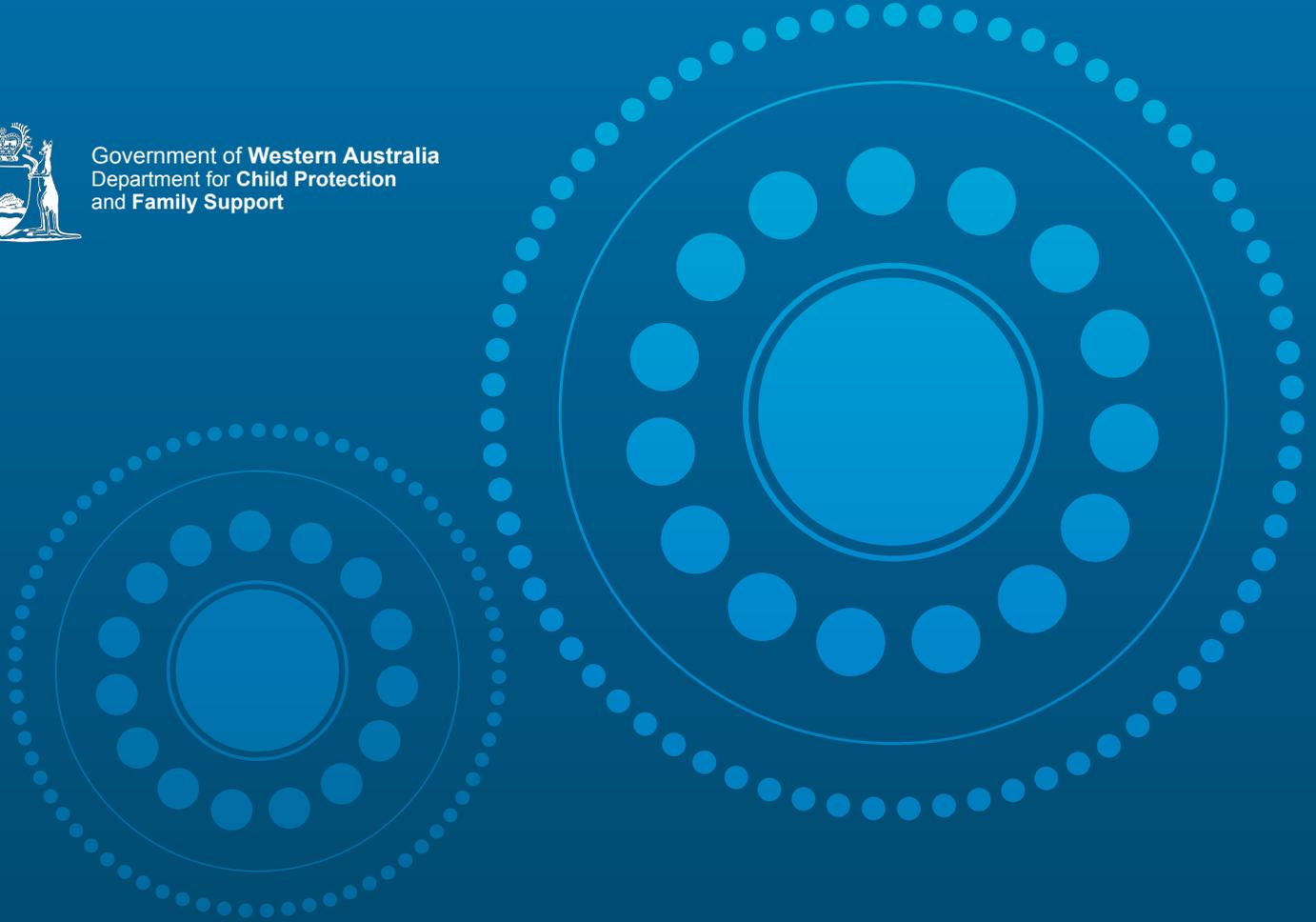




Government of **Western Australia**
Department for **Child Protection**
and **Family Support**



Western Australia's Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy to 2022

Creating safer communities



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Message from the Minister



Family and domestic violence continues to have a profound and devastating effect on individuals, children, families, and communities in Western Australia. It is a complex and persistent social problem that has no easy solution.

A comprehensive, committed and shared response across all state and Commonwealth government departments, community sector organisations, and the wider community is required if the incidence of family and domestic violence in Western Australia is to be reduced.

The new *Western Australian Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy to 2022 (Prevention Strategy)* provides the framework in which a comprehensive and shared response to family and domestic violence can be achieved. Significantly, this new *Prevention Strategy* represents an important long-term focus on early intervention, victim safety and perpetrator accountability over the next ten years.

