



# Evaluation of the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform 2016-2021

## **Summary Report**

Prepared for the Department of  
Communities and Justice

March 2021

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[KPMG.com.au](https://www.kpmg.com.au)

We would like to acknowledge the efforts of all those working tirelessly to address domestic and family violence in their communities.

The evaluation uses evidence to make a difference and improve outcomes for victims of domestic and family violence.

We would like to thank those who talked to us during the evaluation of the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform.

## Getting help



For information and support call the **NSW Domestic Violence Line** on 1800 656 463 or **1800 RESPECT** on 1800 737 732



For crisis accommodation and referral call **Link2Home** on 1800 152 152



For men wanting to address violence behaviour call **No To Violence Men's Referral Service** on 1300 766 491

## Disclaimer

### *Inherent Limitations*

This Summary Report has been prepared as outlined in the scope section of the [final evaluation report](#). The services provided in connection with this engagement comprise an advisory engagement, which is not subject to assurance or other standards issued by the Australian Auditing and Assurance Standards Board and, consequently no opinions or conclusions intended to convey assurance have been expressed.

This Summary Report provides a summary of KPMG's findings during the course of the work undertaken for the Department of Communities and Justice under the terms of KPMG's engagement contract dated 27 January 2021. The contents of this Summary Report do not represent our conclusive findings, which are only contained in KPMG's final detailed report issued to the Department of Communities and Justice on 27 July 2020.

No warranty of completeness, accuracy or reliability is given in relation to the statements and representations made by, and the information and documentation provided by the Department of Communities and Justice management and stakeholders consulted as part of the process.

KPMG have indicated within this Summary Report the sources of the information provided. We have not sought to independently verify those sources unless otherwise noted within the Summary Report.

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### *Third Party Reliance*

This Summary Report is solely for the purpose set out the scope section of the [final evaluation report](#) and for the Department of Communities and Justice's information, and is not to be used for any other purpose.







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# Background

## NSW Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform

The NSW *Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform 2016-2021: Safer Lives for Women, Men and Children*<sup>1</sup> (also known as 'the Blueprint') is a state-wide reform designed to improve collaboration and to support a united approach to address domestic and family violence (DFV) in NSW. The Blueprint, which was released in 2016, was written at a time when there was increasing public attention and government responses to address DFV. Key areas of focus and actions under the Blueprint are summarised in the table below.

**Table 1: Key actions under the Blueprint**

Blueprint area	Key actions
 <b>Priority area 1:</b> Preventing DFV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a DFV Innovation Fund</li> <li>• Development of the NSW Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy</li> </ul>
 <b>Priority area 2:</b> Early intervention with vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of Tackling Violence</li> <li>• Rollout of targeted ethical bystander initiatives.</li> </ul>
 <b>Priority area 3:</b> Supporting victims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State-wide rollout of Safer Pathway</li> <li>• Extension of Safer Pathway support to male victims</li> <li>• Expansion of Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service.</li> </ul>
 <b>Priority area 4:</b> Holding perpetrators accountable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of non-government organisation community-based men's behaviour change programs</li> <li>• Establishment of a state-wide referral pathway between Police and the Men's Telephone Counselling and Referral Service to help offenders change behaviour</li> <li>• Rollout of Police High Risk Offender Teams.</li> </ul>
 <b>Priority area 5:</b> Delivering quality services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of best practice strategies to engage Aboriginal men and women in behaviour change interventions</li> <li>• Embedding of evaluation into all NSW Government funded DFV violence services.</li> </ul>
 <b>Priority area 6:</b> Improving the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of system-wide performance metrics and data collection mechanisms</li> <li>• Establishment of the DFV Reforms Delivery Board</li> <li>• Inter-agency review of the DFV service system.</li> </ul>

Source: NSW Government, *Blueprint Annual Report Card* and KPMG.

<sup>1</sup>NSW Government (2017), Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint, Women NSW. Available at: [www.women.nsw.gov.au/strategies-and-resources/nsw-domestic-and-family-violence/domestic-and-family-violence-blueprint](http://www.women.nsw.gov.au/strategies-and-resources/nsw-domestic-and-family-violence/domestic-and-family-violence-blueprint).

## Evaluating the Blueprint

The Department, through Women NSW, asked KPMG to evaluate the Blueprint in 2019

The evaluation of the Blueprint comprised three components:

- **A process evaluation** assessing how well the Blueprint has been implemented
- **An outcomes evaluation** analysing whether the Blueprint has been effective and efficient in achieving its objectives, particularly the outcomes identified in the DFV Outcomes Framework<sup>2</sup>
- **Identifying future directions** and developing themes for future DFV reform in NSW.

