

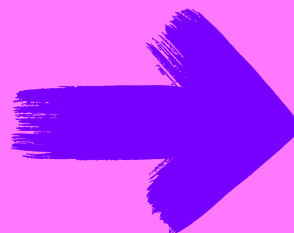
SAFE+EQUAL

Standing strong
against family
violence

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2024

Working towards a world
beyond family and
gender-based violence.



Safe and Equal acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work, the people of the Kulin Nation.

We recognise the loss of lands and culture, knowing the consequences for people, communities and nations. We pay our respects to Aboriginal people and their cultures; and to elders both past and present. We acknowledge that sovereignty over this land was never ceded.

We recognise, welcome and respect people of diverse gender, sex and sexuality. We are committed to greater inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQA+) people and are working towards achieving The Rainbow Tick.

We acknowledge the strength and resilience of adults, children and young people who have experienced family violence, and recognise it is essential that responses to family violence are informed by their experiences and advocacy. We pay respects to those who did not survive and acknowledge friends and family members who have lost loved ones to this preventable and far-reaching issue.

CONTENTS

A Message from the Chair.....	3
Victorian Family Violence Sector Timeline.....	4
Strategic Plan.....	8
Overview	8
Our Vision.....	9
Our Purpose	10
Our Values.....	11
Guiding Principles.....	12
Strategic Context.....	13
Our Strategic Priorities.....	14
Priority 1: Developing Practice and Supporting Workforces	16
Priority 2: Strengthening and Connecting Organisations, Sectors and Systems.....	17
Priority 3: Building Momentum for Social Change	18
Priority 4: Building a Strong Peak Organisation.....	19

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

After decades of activism, advocacy, and hard work, we are at an inflection point in our common efforts to end family violence in our community. This is auspicious timing for the release of this inaugural strategic plan for Safe and Equal as a merged entity. This strategic plan ushers in a new phase for the specialist family violence sector, with our sights set on a vision for safety, equality, and respect for all Victorians. For the first time, the peak organisation for the specialist family violence sector will provide leadership on family violence ranging from prevention to response and recovery.

This strategic plan will drive the establishment of a robust, sustainable peak organisation that is influential and impactful across all levels of our community. Safe and Equal will realise its vision through advocacy, workforce development, practice development and partnership, to ensure that we maintain our momentum in building a strong and sustainable sector.

Safe and Equal will continue to be an independent voice and an amplifier for our members and stakeholders to ensure we have a world class specialist informed family violence

system. At its heart, this strategic plan sets out how we will drive the continuing ambition, efforts and resourcing for the transformative change required to end family violence and violence against women and all marginalised people.

The last 18 months of the COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly impactful for victim survivors and our sector. We want to express our deep gratitude to our staff and our membership for their contributions to the development of this plan, and for their ongoing commitment to our work through this unprecedented and challenging time.

Lastly, we wish to thank the Board for its careful deliberation in reframing the role of a peak body working across the continuum from prevention to response. This strategic plan balances the ambitions of Safe and Equal to ensure it provides strategic directions that are achievable and will deliver tangible benefits to our members, and ultimately victim survivors – right now and into the future.

