



Department of **Justice**
Department of **Communities**



CENTRE FOR
Women's Safety
and Wellbeing

Sexual violence strategy

Consultative forum background paper



Acknowledgement of Country

The Government of Western Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures; and to Elders both past and present.

Background

On 4 September 2021, the Western Australian Government announced the commissioning of the State's first sexual violence strategy. The Office of the Commissioner for Victims of Crime in the Department of Justice and the Department of Communities will lead the development of the strategy over the next two years.

Sexual violence encapsulates a broad spectrum of behaviours that includes the sexual offences in the *Criminal Code*, intimate partner sexual violence, grooming, exploitation, stealthing, sexual harassment, and technology-facilitated sexual violence (e.g. intimate image abuse).

The purpose of the strategy is to improve outcomes for victim-survivors of sexual violence, focusing on primary prevention, support for victim-survivors' recovery and holding the perpetrator to account. The sexual violence strategy will progress work towards the following objectives which will be reviewed by the Reference Group:

1. Defining the continuum of sexual violence.
2. Understanding the drivers of sexual violence.
3. Establishing the prevalence of sexual violence and its intersectional impacts across the life-course.
4. Developing a framework to provide effective, evidence-based prevention and perpetrator programs.
5. Understanding how victim-survivors seek support; the barriers to accessing support; barriers to reporting; and support through the reporting process.
6. Developing a framework for coordinating support systems for victim-survivors that is governed by victim safety, autonomy and choice.
7. Evaluating the effectiveness of responses to sexual violence.

The strategy will be shaped by community engagement and an extensive consultation process which will incorporate the views of victim-survivors, members of the community and people working in the sector. A consultation plan will ensure all voices are heard.

Consultative Forum

The Department of Justice, Department of Communities and the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing is hosting a consultative forum to engage with a range of stakeholders, including organisations that work to address sexual violence in WA. The purpose of this forum is to discuss consultation and community engagement for developing the strategy. We want to engage a diverse population and harder to reach groups. The outcomes of this forum will form the basis of the formal consultation plan for the strategy.

Project Structure

A project structure will provide oversight and accountability to ensure the project objectives are met and stakeholders' interests are considered. The strategy will use a whole-of-government approach with key stakeholders involved in its development.



Flowchart: Governance for the Sexual Violence Strategy project

The Project Team will be responsible for producing the WA Sexual Violence Strategy, with input from the Working Group and expert advice from the Reference Group.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will oversee the project, ensuring that project outcomes are achieved and approving all documentation. The Steering Committee comprises senior representatives from the following agencies:

- Department of Justice
- Department of Communities
- Department of Health
- Department of Education
- Western Australia Police Force
- Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
- Worksafe Commission.

Project Team and Working Group

The Project Team comprises staff from Office of the Commissioner for Victims of Crime and Department of Communities and is responsible for managing the development of the strategy.

A Working Group of participants from Government agencies who work to prevent or respond to sexual violence will meet to discuss research, issues, and outcomes, and progress the work to develop the strategy.

Small working groups may meet to discuss topics. The Project Team and Working Group(s) will develop work for consideration by the Reference Group and the Steering Committee.

More information

You can contact the Sexual Violence Strategy Project Team at:
sexualviolencestrategy@justice.wa.gov.au

You can find information about the Sexual Violence Strategy at:
www.victimsofcrime.wa.gov.au

Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing:
csws.org.au

If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit 1800RESPECT.org.au.

In an emergency, call 000.

Reference Group

A Reference Group of experts will provide the Project Team and Steering Committee with feedback and recommendations during the development of the strategy.

The Chair of the Reference Group will also be a member of the Steering Committee to ensure that the views of the Reference Group are reflected in the decision-making and approvals stage. The Reference Group will provide advice and content matter expertise on:

- consultation and communication, including approving the consultation plan
- themes emerging from the consultation process
- the strategy development process and draft strategy documents to ensure the strategy reflects stakeholder perspectives on sexual violence issues.

The Reference Group will be made up of individuals who have content expertise and who also may represent different cohorts impacted by sexual violence, including women, people with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, men, older people, people from rural, regional and remote areas, and the LGBTQIA+ community.

Members of the Reference Group will be able to provide expertise and understanding of sexual violence in all its forms, including its broader impact on the community and specific vulnerable groups. The Reference Group will be chaired by Nicole Lambert, Chief Executive Officer at Allambee Counselling and Vice-Chairperson of the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence.

The Reference Group will not replace a wide-ranging consultation process. Consultation for the strategy will be open to anyone who wants to contribute and will provide opportunities for individuals and organisations to talk about the ways they have experienced sexual violence and its impacts (whether personally or through working with victim-survivors), and what the strategy should include.

Consultation

Consultation to develop the sexual violence strategy must be inclusive of Western Australia's diversity of voices, backgrounds, and experiences of its people. The purpose of this forum is to ask the sector how to conduct consultation appropriately and effectively. To achieve the project aims, it will be necessary to consult with victim-survivors, support services, health services, police, prosecutions, court staff, perpetrators, corrections staff, and other statutory agencies and industry bodies (e.g. Equal Opportunity Commission).

The evidence informs us that sexual violence is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men against women but we also know that sexual violence occurs in every community and can impact women, men and gender diverse people and children throughout their lives. Participation in the consultation process will be open to all victim-survivors. The Project Team will make particular efforts to consult with those who are marginalised or particularly vulnerable, or who may not have had their voices heard in previous processes, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, CALD people, people with disability, LGBTQIA+ people, prisoners who are victims, older people, people who are homeless or in unstable accommodation, people living regionally and remotely, and men who are victims.

Consultation mechanisms could include:

- Public consultation process (including written, video, or audio submissions in response to a discussion paper)
- In-person visits to rural and remote locations
- Focus groups (e.g. with sector stakeholders)
- Any other mechanism suggested by the Reference Group.

We hope to provide multiple ways to participate. Before we start consulting, it is also important to make sure that the processes we offer are safe, respectful and trauma informed. We will provide appropriate referrals and support for what may be a distressing or triggering process for some people.

Consultation is expected to commence in early 2022 and will run for approximately six months.

Discussion questions – Consultation strategy

- 1. What is the best way to reach the people you work with?**
- 2. Who else should we be contacting to discuss consultation?**
- 3. How can we work with services to support victim-survivors who may want to contribute to consultation but need extra support to do so?**
- 4. How can we support services that may not have the capacity to respond to extra demand?**
- 5. What mechanisms should be used for consultation? What are the most appropriate and accessible mechanisms for stakeholder groups?**
- 6. How can we make the best use of the timeframe we can allocate to consultation? Is six months sufficient?**