

SUBMISSION IN RESPONSE TO THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR DEVELOPMENT BLUEPRINT ISSUES PAPER

inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence

December 2023



Multicultural Centre
Against Family Violence

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first inhabitants of this nation and the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live. We pay our respect to their Elders – past and present. We express our gratitude for the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and hope that we may move forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

Acknowledgement of Victim-Survivors

We also acknowledge the countless women who have experienced family violence, in particular women from migrant and refugee backgrounds. We recognise the courageous path they have travelled to rebuild their lives and honour their stories which continue to inspire and drive our work.

About inTouch

inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence (inTouch) has provided person-centred, integrated and culturally responsive family violence services to migrant and refugee communities in Victoria since 1984.

inTouch works across the family violence continuum, providing culturally-informed early intervention, case management, legal and migration assistance, perpetrator programs, post-crisis recovery and enhanced capacity-building across the sector and community through our learning and development and project management teams. We are proud to provide high-level leadership and guidance to all levels of government with our evidence-based policy and advocacy work.

Our services are informed by an integrated *inLanguage, inCulture* delivery model and supported by our diverse workforce, which is comprised primarily of people who are migrants and refugees themselves. Our team's unique understanding of culture and the migration journey allows inTouch to deliver expert, specialist case management to our clients in over 20 languages.

inTouch's services include:

- Case management that encompasses a first-hand understanding of the migration journey and unique cultural barriers women may face when seeking assistance for family violence.
- An integrated community women's legal centre (**inTouch Women's Legal Centre**) working at the intersection of family and migration law - the first multidisciplinary practice in Australia to provide this inclusive service response.
- inSpire, a post-recovery initiative for victim-survivors, focusing on economic independence, social connection and emotional wellbeing.
- A policy, advocacy and research unit that informs government legislation, service provision and media coverage and is informed by victim-survivors and our client services' team.
- Prevention and capacity-building projects and resource development for multicultural communities and the family violence sector.
- A specialised *inLanguage, inCulture* program, Motivation for Change, that works with men who use violence, focusing on trauma and the impacts of migration.
- A comprehensive suite of Learning and Development modules centred and informed by the experiences of victim-survivors and inTouch's specialist expertise working across the family violence continuum.
- NOOR Family Violence Survivor-Advocates, a group of migrant and refugee victim-survivors who influence policy, service provision and media reporting with lived experience.

For more information, visit www.intouch.org.au email admin@intouch.org.au or call [03 9413 6500](tel:0394136500)

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Introduction

inTouch welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the Blueprint Expert Reference Group's *Not-for-profit Sector Development Blueprint Issues Paper*.

For almost 40 years inTouch has been steadfast in our mission to support migrant and refugee women who have endured family violence. We offer comprehensive case management, perpetrator programs, legal services, specialised migration assistance, crisis recovery and learning and development programs that acknowledge and address the unique cultural challenges these women often encounter when seeking assistance.

inTouch is a not-for-profit (**NFP**) organisation that is funded through Victorian State and Federal government and philanthropic contributions. This funding has been critical in enabling us to deliver state and national initiatives across the family violence continuum, providing learning on promising and effective approaches to successful service delivery and advocacy in the NFP sector. However, for organisations such as inTouch, who are state-based and support clients with intersectional needs, more can always be done to recognise and bolster the essential contribution NFP organisations make to Australian society.

inTouch strongly supports the commitment to develop a Blueprint that sets out a roadmap for the future of the NFP sector and agrees a thriving and cohesive Australian society depends on the successful operation of inclusive, fair and well-funded NFP organisations. Supporting flexible delivery of services to adapt to the changing and diverse needs of Australian society is essential.

inTouch supports clients experiencing family violence across the spectrum of needs, from prevention, early intervention and crisis response through to long-term recovery, healing and empowerment. Despite the impact and value of our integrative service model, as an organisation there is much more we can offer the community with strong support from government and philanthropic organisations. Significant funding and workforce challenges and a lack of collaboration between NFP organisations limits our ability to deliver sustained assistance, at a level that meets demand, for those who require it most.

As an organisation, inTouch is focused on redesigning our services with a victim-centric lens, ensuring that client voice is central throughout our decision-making processes and in all our service delivery. We are mapping client journeys and prioritising the expansion of our services to truly address the complex dynamics of family violence within multicultural communities.

We welcome the opportunity to meaningfully work as partners with government, other NFPs and philanthropic organisations on the major reform needed to ensure that the sector is supported most effectively to better reflect the reality of delivering services and enable a more efficient approach across the NFP sector. inTouch would welcome an opportunity to provide a further submission once the draft NFP Blueprint is released.

This submission seeks to respond to key questions posed by the Issues Paper, most relevant to inTouch, and demonstrate our vision for a cohesive, inclusive and equitable integrated service system that enables migrant and refugee women experiencing family violence to receive the support they require across the spectrum of prevention, response and recovery needs.

inTouch Recommendations

The not-for-profit sector in Australia

1. The NFP sector must place social cohesion as a core value to foster and strengthen community wellbeing and resilience.
2. The NFP sector should be at the forefront of creating a cohesive and empowered society where individual identity is valued and integrated into decision-making and service provision.
3. A culturally diverse and inclusive NFP sector, which fosters collaborations and partnerships across varied organisations must be a key value. The Blueprint must prioritise strong collaborative practices that bolster opportunities to leverage the expertise and experience of the sector in a way that supports accessibility and inclusivity.
4. Core themes for actions to meet the value of social cohesion must include financial security, gender equality and housing accessibility.
5. The NFP sector must commit to meaningfully building diversity across its paid and volunteer workforces to ensure it reflects the evolving Australian community which it supports. This can be achieved by embracing cultural competency and sensitivity.
6. Collaboration and workforce diversity require investment to support strong and meaningful partnerships and integrative and inclusive practices.
7. Strong governance and transparency must underpin the operation of NFP organisations.

Measurement, outcomes and quality of services

8. The core principles of service design and delivery should ensure it is:
 - a. person-centred
 - b. accessible and inclusive
 - c. built through a process of collaboration and meaningful engagement
 - d. fostering a culture of continuous improvement and evaluation
 - e. transparent and delivering measurable impact.
9. Most critically, people must be at the centre of all service design and delivery.
10. A best-practice co-design model and approach should be developed to support the NFP sector to consistently lead and engage with co-design processes.
11. Provide advance notice and communication about co-design processes and ensure appropriate timeframes for co-design inputs are established.
12. Provide adequate funding to enable and support NFPs to resource engagement within the footprint of their workforce, ensuring they can collect evidence, collate positions and consult to support the co-design process.
13. Utilise existing governance and collaborative practice forums to participate in co-design processes, such as established victim-survivor advocacy groups.

14. Community outcomes must be at the centre of decision-making, to enable a more holistic and flexible approach that supports service delivery rather than a focus on individual programs.
15. Outcomes frameworks and reporting should enable qualitative reporting and analysis and support organisations to tell the stories behind the data.
16. Establishing strong outcomes reporting frameworks across the NFP sector should not inadvertently prevent small and newer NFP organisations with limited data sets and evidence-gathering capacity from demonstrating their impact through flexible, qualitative reporting.
17. Program outcomes and metrics must be determined relative to the funding available to prevent organisations absorbing costs.
18. Government must improve its own sharing of data and evaluation findings to support broader learnings across the NFP sector and encourage greater collaboration and information exchanges.
19. Investment is required to support NFP organisations to establish technological capability and ensure sufficient resourcing to support data collection and evaluation.

Policy, advocacy, communications and engagement

20. Dedicated funding streams for small and emerging NFP organisations, that incorporate organisational development funding and support for engagement, are required to build capacity and diversity across the sector.
21. Investing in strengthening partnership capability of larger NFPs and building partnership requirements and incentives into funding models will enable growth opportunities for small and emerging NFPs.
22. Provide financial backing to generate a research pipeline and dynamic engagement, incentivising engagement between small and emerging NFP organisations and larger organisations such as universities.

Leadership and staff development

23. NFP sector leadership must champion diversity and inclusivity to foster social cohesion.
24. Long-term funding agreements are essential to ensuring workforce retention and satisfaction.