The *Prevention Strategy* builds on reforms already undertaken through the *WA Strategic Plan for Family and Domestic Violence 2009-2013* to provide better integrated service responses to individuals and families who find themselves victims of family and domestic violence. Building on these existing reforms establishes a solid foundation, allowing for the ongoing implementation of the *Prevention Strategy* to 2022 and beyond.

By sharing in this long-term commitment to address family and domestic violence in Western Australia, government departments, community sector organisations and the wider community are helping to reduce family and domestic violence and create safer communities for the future.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. McSweeney".

Robyn McSweeney MLC
MINISTER FOR CHILD PROTECTION; COMMUNITY SERVICES;
SENIORS AND VOLUNTEERING; WOMEN'S INTERESTS; YOUTH

Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy to 2022

Family and domestic violence in Australia is a complex problem requiring a committed, long-term and integrated response across all state, territory and Commonwealth governments, community sector organisations and the wider community. By establishing a shared vision across all levels of government and the wider community sector, and working towards common goals, the incidence of family and domestic violence in Australia can be reduced.

Sharing in this vision, Western Australia (WA) has developed this long-term *Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy (Prevention Strategy)* that provides a framework for action over a ten year period until 2022.

Historically the response to family and domestic violence within Western Australia has been fragmented, resulting in isolated and often short term stand-alone strategies to address this complex problem. This new *Prevention Strategy* sets out a commitment by Western Australia to reduce the incidence of family and domestic violence through a focus on integration and reform over the longer term.

Western Australia's *Prevention Strategy* continues the reforms outlined in the *WA Strategic Plan for Family and Domestic Violence 2009-2013 (State Plan)*, building on the work already being undertaken throughout the state. By incorporating the existing family and domestic violence priorities, a solid foundation for the new *Prevention Strategy* is established, facilitating an environment for change and innovation that will be used to shape future directions for 2013 and beyond.

The new strategy (see Figure 1) is designed in three-year stages, allowing for flexibility in the development and implementation of actions that address new and emerging issues as circumstances change. An enduring focus on the outcomes of prevention and early intervention, victim safety, and perpetrator accountability will remain for the life of the *Prevention Strategy*, with targeted actions supporting the achievement of these primary outcomes.

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Definition

Family and domestic violence is considered to be behaviour which results in physical, sexual and/or psychological damage, forced social isolation, economic deprivation, or behaviour which causes the victim to live in fear. A key characteristic of family and domestic violence is the use of violence and other forms of abuse to control someone within an intimate or familial relationship.

The term 'domestic violence' usually refers to abuse against an intimate partner, while family violence is a broader expression encompassing domestic violence and the abuse of children, the elderly and other family members.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people generally prefer to use the term 'family violence'. This concept describes a matrix of harmful, violent and aggressive behaviours and is considered to be more reflective of an Aboriginal world view of community and family healing. However, the use of this term should not obscure the fact that Aboriginal women and children bear the brunt of family violence.

Principles

The following principles have been designed to provide the foundation for the development and implementation of family and domestic violence policies, programs and practices. Each principle is considered of equal value and importance.

1. Family and domestic violence and abuse is a fundamental violation of human rights and will not be tolerated in any community or culture.
2. Preventing family and domestic violence and abuse is the responsibility of the whole community and requires a shared understanding that it must not be tolerated under any circumstance.
3. The safety and wellbeing of those affected by family and domestic violence and abuse will be the first priority of any response.
4. Children have unique vulnerabilities in family and domestic violence situations, and all efforts must be made to protect them from short and long term harm.
5. Perpetrators of family and domestic violence and abuse will be held accountable for their behaviour and acts that constitute a criminal offence will be dealt with accordingly.
6. Responses to family and domestic violence and abuse can be improved through the development of an all-inclusive approach in which responses are integrated and specifically designed to address safety and accountability.
7. An effective system will acknowledge that to achieve substantive equality, partnerships must be developed in consultation with specific communities of interest including people with a disability, people from diverse sexualities and/or gender, people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
8. Victims of family and domestic violence and abuse will not be held responsible for the perpetrators behaviour.

First Phase:

Sustaining Change - strengthening the foundation and supporting further reform (2013-2016)

The first phase will strengthen the framework for the *Prevention Strategy* already established by *Western Australia's Strategic Plan for Family and Domestic Violence 2009-2013*. This will be achieved by identifying those actions that are delivering results, sustaining these changes, and moving into future phases through the identification of new and emerging issues. During this phase, work to establish the data collection framework will continue. The collection of data will provide an evidence base and will assist in setting future directions over the life of the *Prevention Strategy*.

