Safer Families, Safer Communities
Kimberley Family Violence Regional Plan
2015–2020
Front cover:

**Marnin Jarra – Manga Jarra**

These two older women *(marnin)* are talking to the two young girls *(manga)* about domestic violence. The *marnins* are sharing that they have been through domestic violence too.

They’re telling them that they can find strength and comfort again within themselves and move on in their lives. All the *mangas* and *marnins* are encouraging themselves to come together, be strong and carry on day by day.

‘My name is Eileen Forrest and I’m a Walmajarri woman living in Ngurtuwarta community near Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

I started painting a long time ago for Mangkaja Arts and with the ladies at Marra Worra Worra in Fitzroy Crossing. In 2013 I started painting boab nuts and canvasses at the Marninwarntikura Social Enterprise Studio.

I come to the studio because I really like to paint with the other ladies – we like to work together and to paint together and it’s great to earn money to buy food for my family.

I am a survivor of domestic violence. I went through it with my husband for a long time. I was being abused. I used to go to the Marninwarntikura Women’s Shelter every weekend and sometimes stay there for maybe one month or two. I used to share my story with other ladies at the Shelter and they shared their story with me.

I really want all the young girls to stop getting hurt. I just want them to carry on with their lives and stop getting beaten up by their husbands. I’d like to say that I want the young girls to stop drinking and smoking and live a healthy life and feel good about themselves. I would like to say to the young boys too, to stop drinking and smoking and to look after your wife and family.

It’s time now to stop and come together so we can heal and look after each other.’ – **Eileen Forrest**

The Department for Child Protection and Family Support deeply appreciates the generosity of Eileen Forrest, and the Marninwarntikura Women’s Resource Centre for providing the painting depicted on the front cover of the *Safer Families, Safer Communities Kimberley Family Violence Regional Plan 2015-2020.*
# Contents

Acknowledgements ....................................................................................................................2

Working towards safer families and communities is a priority ................................................3

Family and domestic violence strategic planning .................................................................4

Developing the Kimberley Plan ...............................................................................................5

  Defining Aboriginal family violence .....................................................................................5
  Family violence in the Kimberley .........................................................................................6
  Outcomes .............................................................................................................................7
  Good practice .......................................................................................................................7
  Key findings .........................................................................................................................8
  Further information .............................................................................................................9

Safer Families, Safer Communities: Kimberley family violence regional plan .................10

  Aim .......................................................................................................................................10
  Recognition statement ........................................................................................................10
  Guiding principles ...............................................................................................................10
  Proposed approach .............................................................................................................11
  Actions ................................................................................................................................12

Implementation .....................................................................................................................16

  Governance ........................................................................................................................16
  Work plans ..........................................................................................................................16
  Monitoring ..........................................................................................................................16
  Evaluation ............................................................................................................................16

2015–2016 Work plan .............................................................................................................17

  Monitoring and evaluation .................................................................................................20
  Acronyms .............................................................................................................................20

References ................................................................................................................................21

Appendix One: Family Safety Teams ......................................................................................23
Acknowledgements

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the first people of Australia. The culture of Aboriginal people is dynamic and continues to evolve and develop in response to historical and contemporary circumstances. Dispossession, interruption of culture and intergenerational trauma has significantly impacted on the health, safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal people. Working towards healing and redressing the imbalances in access, representation and rights of Aboriginal people is a priority.

Contributors

Representatives from the following agencies contributed their time, energy and ideas to the development of the Kimberley Plan. Their contributions are acknowledged with gratitude and thanks.

Aboriginal Family Law Service  
Aboriginal Legal Service  
Amnesty International  
Anglicare Western Australia  
Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation  
East Kimberley Healing Gathering  
Family Violence Prevention Legal Service  
Fitzroy Valley Futures Forum  
Gawooleng Yawoodeng  
Healing Foundation  
Joongari House  
Jungarni-Jutiya Indigenous Corporation  
Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services Centre  
Kimberley Community Legal Service  
Marnin Bowa Dumbara Family Healing Centre  
Marninwamti Women’s Resource Centre  
Marnja Jarndu Women’s Refuge  
Men’s Outreach Service  
MG Corporation  
Ngaringga Nguurra Safe House  
Ngnowar Aerwah Aboriginal Corporation  
Tjallara Consulting  
Tremalla Strong Women’s Service  
Winun Ngari Aboriginal Corporation  
World Vision Australia  
Yura Yungi Aboriginal Medical Service