Government funding, contracting and tendering

25. Adequate funding for NFPs must appropriately incorporate staffing costs and recognise that these extend beyond service delivery professionals to include program design, community engagement and broader operational overheads.
26. Program outcomes and metrics must be determined relative to the funding available to prevent organisations absorbing costs.
27. Multi-year funding for a minimum of 3 years, but ideally 5 years, will positively impact innovation, service delivery efficiencies and staff wellbeing and retention.

28. Multi-year funding supported by annual work plans provides flexibility and ongoing opportunities to reflect learnings and project evolution.
29. Racism and cultural responsiveness remain a critical barrier for individuals to access social services, and funding to support organisations to identify and address this gap in service delivery is essential.
30. Ensuring baseline and consistent funding in existing programs is an efficient and effective way to address gaps in service delivery. National investment in family violence prevention programs working with men with migrant and refugee backgrounds who use violence, as well as programming to support the recovery and empowerment of women with migrant and refugee backgrounds who have experienced family violence are examples of existing services that address critical demand and service gaps.

inTouch Client Profile and Services

Overview

inTouch works across the spectrum of family violence services and support, providing culturally-informed case management, perpetrator programs, legal assistance and representation and specialised migration assistance, crisis recovery and learning and development and capacity-building programs across the sector and community.

Funding Profile

inTouch primarily receives funding from the Federal and Victorian State governments. This includes Commonwealth funding allocated through National Partnership agreements, such as the National Legal Assistance Partnership (**NLAP**) and specific program funding through grant allocations. The funding breakdown includes 12.5 percent funding from the Federal Government and 84.5 percent from the Victorian Government. A further 2.82 percent of funding comes from philanthropic trusts and organisations and a very small amount from fee for service and donations (0.16 percent and 0.06 percent respectively).

Client profile

Our clients have highly complex and intersectional needs. On a daily basis, we have the privilege of seeing first-hand how our trauma informed, in-culture and in-language support enables our clients to receive services and rebuild community and connections. Our unique service delivery not only supports a more effective and efficient process, but also provides a strong foundation for our clients' healing and recovery, ensuring the best possible outcomes for our clients.

During the 2022-23 financial year, inTouch demonstrated its commitment to supporting vulnerable women, providing support to 1495 women through direct services and 1551 of their children. 196 women attended our community recovery groups with inSpire and a further 60 women were supported with economic independence activities. Additionally, 126 men were supported through our Motivation for Change program.¹

While the impact of inTouch on women's experiences in addressing family violence cannot be understated, the demographics of our clients underscores the unique challenges and barriers our service faces in delivering these vital supports. Among the women assisted by the inTouch Women's Legal Centre:

- 86 percent speak a language other than English as their first language, highlighting the importance of providing culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate services.
- 91 different languages were spoken by inTouch clients in the last financial year, and clients represented people from 97 different countries, demonstrating the diversity of our clients.
- 36 percent reported living with a disability or mental illness, emphasising the need for wrap around supports that adequately take into account these circumstances.
- 44 percent were on temporary visas, demonstrating their vulnerability and lack of stability, driven by the uncertainty about their immigration status.
- 31.3 percent of inTouch clients overall have lived in Australia for less than 5 years, making it very difficult to navigate a legal system they have limited understanding of.
- 62 percent of our clients are either homeless or at risk of homelessness, underscoring the urgency of addressing housing and stability issues alongside and through legal assistance.

- 88 percent of clients are grappling with severe financial disadvantage and 51.4 percent of our clients had nil income at the point of engaging our service.

These statistics serve as a critical reminder of the role the inTouch plays in addressing the intersecting challenges faced by vulnerable women experiencing family violence within migrant and refugee communities.

Women's Legal Centre

The inTouch Women's Legal Centre is a specialist Community Legal Centre (**CLC**) utilising an integrative practice model to provide legal advice and representation to clients who are already receiving support from inTouch case managers. Our Women's Legal Centre was established following research funded by the Victoria Law Foundation in 2012, which identified that navigating the justice system is a particularly challenging process for migrant and refugee women who experience family violence.

As a Women's CLC, the inTouch Women's Legal Centre receives funding through the NLAP and State funding streams that supports delivery of legal and non-legal services. In 2021-22, our Women's Legal Centre supported 701 women, offering the legal resources and assistance they urgently needed. Notably, this included 132 women who successfully obtained permanent residency as a result of family violence provisions.²

inTouch extends its case management and legal services, which are tailored to address cultural and linguistic needs, to women and gender non-binary clients who consent to support from a women's service, are migrants and/or refugees, are aged 18 years and older, reside in Victoria and are currently or continually affected by family violence.³

Given the need to triage and prioritise cases, all clients referred to the inTouch Women's Legal Centre initially receive legal advice through Advice Clinics which include Weekly Advice Clinics, Victims of Crime Clinics, Divorce Clinics and outreach through our Health Justice Partnerships.

Unlike many CLCs, we also offer ongoing legal representation and regularly appear in the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (**FCFCOA**) in parenting and property litigation matters.

Our expert team of lawyers and migration agent provide the following services:

- protection from family violence through intervention orders
- family law dispute resolution and representation in areas such as parenting, small property settlements, and spousal maintenance
- immigration and visa assistance
- support for Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT) applications
- divorce clinics, and
- secondary consultations.

² inTouch, *inTouch Annual Report 2021-22* (2022).

³ The inTouch Legal Centre: Referrals and General Information and Service Guidelines set out the process for client and details on our operation. These documents can be accessed here: https://intouch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/inTouch-Legal-centre-referral-guide_WEB.pdf and <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#label/Consulting/FMfcgzGwHLMGkKvKglhcmmHjPdmsQtsz?projector=1&messagePartId=0.1>

Services and Community Supports

inSpire

Established in 2018, inSpire supports women and their children from migrant and refugee backgrounds post crisis through a longer-term model of ongoing, integrative supports. inSpire is the only post-recovery program in Australia embedded within a trusted multi-cultural specialist family violence service provider, offering a bridge between family violence and migrant and multicultural communities.⁴

Victim-survivors receive initial services during crisis response to address safety and risks. Thereafter limited services are available, leaving many in vulnerable states. The gaps in recovery have resulted in inadequate: holistic programs, recurring government funding, research, and capability building for professionals.

inSpire's model involves:

- 1) Social connection and Resilience
- 2) Wellbeing and Therapeutic interventions
- 3) Economic independence
- 4) Legal pathways to recovery

inSpire develops a recovery plan with victim-survivors to understand their needs and aspirations. Working with victim-survivors has demonstrated recovery from family violence is rarely a linear process. While some victim-survivors make progressive strides, the journey for most is forward and backwards, and unwinding facing multiple barriers. This ranges from systemic, discrimination/disadvantage, social and geographical isolation, visa status (limiting services/government benefits), lacking financials and work expertise, low language and literacy, and ongoing impacts of family violence.

The program is designed to boost confidence, skills and connection, supporting women to build economic independence, wellbeing and social connections. Our goal is to bridge the gap between crisis and long-term wellbeing, empowering women to live their lives, their way. The initiative was designed alongside clients and case managers, to ensure the aims and focus reflect the needs of women who are participating in the program. We regularly engage our advisory group, NOOR Survivor-Advocates, to ensure the program continues to reflect the objectives and needs of the women we work with.

In order to achieve this, inSpire supports women to seek meaningful employment, supporting them to gain the relevant skills to engage with the Australian job market through the Discover, Grow, Connect program. The program also assists women with discovering local support networks and fortifying their social ties, particularly with other culturally and linguistically diverse women who are entering the workforce. Likewise, the inSpire Mentoring Program supports women on their journey to employment, addressing barriers, providing emotional and practical support and building mentee confidence, capability and progress towards career goals.

⁴ inTouch, *Annual Report 2021-22* (2022) p12.

In addition, we work with women to establish a trusted social circle where they can confidently engage with their communities and establish lasting friendships. These social connections are vital in providing a sense of belonging and support for women to speak about their experiences, which can otherwise be isolating, particularly in communities where cultural understandings stigmatise family violence. Initiatives including scholarships for extracurricular activities, school holiday excursions, employment workshops and training, referral services, mentoring and mini grants to access social events all support this healing and recovery process.

