

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Cross Agency Working Group - Communique

The ninth meeting of the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Cross Agency Working Group (CAWG) was held on Wednesday 7 October 2020.

Members noted the August 2020 CAWG meeting was cancelled due to low availability of members and the Northern Territory election.

Update on activities since the previous meeting

The Chair updated members on new Ministerial arrangements for Territory Families, Housing and Communities (the department): The Hon Kate Worden, MLA, Minister for Women's Safety; the Hon Lauren Moss, MLA, Minister for Women; and the Hon Lawrence Costa, Assistant Minister for Men's Policy.

Design of the Workforce and Sector Development Plan is progressing and will be released before the end of the year. Work has already commenced on a number of the priorities in the plan including developing a model for the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) Resource Centre.

July 2020 was a busy month, with the release of the [Gender Equality Statement of Commitment](#) and the [Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework](#) and [Priority Actions](#).

The department is progressing development of the Evaluation Framework for the [Northern Territory's Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018-2028: Safe, respected and free from violence](#). The Evaluation Framework will provide a balance between available DFSV data and the capacity of government to capture new data.

Regional DFSV Coordinators have been established within the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet in Katherine and Tennant Creek to coordinate a wide range of government and community DFSV activities in the Barkly and Big Rivers regions.

A workshop convened in Katherine to discuss the Big Rivers Action Plan received positive feedback from over 50 participants, including Aboriginal Elders, DFSV service providers and representatives from government. Attendees are looking forward to the Big Rivers Action Plan.

A number of remote specialist DFV services have established a remote DFV network, convened by West Arnhem Regional Council - Gunbalanya Safe House.

The final round of funding from the Australian Government has been provided to address needs in relation to COVID-19 across the Northern Territory. Allocated on a per-population basis, the Territory's final share of the national funding pool is \$666 000.

NT Council of Social Services (NTCOSS) will host a meeting with Minister Worden in the coming weeks to discuss the NTCOSS election asks, including establishment of the DFSV Resource Centre.

The Specialist DFV Court pilot program has commenced in Alice Springs and will be supported by operational guidelines currently under development.

Minimum standards for Men's Behaviour Change Programs were launched in Alice Springs on Tuesday 13 October 2020.

Katherine Local Reference Group



Tennant Creek Local Reference Group



Domestic and family violence legal reform

The Department of the Attorney-General and Justice is progressing research into potential legislative reforms to improve outcomes for victim survivors of DFV. Issues being considered include coercive control and misidentification of the primary aggressor and victim survivor.

Risk Assessment and Management Framework orientation

CAWG members were presented with the Risk Assessment and Management Framework orientation session which includes information on the development of the document and accompanying tools as well as an overview of the roles and responsibilities of specialist and universal service providers in screening, identifying and responding to DFV risk.

Orientation sessions are being rolled out across government and non-government organisations, with training scheduled for early 2021. For more information, contact Territory Families, Housing and Communities at dfv@nt.gov.au.

NT Aboriginal Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing COVID-19 Response Plan

The Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory representative presented the Aboriginal Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing COVID-19 Response Plan, which was developed to address the challenges identified by Social and Emotional Wellbeing teams and NT Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations during and following the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

The Response Plan aims to celebrate early initiatives and capitalise on emerging opportunities such as return to country, homeland living and provision of holistic support to community members. The Response Plan sets out social and emotional wellbeing and mental health priorities determined by Aboriginal Community Controlled social and emotional wellbeing managers and teams.

Key priorities include coordination to establish Aboriginal-led programs and services, co-designed with communities; establishing women's and men's programs with appropriate therapeutic evaluation for family-focused response, care and facilities; culturally-responsive, trauma-integrated networks of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and support services including Aboriginal justice, child and family services and housing; and Aboriginal community governance mechanisms for negotiation and interface with policy makers and statutory bodies.

CAWG noted the timing of the Response Plan aligns with government's focus on local decision making and self-determination for Aboriginal Territorians.

Next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for February 2021.