

Human Rights Council – 38th Session

Clustered Interactive Dialogue with
the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its causes and consequences
& the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants

20 June 2018

Country Concerned Statement

Australia would like to thank the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on her mission to Australia and for her report. Independent scrutiny, transparency and accountability are critical to upholding the human rights of all people and Australia welcomes such scrutiny.

Australia is carefully considering the Special Rapporteur's recommendations and appreciates the opportunity to make a preliminary response today.

Australia is firm in its view that violence against women has its roots in gender inequality. Both are unacceptable and must not be tolerated. Violence against women has devastating effects on the entire Australian community. It requires a long-term plan of action.

The Special Rapporteur commended Australia's political will to address violence against women as a national priority, evident in our *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010–2022*.

Work pursued under the National Plan represents the cooperative efforts of all Australian Federal, State and Territory Governments to address this issue of national concern.

In a similar joint effort, the Attorneys-General of all Federal, State and Territory Governments are currently pursuing work to improve the intersection between the family law and child protection legal systems in responding to family violence.

We agree with the Special Rapporteur that there is a critical need to capture data and properly analyse causes that lead to femicides and gaps in services and systems. That is why all Australian Federal, State and Territory governments have committed to the implementation of the National Data Collection and Reporting Framework. This Framework will provide an increasingly accurate picture of the prevalence, justice responses, and deaths related to family and domestic violence to help frame targeted policy responses.

The Special Rapporteur noted particular concerns regarding the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. We acknowledge and regret that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience violence at higher levels than non-Indigenous Australian women. We must do better.

Reducing levels of violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is a national priority for the Australian Government. We have committed over \$46 million in funding for activities specifically directed to addressing family violence affecting Indigenous women, as well as further funding for family violence prevention legal services, victim support and activities to address the drivers of violence. Importantly, extra police, safe houses and community safety initiatives are being rolled out to address violence against Indigenous women and their children.

The Australian Government is committed to seeing greater involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, including women’s organisations, in the delivery of services and programs. This will translate into a significant increase in the number of Indigenous-owned or controlled organisations delivering Australian Government-funded activities.

Australia commends the Special Rapporteur for drawing attention to the issue of elder abuse. Australia is pleased to announce that since the Special Rapporteur’s visit, the Australian Law Reform Commission has completed its report into *Elder Abuse – A National Legal Response*. Australia also endorses the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur to develop a national plan to promote the autonomy and agency of older people, and this work is currently underway.

Australia reaffirms our commitment to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women – the preeminent treaty acknowledging the comprehensive rights of women as fundamental human rights – as we continue our efforts to advance the interests and defend the rights of women and girls in Australia and around the world.

568 Words