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service  
Department for Child Protection and Family Support  
Department of Aboriginal Affairs  
Department of Corrective Services  
Department of Education  
Department of Health  
Department of Housing  
Department of Human Services  
Department of Indigenous Affairs  
Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet  
Derby Clontarf Academy  
Derby District High School  
Derby-West Kimberley Shire  
Fitzroy Valley District High School  
Kimberley Mental Health and Drug Service  
Kimberley Training Institute  
Legal Aid  
Shire of Halls Creek  
Western Australia Police

A note on language: Aboriginal people prefer the term ‘family violence’ as it provides greater scope to recognise violence and abuse in extended family and kinship networks. This will therefore be the preferred terminology used in this document and it will refer to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families. When specific reference is being made to family violence in Aboriginal families, the term ‘Aboriginal family violence’ will be used.
Working towards safer families and communities is a priority

One of the most prevalent and pervasive threats to the health, safety and wellbeing of women and children in Australia is family violence. Experienced by one in three women and one in four children, it is the most widespread and socially accepted human rights abuse occurring in Australia (World Health Organisation 2013).

Family violence is the intentional and systematic use of violence and abuse to create fear and to control a person’s behaviour. Multiple forms of abuse characterise the experience including physical, sexual and/or psychological, forced social isolation, economic deprivation or behaviour which causes a person to live in fear (Department for Child Protection 2011). Family violence is a gendered crime perpetrated mainly by men against women and children (World Health Organisation 2013; ABS 2008; AIHW 2006).

The impacts of family violence on the physical and emotional wellbeing, and overall quality of life of adult and child victims can be devastating. In Australia family violence is the leading cause of: perceived and actual threats to safety for women and children (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] 2005; 2012); non-accidental injury and death for women aged between 15 and 44 (VicHealth 2004); homelessness for women and children (Tually, Faulkner, Cutler & Slatter 2008); mental health diagnoses and substance misuse for women (Golding 1999; Keys & Young 1998); and physical and emotional harm (or risk of) for children (Humphreys 2007).

It is estimated that family violence costs the Australian economy 13.6 billion dollars per year associated with loss of productivity in the workplace and increased demands on health, welfare, housing, crisis and legal/statutory services (National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2009).
Family and domestic violence strategic planning

In 2012 the Western Australian government endorsed and launched Western Australia’s Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy to 2022 (the Prevention Strategy) which sets out a long term, across government framework for responding to family violence. The Prevention Strategy identifies phases of progressive reform emphasising integrated responses to family violence; developing a clear evidence base for ‘what works’; and increased quality, consistency and effectiveness of responses to perpetrators of violence.

To support implementation of the Prevention Strategy the Action Plan Freedom from Fear: Working towards the elimination of family and domestic violence in Western Australia 2015 (the Action Plan) outlines the next key actions required to work towards improvements in prevention, early intervention and responses to perpetrators of violence. One of the priorities of the Action Plan is “target communities and populations at greatest risk” which includes a commitment to work towards improved safety for Aboriginal people1, families and communities, focusing on the Kimberley region in the first instance.

The focus on Aboriginal people is in recognition of the significant over-representation of Aboriginal women and children as victims of family violence (ABS 2008). The Kimberley region was selected as a priority location due to the high rates of reported family violence.

Data from Western Australia Police indicates that per head of population, the rates of reported family violence in the Kimberley is between 2.3 and 8.8 times higher than any other regional or metropolitan location in Western Australia. Over a five year period between 2008-09 and 2012-13 the rate of reporting increased by 79.1 per cent, compared to an overall 42.8 per cent increase state wide (Department for Child Protection and Family Support 2014).

The Kimberley region covers a land area of 419,558 square kilometres; 16 per cent of the total land area of Western Australia. With 34,794 residents living across six towns and 183 Aboriginal communities (ABS 2012), it is the most sparsely populated region in Western Australia. More than 40 per cent of the population are Aboriginal people.

Safer Families, Safer Communities: Kimberley family violence regional plan (Kimberley Plan) aims to increase the health, safety and wellbeing of women, children and men living in the Kimberley region by working towards a reduction in family violence. The Kimberley Plan which sets out a framework for responding to family violence, includes strategies that will benefit all members of the Kimberley community as well as priority areas targeted at responding to Aboriginal family violence.

