



**TAHRG**  
Tasmanian Aboriginal Health  
Reference Group

## **SNAICC - National Voice for our Children**

Dear SNAICC Team,

### **Subject: Tasmanian Aboriginal Health Reference Group (TAHRG) submission on the National Family Safety Plan**

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Health Reference Group (TAHRG) is dedicated to improving the well-being and safety of Aboriginal communities across Tasmania. Recognising the urgent need to address the unacceptable and disproportionate rates of violence faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children, we acknowledge the Family Safety Plan as a crucial initiative aimed at fostering their safety and welfare. However, to maximise its effectiveness, it is vital to localise this national framework within the unique cultural and social contexts of Tasmania.

TAHRG is a collaboration with five Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) that collectively serve approximately 70 percent of Tasmania's rural and regional populations. Together, we present integrated recommendations tailored to the specific needs of our communities. These recommendations, built on a foundation of cultural understanding and direct engagement built over the years consulting with community members, aims to aid in developing the National Family Safety Plan and ensure that it not only reflects, but actively addresses the realities faced by Aboriginal families in Tasmania.

### **Layout of the Submission**

This submission is organised into several key sections to provide a comprehensive overview of our vision, recommendations, and priorities for addressing Family Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) in Aboriginal communities across Tasmania:

**1. Vision for Safety in Our Communities:** This section articulates our comprehensive vision for the safety and well-being of Aboriginal families, emphasising the importance of creating a secure environment free from violence while promoting holistic health and community empowerment.

**2. Priorities and Actions:** In this section, we outline our immediate priorities and the corresponding actions that need to be taken to address the pressing issues of FDSV and health disparities. Key priorities include:

- Enhance Funding and Support for ACCOs
- Data Collection and Storytelling for Understanding and Addressing FDSV
- Health Disparities Associated with FDSV
- Importance of Measuring Effectiveness in FDSV Programs

**3. Recommendations:** Here, we focus on actionable steps that can be implemented to ensure effective responses to these challenges. We present targeted recommendations aimed at enhancing support for Aboriginal communities in relation to FDSV. Each recommendation addresses specific areas, including the enhancement of funding and support for Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), effective data collection, and addressing health disparities concerning FDSV.

**4. Conclusion:** In this concluding section, we emphasise the urgent need for enhanced funding and support for ACCOs and advocate for a flexible government approach that responds to the intersectional needs of Aboriginal individuals and families. We reiterate our commitment to collaboration and the importance of meaningful, community-driven solutions that prioritise the voices and experiences of Aboriginal communities.

### **A Vision for Safety in Our Communities**

Safety in our communities means:

- Holistic Well-Being: Individuals and families feel secure physically and emotionally, with access to comprehensive health support and services.
- Culturally Safe Environments: Services are designed based on Aboriginal cultural values and practices, fostering an atmosphere of trust and understanding.
- Empowered Community Members: Individuals are encouraged to voice their concerns and contribute to decision-making processes related to their safety and well-being.
- Collaborative Safety Networks: Strong partnerships exist between ACCOs, law enforcement, health services, and community organisations to effectively address family, domestic, and sexual violence (FDSV) challenges.

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## KEY PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

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### **PRIORITY: Enhance Funding and Support for Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)**

Rationale:

Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) play a vital role in providing culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal communities in Tasmania, particularly in addressing Family Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV). Despite their importance, many ACCOs face significant challenges, including limited funding, which restricts their ability to deliver comprehensive support to victims and their families. By enhancing funding and support for ACCOs, we can ensure that these organisations are better equipped to meet the unique needs of Aboriginal individuals affected by FDSV.

- **Cultural Relevance:** ACCOs understand the unique cultural context of the communities they serve, which allows them to design and implement programs that resonate with local values and practices.
- **Community Trust:** ACCOs have established trust within Aboriginal communities, making them a preferred point of contact for individuals seeking assistance, especially in sensitive cases such as FDSV.
- **Holistic Services:** ACCOs are positioned to offer integrated, holistic support services, combining health, legal, and social services that address the multifaceted needs of victims of violence.
- **Advocacy and Empowerment:** ACCOs empower communities through education and advocacy, addressing not only immediate support for victims but also contributing to long-term cultural revival and resilience.