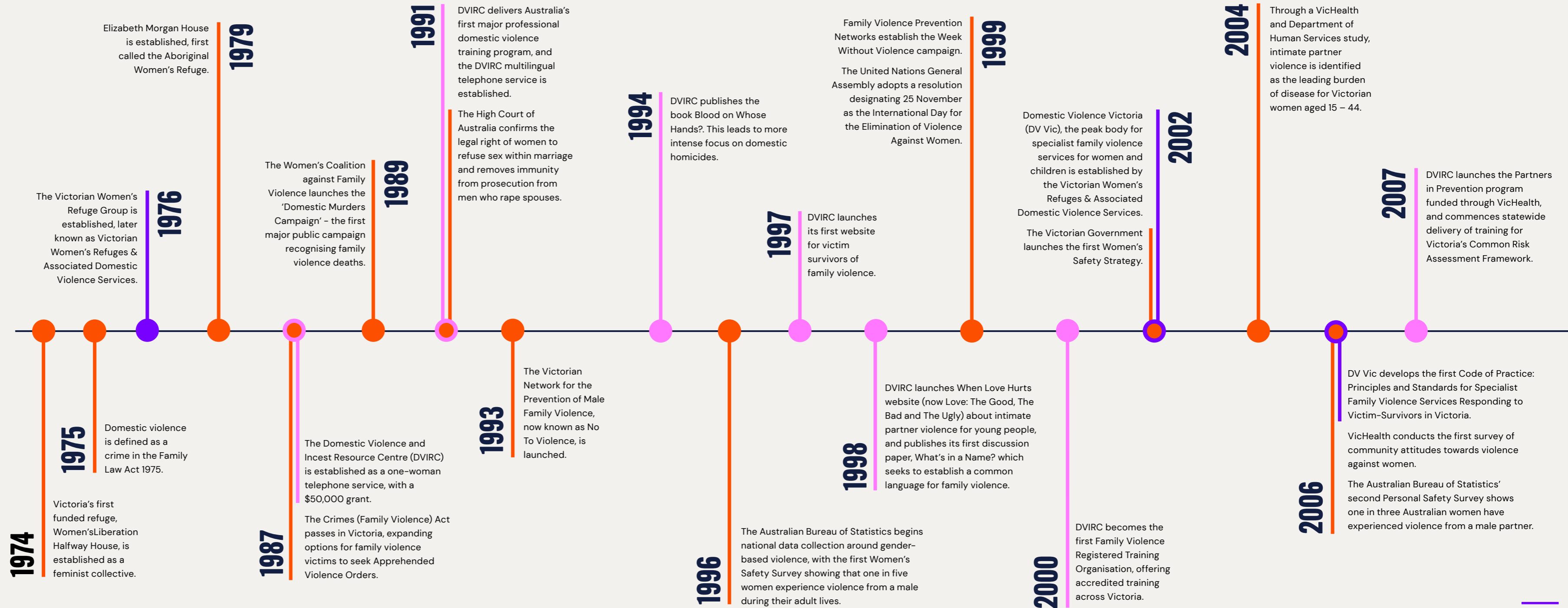
Helen Campbell
Outgoing Chair

Stacey Ong
Interim Chair

Family violence remains one of Australia’s most entrenched and complex social problems. It intersects with many other social issues and requires a committed and coordinated response across all parts of society over the long term. It is a violation of human rights and linked to the global human rights issues of violence against women and children through many United Nations conventions and declarations to which Australia is a signatory. The impact of family violence is magnified during disasters, including the current global pandemic. We will work to ensure we can be responsive to victim survivors in all contexts.

VICTORIAN FAMILY VIOLENCE SECTOR TIMELINE

Safe and Equal brings together and builds on 30 years of pioneering work of DV Vic and DVRCV. It provides us with a platform to work across the continuum of prevention to recovery, particularly in workforce and sector development. In this way, we can engage with current and emerging workforces across primary prevention, early intervention and response. This merger provides the specialist family violence sector with a peak organisation that has more reach than ever before.



VICTORIAN FAMILY VIOLENCE SECTOR TIMELINE

2008 DVIRC changes its name to the Domestic Violence Resource Centre (DVRCV). The organisation moves from a feminist collective to an Incorporated Association and the first Executive Officer is appointed.

2009

The Commonwealth Government releases the first National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010–2022.

2011

DV Vic and DVRCV partner to launch The Lookout website, a single source for specialist family violence practice information and resources.

Our Watch and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) are established as initiatives out of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022.

2013

DVRCV launches the SmartSafe website, in response to Australia's first research into technology-facilitated abuse.

DV Vic and DVRCV partner to launch The Lookout website, a single source for specialist family violence practice information and resources.

2012

DV Vic convenes the EVA Media Action Group to improve media reporting on family violence.
DV Vic presents on Victorian family violence reforms to the UN NGO Parallel Event on the Convention of the Status of Women in New York, and at the Roundtable for UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women.

2014

DV Vic, DVRCV and No To Violence are funded to manage the rollout and training for the statewide Risk Assessment and Management Panels (RAMPs), to respond to women at high risk.

DV Vic and DVRCV establish the No More Deaths alliance, comprised of statewide and local organisations calling for family violence to lead the agenda in the 2014 Victorian election.

Luke Batty is murdered by his father, and Luke's mother Rosie Batty emerges as a powerful survivor advocate calling for change. This is a watershed moment in a year of unprecedented media and community focus on family violence.