---

1 ‘Aboriginal people’ includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
Developing the Kimberley Plan

Defining Aboriginal family violence

Definitions of Aboriginal family violence draw on western definitions of ‘family and domestic violence’ including recognition of multiple forms of violence and abuse, the core dynamic of coercion and control and the gendered nature, but place the use and experience of violence in a broader context (Hovane & Cox 2011).

Of particular importance is recognition of the contribution of colonisation, dispossession, cultural dislocation and forced removal of children (National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation [NACCHO] 2006). This context, and the effects that these policies and practices have had on Aboriginal people, are significant factors contributing to trauma, disadvantage, violence and the use of alcohol and other drugs in Aboriginal families and communities (NACCHO 2006).

It is through an understanding of this context that the significant over-representation of Aboriginal people in family violence statistics, and the magnitude of the effects on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal families and communities is best understood (Hovane & Cox 2011).

Key statistics

- Up to one in two Aboriginal women and children report experiencing family violence (ABS 2008), this is significantly higher than the rate of reported family violence among non-Aboriginal women (which ranges between one in three and one in five) and non-Aboriginal children (one in four) (ABS 2012; Indermaur 2001; Mouzos & Makkai 2004).
- Aboriginal women are three times more likely to be physically assaulted by an intimate partner or family member and five times more likely to be sexually assaulted (ABS 2008).
- Aboriginal women are 35 times more likely to be hospitalised as a result of a domestic assault (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW] 2006).
- Aboriginal women are significantly over-represented as victims of domestic homicide (Ombudsman 2014).
- Aboriginal children are significantly over-represented in child protection systems (AIHW 2014). In Western Australia over half of all children in the care of the Chief Executive Officer of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS) are Aboriginal (CPFS 2014).
- Aboriginal women and children are significantly over-represented in victim of crime statistics (Bryant & Willis 2008). Aboriginal men, women and children are over-represented in perpetrator of crime statistics including incarceration rates (Wundersitz 2010).

2 Please note that for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, a significant proportion of family violence is unreported (Wills 2011).
Family violence in the Kimberley

In 2014 data from Western Australia Police (WA Police), Department of the Attorney General and Department of Health was compiled against seven performance indicators related to family violence, over a five year period (2008-09 to 2012-13). This data was broken down by region and demonstrated that the Kimberley was significantly over-represented, per head of population, on measures related to prevalence and severity of violence and under-represented on measures of response such as criminal charges and violence restraining order applications. The data does not differentiate between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people however reports from service providers indicated that the majority of clients seeking assistance related to family violence are Aboriginal. A snapshot of this data is provided below.
In response to this information, the Family and Domestic Violence Senior Officer’s Group in consultation with the Kimberley Child Safety Directors Group commissioned development of a regional plan to improve responses to family violence. To inform the plan, an extensive process of information analysis was undertaken including stakeholder consultation, case reviews, data analysis, service mapping and review of relevant literature including prior inquiries such as *Putting the Picture Together, Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities* (Gordon, Hallahan & Henry 2002).

Information was analysed in reference to the outcomes of safety and accountability and in recognition of key features of good practice including ‘integrated responses’, ‘prevention and early intervention’ and ‘culturally relevant and appropriate’ service responses. The analysis revealed four inter-related themes:

1. supporting safe families and communities;
2. safe and accountable service responses;
3. perpetrator intervention; and
4. moving beyond a crisis response.

A synopsis of the report is provided including the definitions for safety, accountability, integrated response, prevention and early intervention and cultural competence, followed by a description of the key findings.

**Outcomes**

Safety: Is understood in absolute and relative terms. To be ‘safe’ is to live free of harmful or abusive behaviours, both threatened and actual. The spectrum of behaviours that may be considered in this context is broad, including anything that undermines or is detrimental to an individual’s physical, emotional, social or spiritual wellbeing and/or their economic security. Victim safety is a relative state, dependent upon the risks or danger posed by the perpetrator.

Accountability: Safety for victims of family violence cannot be achieved without managing the risks posed by the person using violence. To do this, an integrated and accountable systems response is required. An accountable systems response prioritises the safety of adult and child victims. At all times the person using violence, service providers, agencies and organisations are accountable to, and for, the safety of the people experiencing or at risk of violence.

**Good practice**

Integrated response: Refers to government agencies and community sector services working in a coordinated and collaborative manner to provide holistic, safe and accountable responses to victims and perpetrators of family violence; streamlined pathways through the service system; and coordinated service delivery between agencies. Integrated responses increase the collective capacity and effectiveness of the service system to identify and respond to victims and perpetrators.

