

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs Inquiry into family violence orders

Public Hearing – 11 October 2024

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: National Programs supporting victim survivors

Question reference number: IQ24-000252

Question asked by: Susan Templeman

Type of Question: Spoken. **Hansard Page/s:** pages 15-16 of transcript

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 8 November 2024

Question:

CHAIR: That's one that just keeps coming up. Thank you for that. We have talked about what's available from a court perspective and then the broader agenda. From a DSS perspective, are there any other specific things from a Commonwealth perspective that are being implemented to support victims of family violence that overlap into the court area? It may not be court specific, but what would be the key things that provide that support to families who may or may not be going through the system?

Ms Purdy: We deliver a range of initiatives that support families in these circumstances. One initiative is the Specialised Family Violence Services. That provides funding to around 38 providers, 10 of which are delivering men's behaviour change programs. That has a focus on counselling and support for families. It's not actually run by our area, so I probably shouldn't provide—well, I can provide a little bit more detail. It's a program that delivers specialised services that support children, families, individuals and couples who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing family and domestic violence. It aims to 'support families', 'improve children's wellbeing' and 'increase participation of vulnerable people in community life'. That is a general program that's out there for those families.

We also deliver a number of perpetrator focused programs as well, focusing at the other end of the spectrum. I don't know if you are interested in—

CHAIR: Yes, we have taken evidence on that, so it would be interesting to just get on the record what is already being implemented.

Ms Purdy: Sure. We provide funding to No to Violence to deliver the men's referral service, which is a national referral hotline that's open 24 hours a day. We also provide funding to No to Violence for the Brief Intervention Service, which provides telephone counselling to perpetrators. and we provide funding to Lifeline for the delivery of Changing for Good services as well. Under the national partnership for family, domestic and sexual violence, we're also working with the states and territories to deliver innovative perpetrator pilot initiatives. States and territories are being provided with \$27 million to deliver a whole range of initiatives under that particular measure. I'm trying to think whether there's anything else.

Ms Lutz: There are other national programs like the Commonwealth financial counselling assistance program. We could come back on notice—and there's 1800RESPECT where people can call and there's an initial point, and they will also refer on. The referral process is slightly different depending on the type of service you're calling into, so 1800RESPECT and the escaping violence payment are different, and then you've got Services Australia with crisis payments and other things. We could come back with a list of national programs that support victims-survivors, if that would be helpful.

CHAIR: I think that would be helpful. While in one way our terms of reference are quite narrow, in other ways there's one bit that's made it very wide, so there have been a number of people talking about the broader context.

Ms Lutz: We can come back with the Commonwealth-led programs, from a DSS perspective, and provide that.

Answer:

A list of programs funded by the Department of Social Services to support victim survivors of family violence is at **Attachment A**.



Attachment A: Programs funded by the Department of Social Services to support victim-survivors

Name of initiative	Description
Safe Places	Safe Places is a capital works program funding the building, renovation or purchase of emergency accommodation for women and children experiencing family and domestic violence.
Specialised Family Violence Services (SFVS)	Specialised Family Violence Services assist individuals, couples and families who are experiencing, witnessing or at risk of family and domestic violence.
Supporting Adolescent Boys Trial	A national early intervention trial for young men and adolescent boys aged 12-18 who present with adverse childhood experiences including family or domestic violence, and who are at risk of perpetrating family, domestic or sexual violence.
Helping Children Heal	Supports children aged 6-12 years who are struggling to reach developmental, social and educational milestones due to family and domestic violence.
Keeping Women Safe in their Homes (KWSITH)	KWSITH provides a range of safety responses such as risk assessments, safety planning and security upgrades for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence so that they can stay in their own homes, or a home of their choice where it is safe to do so.
Safe Connections (Safe Phones)	Safe Phones provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a free smartphone, \$45 pre-paid SIM card, 90-day ID exemption and technology-safety information to women.• training and education on technology-facilitated abuse to frontline workers.
Temporary Visa Holders Experiencing Violence Pilot (TVP)	The Pilot provides financial and legal supports to temporary visa holders experiencing family and domestic violence until 30 June 2025. From 1 July 2025, Temporary visa holders will be able to access financial support through the Leaving Violence Program.
Escaping Violence Payment (EVP) trial	The EVP trial supports victim-survivors with financial support to eligible individuals leaving a violent intimate partner relationship. The EVP trial will cease on 30 June 2025 when the Leaving Violence Program is established.
Leaving Violence Program	From 1 July 2025, the Leaving Violence Program will support victim-survivors leaving an intimate partner violence through financial support, risk assessments, safety planning and referrals.
Support for Trafficked People Program (STPP)	The STPP provides individualised, intensive case managed support to eligible victims of human trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices to assist victim-survivors in their recovery from their experiences, participate in criminal justice processes if they wish to do so, and develop options for life after they leave the program.

