

Northern Territory
**DOMESTIC, FAMILY
AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE
WORKFORCE AND SECTOR
DEVELOPMENT PLAN**



**NORTHERN
TERRITORY**
GOVERNMENT

WHAT IS THIS PLAN ABOUT?

One of the key priorities of the [Northern Territory's Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018-2028](#) *Safe, respected and free from violence* (the Framework) is to build a capable and responsive domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) workforce and sector.

The Northern Territory (NT) Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Workforce and Sector Development Plan (the Plan) sets out our goals and priority actions to strengthen and support the DFSV workforce and sector.

To develop the Plan we consulted with workers and leaders from universal, specialist and statutory services including government agencies, non-government organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. We established an advisory group to help us understand the issues and build on the positive work already achieved. We also undertook an audit of 48 workers and managers. A supporting document, providing background information, a summary of the feedback received, and training audit results, has been developed and is designed to be read in conjunction with the Plan.

For those who took the time to contribute to this plan, thank you. Your voices have been heard.

We acknowledge the significant commitment, skills, experience and wisdom that exists among the Territory's DFSV workforce. Their work is of core value to our communities. They are dedicated to preventing DFSV, supporting victim-survivors' safety and recovery, advocating for stronger system responses, and working towards perpetrator accountability and behaviour change.

ABORIGINAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Northern Territory Government respectfully acknowledges the First Nations people of this country and recognises their continuing connection to their lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to their leaders past, present and emerging. While this strategy uses the term 'Aboriginal', we respectfully acknowledge that Torres Strait Islander peoples are First Nations people living in the Territory. Therefore, strategies, services and outcomes relating to 'Aboriginal' Territorians should be read to include both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Territorians.

WHAT ARE OUR GOALS?

Our goals are:

- a DFSV workforce that is capable, effective, evidence-based, client-centred, trauma-informed, safe, and reflective of the diversity of the communities in which we work
- workers in universal services who are capable and effective in understanding the dynamics of DFSV, identifying DFSV at the earliest stage and responding effectively
- specialist services which are sustainable, culturally secure, accountable, leaders of good practice and which value, develop and support their workers
- a strong and integrated sector that includes specialist, statutory and universal services, that works collaboratively, and that is underpinned by a shared understanding of DFSV, and shared practice frameworks and tools.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

A strong, supported and capable DFSV workforce and sector will enable:

- greater safety and wellbeing for DFSV victim-survivors
- stronger accountability for people who commit DFSV, as well as more effective support to change their behaviour
- more effort to prevent violence before it occurs.

WHO IS THE DFSV WORKFORCE?

The DFSV workforce works across the spectrum of prevention, early intervention, intervention, recovery and healing responses, and includes:

- Universal workers in services such as health, education, housing, disability, alcohol and other drugs, counselling, settlement, advocacy, and family and youth support. While DFSV is not their core business, these workers are often the first to come into contact with both DFSV victim survivors and people who commit DFSV, and need skills and support in recognising, responding and referring. These services are also part of the broad prevention effort.
- Statutory workers in services such as police, child protection, youth justice, judiciary and courts, corrections and mental health. These workers have responsibilities which include providing statutory or legal responses to victim survivors and/or people who commit DFSV.
- Specialist DFSV workers, for whom the prevention of and response to DFSV is their core business. These workers include workers in women's safe houses and refuges, DFSV counselling, DFSV outreach, DFSV individual and systemic advocacy, sexual assault services, men's behaviour change, specialist police services, DFSV prevention, specialist legal services, and DFSV research, training and policy development. These workers usually have specialist skills in DFSV and it is essential that they are supported to maintain and improve existing skills, obtain new skills and qualifications, manage vicarious trauma, and work within shared practice frameworks.

HOW WILL WE WORK TOWARDS OUR GOALS?

The Northern Territory Government has committed \$1 million per year to support the development of the DFSV workforce and sector. This is complemented by increased investment in DFSV prevention, response, and enhanced specialist service provision.

Our goals are long term ones requiring sustained effort over many years. This Plan identifies a number of immediate actions over the next 2-3 years. The Plan will be reviewed every two years and further actions developed to build and complement achievements.

