, it is expected that the evaluation framework will be able to very effectively guide current or future decision making regarding initiatives aimed at reducing domestic and family violence.

Domestic and Family Violence Inter-Departmental Committee

The Domestic and Family Violence Inter-Departmental Committee will be responsible for identifying flagship evaluations, giving consideration to the following criteria:

- the potential to conduct a rigorous, timely and meaningful evaluation
- contextual limitations on being able to demonstrate whether an initiative is associated with observed changes over time
- whether the initiative is new and innovative or a continuation of an established program
- the level of investment in the initiative
- financial and human resources required to conduct the evaluation.
Indicators

The evaluation framework will include regular reporting on high level indicators such as measures of wellbeing, and children and families’ exposure to violence, and community attitudes to domestic and family violence in Queensland. Regular reporting on a suite of high level indicators (both qualitative and quantitative) will make it possible to identify where Queensland is doing well or improving; where challenges remain; and what additional data is needed to better inform our understanding of domestic and family violence causes and consequences. A range of indicators will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders from across Queensland.

In the short term, a rise in reported rates could be expected for some measures. For example, the number of occurrences of domestic and family violence reported to Queensland police could be expected to increase for at least the first 12 months, before a fall in occurrences is realised.

Ultimately we will know the strategy has been successful when there are no more domestic and family violence related homicides, when police are no longer called to domestic and family violence incidents and when children grow up not ever having experienced violence in their homes.
Together we can and must make this vision real.

It is a vision worth working towards.