

SBS RESPONSE TO SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO MISSING AND MURDERED FIRST NATIONS WOMEN AND CHILDREN 9 DECEMBER 2022

Key Points

- The Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) welcomes the opportunity to submit to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee's Inquiry into missing and murdered First Nations women and children.
- Through news, current affairs and factual programming and content on NITV and the broader SBS network, SBS plays a key role in ensuring that issues relating to violence against First Nations women and children are explored in depth and with appropriate sensitivity.
- The network provides an important place for stories by, for, and about First Nations people and to ensure these issues remain on the national agenda.
- This submission provides an overview of coverage to date, as well as upcoming content of relevance to the issues being considered by the Committee.

A crucial forum for First Nations voices, news, current affairs, and stories

National Indigenous Television (NITV) and NITV Radio, part of the SBS network, is the home of storytelling by, for and about First Nations peoples, including Australia's only national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander television news and digital media service.

NITV provides extensive daily news coverage with a First Nations lens, by First Nations journalists including through its *Nula* regular bulletins, as well as current affairs programs *Living Black* and *The Point* (these programs have encore showings across the SBS Network). These are further complemented by the service's unique and First Nations-curated programs that inspire, instil pride and lead to a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures – made by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NITV helps all Australians to connect with First Nations peoples and their rich cultures and history.

As a part of SBS's Elevate Reconciliation Action Plan, SBS is also increasing delivery of more stories and perspectives from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across SBS Radio services in more than 60 international languages, as well as news and current affairs across the network.

These services are complemented by SBS's and NITV's digital news sites, and SBS On Demand service (with more than 10 million registered users), containing a rich archive of relevant content.

The universal and free nature of the SBS and NITV services also make them a critical source of news and information regarding important issues such as violence against First Nations women



and children. It is relevant to note that SBS is the most trusted media brand in the Australian market.¹

Relevant coverage and content

SBS and NITV have produced and published a wide range of news stories and programs which serve to ensure that the issues surrounding violence against First Nations women and children, are both prominent and presented from a First Nations perspective.

The depth and extent of coverage of these issues is unique across media in Australia, providing a critical forum to ensure the issues are appropriately explored and stay on the national political agenda. Standalone, focussed coverage of the issues has been provided, along with inclusion of the issues in broader coverage of domestic violence more generally.

Coverage has included:

- Coverage following the *Four Corners* examination of the crisis (*OPINION: Four Corners' 'How many more?' reveals the nation's crisis of Indigenous women missing and murdered* – 26 October 2022)
- Coverage of domestic violence-related deaths in The Northern Territory (*Nation urged to take notice in wake of horrific NT domestic violence deaths* – 26 July 2022)
- Coverage of the issues in the context of the 2022 Federal Election (*Safety advocates condemn campaign silence on gendered violence* – 10 May 2022)
- Coverage of technology-facilitated abuse (*Technology-facilitated abuse of First Nations women rife in regional and remote areas* – 15 December 2021)
- Coverage of the referral of missing murdered Indigenous women to the Committee (*Silence as senator remembers murdered cousin* – 25 November 2021)
- Need for greater focus on perpetrators (*Preventing violence against women needs greater focus on perpetrators, OurWatch says* – 24 November 2021)
- Federal Government commitment to develop a national plan to tackle family violence in Indigenous communities (*Tailored action plan to tackle violence against Indigenous women and children* – 9 September 2021)
- Coverage of a national women's safety summit (*'Disgusting state': violence against Indigenous women slammed at virtual summit* – 7 September 2021)
- Coverage of the creation of a family violence advisory group (*'It's a start': First Nations women welcome creation of family violence advisory group* – 9 April 2021)
- Coverage of a documentary showcased in Melbourne's Birraranga Film Fest (*'Not just numbers': Indigenous women combat domestic violence* – 25 March 2021)
- Coverage of advocacy from the National Aboriginal Women's Alliance (*'We've battled by ourselves': Indigenous safety groups urge federal government to tackle family violence* – 7 April 2021)
- Coverage of factors preventing reporting of violence (*Fear of child removal preventing Indigenous women from reporting family violence* – 15 December 2020)

¹ SBS Brand Pulse survey in April 2022; Q How do you trust the following media brands? Base: All Australians; Total sample n=750