Prevention and early intervention: Is about stopping violence before it starts, either by engaging with the whole community (primary prevention) or targeting at risk groups (early intervention).
Cultural competence: Refers to a commitment by practitioners, agencies and service systems to engage constructively and respectfully with people from other cultures. Attaining cultural competence is an ongoing process that includes maintaining cultural respect and promoting cultural safety.

In regards to Aboriginal people, cultural respect involves creating a safe environment where service providers understand and respect cultural differences and are responsive to the cultural rights, practices, values and expectations of Aboriginal people (Walker, Schultz & Sonn 2010).

Cultural safety refers to understanding the social, historical and political context of an individual, including the impact of these factors on their health, safety and wellbeing (Walker, Schultz & Sonn 2010). Cultural competence is a critical precursor to accessible, safe and effective services for Aboriginal people.

**Key findings**

**Supporting safe families and communities**

The *Family and Domestic Violence Project Report* (the Report) highlights the significant influence of family and community in creating safety and promoting accountability. Individual, family and community knowledge about, and attitudes towards family violence is a critical and influential context that affects help-seeking behaviour, tolerance for violence, perpetration of violence (including compliance with legal sanctions) and the protection of child and adult victims.

The Report provides examples of the positive and protective influence of family and community such as occasions where safety was improved through the involvement of family and community and community owned and led responses to family violence. In contrast, there were also examples of family or community members minimising, normalising or participating in violence such as blaming a victim for the perpetrator’s use of violence, monitoring a victim’s whereabouts and reporting back to the perpetrator or threatening or intimidating the victim.

The high rate of exposure of children and young people to family violence in the Kimberley and the increasing trend of young people using violence towards their parent/s and/or an intimate partner also reinforced the importance of family and community in establishing social and community norms about safe and respectful relationships.

**Safe and accountable service response**

Safe houses, violence restraining orders and the criminal justice system were highlighted as important response options for adult and child victims that were not operating to their full potential. Specific issues include access, cultural relevance and appropriateness, flexibility and overall effectiveness.

Coordination and collaboration between services is another area requiring improvement. Given the complexities of family violence and the multiple contributing or co-occurring issues, it is critical that services work together seamlessly to provide holistic, relevant and timely services that meet client needs. To do this, services must be able to identify family violence when it is occurring (even if it is not the presenting issue) and identify, assess and manage risk through information sharing, active referrals, coordinated client responses and collaboration e.g., joint case management.
Many good practice examples of agency collaboration in the Kimberley were identified, leading to positive outcomes for the client/family involved. However, when responses were not integrated the following was observed:

- adult and child victims were known to and accessing support services but the family violence was not identified. This limited opportunities for early intervention;
- victims were more likely to fall between the gaps in services;
- issues were addressed in isolation;
- perpetrators were less likely to be engaged or provided with a service/response;
- case management was not informed by an understanding of the risk or of the involvement of other agencies; and
- agencies provided services that were duplicate or counter-productive to what was being offered by the other agencies involved.

**Perpetrator intervention**

Services targeted at perpetrators of family violence are not available in the Kimberley. As a result, responses to men who are using violence comprise mainly legal or statutory responses which are only suitable, available and effective for a small proportion of perpetrators (usually those who have committed a criminal offence). The lack of available responses contributes to high rates of recidivism and undermines overall efforts to respond to family violence.

**Moving beyond a crisis response**

Due to the lack of services/interventions for perpetrators, limited access to and effectiveness of restraining orders and criminal justice responses, lack of coordination between services and community attitudes that normalise or minimise violence, responses to family violence in the Kimberley tend to be reactive, crisis driven and short term. Typically responses are instigated following police attendance at a domestic violence incident. The strategies implemented by police and other agencies are focused on ‘cooling off’ and short term protection. Moving responses beyond crisis requires work across all areas including supporting safe communities, safe and coordinated services and engaging and responding to perpetrators of family violence.

**Further information**

Refer to the Department for Child Protection and Family Support website for the Kimberley Family Violence Project Report which outline the findings from the consultation process including the data collected.

---

3 Pilots and/or services offered for short periods of time have been trialled but not recurrently resourced or available.
Safer Families, Safer Communities: Kimberley family violence regional plan

Aim

Safer Families, Safer Communities: Kimberley family violence regional plan (Kimberley Plan) aims to increase the health, safety and wellbeing of women, children and men living in the Kimberley region by working towards a reduction in family violence. This will be achieved through a whole of community approach that promotes:

1. shared responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of children, individuals and families;
2. developing culture and community based responses to family violence;
3. building strong and safe communities; and
4. developing services and a service system that is integrated, culturally secure, client centred, accessible and effective.