### **Proposed Actions**

To enhance funding and support for ACCOs and improve their capacity to address FDSV, the following actions can be taken:

#### **1. Secure Increased Funding:**

- Advocate for additional State and Federal Funding: ACCOs, along with community leaders and stakeholders, should collaborate to advocate for

increased government funding dedicated to expanding and sustaining ACCO services focused on FDSV.

- Sustainable Funding for Programs: Establish ongoing funding mechanisms to support community-led enabled ACCOs to be sustainable to develop FDSV initiatives, programs targeting family violence, & services addressing the unique needs of Aboriginal people.
- Diversify Funding Sources: ACCOs should explore opportunities to diversify funding by applying for grants from private foundations and other organisations that support community health initiatives.

## **2. Capacity Building Initiatives:**

- Invest in Training Programs: Provide resources for ACCOs to implement training programs, enhancing the skills of staff to respond effectively to the complexities of FDSV and improving overall service delivery.
- Foster Leadership Development: Encourage the development of leadership programs within ACCOs to cultivate local leaders who can advocate for community needs and improve service provision.

## **3. Infrastructure Development:**

- Develop Physical and Digital Infrastructure: Allocate resources for the development of infrastructure that supports ACCOs in delivering services, including the establishment of safe spaces for victims and the use of technology for remote support.
- Support Administrative Capacity: Increase funding for administrative resources within ACCOs to ensure they can maintain robust operational practices and effectively manage funding.

## **4. Investment in Prevention:**

Allocate specific resources for preventative measures, including programs that address the root causes of family violence, such as socio-economic disadvantage and intergenerational trauma.

## **5. Partnership and Collaboration:**

- Strengthen Relationships with Government Agencies: Establish formal partnerships between ACCOs and state/federal governments to facilitate sustainable funding, resource sharing, and collaborative program development.

- Encourage Multi-Sector Collaborations: Foster collaboration between ACCOs and health, legal, and educational sectors to create comprehensive support networks for victims of FDSV.

In conclusion, by prioritising enhanced funding and support for ACCOs, Governments can significantly improve the capacity of these organisations to address Family Domestic and Sexual Violence in Aboriginal communities. Collaborative efforts between ACCOs and the government can lead to effective, culturally relevant interventions that not only provide urgent support to victims but also foster long-term community resilience and health equity.

### **PRIORITY: Data Collection and Storytelling for Understanding and Addressing Family Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV)**

Rationale:

Improving the data collection and storytelling processes is essential for Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and communities to effectively understand and address Family Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV). A robust evidence base empowers ACCOs and other stakeholders to tailor their services, advocate for resources, and create informed policies that resonate with the realities experienced by Aboriginal individuals.

- **Understand Community Needs:** Comprehensive data collection allows ACCOs to identify the specific needs, patterns, and dynamics of FDSV within their communities, highlighting risk factors and protective factors unique to Aboriginal populations.
- **Strengthen Resource Allocation:** Accurate data enables effective resource allocation and grants advocacy, ensuring funding and services are directed to the areas of greatest need. Sharing data responsibly with state and federal agencies can support informed decision-making around program development while protecting confidentiality.
- **Enhance Program Effectiveness:** Structured storytelling and data collection will facilitate a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of existing programs and services, enabling ACCOs to adapt and improve their responses to FDSV.

- **Empower Decision-Making:** Engaging community members in data collection through culturally appropriate methods fosters a sense of ownership and participation. This engagement can lead to more impactful programs that resonate with community experiences and needs.
- **Cultural Relevance:** Data collection and storytelling methods should reflect Aboriginal culture, ensuring that the narratives and experiences shared are respected and accurately represented. This not only provides valuable insights but also builds trust within communities.

#### Challenges in Data Collection and Evidence Gathering:

While the need for effective data collection is paramount in addressing Family Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) within Aboriginal communities, several challenges arise that must be carefully navigated. Cultural sensitivity is critical, as traditional data collection methods may not align with the practices and beliefs of Aboriginal people, making genuine engagement difficult. Additionally, historical mistrust toward institutional systems often leads to reluctance among community members to share personal narratives or participate in data collection, particularly on sensitive topics like FDSV. Ensuring confidentiality is essential to foster a safe environment for participants, promoting honesty in sharing their experiences.