Second Phase:

Consolidating Change – recognising achievements and assessing results (2016-2019)

Throughout this second three-year phase the actions put in place during previous stages are expected to be delivering measurable results. These results will be used to assess and improve the actions needed to consolidate achievements, and will provide a future pathway for the final phase of the *Prevention Strategy*.

It is expected that throughout this second phase data will be collected in increasingly greater detail and accuracy, in line with long-term improvements in data collection and analysis.

Third Phase:

Achieving Change – continuing reform beyond the life of the *Prevention Strategy* (2019-2022)

During this third three-year phase achievements against the outcomes of the *Prevention Strategy* are expected to be delivered that show reduced levels of family and domestic violence in the community, increased safety for victims (primarily women and their children) and increased perpetrator accountability. These achievements will have been supported by a strengthened and growing evidence base developed over the first six years. This final three-year phase will continue to support those reforms that have delivered results over past stages, leaving an enduring legacy of change that will remain beyond the life of the *Prevention Strategy*.

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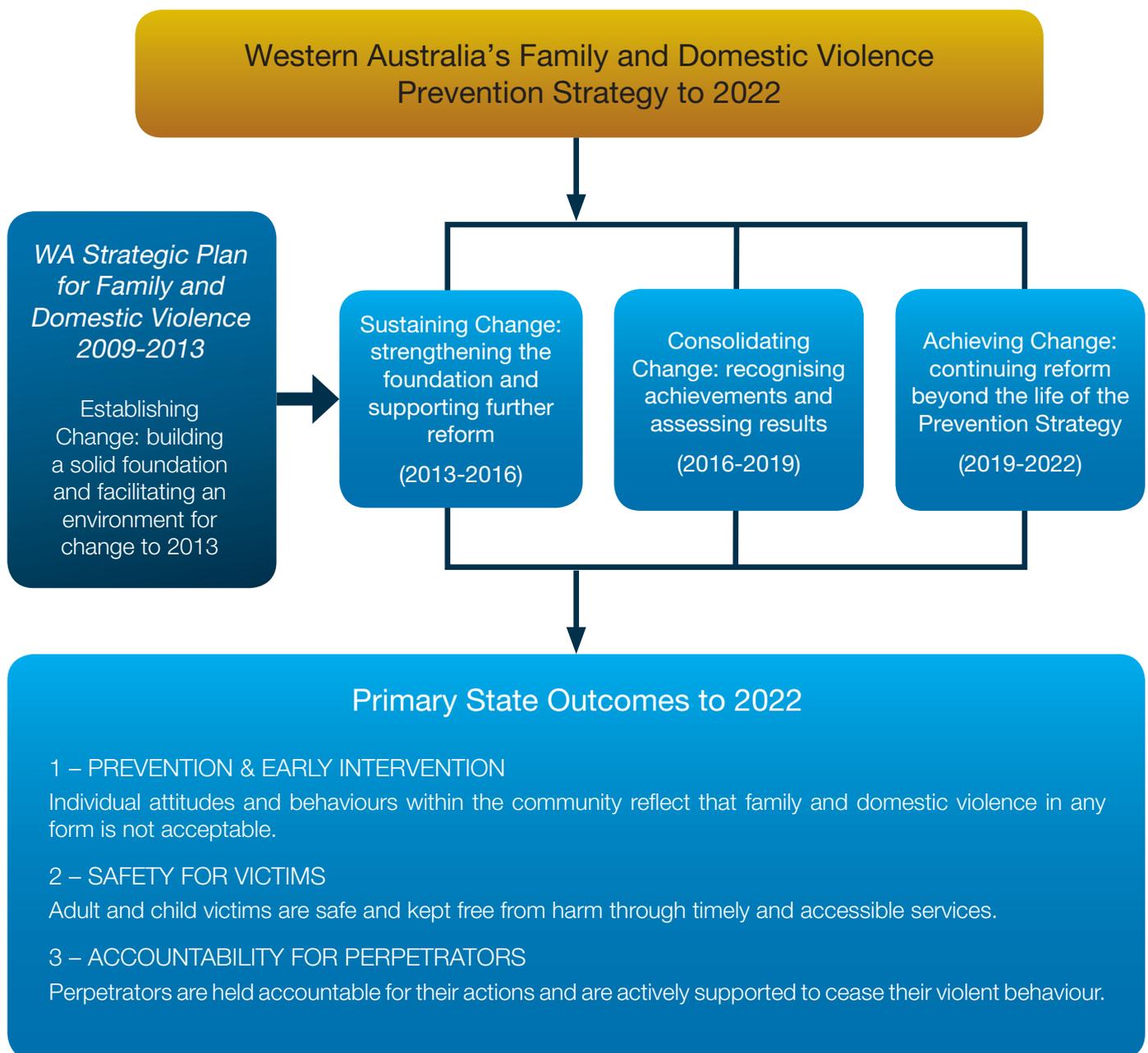


Figure 1 Establish, Sustain, Consolidate, Achieve: *Western Australia's Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy to 2022*.

