



JOINT STATEMENT BY THE 2021 NATIONAL WOMEN'S SAFETY SUMMIT DELEGATES REPRESENTING THE RIGHTS AND INTERESTS OF MIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN

In making this joint statement, we:

Acknowledge the Australian Governments' commitment to, and the whole-of-society responsibility for, ending violence against women and their children.

Commit to contributing our diverse individual and collective expertise and insights drawn from our respective networks towards the development of the next National Plan that is inclusive, intersectional, strengths-based and brings about substantive, equitable changes for all in the Australian community.

Reiterate that women from migrant and refugee backgrounds are a significant and growing part of the Australian population and that family, domestic and sexual violence—while an important and pressing issue for all women in Australia—impacts migrant and refugee women in specific ways.

We urge the National Federation Reform Council Taskforce on Women's Safety to ensure that the following key considerations are incorporated in the next National Plan:

Address the experiences of migrant and refugee women and their children across all approaches, including prevention, early intervention, intervention, response and recovery.

Further, address migrant and refugee women's and children's experiences across all relevant focus areas through responsive, targeted and meaningful approaches (including culturally responsive interventions with men who use violence) that are tailored to the diversity with the migrant and refugee women cohort.

Children's experiences of violence should be recognised and responded to in their own right in a culturally responsive way and acknowledging the rights of both mothers and children.

Considerations of visa/residency status, migration pathways, pre-migration trauma and experiences of violence, language barriers, prejudice, racism, culture, religious affiliation,

community beliefs and influences, disability and age are intersectional disadvantages particularly critical in this regard and enable a more nuanced understanding of gendered power imbalances and how systemic responses can be enhanced to empower and protect women.

Prevention

All investment into primary prevention—including funding for Our Watch and other Commonwealth, State and Territory funded programs—must include a long-term targeted focus on preventing violence against migrant and refugee women through an evidence-based, whole-of-community approach, including working with men and boys. Migrant and refugee community-led prevention initiatives should be prioritised.

Community-led primary prevention in multicultural contexts should be coordinated nationally through a community-of-practice approach to facilitate the sharing of specialist knowledge and resources, while aligning with—and furthering informing—national primary prevention frameworks and approaches.

Primary prevention should be led by representative migrant and refugee women’s organisations with specialist primary prevention expertise.

Multicultural and settlement services, due to their direct and ongoing contact with families from migrant and refugee communities, should be recognised as important front-facing services for prevention, education and support.

Early intervention

Regardless of their residency status, all women experiencing violence in Australia must have access to equitable supports and services—including immediate access to universal income support, emergency housing, and health care—crucial to achieving safety, economic, and social recovery.

Beyond family and domestic violence service systems, practitioners in all service touchpoints with potential interaction with victims/survivors of the family, domestic, and sexual violence—including healthcare, education, justice and policing, social security, multicultural and settlement, and other community social services—should be supported with knowledge and skills in cultural responsiveness and in dealing with disclosures of violence through safe referrals and a multi-agency approach.

Addressing cultural and language barriers to access for migrant and refugee women seeking safety requires investment in enhanced capacity for specialist cultural or faith-based family violence services as well as for specialist family violence services.

Equally measures must be taken to address structural/systemic barriers to access arising from the intersection of migration and social security regulations that prevents a significant proportion of women from seeking safety and recovery.

Response

Investment towards strengthening service systems to better respond to the needs and circumstances of migrant and refugee women must provide a focus both on the cultural and the structural/systemic barriers to access.

The needs and experiences of migrant and refugee women should be considered across all relevant areas of focus—including controlling behaviours and coercive control, trauma, financial abuse, technology-facilitated abuse, and perpetrator interventions—and must be reflected in the next National Plan development and implementation.

Further, the diversity of migrant and refugee women's experiences necessitates recognising that family members perpetrate domestic and family violence and that there may be multiple perpetrators beyond former and current intimate partners. Such recognition has significant implications for service responses, as well as justice and policing responses.

Research, data collection and monitoring

Critically, the equitable and inclusive impact of the next National Plan must be underpinned by a robust data collection and monitoring framework, including ethnicity data indicators, that includes an ambitious program of research on situations and experiences of migrant and refugee women, including through ANROWS and other Commonwealth, State and Territory funded programs.