Moreover, the diversity of understandings surrounding FDSV across different communities can contribute to inconsistencies in data collection, complicating efforts to generate reliable conclusions. Many Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) may lack the necessary resources and expertise to implement comprehensive data collection frameworks effectively, hindering their ability to analyse and utilise the collected information. At the same time, the potential for external bias influences how data narratives are constructed, which could misrepresent individuals and lead to stigmatisation. Therefore, careful planning, culturally responsive practices, and strong governance structures are crucial to overcoming these challenges and ensuring that the data collected serves the community's best interests in addressing FDSV.

**Multisector Data Collection:** Data not only should be collected from the community but also from various service systems, including healthcare providers, law enforcement, and social services. This multisector approach is crucial for gaining a comprehensive understanding of FDSV.

Incentives for Reporting: There must be clear incentives for private practices and other service providers to capture and report relevant data on FDSV. Without these incentives, participation may be inconsistent, compromising the overall effectiveness of data gathering efforts.

### **Proposed Actions**

To implement effective data collection and storytelling systems that enhance understanding and intervention strategies for FDSV while ensuring safety and confidentiality, the following actions should be taken:

#### **1. Develop a Comprehensive Data Collection Framework:**

- Create Culturally Sensitive Surveys and Tools: Collaborate with ACCOs to design data collection tools that incorporate culturally relevant questions and respectful practices while ensuring that the results are anonymised and presented without identifying individuals. This includes using language that resonates with the community and involving community input in the development of these tools.
- Standardise Data Collection Practices: Establish standardised data collection methods across ACCOs but allow for adaptability to local contexts and diverse understandings of FDSV. Utilising both qualitative and quantitative approaches can help paint a fuller picture while protecting confidentiality.

#### **2. Implement Technology-Driven Solutions:**

- Adopt Digital Data Management Systems: Encourage ACCOs to utilise user-friendly digital platforms for data collection and management that ensure confidentiality and data security through encrypted systems. All providers should share a common data collection structure funded by the government, enabling ACCOs to retain control over access to their data, where it is shared, and how it is conveyed.
- Train Staff on Data Systems: Provide training for ACCO staff and community members on how to effectively use data management systems and tools, ensuring they have the skills necessary to gather, analyse, and interpret the data while maintaining the anonymity of participants.

#### **3. Integrate Community Storytelling with Sensitivity:**

- Utilise Participatory Action Research (PAR): Implement participatory approaches that enable community members to contribute to data gathering through storytelling, interviews, and focus groups, ensuring that

their lived experiences inform programs and services while prioritising their confidentiality and safety.

- Peer Support Groups: Consider creating discreet peer support groups that allow community members to share their experiences in a safe space, overseen by trained facilitators. This provides an opportunity for mutual support while minimising the risk of conflict or harm between families.

- Develop Safe Sharing Platforms: Establish digital or physical platforms for sharing community stories that protect individuals' identities and prioritise their safety. This can include anonymous submissions or the option to share experiences in a way that does not directly identify the storytellers.

#### **4. Establish Multisector Collaboration for Data Collection:**

- Engage Healthcare Providers and Law Enforcement: Collaborate with hospitals, clinics, police services, and other relevant organisations to establish mechanisms for collecting data on FDSV incidents reported to these entities. This includes creating referral pathways for individuals seeking support and ensuring that data from all sectors is integrated into the overall data framework.

- Standardise Reporting Protocols: Implement standardised protocols for collecting and sharing FDSV-related data across different service sectors to allow for a coherent understanding of trends and needs while minimising the risk of misrepresentation or bias.

#### **5. Incentivise Reporting from Private Practices:**

- Develop Incentives: Create incentives for private healthcare providers, including reimbursement for collecting and reporting FDSV data as part of their service delivery. This could include grants, subsidies, or recognition programs encouraging participation.

- Provide Training and Resources: Offer training and resources to private practices on the importance of collecting FDSV data and how it contributes to community health outcomes, fostering a sense of shared responsibility.

