



National plan to reduce violence against women and their children

Julia Gillard and Labor
Let's move Australia forward



NATIONAL PLAN TO REDUCE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN

The Gillard Labor Government will work to prevent domestic violence and sexual assault, deliver greater justice for victims, and improve support services through the 12 year *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children*.

The Federal Government estimates that approximately \$1.9 billion is spent every four years on addressing domestic violence and sexual assault through payments, programs and services. State and Territory Governments also provide substantial funding in this area.

This includes an additional \$730 million that has been invested by Federal Labor for programs that directly respond to domestic violence and sexual assault in areas such as housing and homelessness, Indigenous programs, legal aid, family support and prevention programs.

The *National Plan* is intended to get the best results possible out of this significant investment by bringing the efforts of all service systems together to the common goals of preventing violence, delivering justice for victims and improving services.

A re-elected Gillard Labor Government will support the implementation of the *National Plan* with a funding commitment of \$44.5 million over four years.

This package includes:

- **\$3.75 million to support local community action to reduce violence against women including:**
 - Local projects to prevent domestic violence and encourage respectful relationships, building on the Government's successful social marketing campaign www.theline.gov.au. Funding will be available assist specific communities including women with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and gay and lesbian communities.

- Support for sporting codes to establish zero tolerance programs in local clubs. Many communities have already successfully reduced violence by preventing people who commit acts of violence from playing in local football teams.
- Commitment to work through the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority to support the inclusion of **respectful relationships education in phase three of the Australian Curriculum**.
- \$8.8 million to provide **telephone support for frontline workers** such as allied health, child care and paramedics to better assist clients who have experienced violence. Support for frontline workers will be an additional service to be provided through the existing telephone and online counselling service established by Federal Labor.
- \$0.75 million to expand counselling services for male victims of domestic violence through **Mensline**.
- \$4.8 million to **improve services for victims of domestic violence** through reform projects focusing on the health sector and on services provided to children, Indigenous women and women with disabilities.
- \$4.6 million for **new programs to stop perpetrators committing acts of violence** and national standards for perpetrator programs. Funding will be provided as a once-off reward/incentive payment to the States and Territories.
- \$6.9 million for a new **National Centre of Excellence** to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies to reduce violence against women, improve best practice and support workforce development.
- \$14.9 million for the **Personal Safety Survey** and **National Community Attitudes Survey** to track the impact of the new action plans every four years.
- Encouraging young people to develop healthy and respectful relationships through the continuation of the \$17 million **national social marketing campaign, 'The Line'** and \$9 million **respectful relationships program**.
- Establishment of the **Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) inquiry into the impact of Commonwealth laws on those experiencing family violence**, including the impact of child support and family assistance law, immigration law, employment law, social security law, superannuation law and privacy provisions. The ALRC is due to report to the Attorney-General no later than 30 November 2011 and will build on the Commission's current inquiry on the family law system.
- The development of a **national scheme for domestic and family violence orders** through the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General.

The Government, through existing resources, will also **improve sexual assault victims' access to justice** including through:

- The evaluation of the impacts of 'victim-focused' court practices reforms around Australia since 2000.
- The development of a media code of practice on the reporting of sexual assault and domestic violence.

Why the Gillard Labor Government is committed to reducing violence against women

Domestic violence and sexual assault are the most common forms of violence experienced by women.

The ABS Personal Safety Survey (2006) showed that:

- In any year, nearly half a million Australian women experience physical or sexual violence.
- One in three Australian women have experienced physical violence, but only one in five report the violence.
- One in five Australian women has experienced sexual violence.
- About 90 per cent of women who are sexually assaulted do not access crisis support, legal help or services.

The Gillard Labor Government takes a zero tolerance approach to all forms of violence, whether it be in the home or in public places.

The Federal Government estimates that approximately \$1.9 billion is spent every four years on addressing domestic violence and sexual assault through payments, programs and services. State and Territory Governments also provide substantial funding in this area.

