# Hawkesbury Family and Domestic Violence Action Plan











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# **Purpose of this Plan**

The Family and Domestic Violence Action Plan (FDVAP) has been developed to identify actions that can be undertaken by: all levels of government (including Hawkesbury City Council); the Hawkesbury community; and local services and agencies, to support Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) victims and reduce the occurrence of FDV in the local area.

## **Definition Family and Domestic Violence**

From the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007:

#### **Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence is an offence committed by a person against another person with whom the person who commits the offence has or has had a domestic relationship. This includes physical, sexual, psychological, emotional and verbal abuse. It can also take the form of economic abuse, harassment and/or stalking.

These various forms of abuse often occur simultaneously. It involves violent, abusive or intimidating behaviour carried out by a person against a partner or family member to control and dominate that person and causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can also affect the family's finances and financial wellbeing.

#### **Family Violence**

Family Violence encompasses abuse that occurs in the family context (i.e. siblings, parents, children, grandparents, aunts and uncles).

#### Family and Domestic Violence in the Hawkesbury

Although it is difficult to accurately gauge the true extent of FDV in the community due to many factors (including victim under-reporting), a frequently cited study conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Study found that in 2012, 16.9 % of Australian women over the age of 18 years had experienced partner violence since the age of 15 years. The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research study (2016) recorded crime statistics found that there were 285 recorded domestic violence assault incidents in the Hawkesbury LGA between July 2015 and June 2016. This placed Hawkesbury as the 59th highest LGA out of more than 140 LGAs in relation to recorded domestic violence related assault incidents

# Acknowledgements

Hawkesbury City Council would like to thank all the people who have contributed to the development of this plan – particularly the people and agencies that attended the Hawkesbury FDV Forum and workshops in 2016.

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#### 1 Introduction

In May 2015, Hawkesbury City Council (Council) resolved to work with local organisations/networks, specifically Hawkesbury Action Network Against Domestic Violence to facilitate and develop a community led response plan to family and domestic violence in the Hawkesbury.

Council engaged the Social Work and Policy Studies Program at the University of Sydney to undertake an exploratory study to elicit responses from key stakeholders in the community which would inform the development of a community led response to Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) in the Hawkesbury. Dr Susan Heward-Belle (from the University of Sydney) facilitated three focus groups that involved 28 participants, including a wide range of Hawkesbury services, statutory child protection services Family and Community Services (FACS) and local police, plus eight women who experienced FDV while living in the Hawkesbury.

Council facilitated the Hawkesbury Family and Domestic Violence Forum in November 2016 where findings from the focus groups held in Hawkesbury were presented. Other presenters at the Forum included a women with lived experience of domestic violence, the Superintendent from Hawkesbury Local Area Command and the CEO of Domestic Violence of NSW.

The Forum also comprised of a workshop where attendees participated in a facilitated discussion to identify and outline possible strategies for Council to initiate to address family and domestic violence.

## 2 **Guiding Principles**

The Hawkesbury Family and Domestic Violence Action Plan (HFDVAP) has been developed with consideration to the NSW Government's Domestic and Family Violence Framework for Reform. The overall outcomes of the NSWDFV Framework for Reform are that:

- 1. domestic and family violence is prevented
- 2. domestic and family violence is identified early
- 3. victims are safe and supported to recover
- 4. perpetrators stop using violence
- 5. a supported, professional and effective sector is developed.



Dr Susan Heward-Belle University of Sydney



Moo Baulch CEO of Domestic Violence NSW

# 3 Action Plan Recommendations

These recommendations from the workshop session of the Hawkesbury Family and Domestic Violence Forum on 10 November 2016 have been grouped into common themes. See Appendix B for a summary of the community consultation and recommended actions.