In response to increasing demand for therapeutic support and a heightened emphasis on mental and physical health, inSpire introduced a third program stream in 2023 to provide wellbeing and therapeutic programs including art, music therapy and equine therapy as well as a mental health awareness project. The inSpire Our Wellbeing Today and Tomorrow program works with participants to raise awareness of mental and emotional health issues, break down barriers to discussing mental health issues.

inSpire is currently funded through inTouch board reserves with additional funding from Trusts and Foundation the Victorian State budget, including grants via the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, one-off funding by the Victorian Department of Health and the Commonwealth Government Fostering Integration Grants have also provided one-off funding for employment programs operated through inSpire.

As one inSpire participant noted:

"inTouch saved my life and inSpire taught me how to survive."

Motivation for Change

The Motivation for Change program utilises inTouch's innovative *inLanguage, inCulture* delivery model to challenge harmful attitudes and behaviours using culture, language and community as a strength-based response.⁵ The program works with men who use violence, recognising the complex and intersecting barriers that can make prevention and response challenging with culturally diverse men. The group discusses expectations of relationships and challenges their choice to use violence. The majority of the men who engage with the Motivation for Change program are not eligible for mainstream Men's Behaviour Change programs, primarily because they cannot speak English fluently enough to fully participate in a group setting. However, this program has extremely limited funding (less than 100 places) and does not meet the demand for this type of program.

Differences in language, culture and faith can also impact the ability of these individuals to seek help, whether it is from traditional family violence services or their own community. This can be compounded by trauma associated with the migration and settlement journey and a lack of understanding of Australian laws and our justice system.⁶

⁵ inTouch, Annual Report 2021-22 (2022) p7.

⁶ Ibid.

In 2021-22, inTouch received one-off Federal funding via the Migration Council of Australia to work with recently arrived Afghan refugees on family violence education and early intervention. This funding allowed inTouch to develop a program that takes into account the men's existing trauma from recent events in Afghanistan as well as their migration journey. This funding allowed for connection with both men and women from the Afghan communities in rural Victoria, and provided a safe space for community members to discuss and explore what positive relationships look like, as well as places to seek help if required.

Sector & Community

inTouch's Sector and Community combines the unique expertise derived from our client services team with a wide scope of dynamic partnerships - transforming organisational and community response to family violence.

Aligning with the broader principles of inTouch's work, Our Sector and Community draws insight from the lived experiences of migrant and refugee women impacted by family violence and is responsive to the specific needs of social services, the family violence sector and multicultural communities. We build the capability of organisations to engage with clients from culturally-diverse communities through our training and impact program, co-case management, community of practice facilitation and project management.

In 2023, key projects have included:

- Strengthening the Capacity of Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Program (SETS). Providers in Domestic and Family Violence"
- Women on Temporary Visas in Refuge Service Strengthening Project
- Supporting Migrant and Refugee Women in Rural and Regional Victoria, and
- Working Together: Strengthening Partnerships to Support Women in the West.

The scope of our expertise and capability strengthening has included national, regional, place-based, sector-specific and multicultural-led.

Training & Impact

The Training and Impact team draws on the expertise of our trainers, case managers, inTouch Women's Legal Centre, the Motivation for Change program, NOOR Family Violence Survivor-Advocates and feedback from our clients and training participants to develop and tailor professional development opportunities for a range of organisations.

Culturally responsive practice is at the core of all our training content, as we seek to advance good practice in applying intersectionality, cultural humility, cultural responsiveness and anti-racism for accessible, safe and effective services to migrant and refugee communities.

inTouch offers a comprehensive suite of evidence- and practice-based training that is informed by the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) and can be tailored to fit the needs of the organisations or communities we work with. Our training focuses on subjects relevant to early career practitioners, like intersectionality and culturally responsive practice, through to more complex issues like migration and systems abuse and curated discussions informed by collaboration with our expert team as well as inTouch's position papers and policy submissions.

As such, we focus on a variety of subjects including:

- Understanding and responding to family violence in multicultural communities
- Culturally responsive practice and intersectionality
- How culture and migration history impacts client capacity to seek and sustain support
- Service gaps and barriers to participation
- Working with women on temporary visas
- Complex family dynamics
- Cross-cultural engagement, and
- Risk assessment and safety planning for culturally diverse clients.

Our team is continuously updating existing and building new training modules and practices to build capability with diverse practitioners and multicultural communities.

2. The not-for-profit sector in Australia

- 2.1.1 What is your vision or aspiration for the NFP sector over the next 10 years?
- 2.1.2 What core values and considerations should guide a 10 year vision for Australia's NFP sector?
- 2.1.3 What core themes for action should be prioritized in realizing this vision? What will be the consequence of no action on these?

The NFP sector must value social cohesion as a cornerstone for community wellbeing

At a time when social cohesion in Australia is under pressure and declining, the NFP sector can play a pivotal role in cultivating environments where individuals from all backgrounds engage harmoniously and celebrate shared values.

Fostering a society where social cohesion is a foundation for community wellbeing, the NFP sector as a whole has an opportunity to bridge divides, promote inclusivity and nurture a sense of connectedness, purpose and belonging among diverse populations. The *2023 Mapping Social Cohesion Report* found that in the last 12 months, the Scanlon-Monash Index of social cohesion declined by four points to 79, the lowest on record.⁷ One-in-four Australians believe their life in Australia will be a little or much worse in the next three or four years⁸ with the report noting that the increase in pessimism, over and above pre-pandemic levels, is cause for concern.⁹

There is immense potential for the NFP sector to actively build social cohesion through initiatives that build meaningful connections and understanding among diverse communities. Through collaborative and inclusive programs which focus on cultural diversity and community engagement, NFP organisations can create spaces for individuals from different backgrounds to interact, receive support and services, share experience and build mutual respect. By collaboratively working to promote social inclusion, advocating for equal rights and opportunities and addressing systemic inequalities, the sector can play a key role in fostering empathy, understanding and ultimately strengthening social cohesion.

For inTouch, as providers of services and supports to migrant and refugee women, it is heartening to note that 89 percent of Australians agree that multiculturalism has been good for Australia¹⁰ and a growing share of people agree 'we should do more to learn about the customs and heritage of different ethnic and cultural groups in the country' (71 percent in 2023)¹¹. This provides an opportunity for NFP organisations to enhance the vital role they play in amplifying voices that advocate for social justice and build diversity and inclusivity through programs and services that focus on cultural engagement and community building. Likewise, NFP organisations have a critical opportunity to build and grow the trust of migrants and refugees in Australia's service providers and social systems. For instance, as migrant and refugee women, many of inTouch's clients do not

⁷ O'Donnell, James, *Mapping Social Cohesion 2023* (2023), Monash University and Scanlon Foundation Research Institute, p.6.

⁸ Ibid, p.64.

⁹ Ibid, p.65.

¹⁰ Ibid, p.66.

¹¹ Ibid, p.68.

trust police and justice systems due to their experience in their country of origin. For this reason, along with the lack of community support and connection, they are far less likely to report family violence. By engaging with a NFP such as inTouch, not only do they receive direct crisis assistance, but they are also supported to engage with police and the legal system in a way that builds long-term trust of government and greater connection with Australian community and social services.

By establishing social cohesion as a core value, the NFP has the potential to break down social barriers, champion engagement and community-connection and instil a strong sense of unity, laying the groundwork for a more cohesive and resilient society.

To achieve social cohesion, the NFP sector must commit to fostering inclusivity and collaboration

As the Issues Paper notes, ‘for many people from multicultural backgrounds – particularly those new to Australia and in emerging communities – local ethnic, religious and multicultural organisations play an essential role in the journey to building connection, community and maximising their ability to contribute fully to the Australian nation.’¹²

For inTouch clients, these factors are compounded due to the intersectional nature of their needs and the vulnerability they face as new members of Australian society.¹³ All clients of inTouch are women from migrant and refugee communities, who are dealing with financial disadvantage and experiencing family violence. Unmet needs for social and community connections present a significant challenge influenced by a variety of factors. These can include economic disadvantage, social inequality, limited understanding and experience of Australian cultural, social and legal settings, lack of access to culturally and linguistically appropriate information and isolation in the community.

There is a critical demand for culturally and linguistically appropriate, trauma-informed and effective case management, legal, financial and community recovery support.¹⁴ While inTouch provides support across the continuum of these intersectional needs, that are tailored and grounded in significant expertise, there are a very limited number of NFP organisations that can truly deliver this type of support.