- Coverage of increasing support needs in the context of COVID-19 ([*Djirra welcomes Victorian Government support for those escaping family violence*](#) – 16 April 2020)
- An NITV radio piece examining the lack of mainstream coverage ([*Racialized violence against Indigenous women real and rampant but where is the outcry?*](#) – 20 February 2020)
- An opinion piece on the need for restoration and healing ([*It's time for change: Aboriginal women will stand strong against sexual violence*](#) – 12 February 2019)
- An opinion piece on the issues and required action ([*Preventing violence against Indigenous women needs to be on the national agenda*](#) – 16 November 2018)
- Coverage of scrutiny by a key UN Committee ([*UN grills Australia on multiple failures to protect women against violence*](#) – 6 July 2018)
- Coverage of the inclusion of family violence in the Closing the Gap framework ([*Without a strong focus on family violence, the Closing the Gap framework will fail Indigenous women and children*](#) – 15 May 2018)
- Coverage of a report issued by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare ([*Disadvantage, trauma causing high rates of Indigenous family violence*](#) – 28 February 2018)
- Coverage in the context of Australia's presence on the UN Human Rights Council ([*With a seat on the UN Human Rights Council, Australia must fix its record on Indigenous rights*](#) – 27 November 2017)
- Consideration of journalistic coverage ([*Why we need to educate journalists about Aboriginal women's experience of family violence*](#) – 23 November 2017)
- Coverage of political debates on the issue ([*Indigenous politicians lash out against Mundine's accusations of inaction on domestic violence*](#) – 5 October 2016)
- Coverage of the Prevalent and Preventable conference ([*Prevalent & Preventable: A new approach to tackling violence against women and children*](#) – 21 September 2016)
- A fact check on claims raised in an episode of Q&A ([*FactCheck Q&A: are Indigenous women 34-80 times more likely than average to experience violence*](#) – 5 July 2016)
- Coverage in the context of the UN's World Conference on Indigenous People ([*Australia accused of falling behind on Indigenous women's rights*](#) – 5 September 2014)
- Coverage of advocacy to the UN ([*Indigenous women gather at UN to stop domestic violence*](#) – 22 March 2013)

Factual programming

See What You Made Me Do

This extensive news and current affairs coverage is complemented by factual programming exploring the issues in detail. For example, in 2021, SBS aired the revelatory documentary series [*See What You Made Me Do*](#). Hosted by investigative journalist Jess Hill, the series led a suite of programming examining domestic abuse, examining what can be done to keep women and children safer and hold perpetrators to account. The program was one of the highest rating programs on SBS in 2021 and started a powerful conversation among Australians about domestic abuse.




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See What You Made Me Do

Miniseries, Documentary
1 season English M CC HD

Investigative journalist Jess Hill explores important topics about domestic abuse, asking big questions about what needs to be done to keep women and children safer, and better hold perpetrators accountable.



Start Here
Episode 1: Part 1
52m

Jess explores relationships in which abuse can evolve in complex and confusing ways, meeting with survivors to discuss how it can be difficult to recognise the danger of this abuse until it's too late.

The airing of the series was accompanied by an all-Indigenous panel discussion of family violence on NITV. *We Say No More* featured a panel of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts in family violence and shone a light on the current situation disproportionately faced by First Nations peoples.

The panel discussed ways to help address this tragic behaviour and actively become a part of the solution. Panellists included Dr Vanessa Lee (Senior Academic in social epidemiology, Faculty of Medicine and Health at University of Sydney), Marlene Longbottom (Academic), Jody Currie (CEO ATSI Community Health Service Brisbane), Sandra Creamer (Lawyer and survivor), and Ashlee Donohue (CEO of Mudgin-Gal Women's Resource Centre and survivor).

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We Say No More

Special, Documentary, Special Events, General
1h 15m 2021 English M CC HD

Play
We Say No More
1h 15m

An insight into the current situation faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women with regards to family violence.



Following the success of these programs, SBS announced a further commission of Jess Hill's new documentary series *Asking for It*, which explore the status of consent in Australia.

Vanished – the unsolved cases of missing First Nations women

Special documentary by multi-award winning *The Feed* current affairs program, exploring the issue of the significantly higher proportion of First Nations women among missing persons in Australia each year.

Conclusion

SBS and NITV provide a unique broadcast and online media platform on which issues relating to violence against Indigenous women and children are explored.

In particular, NITV's coverage allows for Indigenous perspectives to be centred and ensures these issues remain a part of the national political agenda.