# 3.1 Planning and Coordination

	Strategy/Action	Key agencies	Timeframe (Short, Medium, or Long term)	Output	Outcome
3.1.1	Council develop a Family and Domestic Violence Action Plan (FDVAP) for the Hawkesbury LGA.	Council HANADV	Short – 9 months	Plan developed and adopted by Council	Co-ordinated response to the needs of persons experiencing FDV
3.1.2	Establish a partnership framework (Family and Domestic Violence Action Plan Working Group) to coordinate the implementation of the agreed actions.	FDVAP Working Group Key agencies	Short – 9 months	Partnership framework developed	Co-ordinated response to the needs of persons experiencing FDV



# 3.2 Policy and Advocacy

	Strategy/Action	Key agencies	Timeframe (Short, Medium, or Long term)	Output	Outcome
3.2.1	Council to act as an advocate for FDV issues.	Council	Ongoing	Number of actions taken by council in advocacy for FDV victims	Inclusive communities
3.2.2	Council to work with local health services (GPs, SJOG HDHS and PHN) to identify barriers to access for persons experiencing FDV and where required, advocate for funding and systems change to address gaps	Council, local GPs, SJOG HDHS (Hospital), and Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network	Ongoing	Number of services provided in response to identified gaps	Improved access to healthcare services for people experiencing FDV
3.2.3	Review Council's FDV Policy	Council	Short term: 9 to 18 months	Policy reviewed; Notification to staff	Coordinated response to the needs of Council staff experiencing FDV

# 3.3 Public Information and Education

	Strategy/Action	Key agencies	Timeframe (Short, Medium, or Long term)	Output	Outcome
3.3.1	Council and Hawkesbury LAC (Police) to sponsor an Annual FDV Forum for local community, FDV victims and area services	Council, Hawkesbury LAC (Police), HANADV	Annually	Number of participants	Learn local issues, exchange strategies, foster partnerships and increase collaboration
3.3.2	Co-ordinate delivery of information with respect to FDV services to schools and community through education programs and community events	Council, HANADV	Ongoing	Number of resources available/ Distributed Number of events held	Increase in awareness of FDV issues Improved access to services for persons experiencing FDV
3.3.3	Promote the Women's Cottage as the most appropriate mechanism for co-ordinating information to FDV victims about what's available, where to go and how to get there, etc.	Council HANADV, LAC (Police), All agencies	Ongoing	Number of resources available/ distributed	Improved service access for women experiencing FDV victims
3.3.4	Council work with HANADV to implement calendar of community events (preferably free and local) where FDV information and services can be discreetly accessed by FDV victims	Council, HANADV, other key agencies	Ongoing	Number of resources available / distributed	Co-ordinated response to the needs of persons experiencing FDV
3.3.5	Work in partnership to support roll-out of in-school education programs through Council sponsorship, joint funding applications and/or advocacy (e.g. Healthy Relationship, Wellbeing, White Ribbon, etc.)	Council, HANADV, All agencies	Medium to long term: 1 to 5 years	Number of FDV programs investigated. Number of funding applications submitted.	Early interventions resulting in reduction of FDV in Hawkesbury

	Strategy/Action	Key agencies	Timeframe (Short, Medium, or Long term)	Output	Outcome
3.3.6	Work in partnership to support roll-out of behaviour change programs (e.g. Men's Change Behaviour, Healthy Relationship, Bystander program etc.).	Council, HANADV, All agencies	Medium to long term: 1 to 5 years	Number of community education programs investigated. Number of funding applications submitted.	Reduction of FDV in Hawkesbury
3.3.7	Process to obtain local DV statistics from Hawkesbury LAC	HANADV	Ongoing	Number of requests fulfilled	Effective advocacy using current local statistics Statistics to support funding applications

# 3.4 Partnership/Resource Sharing

	Strategy/Action	Key agencies	Timeframe (Short, Medium, or Long term)	Output	Outcome
3.4.1	Establish local partnerships for development of projects and funding proposals to address key priorities (e.g. funding for crisis accommodations, education programs, health services).	Council, HANADV All agencies	Medium term: 1 to 3 years	Number of projects funded and delivered	Increased programs that support persons experiencing FDV
3.4.2	Establish partnerships between local agencies to enable access to amenities in alternate settings (e.g. neutral calming rooms for police interviews in community centres)	HANADV, Hawkesbury LAC (Police), All agencies	Medium term: 1 to 3 years	Number of new partnerships established	Co-ordinated response to the needs of persons experiencing FDV
3.4.3	Establish partnerships between local agencies to respond to the specific cultural needs of indigenous people.	HANADV, The Women's Cottage Hawkesbury LAC (Police), Darug Elders, Merana, SJOG HDHS (Hospital), Aboriginal Liaison Officer All agencies	Medium Term: 1 to 3 years	Number of new partnerships established	Improved capacity within the local service system to be culturally aware and appropriately support Aboriginal community experiencing FDV