However, there are many organisations across the sector that together do provide a rich and diverse system of programs, supports and opportunities for community connection, inclusion financial development and wellbeing support that could be highly valuable to the most vulnerable members of the community, such as inTouch’s clients. This includes opportunities to build social cohesion and address social isolation, promote gender equality and advocate against gender-based violence, support financial literacy, enable connections with the workforce or provide housing

¹² Blueprint Expert Reference Group, *Not-for-Profit Sector Development Blueprint Issues Paper* (October 2023) p.8.

¹³ Intersectionality provides a framework that underpins the challenges faced by migrant and refugee women as they navigate the complexities of the service system. Intersectionality recognises that individuals can experience an intersection of multiple forms of systemic discrimination that produces greater disadvantage for cohorts that do not have the same access to power and privilege as the dominant group. In the case of migrant and refugee women, the intersecting factors that determine the disadvantages they face include gender, migration status, language barriers, family violence, financial hardship, and in many cases, homelessness, mental illness or disability.

Position Statement on Intersectionality, 2020, Harmony Alliance: Migrant and Refugee Women for Change. <https://harmonyalliance.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Intersectionality-Position-Statement-Final.pdf>

¹⁴ inTouch has developed extensive resources to support intersectional practice. For further information these can be accessed here:

Tipsheet: [Good practice for working with women on Temporary Visas in refuge accommodation](#)

Tipsheet: [Case management checklist for working with women on temporary visas staying in refuge](#)

Tipsheet: [Immigration Resource for working with women on temporary visas](#)

Tipsheet: [Intersectionality in Practice](#)

Tipsheet: [Working with interpreters by phone in a family violence setting](#)

Tipsheet: [Culturally responsive practice with men who use violence](#)

Tipsheet: [Women on temporary visas experiencing family violence](#)

supports. To achieve this and ensure these services are accessible, a truly collaborative approach is required, grounded in a strong principle of connection, inclusivity, support and engagement across the sector.

The Blueprint provides an opportunity to establish much stronger collaborative practices over the next ten years that would bolster opportunities to leverage the expertise and experience of different parts of the sector to better allow accessibility, inclusive engagement and consistently safe and welcoming spaces for all members of the Australian community. This will be supported and enabled by fostering a NFP sector that is inclusive, with a workforce that reflects the true diversity of the Australian community.

Financial security is fundamental to ensuring social cohesion and must be a core theme for action

In recognising social cohesion as a core value and central to the aspirations of the NFP sector, building financial security must be prioritised as a core theme for action over the next ten years.

Financial security is undeniably linked to social cohesion, with financial satisfaction directly impacting social cohesion under the Scanlon-Monash Index. Financial stress was the single most important factor associated with an individual's sense of belonging and social justice, and also impacted people's civic participation and tolerance for difference and diversity.¹⁵ NFP organisations play a pivotal role in fostering financial security, particularly among vulnerable and marginalised groups, such as the migrant and refugee women experiencing family violence, who inTouch work with.

As noted in our client profile, 88 percent of inTouch clients are grappling with severe financial disadvantage and 51.4 percent of our clients had nil income at the point of engaging our service. The Monash-Scanlon report emphasises the impact of this on our broader social cohesion with just 36 percent of those who were struggling financially or poor having a great sense of belonging to Australia.¹⁶ This demonstrates why our financial crisis support, including brokerage and flexible support packages and longer-term, our financial literacy and counselling programs, are essential to saving lives. However, this type of support also importantly builds capacity for our clients to engage meaningfully and most effectively in Australian communities, strengthening their sense of self-worth, resilience, connection and their ability to then flourish and contribute to Australian society.

Through collaborative partnerships, engagement and shared practice learnings, NFP organisations can work as a network to support financial literacy, job training and entrepreneurship to equip individuals with the skills necessary for economic self-sufficiency, independence and social inclusion. NFPs can also contribute to policies that address income inequality, access to affordable housing and fair wages, advocating for systemic changes that benefit entire communities. By supporting work to ensure more equitable access to resources and opportunities, NFPs contribute significantly to building more cohesive societies, where all individuals feel included, empowered and invested in collective progress.

¹⁵ O'Donnell, James, *Mapping Social Cohesion 2023* (2023), Monash University and Scanlon Foundation Research Institute, p. 39.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Collaborative engagement across the NFP sector requires investment

Robust partnerships between the breadth of NFP organisations and all levels of government must be characterised by collaborative planning, resource-sharing and a commitment to achieving tangible outcomes.

Collaborative efforts enable leveraging of complementary strengths, pooling of resources and maximising collective impact in addressing complex social challenges and community needs.

InTouch considers that there should be a common understanding across the sectors of the role and scope of NFP's. We consider that more collaboration within the sector is required to promote seamless referral pathways for clients and reduce duplication.

Meaningful engagement requires truly open communication channels where NFPs can contribute their frontline expertise and insights to inform government policies, shape program and service design, funding agreements and grant allocation processes. In turn, government would provide essential funding and access to broader resources to support the efficacy of NFP collaboration.

Valuing a diverse and inclusive workforce is essential for the NFP sector's sustainability

Embracing diversity in leadership, staff and volunteers enhances creativity, innovation and problem solving by incorporating varied perspectives. Fostering an environment that values and respects diversity leads to better community engagement, increased organisational resilience and a stronger ability to address the intersectional needs of diverse communities, contributing to long-term sustainability and relevance in the dynamic and evolving Australian community, and continuing to build social cohesion.

By encouraging connection and ensuring Australians can see themselves within the NFP workforce, it builds personal engagement and supports efforts to increase participation across both the voluntary and paid workforces. inTouch embodies this diversity, with a workforce made up of staff from over 21 different countries, who speak over 40 different languages and 71 percent who were born somewhere other than Australia.¹⁷ This also enables inTouch to provide the cultural understanding and support that our clients need.

To achieve a vision for a diverse and inclusive workforce, the importance of cultural competency and sensitivity must be central to all aspects of operation. This includes encouraging and advocating for cultural awareness training, language accessibility and tailored approaches to service delivery. By embedding these principles within the sector, it supports everyone, regardless of their cultural background to feel valued and empowered. This vision places significance on building trust and meaningful relationships with communities, ensuring services are respectful, relevant and responsive to the diverse needs of the population and ultimately fostering a more inclusive and cohesive society.

Strong governance and transparency are an essential foundation and important value

Maintaining trust is crucial for the NFP. Robust governance practices, transparent financial reporting and ethical-decision making are essential to secure philanthropic confidence, ensure ongoing government support, foster partnerships and ensure efficient utilisation of resources.

¹⁷ inTouch, *Annual Report 2021-22* (2022) p.4.

The sector must continue to evolve to meet Australia’s changing social, economic, environmental and technological landscapes. In order to thrive, organisations must be innovative in their approaches to fundraising, service delivery and advocacy.

To support this strong governance and reporting must be underpinned by evidence of effective outcomes and meaningful evaluation frameworks, which in turn will attract more support, enhance credibility and support long-term, sustained growth.

inTouch Values

The inTouch Strategic Plan 2022-25 sets out the organisation’s values, which are relevant to a thriving, innovative and collaborative NFP sector.

- **Integrity** – we value and respect our colleagues, clients and the people we work with; our actions are transparent and demonstrate fairness, compassion, humanity and honesty.’
- **Excellence** – we value actively seeking ways to make positive change to continually drive our standards higher.
- **Transformation** – we value our own and our organisation’s growth and seek ways for us all to thrive.
- **Influence** – we value our thought leadership, experience, and advocacy, making a positive difference to everyone we work with, everyday.
- **Collaboration** – we value exploring and growing our partnerships to develop a cooperative working environment and inclusive solutions.
- **Diversity & Inclusion** – we value the cultural diversity of our staff, clients and community and seek ways to embed and be inclusive of all diversity in everything we do.

Recommendations:

1. The NFP sector must place social cohesion as a core value to foster and strengthen community wellbeing and resilience.
2. The NFP sector should be at the forefront of creating a cohesive and empowered society where individual identity is valued and integrated into decision-making and service provision.
3. A culturally diverse and inclusive NFP sector, which fosters collaborations and partnerships across varied organisations must be a key value. The Blueprint must prioritise strong collaborative practices that bolster opportunities to leverage the expertise and experience of the sector in a way that supports accessibility and inclusivity.
4. Core themes for actions to meet the value of social cohesion must include financial security, gender equality and housing accessibility.
5. The NFP sector must commit to meaningfully building diversity across its paid and volunteer workforces to ensure it reflects the evolving Australian community which it supports. This can be achieved by embracing cultural competency and sensitivity.
6. Collaboration and workforce diversity require investment to support strong and meaningful partnerships and integrative and inclusive practices.
7. Strong governance and transparency must underpin the operation of NFP organisations.