Recognition statement

Aboriginal law and culture is central to the health, safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal people. The Kimberley Plan recognises that:

• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are the first people of Australia;
• the cultures of Aboriginal people are dynamic and continue to evolve and develop in response to historical and contemporary circumstances;
• dispossession, interruption of culture and intergenerational trauma have significantly impacted on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people, and they share a continuing legacy of resilience, strength and determination;
• Aboriginal people and communities are diverse in gender, age, languages, backgrounds, sexual orientations, religious beliefs, family responsibilities, marriage status, life and work experiences, personality and education levels; and
• the contribution of all Aboriginal people to generating new ideas and innovative solutions to improve health, safety and wellbeing are valuable.

Guiding principles

The Kimberley Plan is underpinned by the principles outlined in Western Australia’s Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy to 2022. In addition, the Kimberley Plan is informed by the understanding that safe and effective responses with sustainable outcomes require a whole of community approach that includes the following key features:

1. shared responsibility for family safety across community and service providers;
2. changing violence supportive attitudes to promote safe and respectful relationships;
3. the cultural and community-based responses to family violence that are integrated, responsive and respectful of cultural values and community-led; and
4. the development of a whole-of-community approach that promotes culturally appropriate, accessible and effective service systems.

5 The recognition statement was adapted from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-2023.
3. intervening early with at-risk or vulnerable groups such as children and young people;
4. promoting protection, safety and recovery for adult and child victims;
5. responses to perpetrators of family violence that hold them responsible for their use of violence. This includes constant reinforcement by the community and service system; and
6. responses to perpetrators of family violence that are coordinated and collaborative across government agencies and community sector services.

**Proposed approach**

The Kimberley Plan is for all residents of the Kimberley. In recognition of the high proportion of Aboriginal people living in the Kimberley and the over-representation of Aboriginal women and children as victims of family violence, the philosophical and practical approaches that underpin the Kimberley plan include a combination of strategies to improve family violence service provision for all community members and strategies that are specific to Aboriginal people, families and communities.

Outlined below is a summary of the broad practice approaches that underpin the Kimberley Plan. They include: strong law and culture to reduce violence; healing; an effective safety net; and alignment with existing policies, procedures and programs.

**Strong law and culture to reduce violence**

For family violence prevention and intervention to be relevant and effective, it must be grounded in Aboriginal law and culture (Hovane 2015; Hovane & Cox 2011). For Aboriginal people, Aboriginal law sets out the norms, beliefs, expectations and rules for everyday living. Aboriginal law is stable and enduring and embedded within it is dignity, wellbeing and equality between men and women. The day to day living and expression of Aboriginal law is ‘culture’. Family violence has no basis in either Aboriginal law or culture (Hovane 2015). Working alongside Law People, Elders and community leaders provides important opportunities to develop culture and community based responses to family violence that are safe, effective and enduring (Hovane 2015).

**Healing**

Support for healing is integral to promoting safety and wellbeing and reducing family violence. Healing refers to recovery from the psychological and physical impacts of trauma (Healing Foundation nd) for the purposes of the Kimberley Plan. For Aboriginal people this trauma is predominantly the result of colonisation and past government policies that caused the dispossession and dislocation of Aboriginal people from their land and culture.

Healing from this trauma is a process not an outcome, and may continue through a person’s lifetime and across generations. Healing can take many forms and is underpinned by a strong cultural and spiritual base. It enables individuals, families and communities to gain control over the direction of their lives and reach their full potential (Healing Foundation nd). Healing is the basis of family violence prevention and the backdrop for family violence intervention/responses.
**Effective safety net**

Mainstream and Aboriginal services must be available and effective for creating safety and stopping perpetrators use of violence, when they are accessed/called upon by adult and child victims.

Service responses, particularly those that are crisis driven, should not be the predominant framework for responding to family violence. However, they must be accessible and effective when required. An ‘effective’ service response prioritises safety of the adult and child victim, holds the perpetrator responsible for their use of violence, is informed by an assessment of risk, and provides a holistic response that manages risk and responds to client needs through close coordination and collaboration with relevant government and community sector agencies.

**Alignment with existing policies, programs and initiatives**

A siloed approach to community based support, service provision and practice will compromise and undermine the effectiveness of all programs/interventions occurring across the Kimberley.