The Victorian Government announces a Royal Commission into Family Violence, and appoints Australia's first ministerial portfolio for the prevention of family violence.

2015

The Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence receives nearly 1000 submissions and conducts 25 days of public hearings.

Rosie Batty is named Australian of the Year in recognition of her family violence advocacy.

DVRCV launches the SmartSafe+ app, which goes on to win the Victorian Premier's iAward for Public Sector Innovation.

2016

The Royal Commission into Family Violence releases its report and the Victorian Government commits to implementing all 227 recommendations. The Victorian Government establishes key governance and accountability structures, including the Family Violence Steering Committee and the Victim Survivors Advisory Council (VSAC).

Victoria's first gender equality strategy, Safe and Strong is released, followed by the Free From Violence primary prevention strategy.

2017

The Common Risk Assessment Framework is reviewed and redeveloped, becoming what is now the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM).

Victoria's first capability frameworks for the primary prevention and family violence response workforces are developed in a partnership between government and the specialist sectors.

DVRCV launches What's Okay at Home (WOAH), a groundbreaking website for children and young people experiencing family violence.

2018

Respect Victoria, a statutory agency focused on primary prevention, is established under the Prevention of Family Violence Act 2018.

DVRCV hosts its first primary prevention conference: Achieving Generational Change (later re-branded as PreventX).

2019

DV Vic publishes the Second Edition of the Code of Practice: Principles and Standards for Specialist Family Violence Services Responding to Victim-Survivors in Victoria.

DV Vic and the University of Melbourne partner to develop the Experts by Experience framework to guide family violence sector engagement with lived experience.

DVRCV re-develops and re-launches the SmartSafe+ app as Arc, and commences development and delivery of MARAM training across Victoria.

2020

Family violence demand is impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including an increase in complexity, friends and family contacting services, and secondary consultation from allied sectors.

DVRCV and DV Vic partner to launch the Are You Safe at Home campaign for victim survivors and friends and family in response to the pandemic.

DV Vic partners with Monash University to look at the impacts of the pandemic on the specialist family violence workforce.

DVRCV launches Family Violence Foundations, a free, self-paced online course based on foundational knowledge capabilities.

DV Vic & DVRCV Boards and members vote in favour of a merger and one CEO is appointed across both entities.

DVRCV and DV Vic staff come together into one organisational structure. DV Vic/DVRCV establishes its first Survivor Advocate Advisory Group, to inform the implementation of the Experts by Experience framework and embed lived experience into all aspects of our work. The newly merged entity launches as Safe and Equal.

2021

STRATEGIC PLAN

OVERVIEW

Safe and Equal is a product of the action, leadership and expertise of the practitioners, victim survivors and leaders who have come before us. As we renew our commitment to change, we know that collaboration and partnership will be key to achieving our vision.

As the peak body for specialist family violence services responding to victim survivors in Victoria, we lead across the continuum from prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery. Our vision is a world beyond family and gender-based violence, where women, children and people from marginalised communities are safe, thriving, and respected. To achieve this vision, we will develop family violence practice and workforces, strengthen and connect the family violence system, build momentum for social change, and build a strong peak organisation. The living experiences of victim survivors and an intersectional feminist analysis of family and gendered violence guide every part of our work.

Developing practice and supporting workforces will ensure that victim survivors are safe, their rights are upheld, and their needs are met because we have built a strong and sustainable workforce that can meet the needs of the community we serve. The prevalence and impact of family and gender-based violence will be reduced because we will have a strong

and effective workforce responding to victim survivors, while also having a growing and impactful workforce working to prevent violence.

Strengthening and connecting organisations, sectors and systems will support safer and more just outcomes for victim survivors, irrespective of entry point, jurisdiction and individual circumstances. These efforts will ensure the broader response service system is family violence specialised-informed and supported by a well resourced and sustainable specialist sector, joining efforts across prevention, response, and recovery. Our contributions to primary prevention workforces, initiatives and alliances will shape a safer and more respectful community.

Building momentum for social change will generate meaningful action across institutions, settings, and systems for a safer and more equal society. This momentum will be built through our workforce and practice development efforts, coupled with a partnership approach that builds community awareness and commitment to change. Our expertise and efforts will enable

citizens across the community to recognise and respond to family and gendered violence, hold perpetrators to account and support the ongoing recovery and empowerment of victim survivors.