3. Measurement, outcomes and quality of services

- 3.1.1 What core principles of service design and delivery might a sector Blueprint commit to?
- 3.1.2 What good examples of codesign have you been involved in which could benefit sector practices? Why do you think they have worked?
- 3.1.3 What would an outcomes focused approach look like in your areas of work? What would be needed to move towards this and what unanticipated consequences should government and the sector consider?
- 3.1.4 What role should government play in helping NFPs become data capable and informed by evidence?
- 3.1.5 Could common resources or platforms support the technical aspects of outcomes measurement? What might these look like?

The Blueprint provides an opportunity to commit to essential principles of best-practice service design and delivery

The NFP sector must commit to several core principles of service design and delivery to ensure organisations achieve the vision set out for the sector. Most centrally, all service design must be people-centred, ensuring that those who engage with and use services and supports are part of the design process through active and meaningful engagement and co-design.

To support this, accessibility and inclusivity must be prioritised, guaranteeing that services are available and accommodating and work to meet the needs of people in a holistic way. Collaborative partnerships with stakeholders and communities should be fostered to most effectively harness collective expertise and a broad range of perspectives to support sustainable and long-term resilience of the sector.

Establishing holistic practices that enable wraparound services to support an individual's full spectrum of needs including physical, social, economic and emotional wellbeing are critical. An example of this is the inTouch Women's Legal Centre which provides a fully integrated legal practice within a specialist family violence service. This enables the provision of a full suite of services that include case management, migration and legal services, and long-term recovery and healing supports. This model of integrative support has been modelled by NFP organisations including other CLCs and is an example of how innovative service design by inTouch led to collaborative practice through the sharing of information, resources and expertise (refer to Case Study 1 for further detail). This provides an example of best-practice service delivery and a model for strengthening cooperation and collaboration throughout the NFP sector. Importantly, it also demonstrates the importance of the NFP sector working together to best leverage the capacity and expertise of particular organisations to build models of wraparound support with clients at the centre of service delivery – regardless of if they receive that support from a single NFP or multiple organisations working effectively in partnership.

The NFP sector should also adopt a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring there is a process and expectation of evaluation to support innovation and maintain responsiveness to changing social and individual needs. Transparency, accountability and a focus on delivering measurable impact should also be integral to all service design and delivery, ensuring resources are used in the most efficient and effective manner, and building trust and partnerships with stakeholders.

Individuals must be at the centre of all NFP service design and delivery

For inTouch clients there is a critical demand for culturally and linguistically appropriate, trauma-informed and effective support and legal advice. However, this demand is exacerbated by the fact that the foundational cornerstones that enable delivery of such supports in-culture and in-language are often not adequately recognised or funded under most current funding models.

In order to meet clients' needs, it is critical that the design and funding of services requires NFP organisations to put people at the centre of all program development and delivery. Prioritising the needs and experiences of service users at every stage of service design must be at the core the NFP sector's operations and in turn government must support this by ensuring the sector is empowered to implement services in a way that works most effectively for clients.

This principle involves actively engaging with people and communities, ensuring their voices shape the development and improvement of services and looking at the needs and wellbeing of people holistically. As demonstrated by Case Study 1, by listening and working directly with people with lived-experience, inTouch has evolved its service design and delivery to meet client needs in an effective way. This approach has led to the creation of service models that can be replicated by other NFP organisations and by working collaboratively and openly and generously sharing knowledge, expertise and lessons, inTouch has supported other organisations to model this approach and set up and pilot their own integrative services based on our experience.

Case Study 1: Integrated practice models and knowledge sharing

In 1999, inTouch established an integrative practice model to support migrant women experiencing family violence with both immigration and family violence crisis support.

Luba Tanevski began working at inTouch in 1995, soon becoming a registered migration agent and specialising in supporting Russian brides being brought to Australia following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Most of the Russian brides were on temporary visas and experienced significant family violence. Due to their visa status, social isolation and limited understanding of Australian government systems and processes, in-language, holistic support that encompassed migration advice, case work, housing assistance and financial support was essential.

The position and functions of Luba's role expanded out of necessity and evolved to meet the direct and immediate needs of the people seeking support from inTouch. By placing individuals and their full spectrum of needs at the forefront of the services she was delivering, Luba pioneered a model of support that has been expanded significantly, both within inTouch and across other CLCs.

At inTouch, Luba worked with case managers to jointly interview the client, share advice and collate evidence, managing government processes and brokering required supports. Over time with the establishment of the Women's Legal Centre, this support also integrated legal advice and representation, as required. This ensured clients did not have to continuously re-tell their stories and they were supported in a trauma informed way. The model is now used for all migrant and refugee women that inTouch support, regardless of their background or the community they are from.

Through sharing her expertise and the experience gained by piloting this integrative practice approach, Luba has enabled other CLCs to implement similar models of integrative practice for women from other migrant and refugee communities.

Consistency and coordination are essential for meaningful co-design processes

Meaningful co-design processes can provide a foundation for public participation in problem-solving and generation of solutions. However, in order to truly achieve this, approaches to co-design must be strengthened to better recognise and account for the significant workforce and capacity challenges facing the NFP sector.

Simple process changes and forward planning for co-design opportunities, combined with stronger engagement across government departments and governance fora at a national and state level would allow NFPs to better prepare for, allocate resources and participate in co-design opportunities. This is particularly critical to enable effective intersectional needs analysis.

It is also important that the co-design consultation process occurs at very beginning of the service design. In our experience, we have seen that consultation occurs after delivery of services is under way instead of co-design engagement from the start of the project. This would also ensure that there is efficient use of resources.

While inTouch supports the principle of, and opportunities for engagement through co-design, providing meaningful co-design opportunities that best leverage our expertise and experience would require:

- Establishing principles, best-practice guidance and support to NFP organisations to ensure a more consistent a coordinated approach and plan across the sector for co-design opportunities that seek NFP and lived-experience participation.
- Early engagement, advance notice and communication about co-design processes is critical. This would ensure that appropriate timeframes for co-design inputs are established.
- Provision of funding to enable NFPs to resource engagement within the footprint of their workforce, ensuring they can collect evidence, collate positions and consult to support the co-design process.
- Utilising existing governance and collaborative practice forums to participate in co-design processes, such as established victim-survivor advocacy groups.

Leveraging the expertise of advisory groups is critical

Organisations such as inTouch have unique expertise that they can contribute to co-design but to have a truly intersectional approach to program and policy development and funding allocations, a range of expertise and lived experience must be incorporated. Leveraging the capabilities of existing resources within NFP organisations provides a strong foundation for this type of engagement.

The NOOR Family Violence Survivor Advocates group provides a positive example of this type of engagement opportunity. The group was created in 2018 with support from inTouch in response to the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence. NOOR's purpose was to raise the voices of migrant and refugee women who have experienced family violence and comprises women from a range of cultural, linguistic and professional backgrounds. They provide expert advice on a variety of issues relating to their own experiences of family violence, migration, culture and work to ensure the perspectives of migrant and refugee women are captured in policy, legislation, services and the media.

Beyond utilising the expertise of existing advisory groups, when establishing new opportunities for engagement, whether through time-limited consultations or longer-term advisory groups, ensuring broad opportunities to express interest in participating, transparently sharing the criteria for involvement and deciding representation in consultation with CSOs is essential. Representation must factor in organisations that address intersectionality, lived experience and community connections.

Advisory groups could also provide a mechanism to provide a more direct and responsive feedback loop to government on emerging trends, issues and gaps in service delivery. Often anecdotal evidence and observations from service providers is the first indication of a trend that should be considered in partnership with government to ensure we are working together to proactively and responsively respond to emerging issues. This type of feedback loop would be enabled by, and support, a stronger partnership between government and CSOs.