NT DFSV Cross Agency Working Group (CAWG) will monitor progress on implementation. Implementation of the Plan will be aligned with and support other government strategies including the DFSV Framework, the [DFSV Risk Assessment and Management Framework \(RAMF\)](#), the [NT Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework \(SVPRF\)](#), the [NT Gender Equality Statement of Commitment](#), the Indigenous Advancement Strategy Remote Child and Family Safety Program, the [Everyone Together 2019-2029 NT Government Aboriginal Affairs Strategy](#) and the [Northern Territory Human Services Industry Plan](#). Implementation of training will align with existing professional training frameworks and initiatives where these exist.

THE NT DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE WORKFORCE AND SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN

*Goal: Build a supported, safe and capable DFSV workforce and sector so that people experiencing or perpetrating DFSV receive a consistent and effective response from **skilled workers** who are employed by **sustainable services** which collaborate as part of a **joined up service system**.*



WORKFORCE CAPABILITY

Workers have the right skills and support to provide effective services.

- Priority actions include: developing practice and service standards, developing key DFSV training modules, and establishing a coordinated training delivery system.

ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY

Specialist services are accountable, sustainable, responsive to emerging needs, and support the health and wellbeing of their workers.

- Priority actions include: training for managers and boards, ongoing supervision support, governance support and developing service standards.

SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

The sector is strong, sustainable, collaborative and integrated, so that clients experience a joined up system.

- Priority actions include: developing communities of practice and enhancing specialist network supports.



FOCUS AREA 1: WORKFORCE CAPABILITY

Our goal: a DFSV workforce that is capable, effective, evidence-based, client-centred, trauma-informed, safe, reflects the diversity of the communities in which it works, and has the appropriate cultural knowledge, practice, strategies and alliances to provide culturally secure services. This includes workers in universal services who are capable and effective in understanding the dynamics of DFSV, identifying DFSV at the earliest stage and responding effectively.

THIS IS ACHIEVED BY:

- Foundational DFSV training for workers in universal services so that victim-survivors and people who have committed DFSV are identified early and receive the help and referrals they require.
- Foundational and specialist (advanced) training for workers in specialist services.
- Training that is:
 - » evidence-based and informed by national research and practice models
 - » designed specifically for the local context in the NT and its regions
 - » delivered by trainers who have contemporary and local practice knowledge and expertise, as well as skills and experience in working effectively in the remote context, including an understanding of intergenerational trauma and cultural security
 - » available cross-agency to build collaboration, practice consistency and relationships.
- Consistent and clearly articulated practice and service standards to guide specialist workers in their practice and development.
- A coordinated training delivery system so that the development and delivery of DFSV training in the NT is accessible, quality-assured, consistent, regular, and sustainable.
- Continuing initiatives such as existing DFSV training, NT Health DFV Clinical Guidelines, Safe and Together training, development of a DFSV website, the DFSV biannual conference, and the development of sexual violence response training.
- Acknowledging that the prevalence of DFSV means it is inevitable that the workforce includes people with their own lived experience of DFSV (past and present).

OUR IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TO WORK TOWARDS THESE PRIORITIES ARE:

1. Establish a centralised structure for developing, brokering, delivering and coordinating DFSV training across the Northern Territory. The structure will be informed by a model outlining recommended baseline DFSV training for universal and specialist services.¹
2. Commence process of working towards minimum mandatory training standards in foundational DFSV identification and response for frontline workers in health, housing, education, police, corrections, child protection and youth justice.
3. Implement outcomes of NT Police internal training review to strengthen responses to DFSV.²
4. Develop DFV practice and service standards for DFV specialist services, in partnership with specialist services and those with lived experience of DFV, to support service-driven quality improvement, including an implementation process through Quality Assurance tools.
5. Redesign the current Family Safety Framework training model into two modules (DFV Foundations and Risk Assessment and Management Framework) with clear communication to the sector on the redesign and phasing, and provide a regular training calendar for both modules.
6. Develop and deliver training to support specialist and universal services to implement the Risk Assessment and Management Framework including the Common Risk Assessment Tool by the end of 2020.

¹ The model will take into consideration the scope, budget, sustainability, staffing and training framework and consider similar models in other jurisdictions. Possible functions include: develop and deliver training, sustain practice through communities of practice, implement practice standards; implement DFV RAMF training; develop practice resources; work with existing training providers to promote, coordinate and increase accessibility of DFSV training offerings; coordinate a centralised DFSV training calendar; connect with the violence prevention community of practice; enhance quality assurance and training integrity. The training model would set out the scope of baseline and advanced training. Priority modules would include foundational understandings of DFV, responding to sexual violence disclosures, risk assessment and management, vicarious trauma (for staff and managers), and trauma informed and culturally secure practice. The model could also include options for expanding the training repertoire in ongoing years, including induction programs for new workers; advanced training for experienced workers; client advocacy within justice and child protection systems; responding to problem sexual behaviours in children; correctly identifying the person who has committed DFV; avoiding collusion with people who have committed DFV and their supporters; supporting accountability and behaviour change for people who have committed DFV; working with children; and violence prevention.