The research must enable nuanced analysis based on the considerations of visa/residency status, pre-migration trauma and experiences of violence, language barriers, prejudice, culture, racism, religious affiliation, disability and age to inform policy and practice that are truly responsive to the experiences and needs of migrant and refugee women and their children.

Significant investment should be made into community-led and practice-informed research into the best practices on prevention, early intervention and response to violence against women and children from migrant and refugee communities.

In making this joint statement, we draw on the following evidence:

Segrave, M., Wickes, R., and Keel, C. (2021) Migrant and refugee women in Australia: The Safety and Security Study, Monash University

Commonwealth of Australia (2021), Inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence

MCWH (2021), Challenging myths about culture and violence in migrant and refugee communities

ANROWS (2020) Multicultural and settlement services supporting women experiencing violence

El-Murr, A. (2018), Intimate partner violence in Australian refugee communities Scoping review of issues and service responses, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Murdolo, A., Quiazon, R. (2016) Key issues in working with men from immigrant and refugee communities in preventing violence against women

MCWH (2017), Intersectionality Matters: A guide to engaging immigrant and refugee communities to prevent violence against women.

O'Connor, M. & Colucci, E. (2016). Exploring domestic violence and social distress in Australian-Indian migrants through community theater. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 53(1), 24-44.

STATEMENT ENDORSED BY:

ACON	NAVA/Niue Australian Vagahau Association
ActionAid Australia	No to Violence
Advance Diversity Services (ADS)	North Community Legal Centre
Asylum Seekers Centre	North Queensland Combined Women's Services
AustralAsian Centre for Human Rights and Health	North Queensland Women's Legal Service (NQWLS)
Australian Women Against Violence Alliance	NSW Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Council
Australian Women's Health Network	Older Women's Network NSW
Caroline Chisholm Society	PacificwinPacific
CatholicCare Tasmania	PAWA / Pacific Australian Womens Association [*35 x Pacific Women Associates/Groups]

CBR Gals Network	Rape and domestic violence services Australia
Central Australian Women's Legal Service (CAWLS)	Refugee and Immigration Legal Service (RAILS)
Centre for People, Organisation & Work, RMIT University	Ruby Gaea Darwin Centre Against Sexual Violence
Children by Choice	Sienna Aguilar, Facilitation for Purpose
Combined Women's Refuge Group (SE QLD)	Sydney Alliance
CORE Community Services	Sydney Multicultural Community Services
Cultural Diversity Network Inc (CDNI)	The Services Union (TSU)
Domestic violence NSW	The Women's Services Network (WESNET)
Domestic violence Prevention Centre Gold Coast Inc.	Top End Women's Legal Service (TEWLS)
Domestic Violence Resource centre Victoria	Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition
Domestic Violence Service Management NSW	Welcoming Australia
Domestic violence Victoria	Wellsprings for Women
DVConnect	Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre
Economic Justice Australia	Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre
Embolden SA	Women's Health In the North
EMILY's List Australia	Women's Health in the South East (WHISE)
Ethnic Communities Council of NSW members	Women's Electoral Lobby Australia
Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV)	Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West
Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia	Women's Health Goulburn North East
Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA)	Women's Health Grampians
Food for Thought Network Inc	Women's Health Loddon Mallee

Gippsland Women's Health	Women's Information and Referral Exchange Inc (WIRE)
Immigrant Women's Support Service	Women's Legal Service NSW
Immigrant Women's Speakout Association	Women's Legal Service Queensland
Immigration Advice and Rights Centre (IARC)	Women's Legal Service Vic
Intertwine	Women's Legal Service WA
Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Australia	Women's Legal Services Australia (WLSA)
Juno (formerly known as Women's Information Support and Housing in the North)	Dr Michael Salter (Scientia Associate Professor of Criminology, UNSW)
Katherine Women's Information and Legal Service (KWILS)	Dr Annie Cossins (Honorary Professor, School of Law, Justice & Criminology, UNSW)
La Trobe Violence Against Women Network (LAVAWN)	Dr. Afreen Huq, RMIT
Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services	Jo Spangaro (Professor of Social Work, University of Wollongong)
Macleod Accommodation Support Service Inc	Kerry Stubbs (Chair, Northcott Innovation)
Marie Stopes Australia	Nicola Henry (Professor, Social and Global Studies Centre, RMIT)
Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW (MDAA)	Stefani Vasi, RMIT