Building a strong peak organisation will ensure strong, sustainable and influential leadership that fulfils its purpose. The work we do and the way we work are integrated and align with our values. This will be achieved through inclusive culture, and a safe and accessible workplace supported by robust systems and processes.

Safe and Equal is a product of the action, leadership and expertise of the practitioners, victim survivors and leaders who have come before us. As we renew our commitment to change, we know that collaboration and partnership will be key to achieving our vision.

As a peak organisation, our dedication to building strong relationships, new partnerships and collaboration will be foundational to all aspects of our work, and ultimately our success as we work to achieve our vision to end family and gender-based violence for good.

OUR VISION

A world beyond family and gender-based violence, where women, children and people from marginalised communities are safe, thriving and respected.

We understand family violence is predominantly driven by gender-based power, oppression and inequality.

We use gendered language in acknowledgment that the majority of victim survivors are women and children. Nevertheless, our work prioritises the safety of all people experiencing, recovering from, or at risk of, family violence. We recognise that family violence impacts people across a diversity of gender identities, social and cultural contexts, and within various intimate, family and other relationships.

We apply an intersectional feminist lens in our work to address family and gender-based violence and how they overlap and intersect with other forms of violence, oppression and disadvantage.

OUR PURPOSE



We are the peak organisation for the specialist family violence sector. As the peak organisation, we advocate on behalf of and represent specialist family violence services so that we contribute to a society that is free from family and gender-based violence. The interests of all people experiencing, recovering from, or at risk of, family violence is at the heart of everything we do.

We recognise the gendered nature of violence in our society, and the multiple intersecting forms of power and oppression which can overlap and compound the impact of violence. Our expertise can contribute to a society where all people impacted by family and gender-based violence

are safe, thriving and respected. We also work closely with other organisations that aim to end these forms of violence.

We support the leadership of victim survivors to amplify their voices and create change.

We apply a family violence specialist lens across primary prevention, early intervention, response and recovery services and the inter-connections between them.

We are committed to being an independent voice to effect sustainable and purposeful systemic and social change.

OUR VALUES



We are accountable, act ethically and have integrity



We are independent, expert and trusted



We are curious and courageous, we learn, and from this we create opportunities



We work with care, compassion and kindness



We create our own future



We strive for gender equity and a socially just world

Family violence can impact all individuals, regardless of family make-up or community. However, we know that women and children are at greatest risk of this violence and men are still most commonly its perpetrators. Research undertaken by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found that the populations most impacted by family violence are younger women, children, older people, people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (including people with temporary residency status), LGBTIQ+ people, people in rural and remote communities, people with mental health issues and/or substance misuse problems, people from socio-economically disadvantaged areas, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Intersectional feminism is at the foundation of who we are and how we work; it is the primary framework we use to deepen our understanding of the family violence evidence base, build coalitions and partnerships, and engage in critical reflection.

We will advocate for and lead the development of an accessible, inclusive and equitable service system to meet the needs of all people experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of oppression and discrimination.

We are committed to the principle of Aboriginal self-determination. We work towards strong relationships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Elders and communities. We will work with and learn from them, and respect community-led solutions. We will build our understanding of the impact of colonisation and other forms of discrimination and use this to strengthen cultural safety across the family violence service system.

We recognise the special needs of children and young people affected by family violence, and work to strengthen systemic responses to prioritise their safety and wellbeing.

Our work aims to reinforce the accountability of those who use violence and those who condone violence, and to change the social norms, systems and institutions that enable a culture where family and gender-based violence exists.

We aim for everything we do to be socially transformative by addressing power, privilege and oppression.

We are ultimately accountable to victim survivors of family violence and those victims of family violence who did not survive. Our work is fundamentally shaped by their voices. We prioritise the safety, wellbeing and agency of victim survivors in all that we do. Our work aims to promote flexible service responses that support them to achieve autonomy and empowerment.

Our work is both evidence-informed and evidence-building, including evidence which is drawn from practice and lived experience.

We work with others to achieve coordinated multi-agency responses to benefit victim survivors.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Since 2015, there has been a significant shift in how we prevent and address family violence and its impacts in Australia, particularly in Victoria. We have seen unprecedented progress in Victoria. We have seen unprecedented progress, with a concerted effort to implement the 227 recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Family Violence (RCFV).

