



**Aboriginal
Health Council**
of Western Australia

***Our Ways - Strong Ways -
Our Voices:***

**National Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Plan
to End Family, Domestic,
and Sexual Violence**

AHCWA Feedback

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450 Beaufort Street, Highgate, WA 6003
Ph:(08) 9227 1631 | Fax: (08) 9228 1099
f AHCWA | @ THEAHCWA
www.ahcwa.org.au





The Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia (AHCWA) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic, and Sexual Violence.

AHCWA is the peak body for 23 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) in Western Australia (WA). WA ACCHS are located across geographically diverse metropolitan, regional and remote locations. They deliver the most effective model of comprehensive primary health care for Aboriginal people and are in a unique position to identify and respond to the local, cultural and health needs of Aboriginal people and their communities. AHCWA exists to support and act on behalf of its 23 Member Services, actively representing and responding to their individual and collective needs.

Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic, and Sexual Violence (the Plan) is well-structured and articulates a comprehensive, community-led approach to addressing violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It centres cultural authority, lived experience, and self-determination, reflecting the depth of leadership already driving change on the ground. The weaving symbolism powerfully conveys the interconnectedness of culture, community, and healing.

A central challenge is ensuring governments genuinely cede power and resources to Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs). ACCOs bring cultural authority, trust, and accountability that mainstream services cannot replicate. Embedding ACCOs as default providers, with equitable and sustained investment, is critical across prevention, early intervention, response, and healing. This requires moving beyond short-term pilots or competitive grants toward indexed, long-term funding that supports stability, workforce growth, and sector development.

Governments must also commit to formal partnerships and shared decision-making with ACCOs in line with Priority Reform 1 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Clear accountability mechanisms are essential to hold governments and mainstream services responsible for genuine collaboration, progressive service transfer where appropriate, and reform of systems that have historically caused harm - including child protection, policing, and justice.

The Plan should more strongly recognise regional and remote realities, particularly in under-served parts of Western Australia such as the Goldfields, Pilbara, and Kimberley. Culturally safe services must be expanded in these areas, alongside investment in housing, environmental health, and social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB). Integrated, wrap-around supports that address these social determinants are essential to building resilience and safety. Youth leadership should also be more prominent, reflecting the unique strengths and challenges facing young people.

Implementation must be resilient to political change and funding barriers. A dedicated investment strategy should expand ACCO capacity and provide clear workforce development pathways - scholarships, training, and wellbeing supports - for Aboriginal staff



working in high-trauma settings. The Sector Strengthening Plan is welcome but requires clarity on long-term funding and sustainability.

Evaluation must embed Indigenous Data Sovereignty by ensuring that ACCOs lead data collection, governance, analysis, and interpretation. Communities must define success on their own terms - healing, connection, safety - and have authority in monitoring and course correction throughout implementation. Evaluation should also assess how effectively sectors work together, rather than measuring siloed outcomes, to ensure systems align around Aboriginal leadership and community-defined success.

Governance structures must require formal ACCO representation and equal power in decision-making, not just advisory input. Mainstream services should only receive funding if they demonstrate cultural safety, formal partnerships with ACCOs, and independent accountability. Youth justice and child protection reform must prioritise keeping children safe within culture, families, and communities.

The Plan must avoid metro-centrism by recognising challenges across urban, regional, and remote contexts, from systemic racism and overcrowding to infrastructure and service barriers. Investment in culturally safe early intervention programs, men's healing initiatives, and family-centred supports must be prioritised across all settings. Aligning actions with the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms and relevant targets -particularly Targets 12 and 13 - will provide transparency and accountability.

Overall, the Plan demonstrates deep respect for culture, dignity, and community strength. Its success depends on embedding sustained ACCO investment, strengthening accountability for governments and mainstream services, and resourcing holistic, wrap-around healing approaches. With these commitments, it can deliver meaningful, lasting change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children, and families.