Working together within a National Framework

The *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 (National Plan)* was released in February 2011 following endorsement from the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). The *Western Australian Prevention Strategy to 2022 (Prevention Strategy)* works within the national framework (see figure 2). Each three year phase of the *Prevention Strategy* is aligned to the three year national Action Plans and will serve as the WA Implementation Plan for the *National Plan*. Annual *Achievement Reports* that outline current and planned initiatives will be developed over the life of the *Prevention Strategy*.

The *National Plan* is underpinned by an understanding that the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, and the wider community, need to take action and work alongside each other to reduce violence against women.

The *National Plan* provides the overarching framework in which this shared action can occur, and delivers a coordinated national approach that will support state and territory governments to work alongside each other to reduce violence against women and their children.

The *National Plan* also recognises that to make a real and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children, a long-term commitment to action is needed. The *National Plan* sets out six national outcomes for state and territory governments to deliver from 2010 to 2022. The national outcomes are delivered through four, three-year Action Plans. These national Action Plans have been designed in progressive three-year terms that allow for review and evaluation over the life of each plan. This will provide governments and communities with the flexibility to respond to emerging priorities as new evidence becomes available and situations change.

The overall goals of the *National Plan* are to reduce violence against women and their children, improve how governments work together, increase support for women and their children, and create innovative and targeted ways to bring about change.

'By working together and challenging the attitudes and behaviours that allow violence to occur, all Australian governments are saying a very loud "no" to violence.'

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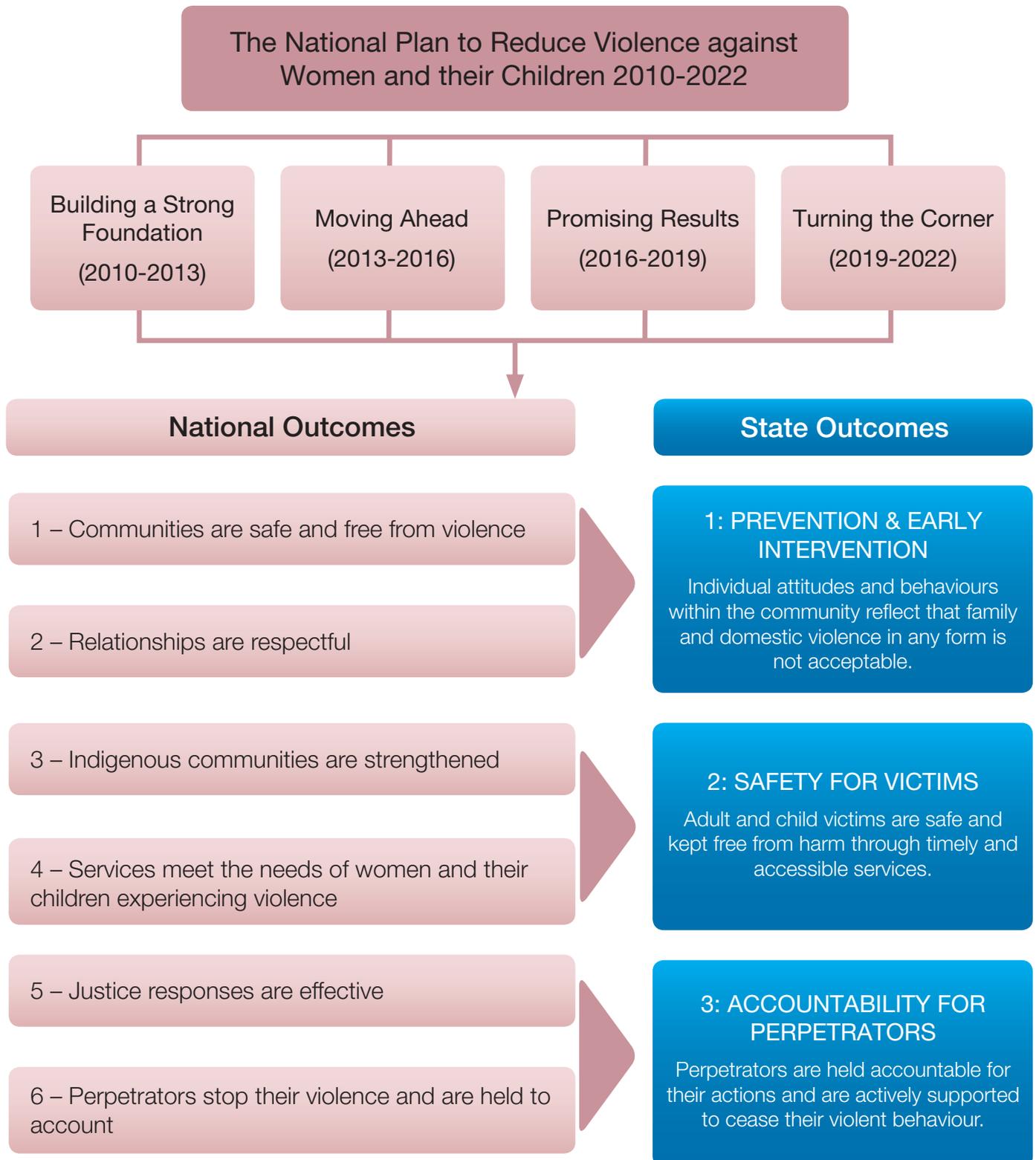