Recommendations:

8. The core principles of service design and delivery should ensure it is:
 - a. person-centred
 - b. accessible and inclusive
 - c. built through a process of collaboration and meaningful engagement
 - d. fostering a culture of continuous improvement and evaluation
 - e. transparent and delivering measurable impact.
9. Most critically, people must be at the centre of all service design and delivery.
10. A best-practice co-design model and approach should be developed to support the NFP sector to consistently lead and engage with co-design processes.
11. Provide advance notice and communication about co-design processes and ensure appropriate timeframes for co-design inputs are established.
12. Provide adequate funding to enable and support NFPs to resource engagement within the footprint of their workforce, ensuring they can collect evidence, collate positions and consult to support the co-design process.
13. Utilise existing governance and collaborative practice forums to participate in co-design processes, such as established victim-survivor advocacy groups.

An outcomes focused approach will allow organisations to demonstrate the true impact of their services

Adopting an outcomes-based approach provides a pathway for NFP organisations to demonstrate the true impact of their services. Such an approach requires an alignment of strategies and interventions with measurement frameworks, however for many NFP organisations, limited capacity and capability to collect data and evidence to underpin an outcomes framework makes this a challenging task.

Current reporting requirements strongly prioritise compliance and specific metrics over learning, understanding of current needs and meaningful future service design that is contemporary. There is an overreliance on log frames and quantitative indicators, rather than exploratory qualitative reporting and analysis that helps to identify the strengths and gaps in systems.

If organisations are supported to tell the story behind its data and focus on the outcomes and impact of their work, it would improve learning across the sector as a whole, while also supporting the more flexible allocation of funding, improved connections between NFP organisations and a more nuanced understanding of success.

Consideration must be given to the capacity of small and newer NFPs to collect data and extensive quantitative evidence. While outcomes frameworks are an important accountability tool and provide a strong baseline for demonstrating community impact, an over reliance on certain types of data and outcomes reporting will inadvertently prioritise larger NFP organisations that have longer-term data sets and a greater capacity to collect and analyse data for funding and engagement opportunities.

Outcomes reporting must also enable sufficient flexibility to demonstrate long-term impact. For instance, in order for place-based engagement to be effective, there must be a focus on systems change in a location. This requires multi-year, flexible funding that accounts for the significant period of time required at the commencement of an initiative to build the foundations required to assess local dynamics, build relationships and trust and establish quality program design. This includes flexibility in defining outcomes in the first year of an initiative and capacity to adapt as the understanding of local dynamics evolves and change becomes recognised and valued by the local community.

Government must improve data sharing and provide funding to support NFP capacity development

Effective outcomes measurement in the NFP sector requires a shift towards a more collaborative approach, fostering partnerships not only within the sector, but also with government entities. Government data collection and reporting and program evaluations often lack transparency and accessibility, emphasising the need for a collaborative effort to ensure the sharing of knowledge, methodologies and findings. Establishing transparent and shared evaluations would contribute to a collective database of learning opportunities, allowing organisations to benefit from each other's experience and insights.

However, to enable this collaborative approach, adequate funding is imperative. Many NFPs require upfront investment and financial support to enhance their capacity and capability in data collection, evaluation methodologies and the development and application of robust outcomes frameworks. This funding facilitates the acquisition of necessary technology and data collection systems, training and expertise, empowering organisations to implement more effective outcomes and measurement practices. Many learnings could be shared from larger NFP with new and emerging organisations and within sectors, improved data sharing would further strengthen this approach.

Case Study 2: peak body providing data implementation support to its members

The Victorian Federation of Community Legal Centres (FCLC) is currently supporting CLCs, including inTouch, with a data implementation project and expansion of digital records. Through the project the FCLC is funding a data implementation role which provides support across CLCs to ensure consistency through the transition to digital files and client management systems, collection of data and evaluation. This has been a highly effective and efficient approach to support the diverse CLCs in Victoria to consistently establish their data and technological capabilities and support the evolution of our outcomes measurement approach.

More broadly, there is an opportunity for government to coordinate across the NFP sector to support the development of data capability within organisations, ultimately supporting decision-making to be informed by robust evidence.

Recommendations:

14. Community outcomes must be at the centre of decision-making, to enable a more holistic and flexible approach that supports service delivery rather than a focus on individual programs.
15. Outcomes frameworks and reporting should enable qualitative reporting and analysis and support organisations to tell the stories behind the data.
16. Establishing strong outcomes reporting frameworks across the NFP sector should not inadvertently prevent small and newer NFP organisations with limited data sets and evidence-gathering capacity from demonstrating their impact through flexible, qualitative reporting.
17. Program outcomes and metrics must be determined relative to the funding available to prevent organisations absorbing costs.
18. Government must improve its own sharing of data and evaluation findings to support broader learnings across the NFP sector and encourage greater collaboration and information exchanges.
19. Investment is required to support NFP organisations to establish technological capability and ensure sufficient resourcing to support data collection and evaluation.

4. Policy, advocacy, communications and engagement

- 4.1.1 How can the role of advocacy by NFP organisations be better embedded and preserved in policy and legislation?
- 4.1.2 What mechanisms are needed so that the expertise of the NFP sector is better used in designing policy and services?
- 4.1.3 What could NFP organisations and networks be doing to better ensure their systematic advocacy directly involves the people and communities they serve?
- 4.1.4 How could the assets of the sector, for example the research expertise of larger organisations, including public universities, be better used to build the evidence base for systemic advocacy and reform?

Emerging and small NFPs must be recognised to ensure a dynamic community service sector

Ensuring the input of all NFP organisations is recognised and considered across the broader sector and in engagement with government, requires addressing critical aspects that shape accessibility, sustainability and capacity-building initiatives, particularly for smaller and emerging NFP organisations.

Opportunities for dedicated funding, advocacy opportunities and direct engagement with government for emerging organisations, with clear criteria and caps (such as years of operation, staff profile, lived experience, etc) and recognition of the need for additional organisational developmental funding would enable emerging or smaller NFP organisations to demonstrate their ability to deliver services against relevant criteria rather than in competition with larger, more practiced organisations. This approach would ensure diversity, support innovation and encourage evolution in the community service sector and prevent smaller organisations from being subsumed during funding submission processes.

Additionally, funding and opportunities that support organisational growth whether through base-funding or provision of organisational development funds, including to support engagement, will enable newer and small NFP organisations to build an evidence-base that will support them to access project or core funding and advocate and engage more effectively. This may include specific funding allocations for research grants, technical support for community needs analysis, supporting partnerships and alliances or funding organisations to participate in co-design and submission processes.

This would also support smaller NFP organisations to more effectively engage with government, who should aim to consult widely across the sector in policy development. For many organisations preparing position papers and policy submissions and investing resources to support participation in co-design or providing lived-experience expertise to support and enable direct engagement with government and decision-makers is not possible. This entrenches the voice and opportunities for larger organisations because they have capacity to support this direct advocacy.

A funding stream targeted to emerging and smaller NFPs should also account for different reporting requirements, reflecting the fact that the burden of reporting and acquittal requirements are even

more significant and cumbersome for small organisations that do not have the workforce, data collection expertise or established evidence base.

Encouraging partnerships with emerging organisations will grow their long-term viability

Establishing funding streams that require larger NFP organisations to partner and engage with newer or smaller organisations to develop and deliver programs and services will support growing organisations to strengthen their sustainability and opportunities for longer-term growth. This could be facilitated through specific budget requirements for capacity investment and outcomes related to relationship and network development as well as incentives for demonstrated support and engagement.

Building this engagement and collaborative practice would support innovation and enable the breadth of expertise across the NFP sector to be leveraged. For instance, there are many opportunities universities to engage directly with sector-based NFP, building a research pipeline and supporting work to establish more a robust and meaningful data and evidence-base. However, for small NFP organisations, limited capacity or lack of relationships with universities make this challenging to build these relationships, so it is incumbent of the larger organisations, in this case universities to drive these relationships. However, often without financial backing or incentives this is unlikely to occur.

Current approaches to funding allocation entrench competition and favour large organisations

Limited time for meaningful project design and short-term funding structures reinforce barriers that prevent good partnership practice across the NFP sector. The competition for limited funding and siloed approach to programs prevents organisations from working together effectively while failing to facilitate end-to-end value and does not put clients at the centre of service delivery. Good partnership practice must be appropriately resourced. This means providing smaller organisations with adequate funding for workforce and long-term staff retention and building in expectations of good partnership practice and brokering for larger NFPs to strengthen partnership approaches.