Forced Marriage Specialist Support Program (FMSSP) -

The FMSSP will provide tailored support to meet the health, wellbeing, physical and social needs to people at risk of, or who have experienced forced marriage (from January 2025).

Community-led Men's Wellness Centres for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The program aims to establish Men's Wellness Centres in regional and remote locations. Funded initiatives will be led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. The activities will complement and support existing services and activities to enable improved service delivery.

Increasing Capacity of Crisis Accommodation Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The program is providing funding to support urgent attention to increase the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander shelter and crisis accommodation services to deliver integrated approaches. The activities will complement and support existing services and activities to enable improved service delivery.

Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Programs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisations

The program is providing funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisations to support centring of First Nations cultural knowledge, frameworks and responses in program design and delivery, to better meet the needs of First Nations peoples. The activities will complement and support existing services and activities to enable improved service delivery.

Community-led Prevention Services, Programs and Campaigns for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children

Increase prevention services, programs and campaigns for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, including on-Country learning.

Renewed National Partnership Agreement for Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses

National Cabinet agreed to a renewed, 5-year National Partnership Agreement to commence on 1 July 2025 that will support greater flexibility for states and territories to direct funding to meet local need and will be accompanied by stronger transparency and accountability mechanisms. It will include a focus on nationally coordinated approaches to support prevention activities through frontline services, including funding for: specialist services for women; services to support children exposed to family, domestic and sexual violence to heal and recover; working with men, including men's behaviour change programs for perpetrators of gendered violence.

1800RESPECT

1800RESPECT is the national counselling, information and support service for people affected by FDSV. It is a free and confidential service, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

1800RESPECT is a demand-driven service and fully funded by the Australian Government.

500 Workers

Funding to support 500 frontline service and community workers has been provided to jurisdictions to support women and children experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence, with support targeted to women and children in rural, regional and remote areas; First Nations people; the culturally and linguistically diverse community; women with disability; and the LGBTQIA+ community.

Crisis and transitional housing options under the Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF)

The Crisis and Transitional Accommodation Program will support organisations to build, remodel or purchase new or expanded crisis and transitional accommodation for women and children experiencing family and domestic violence and older women at risk of homelessness.

**Financial Wellbeing and
Capability services**

A range of supports are available for eligible individuals and families experiencing financial crises and help build financial wellbeing, financial capability, and resilience. This includes support for people impacted by family, domestic and sexual violence. Services are free, voluntary and confidential and are delivered by community organisations nationally. Services include crisis support through Emergency Relief, financial counselling and financial capability services and access to the No Interest Loans Scheme which provides access to fair and safe loans up to \$3,000 with no interest, fees or charges. Loans can be used for a range of purposes including household appliances, medical and dental, rent, utilities hardship, and car repairs.

Crisis Payment

A one-off payment for income support recipients who are in severe financial hardship and have recently experienced an extreme circumstance such as family and/or domestic violence.