



**National Women's  
Safety Alliance**

# **POLICY POSITION: INVEST IN TARGETED FUNDING FOR SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES**

Proudly led by YWCA Canberra, the Working with Women Alliance (WwWA) is one of the five National Women's Alliances that play a key role in ensuring women's voices are central in the policy development process by providing evidence-based, intersectional gender equality advice and civil society expertise to government on areas of most impact and influence to Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality.

The National Women's Safety Alliance is a portfolio under the WwWA that brings together a diversity of voices, expertise and experience to inform and guide national policy on women's safety.

# POLICY STATEMENT: INVEST IN TARGETED FUNDING FOR SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES

## Executive Summary

The acceleration of gender-based violence has increased pressure on Australia's housing crisis and frontline services. Demand for support in the face of violence vastly outweighs the available supply and leaves women and children at great risk of homelessness or further violence.

Experiences of gender inequality increase the risk of poverty, limit opportunities to escape and recover from violence, contribute to housing insecurity and homelessness and result in lower superannuation balances and reduced financial stability in retirement.

This policy position statement highlights the urgent need for policies that prioritise women's access to safe, affordable housing, comprehensive income support, and sustainable frontline services as a response to extreme rates of gender-based violence. In addition, it calls for pro-active policies that eliminate instances of violence in the first place.

## Key Recommendations

Invest in targeted funding for sexual violence services:

1. Secure dedicated funding for sexual violence services to expand and improve specialist support for survivors.
2. Include a budget line for specialist sexual violence services within National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic, and Sexual Violence Responses (the National Partnership Agreement) with a focus on services catering to children and young people.



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# Sexual violence: Our National Crisis

Recent data from the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) indicates that sexual violence in Australia has reached alarming levels. The AIC's Sexual Offending in Australia 2021–22 report reveals a sexual offending rate of 40.11 per 100,000 individuals aged 10 years and over, with over 90% of offenders being male.[i] This underscores the urgent need for enhanced support services, particularly for children and young people who are disproportionately affected.

To address this crisis, the Australian Government must allocate \$228.6 million over five years through the National Partnership Agreement for specifically designated sexual violence services targeting children and young people. Such an investment would bolster trauma-informed programs, strengthen crisis response teams, and support long-term therapeutic interventions, ensuring that young survivors receive the comprehensive care they need.

This proposed allocation represents a significant increase in the current National Partnership Agreement, which stands at \$700 million. By directing additional resources to specialist services, the Australian Government can enhance the capacity of existing programs and facilitate the development of new initiatives tailored to the unique needs of young survivors.

The National Plan emphasises the importance of coordinated efforts between federal, state, and territory governments to prevent and address violence. Aligning with The National Plan, this approach aims to create a cohesive and effective response to sexual violence across Australia.[ii]

Continuous evaluation of the National Partnership Agreement is essential. It is imperative that states and territories are mandated to report on the utilisation and impact of these funds through the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission. Regular reporting will ensure transparency, accountability, and the effective use of resources, enabling adjustments to maximise the positive outcomes for survivors.

More funding is necessary to eradicate gender-based violence within a generation. This proposed investment signifies a decisive step towards this goal, reflecting a national commitment to safeguarding the well-being of children and young people across Australia.



## Increased funding for sexual violence services targeting children and young people

The Australian Government should allocate \$228.6 million over five years through the National Partnership Agreement to support trauma-informed programs, crisis response teams, and long-term therapeutic interventions to ensure children and young survivors receive comprehensive care.

## Mandatory reporting on fund utilisation and impact.

States and territories should be required to report on the use and impact of allocated funds through the Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence Commission. Regular reporting will enhance transparency, accountability, and effectiveness, ensuring that resources are used efficiently and that necessary adjustments can be made to improve survivor outcomes.



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## References

[i] Sullivan, T., Faulconbridge, E., & Bricknell, S., 2024, Sexual Offending in Australia 2021–22. Australian Institute of Criminology. Retrieved from <https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/sr/sr30>

[ii] Commonwealth of Australia, 2024, National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032. Retrieved from <https://www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/national-plan>



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