Family violence does not occur in isolation of other individual, family or community needs. For example, common co-occurring issues or concerns include physical health, mental health and wellbeing (including trauma), child protection involvement, homelessness, substance misuse, foetal alcohol syndrome, chronic disease, poverty, disability, suicide and self-harm and school drop-out (or low attendance). Every effort will be made to provide an integrated response that supports and aligns with existing strategies, services, community priorities and needs.

**Actions**

The actions outlined below are the key strategies or initiatives that are necessary for supporting a whole of community approach to family violence. The actions are grouped under the following four themes and linkages to the report findings and practice approaches are provided:

1. shared responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of children, individuals and families;
2. developing culture and community based responses to family violence;
3. building strong and safe communities; and
4. developing services and a service system that is integrated, culturally appropriate, client centred, accessible and effective.

It should be noted that many of the actions are stated broadly and do not include details about implementation. This approach is deliberate, to allow for enduring and varied approaches to any one action. For further details about implementation, refer to the 2015-2016 Work Plan which includes strategies or initiatives to be pursued within the first twelve months of implementation and the lead agency responsible (see pages 17–18).
1 The safety and wellbeing of children, individuals and families is everyone’s responsibility

Relevant key finding: supporting safe families and communities.

Relevant practice considerations: strong law and culture to reduce violence, healing, effective safety net and alignment with existing policies, programs and initiatives.

A whole of community approach is required to respond safely and effectively to family violence in the Kimberley. This must be underpinned by mechanisms for collaborative governance involving processes for joint decision making that engages/involves Aboriginal Law People, Elders, community leaders and service providers. Collaborative governance promotes shared ownership and responsibility for family violence and helps to inform and promote service responses that are accessible, culturally appropriate and effective.

1.1 Engage Aboriginal Law People, Elders and community leaders to discuss family violence and opportunities for culture and community based responses.

1.2 Develop and implement opportunities for shared responsibility and collaborative decision making between Aboriginal Law People, Elders, community leaders, key Aboriginal organisations and other government agencies and community sector services.

1.3 Support alignment and integration of the Kimberley Plan with related strategies, initiatives and programs.

2 Culture and community based responses to family violence

Relevant key finding: supporting safe families and communities, safe and accountable service response, perpetrator intervention and moving beyond a crisis response.

Relevant practice considerations: strong law and culture to reduce violence and effective safety net.

Aboriginal law and culture promotes and prioritises the safety and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. It includes clear norms for behaviour and the structures and sanctions for responding to people who act outside of the established norm. Positioning law and culture at the forefront of responses to family violence provides opportunity to increase the accessibility, relevance and effectiveness of responses to family violence in Aboriginal communities.

2.1 Trial a new model for responding to Aboriginal family violence that uses law and culture as the basis for engaging and responding to adult and child victims, perpetrators and other family and community members. This approach will be directed by Aboriginal Law People, Elders, community leaders and members and will directly inform or contribute to the work/actions undertaken to promote Strong and Safe Communities.
3 Strong and safe communities

**Relevant key finding:** supporting safe families and communities, safe and accountable service response, perpetrator intervention and moving beyond a crisis response.

**Relevant practice considerations:** strong law and culture to reduce violence, healing and effective safety net.

Strong and safe communities are the critical foundation or context for effective responses to family violence. They promote knowledge and attitudes that condemn the use of violence, create and/or support strategies to increase the safety and wellbeing of adult and child victims and challenge person/s using violence (when it is safe to do so).

3.1 Support strategies and initiatives that promote healing for Aboriginal people.

Note: The Kimberley Plan is not intended to set out a comprehensive framework or approach to healing. However, healing is recognised as a critical component of creating safe communities and is therefore strongly supported.

3.2 Undertake community safety planning to support and protect people experiencing, or at risk of family violence.

3.3 Engage children and young people in activities that promote respectful relationships.

3.4 Engage communities in activities or events that promote awareness about family violence.

4 Services are integrated, culturally appropriate, client centred, accessible and effective

**Relevant key finding:** supporting safe families and communities, safe and accountable service response, perpetrator intervention and moving beyond a crisis response.

**Relevant practice considerations:** strong law and culture to reduce violence, effective safety net and alignment with existing policies, programs and initiatives.