This includes an additional \$730 million that has been invested by Federal Labor for programs that directly respond to domestic violence and sexual assault in areas such as housing and homelessness, Indigenous programs, legal aid, family support and prevention programs.

All governments in Australia are continuing to improve their responses to domestic violence and sexual assault. Increased reporting, law reform and greater community awareness have made a difference. While all governments have services and programs to respond to violence against women and their children—many of them highly effective—these responses can be fragmented.

National leadership, through a *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children*, will focus the efforts of all of these programs on shared goals to prevent violence, deliver justice for victims and improve support services.

Long term outcomes can only be achieved by all areas working together – including the police, health, housing, Centrelink, community services, courts and education.

Who will benefit from this plan?

All Australians will benefit from greater efforts to reduce domestic violence and sexual assault. Australian women in particular will benefit from the increased prevention of violence, the delivery of justice for victims and improved support services.

The *National Plan* will bring a new focus on preventing violence against by women by seeking to change the attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence. This will particularly focus on helping young people to build the skills needed for respect in relationships.

Local communities and sporting groups will have the opportunity to take action against violence against women with funding for local prevention programs. This will include programs focused on young people and zero tolerance programs in local sporting clubs.

Victims of violence will have access to more effective services that work better together and help people to find the services they need. Children, Indigenous women and women with disabilities will receive a specific focus. Support will include access to online counselling led by tertiary qualified counsellors. Victims of violence will also experience a justice system that is better linked with services and makes better use of processes to support victims during legal processes.

In addition to being able to access other services, male victims of domestic violence and sexual assault will receive greater support from additional funding for counselling services specifically focused on men.

People working in domestic violence and sexual assault will benefit from an agreed set of national goals that all governments and services work toward. Field experts will have access to better evidence of what works and new funding to develop programs to stop perpetrators reoffending. Opportunities to share best practice across disciplines and increase workforce capacity will be supported through the establishment of the new Centre of Excellence. Frontline workers in areas like allied health, emergency services and child care will be also able to access telephone support on how to best assist clients who are or have been victims of violence.

'Domestic Violence, it's not our game' - a Case Study

Encouraging a culture of zero tolerance to domestic violence in sporting clubs has proven to be an effective strategy to reduce violence in local communities.

A joint initiative between the Normanton Stingers Indigenous Rugby League team and the Normanton Building Safer Communities Action Team (BSCAT) in Northern Queensland, implemented from March 2007, demonstrated outstanding results.

The slogan 'Domestic Violence – it's not our game' was adopted by the club and its players. Team members agreed to become role models in the community by not engaging in domestic or family violence. The penalty for breach of the agreement was exclusion from games and ultimately from the team.

When the media campaign started on *Imparja* TV in May 2007 featuring the players and the slogan, there was a 55 per cent decrease in reported cases of domestic violence in Normanton, compared to the previous year (May to July 2006). Police reported that breaches of existing Domestic Violence Orders decreased by 64 per cent compared to the same period the previous year (March to July 2006).

The program was supported by a \$5,000 grant from the local Carpentaria shire, and the resources of the Rugby League's One Community initiative.

The 'Domestic Violence - it's not our game' project won the Federal Government's 2009 National Awards for Local Government, the 2008 Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards (ACVPA) and numerous other national and state awards.

How the plan will make a difference at the front line

Emily is the manager of a child care centre who is concerned about one of the mums that uses her child care centre. Jane is often upset and at times overprotective of her child. Emily approaches Jane, and after a long conversation Jane mentions that she is extremely worried because her ex-husband is about to be released from prison.

Jane's ex-husband was extremely violent and the thought of him returning to the community is disturbing her sleep and making her extremely anxious.

Emily isn't sure what to do but wants to help because she believes Jane will not disclose her concerns to anyone else.

Emily remembers reading that the Federal Government's new national telephone and online counselling service was recently expanded to assist people on the frontline such as allied health professionals, child care workers and paramedics.