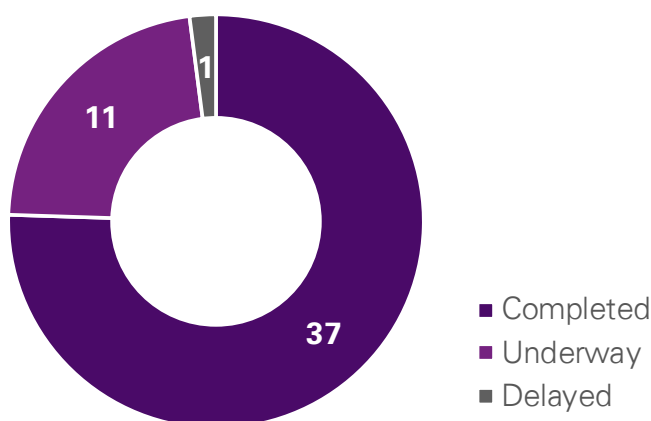
The method used for the evaluation – including data sources, and strengths and limitations in the approach – is detailed in full in the [final evaluation report](#).<sup>3</sup>

# What we found

## Was the Blueprint implemented as intended?

As shown in the figure below, as of 30 June 2019, NSW Government agencies had implemented 37 of 49 actions within the Blueprint. Of the remaining 12, 11 were underway and one had not yet been delivered within original timeframes. This is an impressive achievement given the scale and complexity of the actions under the Blueprint.

**Figure 1: Status of actions under the Blueprint**



Source: NSW Government, *Blueprint Annual Report Card* and KPMG

Stakeholders told us there has been increase in support for victims and an increase in the number of services to support behaviour change for perpetrators. Stakeholders agreed that there is now a changed response to DFV in NSW which is more supportive of victims. We found that collaboration, strong working relationships and commitment by the NSW Government have helped support implementation of the Blueprint.

Our other key findings about the implementation of the Blueprint are outlined below.

<sup>2</sup> NSW Government (2018), Domestic and Family Violence Outcomes Framework, NSW Government.

<sup>3</sup> KPMG (2020), Evaluation of the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform 2016-2021: Final Report, prepared for the Department of Communities and Justice. Available at: [www.women.nsw.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/787902/KPMG-Evaluation-of-the-NSW-Domestic-and-Family-Violence-Blueprint-for-Reform-2016-21.pdf](http://www.women.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/787902/KPMG-Evaluation-of-the-NSW-Domestic-and-Family-Violence-Blueprint-for-Reform-2016-21.pdf).

### **While DFV services are working better together, victims still have to re-tell their stories multiple times to different services**

- The Blueprint has led to improvements in collaboration, information sharing, and service coordination. However, responses to people affected by DFV are not fully integrated, with victims still having to re-tell their story multiple times.
- While the service system is now supporting both DFV victims and perpetrators more than before, there is limited data and information sharing between services working with the victim and those working with the perpetrator.
- Joint effort between the NSW Government and the corporate sector to tackle DFV has been limited and could be improved.

### **Access to DFV services for victims is improving**

- Access to services for victims of DFV is improving through the Safer Pathway<sup>4</sup> rollout. However, this is mainly for those who come into contact with NSW Police. Contact with victims is being attempted within one business day of referral to Safer Pathway.
- Access to services for perpetrators of DFV has improved under the Blueprint through the rollout of the Men's Telephone Counselling and Referral Service and men's behaviour change programs. However, further support is required to build the capacity of the non-government service sector to deliver perpetrator programs, particularly Aboriginal service providers and smaller organisations.
- There is limited data available to determine how many people from at-risk groups are accessing DFV services such as people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or queer.

### **Governance bodies were established to support the Blueprint but formal governance at the regional level is missing and the non-government sector is not represented**

- The DFV Reforms Delivery Board, which oversees implementation of the Blueprint, has been an effective forum for government agencies to resolve problems during implementation. However, there is a lack of consistent regional governance bodies to enable oversight of local implementation.
- The introduction of the Blueprint has seen an increase in monitoring of, and reporting on, the quality and outcomes of services being provided by the non-government sector.
- The role of the non-government sector in the development, design, and governance of the Blueprint has been limited. There has been inconsistent engagement with the non-government service sector, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled organisations.

### **Greater community recognition of DFV is driving demand for services**

- With increasing client demand for services and increasing community recognition of DFV, there are increasing pressures on the DFV budget.
- Options to increase funding sustainability include analysis of demand modelling and the scope for innovation and efficiency as well as exploring social impact investing opportunities.

<sup>4</sup>Department of Communities & Justice (2020), Safer Pathway. Available at: [www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/families-and-communities/safer-pathway](http://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/families-and-communities/safer-pathway).







## Is the Blueprint achieving its objectives?

The evaluation considered whether the Blueprint has had an impact on the outcomes outlined in the NSW DFV Outcomes Framework. While there has been significant investment and activity to address DFV in NSW, material impacts on the prevalence of DFV and rates of re-victimisation, actual bodily harm and DFV-related deaths are yet to be observed.