Five years since the RCFV delivered its report, it is now time to take stock of what we have achieved. There is still much to do to ensure that our effort delivers on the spirit and intent of those recommendations. This strategic plan provides our newly merged entity with the opportunity to combine our collective effort to influence how the system and approach to preventing and responding to family violence will look in three years and beyond. As the peak organisation, Safe and Equal has a major role in driving this change. We want Safe and Equal to deliver the best outcomes for victim survivors, and support our members, stakeholders, partners, governments and communities to do their best work.

We are at a critical moment in time. Safe and Equal, along with allies, have over many years helped put family violence and violence against women and children on the radar of communities and government. Safe and Equal is committed

to influence the national conversation about preventing and responding to family violence. There is shared resolve that family violence and all forms of gendered-based violence must end.

This is an important moment in our reform history. Safe and Equal will broaden and deepen its efforts so that our members and all the practitioners we support from prevention to recovery can scale up their effort, without compromising their specialisation or specialist expertise. To eradicate family violence, the prevention and response workforces must work together across prevention, early intervention (reducing harm), response and recovery.

Safe and Equal inherits the combined specialist expertise of DV Vic and DVRCV and links to frontline services, our members and communities. The expertise of our members, networks and communities of practice must inform prevention, early intervention or response activity in Victoria, and nationally. The new entity will maximise the impact of its partnerships and collaborations. No one person, service or sector can achieve our vision alone. As a peak organisation, our dedication to building strong partnerships, new partnerships and collaboration will be foundational to all aspects of our work, and ultimately our success as we work to achieve our vision to end family and gender-based violence for good.

All people experiencing family violence deserve a comprehensive response that will keep them safe and help them recover and rebuild their lives. Our service system must be responsive and accessible to all people who experience family violence and make sure that perpetrators are held accountable for their behaviour. This is particularly important for those who suffer multiple and overlapping forms of discrimination and oppression. To do this work, we must be true to the intersectional feminist framework we are seeking to apply across our new entity. This means also acknowledging the strong feminist history of our organisations. We must work with and learn from our First Nations communities, who are seeking their own solutions for addressing family violence that recognise the impact of colonisation and intergenerational trauma on their people. We declare our intention to continue being allies in their efforts to address and end a problem that involves all our society.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

2021 – 2024



PRIORITY 1

Developing practice and supporting workforces

We continue to support effective, high quality practice, including through innovative approaches. We build the capability, sustainability and connectedness of the specialist family violence workforce, the prevention workforce, and broader workforces whose work intersects with family violence. We advocate for more comprehensive approaches to building workforce capability, including a broad suite of professional development programs for our workforces. In these ways, we not only reduce the prevalence and impact of family and gender-based violence and ensure victim survivors are safe, their rights are addressed, and their needs are met, but make sure our workforces are well supported to do their work.

PRIORITY 2

Strengthening and connecting organisations, sectors and systems

We strengthen the ability of organisations, sectors and systems to provide effective, coordinated and comprehensive responses to family violence and its intersections with other forms of oppression and discrimination. We do this by developing the capability and sustainability of specialist family violence services. We advocate on behalf of the specialist family violence sector. We influence other parts of the family violence system to ensure a family violence specialist informed response and recovery system. We contribute to the development of primary prevention initiatives, particularly through workforce development and alliances to help shape safer and more respectful communities.

PRIORITY 3

Building momentum for social change

We partner with others to help build community-wide understanding of the nature, impacts and drivers of family and gender-based violence, and other intersecting forms of oppression and disadvantage. We work to create environments that enable friends, family and the community to intervene appropriately to address violence, maintain perpetrator accountability, and support victim survivors. Through our comprehensive approaches to workforce development, the creation of strategic resources, and a range of other opportunities as they emerge, we work to generate commitment and meaningful action across institutions, settings and systems to effectively respond to and prevent family and gender-based violence.

PRIORITY 4

Building a strong peak organisation

We will build a strong, sustainable, responsive and influential peak organisation that fulfils its purpose. We will build a culture that fosters excellence, innovation, flexibility and inclusion. Our staff are supported with robust and inclusive organisational systems and processes. The work we do and the way we work reflects our values.