Investment in resources and support for the sector to build capacity in partnerships and engagement at larger NFPs will ultimately assist and create impact for smaller NFPs in the long term.

Recommendations:

20. Dedicated funding streams for small and emerging NFP organisations, that incorporate organisational development funding and support for engagement, are required to build capacity and diversity across the sector.
21. Investing in strengthening partnership capability of larger NFPs and building partnership requirements and incentives into funding models will enable growth opportunities for small and emerging NFPs.
22. Provide financial backing to generate a research pipeline and dynamic engagement, incentivising engagement between small and emerging NFP organisations and larger organisations such as universities.

7. Leadership and staff development

- 7.1.1 What should be the priorities for future leadership in the sector and developing the sector's paid workforce and volunteers?
- 7.1.2 What can the sector do to change understanding of the role of overheads in the value it creates for people, society and funders?
- 7.1.3 How can we make employment opportunities attractive and build career pathways to develop the paid NFP workforce of the future?

Future leadership must prioritise diversity, inclusivity and cultural competency

As outlined above, a core value and opportunity for the NFP sector is to foster social cohesion. To achieve this, leaders must champion values of diversity, inclusiveness and community engagement, ensuring that their workforce and volunteers represent the communities they serve. Leaders in the NFP sector will need to balance financial constraints with the important work of embedding comprehensive training that focuses on understanding diverse cultural contexts and trauma-informed care to develop a skilled and empathetic workforce.

Attracting and retaining a skilled workforce is challenged by short term funding across the sector

The lack of long-term funding across the sector poses significant workforce challenges, limiting our ability to deliver sustained assistance, at a level that meets demand, for those who require it most. Short-term funding arrangements make retaining a paid workforce highly challenging. Uncertainty about funding allocations necessitates short-term contracts and staff turnover is high across the sector. As a specialist service provider, where specific language skills are often essential, recruitment and training for staff creates significant and unsustainable expenses that could be avoided by the provision of longer-term funding arrangements.

The understanding of the role of overheads and the social and community value is further explored in Section 8.

For specialist services, volunteering opportunities provide a career pathway into the sector

While the volunteer workforce at inTouch provides a critical opportunity for engagement and collaboration they often do not assist with resource capacity and we have taken many lessons from programs such as the Women's Legal Centre's volunteer program which commenced in 2023. Through this program, university students spend 12 weeks with inTouch working with the Centre's lawyers. However, training is critical and workloads and allocations must be carefully planned with extensive support and supervision required. The resource intensive nature of this type of program means that rather than supporting the Centre's workload, it is primarily an opportunity to build a relationship with a university and advocate with students about the value of community law work and demonstrate future opportunities within the sector.

Case Study 3: Provision of adequate funding

Funding was provided by the Commonwealth Government to facilitate a community of practice (**CoP**) for the 112 lead settlement service providers delivering the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Program (**SETS**). The purpose of the SETSCoP is to facilitate ongoing engagement, capacity building and the sharing of best practice to improve outcomes for migrant and refugee communities.

Through this process, inTouch was allocated Federal funding over two years to deliver a national training package tailored for settlement service practitioners. The training covered understanding family violence and identifying risk factors; principles of culturally responsive practice and intersectionality; understanding systemic barriers to seeking support; and responses to disclosures, safety planning and referrals.

To deliver the training, inTouch conducted an extensive needs analysis, ensuring that the program met family violence sector standards with a strong focus on trauma informed, culturally responsive practice. In this instance, inTouch undertook extensive further work to accommodate the differing approach to family violence risk assessment across jurisdictions, tailoring the project to the context of each state's training and resources – an element that was not considered or factored into the national funding mechanism.

Recommendations:

23. NFP sector leadership must champion diversity and inclusivity to foster social cohesion.
24. Long-term funding agreements are essential to ensuring workforce retention and satisfaction.

8. Government funding, contracting and tendering

- 8.1.1 How should government improve the way it funds and contracts charities?
- 8.1.2 How could government funding, tendering and contracting drive a good balance of collaboration and competition to support innovation in the NFP sector?

A holistic and transparent funding approach is required

Addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by NFP organisations in obtaining adequate and flexible funding while managing administrative overhead costs is paramount for sustaining effective community services. A holistic approach that blends flexibility, transparency and strategic alignment between NFPs and government is essential to navigate these challenges effectively.

In order to achieve this, innovative funding models, a comprehensive understanding of operational expenses and collaborative efforts to streamline administrative processes is required. Such collaboration has the potential to better support equitable distribution of funds and alleviate the administrative burden faced by NFPs, creating a more sustainable provision of community services.

Adequate funding streams must reflect the true cost of service delivery

Existing grant and funding arrangements often do not adequately cover administrative and resourcing costs for NFPs and fall far short of meeting community demand for services.

Key to ensuring grants adequately enable service delivery is appropriate resourcing of staffing costs to achieve expected outcomes. Staff play a pivotal role in direct service provision, as well as the program development and community engagement that enable successful delivery of services. Adequate funding that sustains competitive wages, enables staff training and development and ensures fair compensation for their dedicated work is critical. Insufficient funding for staff costs not only jeopardises the retention of skilled professionals but compromises the quality and continuity of services provided to the community (as outlined in section 7). We note that “In-kind contributions” and “sustainability beyond the funded project” both mean that there is an expectation that the organisation will provide resources outside of what is funded.

Where project grants are time-limited (for instance one-year) and focus on project deliverables, they often do not factor in the human resources required to achieve the expected project outcomes. This leads to challenging decisions about the quality of activities. For instance, inTouch has found that funding for the creation of new training modules is rarely reflective of the effort required to deliver the project, with the true cost of development rarely costed accurately or funded appropriately. The impact is that government funding does not fully meet actual delivery costs and organisations are compelled to compromise on the organisational fee model or subsidise the true training costs with core revenue or in-kind support.

While inTouch recognises that funding for national initiatives is a powerful opportunity to drive the sharing of good practice and learning across the country and foster national coordination, national funding needs to account for and provide sufficient flexibility to accommodate the resourcing

required to tailor activities to different state contexts. This is demonstrated in the following case study: Provision of adequate funding.

Finally, it is important that funding reflects the true cost of delivery of services in order to ensure sustainability of such services. This would, in return, reduce the costs involved in winding up and re-establishing services as well as client disengagement caused by stop/start service delivery.

Recommendations:

25. Adequate funding for NFPs must appropriately incorporate staffing costs and recognise that these extend beyond service delivery professionals to include program design, community engagement and broader operational overheads.
26. Program outcomes and metrics must be determined relative to the funding available to prevent organisations absorbing costs.

Flexibility in grant allocations and improved government collaboration will support efficiencies

The lack of flexibility in the way grants are applied limits the effectiveness and efficiency of the service delivery NFPs can achieve at a local level. Likewise, limited coordination across government, including within single departments, creates inefficiencies and duplication and restricts NFP organisations' ability to apply funding most effectively.

For instance, inTouch has led work on the development of a Working with Women on Temporary Visa training program, however in order to adequately resource this, funding from a range of sources was utilised. One funding stream established the pilot while another source was used to further implement additional pilot training, testing and refinement.

Stronger understanding within government of the ways in which organisations leverage limited funding is required and supports a broader picture of how multiple funding streams can benefit another and how the development of resources for one project can have flow on effects to another. A simple value for money assessment of cost-per-head rarely takes this into account.

As a consequence, there is a missed opportunity to look more broadly at work across government, at both a state and federal level, to identify synergies and opportunities to align grants with a focus on outcomes rather than individual program deliverables.

Longer-term agreements are essential for sustained and impactful service delivery

Extended grant agreements provide stability and allow NFP organisations to strategically plan and embark on more ambitious projects that truly incorporate meaningful time for development, implementation and evaluation. Longer-term agreements allow for greater investment in capability building, staff training and resource development, ultimately ensuring a more resilient and adaptable organisational structure.

Organisations working in the space of social change are particularly challenged by annual funding cycles. inTouch works to shift power, norms, beliefs and practices in the community and across the family violence and social services sectors. This work is long-term and requires flexible, core funding

to enable the implementation of a multi-year strategy that delivers transformative change. For inTouch, this would enable a more holistic, wrap around approach to service delivery, supporting a breadth of work across prevention, response and recovery – rather than the current focus on meeting demand and responding at the point of crisis.

