



Embed Migrant and Refugee Voices and Experiences into the National Response to Family Violence

Policy Brief – March 2022

Over half of all Australians were either born overseas or have one parent born overseas. Our service system must reflect this and embed culture, language and faith into how we work with all people in our community.

The co-ordinated multi-jurisdictional responses to family violence – including the Second National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children and subsequent action plans – must include measures to improve outcomes for migrant and refugee women. Based on our extensive experience as the leading family violence response service for migrant and refugee communities in Australia, we believe it is critical to prioritise:

1. **Providing culturally safe care**
2. **Addressing systemic barriers**
3. **Collaborating with communities**

We must provide culturally safe care

- Expand how specialist family violence services deliver culturally safe services, including embedding a deep and complex understanding of client's culture, language and faith by:
 - Funding more dedicated services, like inTouch, across the country;
 - Employing more bi-lingual, bi-cultural case managers within services; and
 - Educating and training generalist family violence services to deliver culturally responsive services.
- Increase the resourcing of qualified and appropriate interpreters to ensure that all victim-survivors of family violence can access interpreters that are trauma-informed, confidential and non-judgemental, for free at every point in their family violence recovery journey. Provide training to workers within the family violence service system to effectively work with interpreters.
- Build the capacity of specialist family violence services in regional and rural areas to work with culturally responsive service providers to better engage and support clients from migrant and refugee backgrounds.
- Establish and sustainably fund culturally responsive case management and group work models, such as the Motivation for Change program, should be applied to perpetrator interventions nationally.

Systemic barriers must be addressed

- Establish a new visa for those who have experienced family violence in Australia. This temporary visa will allow women who are in legitimate relationships and experiencing family violence access to Medicare, social security, and housing services in Australia while they engage in crisis recovery.
- Develop formal and consistent referral and information pathways between settlement services, ethno-specific agencies, and family violence services.

- Resource and fund community legal centres to provide free expert advice to victim-survivors on complex intersecting legal issues of family violence, family law and migration law.
- Provide training for police, judges, and court staff to understand the various manifestations of family violence in diverse communities and families.
- Fund and expand recovery programs, such as inTouch's inSpire program, that enable victim-survivors to rebuild their lives and establish social and economic independence through networking and professional development opportunities.
- Develop and implement nationally consistent risk assessment and data collection tools that includes visa status, language, culture, identity and community markers of those experiencing family violence.

We must collaborate closely with communities

- Establish a national consultative body to include the lived experience and views of victim-survivors from migrant, refugee, and temporary visa holder backgrounds in the development of family violence prevention and response policies and plans.
- Develop and fund a national education, prevention, and early intervention pilot program to be led by culturally diverse women in collaboration with community, cultural and faith leaders. Then, using the evidence base expand the program to communities across Australia.