However, it is worth noting that the DFV Outcomes Framework did not set timeframes, and as such, it is not clear when short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes are expected to be achieved.

The key findings are outlined below.

**Table 2: Key findings**

Blueprint area	Highlights
 <b>Priority area 1:</b> Preventing DFV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most people in NSW have a good understanding of what violence against women means and they reject attitudes that support violence against women.</li> <li>Between 2009 and 2017, there was a positive change in community understanding of violence against women.<sup>5</sup></li> </ul>
 <b>Priority area 2:</b> Early intervention with vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The incidence of DFV-related assault is increasing in NSW. Prevalence rates have fluctuated but have recently increased. Greater efforts by NSW Police in responding to DFV may be contributing to increased prevalence rates.</li> <li>There is little to no information collected on at-risk population groups and incidence rates of DFV.</li> </ul>
 <b>Priority area 3:</b> Supporting victims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From 2013-14 to 2017-18, re-victimisation<sup>6</sup> for DFV was stable at 13 per cent.</li> <li>There is a higher re-victimisation rate for DFV for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims (21.4 per cent compared to 13.1 per cent for all victims).</li> <li>Rates of actual bodily harm have increased since 2013-14, peaking in 2017-18.</li> </ul>
 <b>Priority area 4:</b> Holding perpetrators accountable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There have been yearly improvements in the percentage of DFV-related assault incidents having legal action taken by police within 90 days, showing progress in the timeliness of legal action.</li> <li>Since the Blueprint was introduced, the number of reoffenders initially fell by 6 per cent. In the most recent year's data accessed for the evaluation (2018-19), there was a slight increase of 0.8 per cent.</li> </ul>
 <b>Priority area 5:</b> Delivering quality services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development of service quality standards has been delayed. However, the Department, through Women NSW, has engaged in a significant amount of preparation activities to complete the standards, therefore progress is in train.</li> </ul>
 <b>Priority area 6:</b> Improving the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is currently not possible to determine the system-level impacts of partnership and governance arrangements on the entire DFV service sector.</li> <li>Due to the limitations in the available financial data, it was not possible to determine the effectiveness of funding allocations under the Blueprint.</li> </ul>

Source: NSW Government, *Blueprint Annual Report Card* and KPMG.

<sup>5</sup>NCAS and NSW Government (2019). Attitudes towards violence against women and gender equality among people in NSW: Summary findings from the 2017 National Community Attitudes Survey (NCAS). Available at: [www.women.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/728802/AttitudestowardsviolenceagainstwomenandgenderequalityamongpeopleinNSW.PDF](http://www.women.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/728802/AttitudestowardsviolenceagainstwomenandgenderequalityamongpeopleinNSW.PDF).

<sup>6</sup>Re-victimisation means when a victim reports another DFV-related assault within the next 12-month period.

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# Recommendations

Based on the evaluation findings, KPMG made a number of recommendations for the future direction of the DFV service system. The complete picture of how the findings informed these recommendations are in the full evaluation report.



## **Recommendation 1: Design timeframes and performance expectations over a longer term (10 years) in future DFV reform**

- Include timeframes for the achievement of outcomes and set expectations for performance



## **Recommendation 2: Strengthen the scope and focus of DFV reforms**

- Include children and young people as victims in their own right in any reform
- Develop a strategy for strengthening the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community's response to family violence
- Consider including sexual violence within the DFV policy reforms.



## **Recommendation 3: Build the evidence base for reform**

- As a matter of priority, build the evidence base around perpetrator programs
- Develop a research agenda for DFV for NSW so that knowledge is developed on what works for different people and resources can be targeted where they have most impact
- Identify what works to prevent DFV and only implement programs with a credible evidence base.



## **Recommendation 4: Develop the pre-conditions for a sustainable DFV service system**

- Develop a dynamic model of the DFV system as this would demonstrate the impact of increasing client volume on parts of the service system.
- Consider other innovative sources of sustainable funding for the DFV service sector such as the creation of a DFV impact fund.



## **Recommendation 5: Implement the following operational recommendations to create a stronger response to DFV in NSW**

- Refresh and establish regional and locally based governance for DFV to support local decision making and strengthen accountability around DFV.
- Develop and use the most up-to-date monitoring and information technology so that government agencies and service providers have real time data on service demand and capability.
- Request that the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research investigates and regularly releases information on the level of police and community activity and how this relates to changes in the frequency of reported DFV assaults over time.
- Explore data collection to capture a true incidence of DFV which is not related to police activity.
- The Department completes the development of the service quality standards.
- To help support more effective and consistent measurement of cost effectiveness in the future, consider the use of common data requirements across programs and investments.

## **Next steps**

The findings and recommendations of the evaluation are currently being considered by the Department of Communities and Justice and will inform the development of the next whole-of-government DFV strategy. The next strategy is expected to be released in 2022.





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