

Embolden Statement National domestic, family and sexual violence crisis

South Australia's Royal Commission into domestic, family and sexual violence commences 1 July, which will facilitate a deep dive into the barriers to safety for women across the South Australian service system. At the national level, following the outcomes of the National Cabinet meeting on 1 May 2024, Embolden advocates for:

- The establishment of a **Senate Standing Committee on domestic, family and sexual violence**;
- Much greater investment nationally in **specialist domestic, family and sexual violence services – across early intervention, crisis response, recovery and healing**. While the announcement in relation to Leaving Violence Payments is welcome, this is not adequate to improve safety outcomes for many women and children experiencing violence, who require longer-term, wrap around supports to navigate a pathway to safety and to rebuild their lives.
- Much greater investment nationally in **early, holistic supports for families** with complex needs at risk of/experiencing domestic and family violence, including therapeutic supports for children and young people. This must include funding to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations for Aboriginal-led approaches.
- Much greater investment to drive and support leading practice approaches to **early intervention with boys and men at risk of using violence**.
- Tangible, national collaborative action to **prevent system failures to protect women and children from high-risk perpetrators**. Embolden notes that this will progressed by Police Ministers and Attorneys-General and is an anticipated focus of the next National Cabinet meeting. Action should encompass but not limited to:
 - **Nationally consistent risk assessment processes** that are sensitive to patterns of behaviour over time and evidence-established precursors/risk factors for severe and fatal violence, including coercive control, sexual violence and non-fatal strangulation. Once developed, nationally consistent risk assessment processes must be effectively implemented across systems, including police services and courts.

- **Critical systemic opportunities to prevent and disrupt violence by high-risk perpetrators**, including but not limited to: consideration of bail laws and their application; protective orders and penalties for breaches; electronic monitoring of high-risk offenders; high-risk /serial offender databases and information sharing across systems and jurisdictions; and national harmonisation of domestic violence disclosure schemes.
- Approaches to early intervention and the prevention and disruption of high-risk perpetrators to be consolidated within a targeted **national strategy on perpetration/people using violence**.
- The development and implementation of a **National Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Workforce Strategy**. The domestic, family and sexual violence sector cannot do this work if there are not workers to do it. There are critical worker shortages across the sector in South Australia, in particular in regional and remote areas. For example, NPY Women's Council Domestic and Family Violence Service is currently only able to fill 55% of its funded frontline positions.

A National Workforce Strategy could drive action in key areas including: partnerships with tertiary institutions to boost numbers of graduates with specialist skills in domestic, family and sexual violence; alternative pathways and flexible requirements to reduce barriers for Aboriginal workers and people with lived experience/peer workers; and incentives to support attraction and retention in regional and remote areas.

- Consideration of **national harmonisation of mechanisms to review deaths, including suicides, relating to domestic and family violence**.