For instance, with greater funding certainty, inTouch would be able to commit to and strengthen relationships with community partners such as ethnospecific and faith-based organisations to substantially shift community norms through prevention. Longer-term funding is essential for inTouch to attract and retain staff, enabling job security along growth and development.

Long-term funding arrangements facilitate collaboration

Annual funding cycles with limited funding create competition and unequal power dynamics that privilege an organisation's size, identify and previous funding allocations. However, communities and individuals affected by family violence would undoubtedly benefit from a more collaborative approach across organisations. An example of a potential collaborative practice model that would be enabled if longer-term funding cycles were the norm, is outlined in the following case study: Establishing collaborative practice to build cultural capacity and capability of specialist family violence responses.

Case Study 4: Establishing collaborative practice to build cultural capacity and capability of specialist family violence responses

Working collaboratively across jurisdictions, inTouch have developed a proposed model for collaborative engagement to support ex-clients of family violence services who are from migrant and refugee communities on their pathway to achieve positive life outcomes.

The program leverages inTouch's leadership in developing inSpire and would implement initiatives that strengthen connections between family violence services and employment programs across multiple states. inSpire would partner with specialist family violence and multicultural services in jurisdictions beyond Victoria to build capacity to implement the inSpire model of support. In return, the relevant services would share their experience in supporting women in their state-based context.

The program would actively engage with specialist services to provide technical employment and related support to project clients. This includes DESE Job Active, inSpire partners (such as Fitted for Work, Brotherhood of St Lorraine), local specialist employment support agencies, community organisations and social enterprises across jurisdictions. The program would build relationships with employer networks and services to support pathways to education, training, and employment opportunities.

Program participants – women from migrant and refugee backgrounds who have experienced family violence – will have:

- Increased confidence, skills, self-reliance and readiness for economic participation and independence;
- Increased skills and knowledge of addressing barriers to work in Australia, including improved support pathways, networks and connections;
- Increased meaningful engagement in employment, training, volunteering, mentoring, work experience or related activities; and
- Improved wellbeing and sense of belonging, leading to reduced social isolation and increased social and economic participation.

This proposal describes several elements that if implemented would create a holistic response to supporting temporary visa, migrant and refugee women and their children who experience domestic and family violence in jurisdictions beyond Victoria and would lead practice locally and nationally.

Recommendations:

27. Multi-year funding for a minimum of 3 years, but ideally 5 years, will positively impact innovation, service delivery efficiencies and staff wellbeing and retention.
28. Multi-year funding supported by annual work plans provides flexibility and ongoing opportunities to reflect learnings and project evolution.

Duplicative funding of services is common, but gaps remain in critical areas of service delivery

inTouch has experienced many examples of duplicative funding arrangements and has identified multiple occasions where government has funded organisations to deliver training that inTouch is already effectively providing. Similarly, our family violence clients are often referred to us via multiple services where they have received similar supports, but none have addressed core problems the client has identified as critical to them. For instance, a recent client referred to inTouch had received housing assistance via three different services but was not allocated the mental health support for herself and her children she had repeatedly asked for because of the way funding and service agreements required organisations within the sector to engage with the client.

This duplication is not only an inefficient use of resources, duplicating work and failing to put the client at the centre of service delivery exposing them to potential re-traumatisation, it also affects trust and relationships between organisations and dilutes the impact of the support and services any one individual NFP can provide.

While there is extensive duplication across the system, there remain significant gaps in service delivery. Broadly, racism and a lack of cultural responsiveness is a critical barrier affecting migrant and refugee access to social services. This could be addressed through funding incentives that require organisations delivering services to ensure intersectional, anti-racist and culturally responsive approaches through all services and policy engagement. The impact of this gap in service delivery is evidenced by the experience and feedback provided by inTouch clients about the support they received prior to engaging with us, inTouch's sector needs assessments and responses to pre-training questionnaires from inTouch's training participants.

inTouch has aspirations to develop an organisational assessment tool and approach to enable organisations to assess where they're at with cultural responsiveness and safety and identify opportunities to improve organisational culture, systems and service quality. With appropriate resourcing, inTouch would be well-placed to support government to address this critical gap in service delivery across the NFP sector.

Established programs provide a strong foundation to address critical gaps in service delivery

Grant and funding opportunities that support NFP organisations to pilot new and innovative programs are critical and a keyway to ensure a dynamic and responsive community service sector that responds and adapts to community needs.

However, there are also many examples, across organisations within the NFP sector, where successful programs that are responding to service delivery gaps, are already in operation. Ensuring funding opportunities that support and target these types of programs is essential to building a strong foundational service offering and working to meet gaps in demand. This is an efficient way to ensure value for money and provides opportunity to fund areas where typically limited funding has been available by leveraging existing programs.

inTouch is committed to strengthening our client-centred approach and continuing to grow our family violence services across the spectrum of prevention, early intervention, response and recovery and empowerment. However, almost all government funding is concentrated in the response phase, enabling support for people in crisis, but failing to prevent family violence or

support women to fully heal and recover from their experiences. We deliver many exceptional programs that have been demonstrated through independent evaluations to provide positive outcomes for migrant and refugee women experiencing family violence, including in prevention and recovery and empowerment. The following case studies on Motivation for Change and inSpire, provide real client experiences of these programs and the impact they have had on their lives.

Case Study 5: Prevention - *Motivation for Change*

Esmat is originally from Afghanistan and has been in Australia since 2019, sponsored by his fiancée, Shabana. Due to the recent takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban, Esmat is deeply concerned for the safety of his remaining family and wants to bring them from Kabul to Australia.

COVID lockdowns had resulted in loss of income because Esmat has been unable to go to his casual job as a construction worker. He feels frustrated and has started becoming abusive towards Shabana and their newborn child. The police attended Esmat and Shabana's home after the neighbours reported loud shouting and noises. An interim IVO was put in place, which resulted in Esmat staying in a hotel until the court date.

After speaking to the Men's Referral Service via an interpreter, he was referred to Motivation for Change's in-language group and case management program. Esmat agreed to an online assessment and interview with a case manager, who inducted him into the program and provided technical support so Esmat could attend online group sessions conducted in Dari every Saturday.

After five weeks, Esmat expressed that he was finding the group to be beneficial and enjoyed sharing his thoughts with other men who understood his background and challenges as well as his concerns for his family in Afghanistan. At the end of the 15 sessions, Esmat wanted to attend further group work as he was still not working due to the lockdown and had connected with the other Afghan men.

Case Study 6: Recovery and Empowerment - *inSpire*

Rukiya is a victim-survivor of family violence, a recent university graduate and a mother of three. Prior to engaging with inTouch's services and the inSpire Program, she faced multiple challenges as her children's sole carer, including finding employment.

After relocating Southeast Melbourne with her children for safety reasons, she felt isolated and lonely. Rukiya expressed interest in Discover, Grow, Connect and joined our career mentoring program. Her participation in these programs increased her confidence and sense of autonomy, setting her on a clear, supported path to healing and recovery.

Rukiya gained employment as a part-time teacher but soon recognised that she had the drive and capacity to do more. She continued in her search to find a role that offered more secure hours to increase her income and allow time for additional professional development.

Rukiya's persistence, diligence and hard work paid off, securing her a second job with her local council as a Business Support Officer. She has also recently joined inTouch's survivor advocate group, NOOR- an opportunity to use her lived experience to inform and influence policy, service development and media discussions around family violence in culturally diverse communities.

Rukiya told us: *"inSpire has provided me with a great chance to know what I am capable of doing, what my chances are out there. I feel like there's a light all around me. It's going to end up good!"*

Recommendations:

29. Racism and cultural responsiveness remain a critical barrier for individuals to access social services, and funding to support organisations to identify and address this gap in service delivery is essential.
30. Ensuring baseline and consistent funding in existing programs is an efficient and effective way to address gaps in service delivery. National investment in family violence prevention programs working with men with migrant and refugee backgrounds who use violence, as well as programming to support the recovery and empowerment of women with migrant and refugee backgrounds who have experienced family violence are examples of existing services that address critical demand and service gaps.

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**If you are experiencing family violence and need immediate support,
please call 1800 RESPECT on 1800 737 328**

inTouch

Multicultural Centre
Against Family Violence