

Key Findings from the Inaugural

Australian Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Recovery and Healing Conference: *The Right to Recovery*



The Australian Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence Recovery Alliance held the Inaugural Australian Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Recovery and Healing Conference: The Right to Recovery and Healing Conference in Wollongong, in May 2023 with the support of private sector partners, NSW and Commonwealth Government, the domestic, family and sexual violence sector, and tertiary institutions. The outcomes outlined here were informed by people with a lived experience and expertise including adults and children, policy makers, government officials, service providers and academics and align with the Four Pillars of Recovery and Healing developed by the Alliance. These pillars support the Recovery and Healing strategy in the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2023–2032. Four key recommendations emerged from the conference workshops delegates.

1. Trauma and violence informed healthcare

Victim survivors are safe, empowered and supported over the long term to become healthy and well and live a good life through:

- (a) a redefinition of 'trauma' to incorporate the lived experience of victim survivors and their perception of what trauma is. The revised definition needs to be integrated across all sectors;
- (b) trauma and violence informed domestic, family and sexual violence education for mainstream workforce;
- (c) a flexible and dynamic approach to healthcare models; and
- (d) access to long term recovery and healing support.

2. Responsive and accessible pathways to justice

Pathways to justice require trauma and domestic, family and sexual violence informed responses for individuals along the entire length of the criminal journey. Legislative and system reforms are urgently needed to ensure the victims survivors are supported by the system, not further traumatised or have their safety compromised. Timely responses and a range of justice options are critical to achieving healing.

The Australian National Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Recovery Alliance recommends a range of initiatives and investment to ensure that survivors of gender-based violence receive support in every way to thrive and regain their physical, mental, social, and emotional health.



3. Housing and economic recovery

Housing is a human right. To ensure the best healing and recovery opportunities for all victim-survivors suitable, sustainable and affordable housing must be available. Additionally, housing support systems must be trauma informed and easily accessible to ensure people are not further impacted when seeking assistance. There must be a focus on both quantity and quality of housing for women and children: safe, accessible, culturally appropriate and long term housing is critical to improving economic outcomes for victim-survivors, enabling to rebuild their lives. Pathways to economic stability and financial independence must include access and options to education and employment, supported by improved understanding of violence, abuse and trauma in the finance sector and Services Australia

4. Centring the voices of children and young people

Young people want their experiences and opinions to be valued. They want to be believed, trusted, heard and respected by adults. Their opinions and experiences should not be weaponised against mothers in the Family Court. There should be increased support for social connectedness; trauma and violence-informed services in schools; legal services catering to the needs of young people; and for children and young people not to be pressured in choosing a parent/caregiver or being forced to live with a parent/caregiver by the legal system.