#### **6. Governance Structure for Data Management:**

- Establish a Data Governance Committee: Create a governance structure composed of community leaders, ACCO representatives, and data management experts tasked with overseeing the data collection process.

This committee will ensure that data collection, analysis, and reporting practices adhere to community values and protect individual confidentiality.

- Implement Confidentiality Agreements: Ensure that all individuals and organisations involved in the data collection and management processes sign confidentiality agreements. This legal structure will protect sensitive information and permit retention of data on a "need-to-know" basis when necessary, to avoid stigmatisation or misrepresentation of community members.

### **7. Engage in Regular Data Analysis:**

- Establish Working Groups for Data Review: Form local working groups consisting of ACCO representatives, community members, and relevant stakeholders to regularly analyse collected data. Ensure that data findings are shared in ways that prioritise community context and confidentiality, avoiding misinterpretation or misrepresentation of individuals as perpetrators.

- Utilise Findings to Inform Practices: Use data analysis findings to inform the design of interventions, advocacy efforts, and policy recommendations aimed at addressing FDSV in Aboriginal communities, illustrating how evidence can lead to crucial changes while being carefully framed to prevent external bias.

### **8. Collaboration and Reporting:**

- Create Partnerships for Data Sharing: Encourage collaboration between ACCOs, health services, law enforcement, and governmental bodies to share findings on FDSV while ensuring individual identities are protected. This collaboration can create a unified approach toward addressing the issue, with inputs gathered by community members being faithfully represented.

- Public Reporting on Outcomes: Develop accessible reports that summarise key findings and outcomes from data collection efforts while maintaining confidentiality of individuals involved. These reports can highlight community strengths and challenges, serve as valuable advocacy tools to address funding, resources, and policy changes while ensuring that narratives authentically reflect the community's voice without stigmatising any group.

### **9. Advocate for Supportive Policy Frameworks:**

- Engage with Government on Data Needs: Advocate for state and federal support in establishing a comprehensive data collection strategy focused on FDSV in Aboriginal communities, ensuring that organisational and governmental data practices align and are coordinated. Ensuring these practices prioritise community voices will enhance the legitimacy of findings.

- Encourage Policy Development Based on Evidence: Work with policymakers to create frameworks that utilise community-generated data to inform legislation and funding decisions aimed at reducing FDSV rates. Data should illustrate the realities within communities, making a compelling case for needed resources and interventions, and ensuring community perspectives are at the forefront.

In conclusion, by prioritising data collection and storytelling, the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations and communities can gain a comprehensive understanding of Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence. Addressing challenges in data collection while ensuring confidentiality, multisector collaboration, and avoiding external bias is crucial to ensuring that the experiences and insights of Aboriginal individuals are captured in a respectful and empowering manner. These efforts will enable more targeted interventions, enhance service delivery, and inform policy development that is grounded in the realities faced by Aboriginal individuals. The collaborative actions between ACCOs and government bodies to establish viable data systems will ultimately lead to improved outcomes for those affected by violence and contribute to the overall health and well-being of Aboriginal communities.

### **PRIORITY: Addressing Increased Health Disparities**

Rationale:

Family Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) has profound implications for health disparities within Aboriginal communities. Many individuals affected by FDSV experience mental health issues, trauma, and barriers to accessing healthcare services. Addressing these disparities requires a comprehensive approach that integrates holistic health services, promotes resources tailored to community needs, and prioritises mental well-being informed by lived experiences.

- Holistic Approach to Health: Recognising the interconnectedness of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health is vital.

Consequently, health initiatives should be designed to address these various dimensions comprehensively.

- **Culturally Relevant Services:** Providing services that respect and incorporate Aboriginal culture, traditions, and values is critical for building trust and ensuring effective healthcare delivery.
- **Community Empowerment:** Engaging community members in the design and implementation of health programs fosters ownership and effectiveness, ensuring services meet the unique needs of the population.
- **Utilisation of Lived Experiences:** Specifically incorporating the insights and stories of individuals with lived experience of FDSV into program development is essential for understanding community-specific needs and improving service delivery.