DEVELOPING PRACTICE AND SUPPORTING WORKFORCES

We continue to support effective, high quality practice, including through innovative approaches. We build the capability, sustainability and connectedness of the specialist family violence workforce, the prevention workforce and broader workforces whose work intersects with family violence. We advocate for more comprehensive approaches to building workforce capability, including a broad suite of professional development programs for our workforces. In these ways, we will reduce the prevalence and impact of family and gender-based violence, ensure victim survivors are safe and their needs are met, and ensure our workforces are well supported to do their work.

Priority 1

Key Outcomes

Across the continuum from primary prevention to recovery:

- Practice is guided by accessible, evidence-based and innovative frameworks and tools.
- Practitioners are skilled, knowledgeable and confident
- Services are consistent, high quality, empowering and aligned with victim survivors' needs.
- Victim survivors and those at risk of violence achieve personal safety, autonomy and wellbeing.
- Social norms, attitudes and behaviours that contribute to family and gender-based violence and intersectional oppression are reduced.

STRENGTHENING AND CONNECTING ORGANISATIONS, SECTORS AND SYSTEMS

We strengthen the ability of organisations, sectors and systems to provide effective, coordinated and comprehensive responses to family violence and its intersections with other forms of oppression and discrimination. We do this by developing the capability and sustainability of specialist family violence services. We advocate on behalf of the specialist family violence sector. We influence other parts of the family violence system to ensure a family violence specialist informed response and recovery system. We contribute to the development of primary prevention initiatives, particularly through workforce development, and alliances to help shape safer and more respectful communities.

Priority 2

Key Outcomes

- Victim survivors receive timely, accessible and well-coordinated services that met their needs.
- The specialist family violence sector is valued for its expertise and is influential in shaping the family violence system.
- The family violence service system is seamless, adaptable, specialist-informed, and guided by the voices of victim survivors.
- Specialist family violence services are strong, appropriately resourced and sustainable.
- Connections and exchange of expertise between response and prevention work are strengthened.
- Within the family violence system, primary prevention work has stronger infrastructure, coordination and connection.
- Perpetrators are held accountable and monitored through a system-wide approach.
- Partnerships and relationships are strong and contribute to the development of comprehensive and influential work that informs better systems.

BUILDING MOMENTUM **FOR SOCIAL CHANGE**

We partner with others to help build community-wide understanding of the nature, impacts and drivers of family and gender-based violence and other intersecting forms of oppression and disadvantage. We work to create environments to enable friends, family and the community to intervene appropriately to address violence, maintain perpetrator accountability and support victim survivors. Through our comprehensive approaches to workforce development, the creation of strategic resources, and a range of other opportunities as they emerge, we work to generate commitment and meaningful action across institutions, settings and systems to effectively prevent and respond.

Priority 3

Key Outcomes

- People and communities have a sound understanding of the drivers of family and gender-based violence, and the impact of other forms of oppression and disadvantage.
- People and communities have the capacity to respond effectively to family and gender-based violence and to support those at risk.
- People and communities contribute to safe, respectful and inclusive relationships.
- Family and gender-based violence remain a strong focus of community awareness, public conversations and strategic social policy.
- Government and other key institutions take sustained and effective action on family and gender-based violence.
- Effective change occurs across a range of settings.
- The peak affects change at the local, state and national level.

BUILDING A **STRONG PEAK** **ORGANISATION**

We will build a strong, sustainable, responsive and influential peak organisation that is focused and delivers consistent, high quality work. We will build a culture that fosters excellence, innovation, flexibility and inclusion. Our staff are supported with robust and inclusive organisational systems and processes. The work we do and the way we work reflects our values.

Priority 4

Key Outcomes

- Our organisation is strong and sustainable.
- Our organisation is considered an exemplar at state, national and international levels.
- A peak organisation that has the capacity and trust to advocate and inform systems change across the continuum from primary prevention to recovery.
- Our organisation is accountable to and informed by the needs of victim survivors through our role with specialist family violence services.
- Our organisation is high performing. We are purposeful, flexible, innovative and enabled by curiosity and courage.
- Our workplace is safe and inclusive and supported by robust organisational infrastructure, policies and processes.

SAFE + EQUAL

**Standing strong
against family
violence**