² Aligned with Action [4.2 under the SVPRE](#) - development of a Code of Practice for the investigation of sexual crime including interviewing techniques for vulnerable persons.



FOCUS AREA 2: ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY OF SPECIALIST SERVICES

Our goal: specialist DFSV services which are sustainable, culturally secure for staff and clients, accountable, leaders of good practice and which value, develop and support their workers.

THIS IS ACHIEVED BY:

- Strong governance whereby organisational leaders and boards understand and uphold their legal, industrial and contractual obligations through effective policies, procedures, standards, and organisational culture.
- Governance that meaningfully reflects the diversity of the communities in which the service operates, and includes independent expertise.
- An organisational response to the developmental and occupational health and safety needs of workers, including prevention and management of vicarious trauma and burnout, effective professional development, and supervision frameworks.
- Attracting, recruiting, and retaining skilled workers, and developing robust succession planning, mentoring, and leadership cultivation.
- Consistent and clearly articulated service standards to guide service leaders in their responsibilities for worker safety and wellbeing, strong governance, and effective mechanisms for learning from the lived experience and expertise of clients.
- Continuing current initiatives in this area, such as sustainable five year funding agreements for non-government organisations, DFV service and system reviews, targeted funding for supervision and practice management, and the [NT Human Services Industry Plan](#).

OUR IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TO WORK TOWARDS THESE PRIORITIES ARE:

7. Review Territory Families, Housing and Communities specialist DFSV service grants to include ongoing supervision and practice management funding.
8. Explore workforce recruitment and retention strategies including leveraging implementation of the [NT Human Services Industry Plan](#) so that the current and future needs of the DFSV workforce are included, particularly in the areas of improving governance, organisational sustainability, attracting skilled workers, and increasing Aboriginal employment.
9. Include the training needs of managers and leaders in regards to vicarious trauma, and strategies to support workers with lived experience of DFSV, as part of the training model developed in action 1.
10. Include the needs and requirements of organisational leaders and boards in the training model developed in action 1 and the practice and service standards developed in action 4.



FOCUS AREA 3: DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPECIALIST DFSV SECTOR

Our goal: a strong and integrated sector that includes specialist and universal services, that works collaboratively, and that is underpinned by a shared understanding of DFSV, shared standards, and shared practice frameworks and tools.

THIS IS ACHIEVED BY:

- Services being trained in and working with a shared understanding of DFSV, shared standards and shared practice tools to enable a consistent response to clients. This includes the DFSV Framework, the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework, DFV information sharing guidelines, the Risk Assessment and Management Framework, and practice and service standards.
- Services understanding each other's roles and establishing strong working relationships to enable effective referrals and information sharing, including by participation in interagency meetings.
- Support for a culture of collaboration, innovation, learning and accountability across the service system, achieved through collaborative case management, inter-agency professional development, communities of practice, and sustainable sector network mechanisms. This includes leadership, resources and service practices that support worker participation in these activities.
- Continuing initiatives such as support for sector networks, the biannual DFSV conference, Family Safety Framework, Cross Agency Working Group, regional DFSV coordinator positions in Katherine and Tennant Creek, the development of a DFSV website, primary prevention community of practice, and the specialist DFV Alice Springs Local Court.

OUR IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TO WORK TOWARDS THESE PRIORITIES ARE:

11. Continue the commitment to the biannual conference (Action Plan 1 5.5a) that will align with workforce development needs and reviews and prioritise a skills based focus.
12. Explore how sector support development and advocacy can be improved.
13. Strengthen and support connections between urban and remote specialist services to improve cultural understanding and service quality, build staff capacity and provide support including through mentoring and secondments.
14. Explore options to improve broader sector links and partnerships across Northern Australia so that integrated service delivery is improved.
15. Implement the NT Violence Prevention Community of Practice (Action Plan 1 1.2c) to increase prevention capability across the Territory.
16. Introduce, in partnership with services, principles for consulting with and within the sector.
17. Build on the current DFV network models to increase engagement of services and workers where specialist networks do not currently operate.



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