### Challenges in Addressing Health Disparities

Several challenges must be considered to effectively address health disparities exacerbated by FDSV:

1. **Limited Access to Services:** Geographic isolation and a shortage of culturally competent healthcare providers can create barriers to accessing appropriate care.
2. **Stigma and Mistrust:** Historical trauma and systemic discrimination have led to mistrust in healthcare systems among Aboriginal individuals, making it difficult to engage them in necessary health services.
3. **Fragmented Services:** A lack of integration among health services can lead to disjointed care, where individuals do not receive the comprehensive support they need to address trauma and health disparities effectively.
4. **Inadequate Funding:** Health initiatives specifically targeting FDSV and its related health disparities often lack sufficient funding and resources.
5. **Cultural Competence:** Many healthcare providers may not have adequate training in culturally responsive practices, limiting their effectiveness in serving Aboriginal communities.

## **Proposed Actions**

To effectively address health disparities and provide holistic support to individuals affected by FDSV while incorporating lived experience, the following actions should be taken:

### **1. Integrate Holistic Health Services:**

- **Develop Comprehensive Health Models:** Establish health service delivery models that integrate mental health, substance abuse treatment, trauma recovery, and primary health, and medical care. This integrated approach should be informed by the lived experiences of those who have faced FDSV to ensure that the services are relevant and responsive.
- **Implement Trauma-Informed Care Approaches:** All health service providers should adopt trauma-informed care principles that recognise the impact of trauma on health and service engagement, ensuring that interactions with service recipients are sensitive, supportive, and empowering.

### **2. Allocate Resources for Health Disparities:**

- **Increase Funding for Health Initiatives:** Advocate for increased funding from governmental and non-governmental organisations for health programs specifically designed for Aboriginal communities to address FDSV-related health disparities.
- **Promote Accessible Health Resources:** Develop initiatives that facilitate access to culturally relevant health resources, including education and outreach programs tailored to the unique healthcare needs and preferences of Aboriginal individuals.

### **3. Expand Community Engagement:**

- **Involve Community Members in Health Program Design:** Actively involve Aboriginal community members, including those with lived experience, in identifying health priorities and designing programs that effectively address these needs.
- **Create Health Advocacy Networks:** Establish community-led health advocacy groups that promote awareness of available services, support community members in navigating health systems, and advocate for policy changes to improve health access and resources.

#### **4. Enhance Training and Capacity Building:**

- Provide Cultural Competency Training: Develop training programs or bolster existing training for healthcare providers focused on cultural competency, understanding Aboriginal history and context, and the specific health challenges faced by Aboriginal communities.
- Support Training for Community Health Workers: Invest in training community health workers or bolster training to act as liaisons between healthcare systems and Aboriginal communities, increasing trust and enhancing access to health services.

#### **5. Monitor and Evaluate Health Outcomes:**

- Establish Health Outcome Metrics: Develop relevant health outcome indicators to measure the effectiveness of integrated health services, focusing on physical health, mental health, and trauma recovery.
- Conduct Regular Health Disparity Assessments: Implement regular assessments to evaluate health disparities within Aboriginal communities, identify emerging needs, and track progress over time, ensuring the inclusion of lived experiences in analysis and reporting.

#### **6. Foster Collaboration Across Sectors:**

- Create Cross-Sector Partnerships: Foster collaboration between health services, educational institutions, social services, and community organisations to build a network of support for individuals affected by FDSV. These partnerships can enhance the capacity to address complex health needs more effectively.
- Engage Law Enforcement and Justice Sector: Work with the justice system to incorporate health services within sexual and domestic violence response frameworks, ensuring that individuals accessing services within these systems receive holistic health support.

In conclusion, addressing health disparities resulting from Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence requires a comprehensive approach that integrates holistic health services and promotes culturally relevant resources tailored to Aboriginal communities. By recognising the multifaceted nature of health, engaging individuals with lived experience, and fostering collaboration across sectors, stakeholders can effectively create an intervention framework that meets the unique challenges posed by FDSV. These actions will ultimately improve health outcomes, enhance

accessibility, and support the overall well-being of Aboriginal communities affected by violence.