Figure 2 The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children.

Measuring Success – Reporting on Achievement

It is important to measure what has been achieved over the duration of the *Prevention Strategy* and to continue to improve the response to family and domestic violence in Western Australia based on experience and new knowledge. The *Prevention Strategy* sets out a long-term commitment to integrate systems and share information, to track performance, and improve and grow the evidence base for family and domestic violence.

The *Prevention Strategy* is built on a principal commitment to develop the systems and gather the data that will allow for improved decision making and planning, which is essential if lasting change is to be realised. During each three-year stage of the *Prevention Strategy* achievement against outcomes will be monitored, with annual reporting providing the necessary evidence to inform future target areas. At the conclusion of each three-year period data will be provided to measure progress toward the achievement of the outcomes of the *Prevention Strategy*.

Western Australia's Strategic Plan for Family and Domestic Violence 2009-2013 Mid Term Progress Report (Progress Report) provides the baseline data and the initial development of an evidence base for the long-term approach, and will inform decision making and planning throughout the life of the *Prevention Strategy*. The reporting framework for the *Progress Report* captures a range of data including changes in performance indicators over time. A data working group has been established to continue to strengthen the framework and work toward greater uniformity and quality of data from reporting sources.

Western Australian Family and Domestic Violence Senior Officer's Group

The *Prevention Strategy* has been endorsed by the Western Australian Family and Domestic Violence Senior Officer's Group (SOG), comprised of senior representatives from the key state and Commonwealth government agencies that have a direct or indirect responsibility for victims and perpetrators of family and domestic violence. The Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services is also represented. The purpose of the SOG is to plan, manage and monitor a strategic across government response to the issue of family and domestic violence in WA.

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WA Implementation Plan to 2013

Establishing Change: building a solid foundation and establishing an environment for change to 2013

Outcome 1: Prevention and Early Intervention

Individual attitudes and behaviours within the community reflect that family and domestic violence in any form is not acceptable.

Action Areas

- 1.1 Encourage schools and other educational institutions to implement Respectful Relationships Education Programs through integration into the mainstream curriculum.
- 1.2 Continue to raise awareness and support attitudinal change towards family and domestic violence through a range of social marketing campaigns targeted at diverse communities.
- 1.3 Build capacity and engagement with media outlets to promote appropriate and respectful reporting of family and domestic violence.
- 1.4 Support and improve the links between Aboriginal organisations and government and community sector agencies working with family and domestic violence to provide a coordinated and integrated response.

Outcome 2: Safety for Victims

Adult and child victims are safe and kept free from harm through timely and accessible services.

Action Areas

- 2.1 Continue to strengthen and integrate responses to family and domestic violence statewide.
- 2.2 Build the capacity of service responses to family and domestic violence, with a particular focus on regional areas across the state.
- 2.3 Continue the implementation of the Family and Domestic Violence Common Risk Assessment Risk Management Framework.
- 2.4 Work to improve the effectiveness of the justice system response to support integrated, accessible, timely, and safe processes and outcomes for victims of family and domestic violence.

Outcome 3: Accountability for Perpetrators

Perpetrators are held accountable for their actions and are actively supported to cease their violent behaviour.

Action Areas

- 3.1 Continue to strengthen legislation to provide a high level of protection for victims of family and domestic violence.
- 3.2 Identify gaps in current services for perpetrators, or those at risk of perpetrating, family and domestic violence and improve the quality and availability of services and programmes working with perpetrators, or those at risk of perpetrating, family and domestic violence.