For clients who are experiencing family violence or who are at risk of harm ‘safety net’ services including safe houses, police, child protection, health, courts and family support services must be accessible, easy to navigate, culturally appropriate and client driven (for example, focusing on the needs of the client rather than the agency mandate). The best possible outcomes will be achieved by responses that prioritise the safety of adult and child victims, are risk informed and holistic including services/intervention for the adult and child victim and the person using violence. All responses to family violence must involve coordination and collaboration between agencies, information sharing and referral.

4.1 Develop and implement ‘Family Safety Teams’ in four locations across the Kimberley. The Family Safety Teams are a multi-agency wrap around response that promotes safety and recovery for adult and child victims; engages and responds to perpetrators; supports coordination and collaboration between agencies; and engages family and community to promote prevention and early intervention. Refer to appendix one for further information about the Family Safety Teams.
4.2 Support the implementation of community based outreach.

4.3 Work towards improved access to and effectiveness of violence restraining orders for victims of family violence.

4.4 Improved access to, and effectiveness of, the criminal justice system for victims of family violence.

4.5 Increase collaboration and coordination between agencies to support earlier identification of victims, holistic responses to family violence, coordinated case management between agencies and increased capacity to manage identified risks.

4.6 Improve the capacity of the service system to engage, respond and manage risk associated with perpetrators of family violence.

4.7 Promote workforce development activities that increase cultural security of services and promote understanding about how Aboriginal law and culture can challenge family violence and create safety.
Implementation

Governance
Implementation of the Kimberley Plan will be managed through the Kimberley Child Safety Directors Group (KCSDG) KCSDG reports to the State Child Safety Directors Group (SCSDG) which is chaired by the Director General of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support and comprises senior executives from state government agencies, the Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Western Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council and the Western Australian Council of Social Service. SCSDG reports to the Minister for Child Protection and through the Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee to Cabinet.

In addition, overall progress of the Kimberley Plan will be monitored by the Family and Domestic Violence Senior Officers’ Group (Senior Officers’ Group). The Senior Officer’s Group was responsible for commissioning development of the Kimberley Plan and will promote connection to the Freedom From Fear Action Plan 2015 and Western Australia’s Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy to 2022 (the Prevention Strategy).

Feedback loops between the SCSDG, Senior Officer’s Group and KCSDG will be established. A regular review of the local and regional governance structures will be undertaken.

Work plans
Implementation of the Kimberley Plan will be guided by annual work plans. This approach will enable ongoing review and refinement of implementation strategies. The work plan for 2015-16 is included on pages 17–18.

Monitoring
An inter-agency working group comprising representatives from government agencies and community sector services will be convened to develop new family violence performance indicators. These will build on the existing seven performance indicators identified in the Prevention Strategy and will include refinements related to gender, age and cultural background, and additions in the areas of child protection, sexual assault and legal outcomes.

A multi-agency case review process will also be implemented. Using appreciative inquiry, government agencies and community sector services will review family violence cases and consider what worked well, what didn’t work well and why, and what would need to happen to improve the capability of agencies and the service system to work towards victim safety, perpetrator accountability and integrated responses.

Evaluation
Where possible and practicable, formal evaluation of the actions and strategies included in the Kimberley Plan will be undertaken.

---

6 Data against these performance indicators has been regularly collected, and is available from 2007-08.
## 2015–2016 Work plan

Outlined below are the implementation priorities for 2015-2016 (referred to herein as the ‘work plan’). The work plan is not intended to represent the entirety of work/action undertaken to implement the Kimberley Plan, but rather highlight the priorities for the first 12 months of implementation. For each strategy or initiative included in the work plan, the lead agency/ies responsible is identified.

### 1 The safety and wellbeing of children, individuals and families is everyone’s responsibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Description</th>
<th>Lead agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Engage the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre (KALACC) to discuss options or opportunities to reduce family violence across the Kimberley. With their permission, engagement with KALACC will be ongoing and will directly inform the actions/approaches undertaken to build strong and safe communities (see priority three).</td>
<td>CPFS and the Kimberley CSDG with the advice and direction of Aboriginal community leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Engage Wunan and the Empowered Communities group to discuss options or opportunities to reduce family violence in Aboriginal families and communities across the Kimberley.</td>
<td>CPFS and the Kimberley CSDG with advice from MG corporation and Gawooleng Yawoodeng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Work alongside the Aboriginal Education Team to engage community leaders in discussions about promoting safety and wellbeing and building strong and safe communities.</td>
<td>Department of Education and CPFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Engage (or re-engage) existing inter-agency groups or forums, such as Fitzroy Valley Futures Forum, to discuss location specific opportunities to support implementation of the Kimberley Plan.</td>
<td>CPFS and the Kimberley CSDG with Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Establish governance arrangements for the Kimberley Plan including reporting to the Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee via the Child Safety Directors Group.</td>
<td>CPFS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 Culture and community based responses to family violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Explore funding options to implement a model of community engagement and violence prevention. This approach will work in consultation with key stakeholders including Aboriginal Law People, Elders and community leaders. This will directly inform action or initiatives undertaken to support priority three, building strong and safe communities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Strong and safe communities

Action in this area will be informed and directed by engagement with Aboriginal Law People, Elders and community leaders such as the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre.

