

**18/769 ACT Government Response to the Domestic Violence Prevention Council Report from the Extraordinary Meeting on Children and Young People 2018**

**Summary of impacts**

- Children and young people can be profoundly impacted by domestic and family violence (DFV), even when this violence is not directed at them. The Final Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC) Report on the Extraordinary Meeting (EM) held in April 2018 noted that ‘children and young people are often forgotten or do not have a voice in shaping the responses and supports that should be targeted at reducing their experience of violence and mitigating the impact of this experience’.
- The ACT Government Response to the DVPC Extraordinary meeting (the Government Response) will improve the capacity at the ACT service sector to understand and respond effectively to the needs of children and young people affected by DFV, through the implementation of initiatives against the key recommendations made in the Final DVPC Report.
- Actions undertaken in-line with the Government Response will ensure that voice of children and young people are captured and placed at the heart of service design and delivery. Services will no longer see children as ‘invisible’ but rather as ‘clients in their own right’ and will augment existing service delivery to ensure it is child-safe.
- Consulting and engaging with children and young people will build capability in the sector through a more sophisticated understanding of their experiences, desires and needs that will drive policy and service design, delivery and evaluation. This not only enhances the rights of children and young people impacted by DFV, but ensures that the sector is better equipped to both meet and support their needs.
- The Final DVPC Report also recommended training for people who work in roles/places that are ‘touch points’ for children and young people. The ACT Government Domestic and Family Violence Frontline Worker Training Strategy being implemented across Government aligns with this recommendation and will develop a consistent and shared understanding of DFV in ACT, including the specific risks and consequences of children and young people experiencing this violence.
- The DVPC Final Report and subsequent Government Response notes that the sector must meet the demand for therapeutic interventions for children and young people in the ACT. Timely and appropriate interventions for children and young people will result in a reduction in the long-term social and economic costs borne by individual children and young people and their families. Timely interventions will also serve as an investment cost by the Government that will bring future budgetary savings through a reduction in long-term demand for crisis services.
- Leveraging off existing infrastructure in the ACT through the implementation of DFV datasets into the ‘Data Lake’ will support innovation in the sector through generating insights that will improve service design, allow for resources to be targeted more effectively and further optimise service delivery in order to change the life trajectories of vulnerable children and young people who are exposed to this violence.
- Rather than prepare a 2019-20 ACT Government Budget Business Case that responds directly to the DVPC Report, the approach has been to reference relevant initiatives across Government that addressed the DVPC Report recommendations. Some of these initiatives are currently seeking funding through Business Cases for the 2019-20 Budget.
- There are no anticipated environmental impacts.

*Key to impacts: Red – negative, Blue – neutral, Green – positive.*

**Social**

**Justice and rights**

- The Government Response has been prepared with careful consideration of the strong legal and policy context supporting the rights of children and young people in the ACT. These are articulated in the Government Responses Guiding Principles.
- Putting the voice of children and young people at the heart of service delivery was a key recommendation obtained in the DVPC Extraordinary Meeting and subsequent Final Report. Undertaking consultation and engagement with children and young people will focus on their experience of DFV, the effects on their lives and the supports and services they receive that best empower them to report and recover.

	<p>These insights will be used to inform future family safety hub activities with children and young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Government Response references work that will be undertaken across the Territory to progress the implementation of Child Safe Standards. Embedding the child safe standards for all organisations providing facilities or services to children in the ACT will drive cultural change in organisations so that protecting children from abuse is embedded into everyday practice. It will also ensure that current and future service system responses are child-centred.</li> <li>• The DVPC Final Report referenced the need to establish an Intermediary Scheme in the ACT to ensure that vulnerable children and young people have the special consideration and attention necessary to ensure that their voices are heard. The Government Response references that consultation had commenced on the introduction of an intermediary scheme in the ACT. Intermediaries will play a valuable role in reducing stress and trauma of vulnerable children and young people. Intermediaries will also ensure that the needs of these children and young people are clearly communicated and considered from the point of the police interview to giving evidence at trial.</li> <li>• The Final DVPC Report also recommended training for people who work in roles/places that are ‘touch points’ for children and young people. The ACT Government Domestic and Family Violence Frontline Worker Training Strategy aligns with this recommendation and will develop a consistent and shared understanding of DFV in ACT, including the specific risks and consequences of children and young people impacted by this violence.</li> <li>• The full extent and impacts of DFV on children and young people are not yet clear, due to limitations in ACT approaches to identifying clients and capturing data. Using data and evidence is essential to inform DFV strategies for children and young people. Prioritisation of relevant datasets for inclusion in the ACT Data Analytics Centres Data Lake will access opportunities to link data to generate new insights about the extent and circumstances of children and young people impacted by DFV. This includes the potential to recognise children and young people at risk who were previously ‘invisible’ in the existing service response.</li> </ul>
<b>Gender impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are significant links between child sexual assault and adult victimisation of women who suffer DFV. A focus on intervening early through the development of therapeutic services for children and young people will break a significant pattern for women in reducing the victimisation they are vulnerable to as adults, due to the specific impacts of this violence.</li> <li>• The ACT Government Domestic and Family Violence Frontline Worker Training Strategy addresses the gendered nature of DFV against women. While the approach may appear to be focused on women, it addresses the issue for majority of victims. Also, awareness of the issue overall and the skills to recognise and respond to DFV can be applied generically for victims of all genders.</li> </ul>

**Economic**

<b>ACT Government Budget</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rather than prepare a 2019-20 ACT Government Budget Business Case that responds directly to the DVPC Report, the approach has been to reference relevant initiatives across government that addressed the DVPC Report Recommendations.</li> </ul>
<b>Productivity and innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations within the Government Response identifies work that relates to early intervention and recovery. Timely and appropriate interventions could in the long term reduce the costs borne by individual children and young people and their families, and future budgetary costs — including the costs associated with children's experience of DFV.</li> <li>• Improving the prevention, early intervention, crisis and recovery response of the DFV system through the delivery of the training strategy can be expected to have productivity benefits.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leveraging off existing infrastructure in the ACT through the implementation of DFV datasets into the 'Data Lake' will generate insights that will improve service design, target resources more effectively, and optimise service delivery in order to change the life trajectories of vulnerable children and young people who are exposed to this violence.</li> </ul>
<b>Skills and education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consulting and engaging with children and young people will build capability in the sector through a more sophisticated understanding of their experiences, desires and needs that will drive policy and service design, delivery and evaluation.</li> <li>The Implementation of The ACT Government Domestic and Family Violence Frontline Worker Training Strategy will develop a consistent language and shared understanding of DFV in ACT, which will equip workers with the knowledge and skills to respond to DFV in the workplace in within the community.</li> </ul>

**Environmental**

Nil impact.