

Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Strategy Reference Group

Communique – Meeting 14 October 2022

The Office of the Commissioner for Victims of Crime in the Department of Justice and the Office for the Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence in the Department of Communities are jointly leading a project to develop Western Australia's (WA) first Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Strategy (the Strategy).

An independent Reference Group comprising experts and advocates working in the sexual violence field, has been established to guide the development of the Strategy. The Reference Group met for the second time on Friday 14 October 2022. This Communique has been developed to provide all stakeholders with information and outcomes from this meeting.

Terms of Reference

Members endorsed the Reference Group Terms of Reference, pending the finalisation of the project objectives out of session. The Terms of Reference will be published on the Office of the Commissioner for Victims of Crime website at: [Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Strategy \(www.wa.gov.au\)](http://www.wa.gov.au)

Policy Map

Members considered and discussed a map of current WA, national, international policies and other documents relating to sexual violence. The map identifies policies with which the Strategy should align (but not duplicate) and gaps in the overall policy framework for sexual violence, which the Strategy could address.

The document includes policies directly addressing aspects of sexual violence, including state and national family and domestic violence, child abuse and gendered violence policies. It also identifies policies that do not directly address sexual violence, but which address broader social issues relating to sexual violence, including homelessness, health mental health and Aboriginal empowerment.

Members noted that the document was useful in identifying potential focus areas for further consultation.

Literature Review

The Gender Research Network at Curtin University was commissioned to produce a Literature Review to provide a framework for conceptualising sexual violence and to summarise the evidence base. Dr Samantha Owens and Dr Peta Dzidic attended the meeting to present the draft Literature Review and receive feedback from Members.

The draft Literature Review proposes a definition of sexual violence across a continuum of behaviours and experiences. The paper also recommends a focus on long-term, cultural change as well as direct changes to reduce the prevalence of, and respond to, sexual violence.

Members provided feedback on the Literature Review, including the following key points:

- the conceptual framework is useful for positioning the Strategy in the wider social context in WA

- the experience of victim-survivors and the behaviour of perpetrators should be more closely examined for a range of different cohorts in the community including Aboriginal land CALD communities, people with disability and sex workers.
- the paper should further explore perpetrator visibility, particularly for perpetrators who do not come into contact with the criminal justice system.

Scope and focus of the Strategy

Members had a wide-ranging discussion about the scope and focus of the Strategy as outlined in the project objectives. The discussion indicated the complexity of the policy environment and members highlighted areas of importance for Strategy development, including that the Strategy should:

- name and include all groups of victim-survivors across the life-course
- address the different experiences of Aboriginal people as victim-survivors and that approaches to preventing and responding to sexual violence may be different from non-Aboriginal victim-survivors
- provide the policy framework for:
 - effective, evidence-based, culturally appropriate prevention programs
 - effective perpetrator responses
 - coordinated responses for victim survivors that is governed by victim safety, autonomy cultural awareness and choice.
- Enable short and long-term monitoring and evaluation responses with an emphasis on building reliable data sets and information sharing networks.

Members agreed to further consider and refine the project objectives for the Strategy out of session.

Scope and focus of the consultation process

Members considered a proposed consultation scope document. The consultation scope was informed by the findings of the Consultative Forum, Literature Review, Policy Map and Reference Group feedback. Broad agreement was reached among the Reference Group on the overarching common principles and architecture for the Strategy, and that rigorous consultation should concentrate on Strategy focus areas and actions.

Members discussed the proposed focus areas, and it was agreed that a revised focus areas document, based on members' feedback, would be provided out of session for further consideration. Members also raised questions in relation to methods of consultation.

Next steps

A Steering Committee meeting will be held in November 2022 and will consider recommendations of the Reference Group.

A consultation plan, and consultation materials will be developed. It is expected that public consultation will launch in 2023. The next Reference Group meeting will be held in the first quarter of 2023.

Please feel free to distribute this Communique to your wider networks. Communiques and other relevant documents for the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Strategy are also available on the Office of the Commissioner for Victims of Crime website at: [Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Strategy \(www.wa.gov.au\)](http://www.wa.gov.au)