Emily calls the number is provided with expert advice about what to do. Emily passes on information to help Jane and encourages her to go to the local women's health centre. When Jane contacts the local service, she gets advice on improving her security at home and some counselling to help her sleep.

How will the National Plan be delivered

Federal Labor's *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children* has been negotiated with State and Territory Governments after extensive consultation with the community and service providers.

The *National Plan* directly responds to *A Time for Action*, the final report of the National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children.

The *National Plan* will be implemented through four three year action plans over a period of twelve years. The Action Plans will be governed by an appropriate Ministerial Council and overseen by a National Implementation Group including representatives of the Federal Government, State and Territory Governments, the non-government sector and leading researchers and experts.

A re-elected Gillard Government will move swiftly to secure agreement to this plan from all States and Territories through the Council of Australian Governments.

New funding initiatives will be managed by the Federal Government. This will include the allocation of primary prevention grants for local communities and sporting codes.

Projects to improve services will be run in collaboration with the State and Territory Governments so that their results can be used in the service systems that are set up to make a difference to victims of violence. State and Territory Governments will also be able to bid for funds to run new programs to find effective ways to stop perpetrators committing acts of violence in the future.

Advisory groups will be established where necessary to over see the implementation of initiatives and will comprise of experts and leaders from the fields of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Violence against Women

- In any year, nearly half a million Australian women experience physical or sexual violence.
- One in three Australian women have experienced physical violence, but only one in five report the violence.
- One in five Australian women has experienced sexual violence.
- About 90 per cent of women who are sexually assaulted do not access crisis support, legal help or services such as telephone helplines.

Up to one-quarter of young people in Australia have seen their mother or stepmother physically or sexually assaulted.

Violence against women costs the nation \$13.6 billion each year. By 2021, the figure is likely to rise to \$15.6 billion if extra steps are not taken.

Financial Implications (\$m, underlying cash balance)

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Total
Primary prevention grants	0.0	-1.25	-1.25	-1.25	-3.8
Support for frontline workers	0.0	-2.2	-3.1	-3.5	-8.8
Improved service delivery	-1.0	-2.0	-1.8	0.0	-4.8
Stop the perpetrators program	-0.1	-0.3	-0.3	-4.0	-4.6
Mensline	0.0	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.75
National Centre for Excellence	-1.3	-3.3	-1.9	-0.5	-6.9
Personal Safety Survey & NCAS	-5.5	-5.9	-0.4	-3.1	-14.9
<i>Uncommitted funds to offset</i>	<i>8.4</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>17.4</i>
Net cost	0.5	-12.2	-6.0	-9.5	-27.2

The net cost of this new policy will be fully offset over the forward estimates, consistent with the Gillard Labor Government's commitment to return the Budget to surplus in three years.

Labor's Record

The Gillard Labor Government has taken action to bring together the efforts of governments and community experts from across the nation to make a real and sustained reduction in the levels of domestic violence and sexual assault.

The *National Plan* will be the first initiative of its kind to focus strongly on prevention. It will be the first to look to the long term, building respectful relationships to prevent violence from passing from one generation to the next.

The Gillard Labor Government has developed the *National Plan* from an evidence base involving new research and extensive consultation with experts and the community over the last two years.

While developing the *National Plan*, Labor invested an additional \$730 million for programs that directly respond to domestic violence and sexual assault in areas of high need such as housing and homelessness, Indigenous affairs, legal aid, family support and prevention programs. The *National Plan* will build on these reforms.

THE COALITION'S RECORD

The former Coalition Government's approach to domestic violence and sexual assault was ad-hoc and fragmented.

- ✘ The Women's National Safety Agenda (2005-2007), which included the *Violence against Women, Australia says No* campaign, was implemented without consultation with the States and Territories or the service sector and was not developed from an evidence base.
- ✘ While the *Violence against Women, Australia says No* campaign did raise awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault, it did not seek to change violence supportive behaviours and attitudes and reduce violence for future generations which the *National Plan* will seek to do.