4 Services are integrated, culturally appropriate, client centred, accessible and effective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Establish four Family Safety Teams across the Kimberley located in Broome, Derby, Kununurra and Halls Creek. Refer to appendix one for a description of the Family Safety Teams.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Establish clear referral pathways and processes for Multi-Agency Case Management (MACM) of high risk family violence cases. Processes for MACM are to be coordinated via the Family Safety Teams and will involve relevant government agencies and community sector services in the Kimberley including representatives from Department of Education, Department of Health and local safe houses. Professional education will be provided to support this initiative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Promote consistent understanding and practice regarding information sharing/exchange.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Monitoring and evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop and trial a model for multi-agency case review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake an evaluation of the Men’s Family Violence Service working in the Family Safety Teams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and agree performance indicators to support monitoring of family violence in the Kimberley.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support research being conducted by Curtin University into family and domestic violence in regional and remote locations. This project will involve engaging service providers and victims of family violence in Derby.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acronyms

AFLS: Aboriginal Family Law Service
DCS: Department of Corrective Services
CSDG: Child Safety Directors Group
DotAG: Department of the Attorney General
CPFS: Department for Child Protection and Family Support
References

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2014, Child Protection Australia 2012-2013, Cat. no. CWS 49. AIHW, Canberra.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2006, Family Violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, Cat. no. IHW 17. AIHW, Canberra.


Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, Cat. no. 4714, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.


Bartels L 2010, Indigenous Women’s Offending Patterns: A Literature Review, Research and Public Policy Series no. 107, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.


Department for Child Protection and Family Support 2015, Freedom from Fear: Working Towards the Elimination of Family and Domestic Violence in Western Australia, Department for Child Protection and Family Support, Western Australia.

Department for Child Protection and Family Support 2011, Western Australia’s Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework, Department for Child Protection and Family Support, Western Australia.

Department for Child Protection and Family Support 2012, Western Australia’s Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy to 2022, Department for Child Protection and Family Support, Western Australia.


Healing Foundation nd, Glossary of Healing Terms, Healing Foundation, Canberra.
Hovane V 2015, Our Story to Tell: Aboriginal Perspectives on Domestic and Family Violence, ANROWS Footprints, Issue One.


Indermaur D 2001, Young Australians and Domestic Violence, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.


Ombudsman 2014, Ombudsman Western Australia Annual Report 2013-14, Ombudsman, Western Australia.


Appendix One: Family Safety Teams

Family Safety Teams are a coordinated, multi-agency response that provides wrap around support and services to individuals, family and community experiencing family violence. The Family Safety Teams are comprised of six staff including:

- a women and girls worker;
- a men and boys worker;
- a community worker7;
- a representative from Western Australia Police;
- a representative from the Department for Child Protection and Family Support; and
- a representative from the Department of Corrective Services.

The responses offered by the Family Safety Teams are multi-faceted including promoting safety and recovery for adult and child victims; engaging and responding to perpetrators; supporting coordination and collaboration between agencies; and engaging family and community to raise awareness about family violence, promote respectful relationships and support community safety planning.

Key features of the Family Safety Team model include:

- co-location of staff, where possible;
- joint assessment and triage of WA Police Domestic Violence Incident Reports (DVIR);
- proactive outreach to families identified in a DVIR;
- provision of a central referral point for cases of high risk family violence;
- coordination of multi-agency case management for cases of high risk family violence. This includes engagement of other key agencies and services including housing, alcohol and other drug, health and mental health; and
- community engagement and education.

The Family Safety Teams will be established in four locations (Broome, Derby, Kununurra and either Halls Creek or Fitzroy Crossing). They will provide outreach to surrounding communities and towns.

A diagram illustrating the role and function of the Family Safety Teams is provided as Figure 1.

---

7 Resourcing for this position is yet to be finalised.
Figure 1. Family Safety Teams