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We work on Ngunnawal land

Public Submission

Our Ways – Strong Ways– Our Voices:

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Safety Plan Engagement

I have answered questions 1, 3 and 4 out of the 5.

Q1 – What are the key priorities and actions the family safety plan should focus on to create real and sustainable change for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander families?

Culturally Safe and Community-Led Approaches

Involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the design, implementation, and evaluation of family safety plans to ensure they reflect cultural values and local needs. Strengthen the role of Elders and community leaders in developing culturally grounded strategies.

- Culturally safe services that are trusted by families and more likely to result in engagement and long-term impact.

Holistic, Strength-Based Support

- Address the social, emotional, and physical well-being of families, focusing on healing and empowerment. Support should be holistic, incorporating housing, education, employment, and access to health care.

Trauma-Informed Care and Healing

- Implement trauma-informed practices that acknowledge the intergenerational impacts of colonisation, violence, and displacement. Embed healing practices that draw from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural frameworks.

Prevention and Early Intervention

Invest in community-based, early intervention programs that aim to prevent family violence and support families at risk. Programs should address issues such as mental health, substance use, and poverty, which are often root causes of violence.

- Reduction in the incidence of violence by addressing factors that contribute to family breakdown before they escalate.

5. Strengthening Legal and Justice Responses

Ensure that legal and justice systems are culturally responsive and accessible. This includes training for police and judicial staff in culturally competent practices, and increasing access to Aboriginal Legal Services for families in need.

- Families feel safer and better supported through justice processes, with improved legal outcomes that protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable.

Support for Children and Young People

Prioritise the safety, well-being, and development of children by providing child-focused services, including child-led therapeutic support, mentoring, and family strengthening programs that nurture a positive identity and emotional resilience.

- Healthier future generations, breaking cycles of trauma, and fostering leadership among young people.

7. Collaboration Across Sectors

Strengthen collaboration between government agencies, non-profit organisations, health services, schools, and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organizations (ACCOs) to deliver coordinated and consistent support for families.

- Improved service delivery, reducing duplication and gaps in support, and ensuring families have continuous access to necessary services.

8. Addressing Systemic Inequality and Racism

Confront systemic racism and inequality by advocating for policies that address the socio-economic disadvantage faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, including education reform, economic opportunities, and equitable access to services.

- Long-term structural changes that enhance family safety and create more equitable conditions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to thrive.

Ongoing Monitoring and Accountability

Establish mechanisms for ongoing evaluation and accountability in implementing the family safety plan. Involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in assessing the plan's effectiveness and making improvements over time.

- A responsive and adaptive plan that can evolve to meet the changing needs of communities, ensuring long-term sustainability.

Q3 – What does culturally appropriate and holistic service provision look and feel like?

Culturally appropriate and holistic service provision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is grounded in respect for cultural values, community involvement, and an understanding of the interconnectedness of a person's physical, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being.

- Cultural Respect and Safety
- Clients feel safe, respected, and understood.

Q4 – How can Government and mainstream services best support Ab'l & TSI people (including workforce and clients), services and solutions?

Commit to Cultural Safety and Competency

Provide ongoing, high-quality cultural competency training for all government and mainstream service staff, focusing on understanding the history, cultural values, and contemporary experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

- Services that are more respectful, culturally aware, and capable of building trust with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Increase Representation and Leadership in the Workforce
- Partner with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organizations (ACCOs)

Support Self-Determination

Embed principles of self-determination by involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the design, implementation, and evaluation of policies and services that affect them. Ensure they have genuine decision-making power in solutions affecting their communities.

- Address Systemic Barriers and Inequality
- Foster Strong Community Relationships
- Improve Data Collection and Accountability

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