**Quaker Peace & Legislation Committee**

**ACTION ALERT 22-1 NATIONAL PLAN FOR WOMEN**

**Consultation – draft National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032**

**Submissions close 25th February 2022**

**As Quakers we seek a world without war. We seek a sustainable and just community. We have a vision of an Australia that upholds human rights and builds peace internationally, with particular focus on our region. In our approach to government we will promote the importance of dialogue, of listening and of seeking that of God in every person. We aim to work for justice and to take away the occasion for war**

The federal Department of Social Services is inviting public **comments** on the draft National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children
2022-2032 **by 25th February 2022**. It was very unfortunate that there has been little time for this to be considered in any real detail.

Comments from individuals and organization are being collected through an **online survey questionnaire which will take about 10 minutes to complete.** Margaret Clark completed the survey and the yes/no-comment questions assume that the respondent has read the draft document – at least a light read. However, at the end of the survey is a ‘free text’ space for your comments (250 words maximum). A longer document can also be uploaded at the end of the survey, just below the free text space.

The draft Plan document and link to the survey can be found at

<https://engage.dss.gov.au/draft-national-plan-to-end-violence-against-women-and-children-2022-2032/> (please cut and paste if the link doesn’t work)

Since 2007-2008, successive federal and state/territory governments have worked together, with stakeholders and community groups, to develop and implement National Plans to reduce violence against women and their children. In September 2021, the National Summit on Women’s Safety met virtually, providing recommendations for the National Plan 2022-2032. The Delegates’ Statement is at <http://www.womenssafetysummit.com.au/>

Unlike the previous plan, which covered twelve years, this plan covers ten years, broken into two five-year action plans and two five-year Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander action plans. This decision was in response to many organisations which advised that five-year timeframes would give programs a better chance to make a difference.

The four pillars for government action are: prevention, intervention, response and recovery. The broad themes are:

* addressing gender inequality
* making sure victim-survivors are ‘at the table’
* working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders leaders, elders and communities; and
* the importance of an evidence-based approach that considers the diversity of people’s experiences.

‘Prevention’ in the draft Plan encourages the community to change attitudes that ‘justify, excuse, trivialize, normalize or downplay violence against women and children’, by embedding prevention education in homes, schools and workplaces.

There will also be a specific focus on working with men and boys to endeavour to promote ‘healthy masculinities’ and normalize relationships that are built on respectful, fair, ethical, safe and supportive behaviours.

Early intervention in the Plan includes

* Breaking the cycle of intergenerational trauma through targeted programs like those during pregnancy and after relationships break down
* Providing opportunities for men and boys who are violent to change their behaviour through support programs
* Developing more programs for perpetrators both in the community and in the justice system to reduce re-offending
* Build community capacity to enable people to identify violence early

The Plan includes support for and improvement of, services for women and children escaping domestic violence. This includes increasing well trained staff and increasing crisis and long-term housing options for those in need.

Specific funding amounts are not included in the Plan. In last year’s Budget, the government designated $998 million over four years for the Plan. However, Women’s Safety NSW has estimated $1 billion a year would be needed just for frontline services – especially considering the increase of domestic violence during the pandemic.

The Plan also considers:

* the role technology plays by supporting young people and women when they experience ‘technology facilitated abuse’
* improved legal response and training on ‘coercive control’
* working with the financial sector to take action and prevent financial abuse.

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-01-14/draft-national-plan-end-violence-against-women-children/100756294