# 3.5 Safe Housing

	Strategy/Action	Key agencies	Timeframe (Short, Medium, or Long term)	Output	Outcome
3.5.1	Advocate for a women's refuge in the Hawkesbury	Council, HANADV All agencies	Medium to long term: 1 to 5 years	Number of relevant advocacy actions taken by Council	A women's refuge in the Hawkesbury
3.5.2.	Advocate for safe and affordable housing options for FDV Victims	Council, HANADV, The Women's Cottage, Wentworth Community Housing, local real estate agencies	Long term: 5 to 10 years	Number of representations made	Increased affordable housing options in the Hawkesbury
3.5.3	Council amend Homelessness Action Plan and Affordable Housing Policy to explicitly name FDV as a cause of homelessness.	Council	Short term: 9 months	Amended Action Plan and Policy	Council's social plans and related policy are aligned.

# 3.6 FDV Services/Facilities

	Strategy/Action	Key agencies	Timeframe (Short, Medium, or Long term)	Output	Outcome
3.6.1	Council disseminate relevant funding opportunities through HANADV and Hawkesbury e News	Council, HANADV, All agencies	Ongoing	Number of new funding opportunities investigated	Increase in funding for FDV services and supports in the Hawkesbury
3.6.2	Council, encourage local partnerships and support collaborations formed for funding applications (e.g. write letters of support)	Council, All agencies	Ongoing	Number of new funding opportunities investigated	Co-ordinated response to the needs of persons experiencing FDV
3.6.3	Advocate for improvements to the local court (e.g. facilities to separate FDV victims from offenders).	Council, HANADV	Short term: 9 to 18 months	Number of new representations made	Physical improvements to the local court to ensure the facility can better support FDV victims and their children
3.6.4	Council and Peppercorn Services Inc. to consider a transport solution to assist FDV victims to access services.	Council, Peppercorn Services Inc., local taxis	Medium to Long term: 1 to 5 years	Transport solution developed	Improved access to services for persons experiencing FDV

# Appendix A – Community Outcomes of the Hawkesbury FDV Focus Groups Nov 2016

#### Introduction

In May 2015, Council resolved a motion that:

- 1. Council views with deep concern the level of family and domestic violence (FDV) within our own community
- 2. Council officers prepare a report outlining possible strategies for Council to support its commitment to prioritising and initiating a reduction in FDV in our local area. In addition confirm what funds may be available to implement strategies
- 3. Council will work with local organisations/networks, specifically the Hawkesbury Action Network Against Domestic Violence to facilitate and develop a community led response plan to FDV in the Hawkesbury
- 4. Council corresponds with our local state and federal representatives to work alongside the community and give priority to and support funding programs available through the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Framework Reform and the Federal Government's Family and Domestic Violence Strategy to ensure that Hawkesbury maintains and enhances locally based services
- 5. Council instruct its senior officers to work through a joint consultative committee to establish a family and domestic violence clause in its workplaces.

The Social Work and Policy Studies Program at the University of Sydney was contracted to assist Council particularly in relation to aforementioned points, (2) and (3). In order to advance these issues, an exploratory study was undertaken to inform Council's report. This study aimed to: a) elicit responses from key stakeholders in the community in order to develop a report for Council to support its commitment to prioritising and initiating a reduction in FDV in the local area and to b) work with local organisations/networks specifically Hawkesbury Action Network Against Domestic Violence (HANADV) to facilitate and develop a community led response to FDV in the Hawkesbury.

#### Methodology

A mixed methods research methodology was adopted which included: a desk analysis of prevalence research; telephone interviews with Hawkesbury women who were experiencing or had experienced FDV; focus groups with workers in the criminal justice, statutory child protection and human and community services fields; and surveys.

#### **Data Collection**

Data was obtained from key stakeholders including: women with lived experiences of FDV; statutory child protection services (CPS) workers and police; and other human and community service workers. Their perceptions were elicited via telephone interviews, surveys and focus groups.

#### **Participants**

28 stakeholders participated in the research including eight women with lived experiences; five human and community services workers; six statutory workers from CPS and police; and nine non-statutory human and community workers.