### **PRIORITY: Importance of Measuring Effectiveness in Family, Domestic, and Sexual Violence (FDSV) Programs**

Measuring the effectiveness of Family, Domestic, and Sexual Violence programs is essential for several reasons:

1. **Accountability:** Evaluation provides accountability to stakeholders, including community members, funders, and governmental bodies. It ensures that programs are delivering on their promises and using resources effectively.
2. **Informed Decision-Making:** Rigorous evaluation processes allow program administrators and policymakers to make informed decisions about resource allocation and program design. Understanding what works and what doesn't enables targeted improvements and better outcomes.
3. **Identifying Best Practices:** Evaluations can uncover successful strategies and approaches, allowing organisations to replicate effective practices across different communities, thus enhancing the overall impact of services offered.
4. **Tailoring Programs:** Continuous measurement of outcomes helps to identify the unique needs and challenges of specific populations, allowing programs to be adjusted or redesigned to ensure they meet the needs of the community effectively.
5. **Advocacy for Resources:** Data from evaluations can serve as compelling evidence for advocacy efforts, showcasing the need for ongoing or increased funding and support for effective programs. Positive outcomes can help garner public support and drive policy change.
6. **Community Empowerment:** By involving community members in the evaluation process, programs can empower individuals and groups to take ownership of the results and be active participants in identifying solutions to FDSV.

### **Expected Outcomes and Impacts of Effective Measurement:**

When FDSV programs are measured effectively, several positive outcomes and impacts can be anticipated:

**1. Reduction in Violence Rates:** Measurements can help demonstrate the program's effectiveness if there is a significant decrease in reported incidents of family violence, including both severity and frequency.

**2. Improved Survivor Support:** Effective programs should enhance access to necessary support services for victims, resulting in greater satisfaction with available resources, increased service usage, and better recovery outcomes.

**3. Enhanced Community Awareness:** Programs geared towards education and prevention may measurably increase community awareness of FDSV issues, leading to greater engagement with support systems and a cultural shift in addressing violence.

**4. Increased Healthcare Access and Outcomes:** Evaluation can reveal improved health outcomes for individuals seeking assistance for issues related to FDSV, including physical and mental health improvements.

**5. Community Engagement and Empowerment:** Programs that evaluate and adapt based on feedback can lead to more engaged communities, where individuals feel valued and empowered to contribute to solutions.

**6. Strategic Resource Allocation:** Data-driven insights can lead to smarter investment in programs and initiatives that produce measurable results, ensuring resources are used effectively where they will have the greatest impact.

**7. Sustainable Change:** Ultimately, measuring effectiveness fosters sustainable change within communities, as successful programs can be scaled and adapted, contributing to long-term improvements in safety and well-being for Aboriginal women and children.

In conclusion, by measuring the effectiveness of FDSV programs is not just a matter of accountability; it is essential for ensuring that the support provided is impactful, culturally relevant, and adequately responsive to the needs of Aboriginal communities. Through systematic evaluation, we can create a foundation for continuous improvement and advance our collective goal of eradicating violence and fostering safety for all individuals and families.

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## **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

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To address the pressing issue of FDSV and its associated health disparities among Aboriginal communities in Tasmania, we present the following key recommendations:

### **1. Enhance Funding and Support for Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs):**

- Increase Funding: Secure increased state and federal funding for ACCOs to expand their capacity and reach in providing support to victims of FDSV.

### **2. Data Collection and Storytelling:**

- Prioritise Lived Experience: Engage community members in the data collection process through culturally sensitive storytelling methods, ensuring their lived experiences inform programs and services.

- Utilise Storytelling: Make narratives from community members a key part of advocacy efforts to illustrate the real impact of FDSV on families, facilitating greater understanding and resource allocation.

### **3. Addressing Increased Health Disparities:**

- Integrate Holistic Health Services: Develop integrated health services focused on mental well-being, trauma recovery, and holistic support tailored to the unique health needs of Aboriginal communities affected by FDSV.

- Allocate Resources for Health Disparities: Promote accessible health resources that cater to the specific requirements of Aboriginal individuals, including culturally relevant education and outreach.

### **4. Culturally Appropriate Education and Training Programs:**

- Cultural Competency Training: Mandate comprehensive training for healthcare providers and law enforcement on cultural competence, ensuring respectful and effective interactions with Aboriginal individuals and families.

- Community Awareness Campaigns: Launch initiatives to raise awareness about FDSV signs, available resources, and the importance of reporting, tailored for different age groups within the community.

### **5. Strengthening Legal and Protection Frameworks:**

- Review and Advocate for Legislative Changes: Advocate for changes to state laws that provide better protection for Aboriginal individuals experiencing family violence, ensuring their voices and needs are prioritised.

- Enhanced Access to Legal Support: Create programs to facilitate access to legal services for Aboriginal victims of FDSV, promoting legal pathways to safety.

## **6. Support Services for Victims and Survivors:**

- Establish Safe Spaces: Create safe shelters providing not just accommodation but also comprehensive counseling and support services for Aboriginal victims of FDSV.
- Ensuring timely access to both short-term and long-term housing and accommodation solutions for individual of all genders is essential.
- Holistic Support Services: Foster integrated services that consider both victims and perpetrators, ensuring familial relationships are accounted for and children's needs are prioritised.

## **7. Multisector Collaboration for Data Collection:**

- Engagement with Service Systems: Collaborate with healthcare providers, law enforcement, and social services to create a comprehensive data system that respects confidentiality while allowing for effective resource allocation.

## **8. Governance Structure for Data Management:**

- Establish a Data Governance Committee: Create a governance structure to oversee data collection processes, protect individual confidentiality, and ensure adherence to community values.
- Implement Confidentiality Agreements: Ensure all individuals involved in data collection and management processes sign confidentiality agreements to protect sensitive information.

## **9. Measure Program Effectiveness:**

- Define Goals and Metrics: Develop clear metrics to assess program impact, ensuring continuous monitoring and adaptation of strategies based on data analysis.
- Shared Learning: Regularly report findings and lessons learned to stakeholders to promote transparency and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

Integration of the Family Safety Plan in Tasmania to make the Family Safety Plan relevant and actionable in Tasmania, we emphasise the importance of localising this framework:

- Community Consultation: Engage Aboriginal communities to gather insights about their unique challenges related to family violence and ensure that implementation strategies reflect local needs.
- Tailored Programs: Develop programs and resources under the Family Safety Plan that are culturally appropriate and specifically designed for Tasmanian Aboriginal contexts.
- Enhanced Cross-Sector Collaboration: Foster partnerships among local governments, ACCOs, health services, and service providers to create a coordinated response to FDSV.
- Data-Driven Decision-Making: Utilise local data collection efforts to monitor FDSV prevalence and assess the effectiveness of strategies implemented, ensuring that all measures reflect community perspectives.

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## **CONCLUSION**

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While this submission addresses only a portion of the comprehensive recommendations outlined in our submission to SNAICC for the National Family Safety Plan, we want to underscore that we consider all recommendations to be important. Our response has concentrated on four key areas: enhancing funding and support for Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), improving data collection and storytelling methodologies, addressing health disparities associated with Family Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV), and emphasising the importance of measuring the effectiveness of FDSV programs. By homing in on these priorities, we aim to highlight the urgent actions needed to create meaningful and lasting change for Aboriginal communities in Tasmania.

This submission has been crafted with careful consideration of the unique social and cultural landscape of Tasmania, acknowledging the specific challenges faced by our communities. Simultaneously, we recognise the commonalities shared with Aboriginal populations across Australia, particularly concerning the issues surrounding family violence and health disparities. Our goal has been to reflect both the local context and the broader national landscape, ensuring that our recommendations are culturally relevant and actionable.

We are committed to fostering collaboration and advocacy to advance the safety and well-being of Aboriginal women and children. By implementing the strategies identified in this submission, we can work together toward a future where every Aboriginal individual feels safe, supported, and empowered within their community. We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this essential dialogue and look forward to ongoing collaboration to realise these goals.

### **Tasmanian Aboriginal Health Reference Group**

TAHRG ACCO Members:

Cape Barren Aboriginal Association Inc

Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation

Flinders Island Aboriginal Association Inc

Karadi Aboriginal Corporation

South East Tasmania Aboriginal Corporation