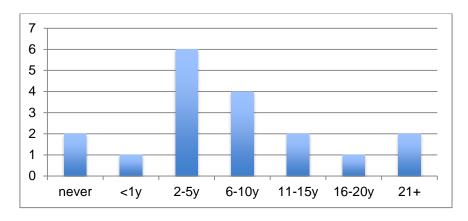
Data was elicited from the participants using the following methods:

Surveys/Telephone and/or face-to-face interviews	
Women with lived experiences of domestic violence	8
Human and community service workers	5
Focus Groups	
Statutory workers (Police & CPS)	6
Non-statutory human and community workers (Health, Education, NGOs, MP, HCC)	12

#### Focus Group Participants' demographic details

Eighteen focus group participants made up of 15 women and 3 men employed in statutory and non-statutory services completed a demographic questionnaire. Participants' ages were: 18-29 years (3); 30-49 years (11); 50-64 years (4). Their educational backgrounds included University postgraduate degree (4); University undergraduate degree (8); TAFE qualification (4). Two participants declined to answer this question. The number of years that they had worked in the FDV field is graphically depicted below.

Table 1: Years of experience working in FDV field



#### Women with a lived experience of domestic violence

Eight women participated in the study. One woman was interviewed in a face to face interview; seven women completed an electronic survey, of which three agreed to be interviewed further over the telephone. All women lived in the Hawkesbury area when the FDV was occurring. On average women lived with FDV for at least 12 years. All women had children and young people in their care during the years that they experienced FDV. All women had an experience with statutory services including police and child protective services. Many had experience in the district and/or family law courts. All women had received support services in the Hawkesbury area.

#### **Findings**

From the analysis of the data collected, seven themes emerged. These themes were the strengths of the Hawkesbury region, the role of the council, ideas and suggestions to overcome issues identified, gaps in service provision, challenges for women, children and young people, the rural context, and advice to policy makers and statutory bodies. These will be discussed below, and interview data is attached as Appendices 3 to 10.

#### Strengths of the Hawkesbury

It was found that there were responsive and effective services within the region, with the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service and Women's Cottage identified. Advocacy skills and interagency communication emerged as strengths in practice, and it was noted that workers have access to training in working with domestic violence.

#### Role of the Council

The lack of investment in a women's refuge and lack of housing was a strong theme across both statutory and non-statutory workers. Workers identified feeling helpless in assisting women to navigate finding safe and secure housing, and highlighted that women often need to relocate to secure accommodation. As one worker stated:

"There is certainly gaps in terms of where you go next, either the crisis support or refuges, all that kind of thing...A recent example is a client who [has] three children under four, leaving a domestic violence situation, all the supports are in this area but the refuge she had to go to was Central Coast. And she's driving back to playgroup on a Tuesday morning with a newborn baby". (Participant 7)

Further, one worker discussed the helplessness they felt in assisting women:

"If it's housing [which women need assistance with], getting away, staying safe, you feel helpless as a worker". (Participant 8)

Statutory workers similarly identified that access to a safe house for women in which they could access support from both Family and Community Services and the Police would be valuable in their support of women and children. As one statutory worker stated:

"there is a specific DV building, that's what it's for, and there's specific DV workers that are in there, and as soon as you go in there's a lounge section, there's a little play section for the kids, it's security-wise, so it's not just you can walk in and he can follow, there is security throughout the way...with specific services that were like that, which maybe then that's a place where the police can come, or if we had to interview and it was unsafe for her at the home, because we don't know if he's in the house, or whatever, that she could come and do it there, a bit more on neutral ground". (Participant 12)

Workers additionally identified that access to targeted programs for men perpetrating domestic violence was limited, and that assistance for men within the region would be beneficial.

It was found that the Council could have a greater role in public awareness of domestic violence and coverage of the services that the Hawkesbury region has available. This was found to be linked to greater accountability for men, and advertisement of supports for women. Banners, signage, and posters within police stations regarding domestic violence were noted to be absent and workers believed this would be useful. As a worker stated:

"In Blacktown all the bus shelters have we don't like DV and.. put big signs up on the police stations so that when you walk into the police station you know that the people in there are expected to be not okay about DV and expected to be supportive of you".

Security and investment in a modern courthouse in the Hawkesbury region was also something that was identified by workers as something that would assist in statutory workers work in relation to domestic violence.

Workers additionally saw the council having a role in supporting current services to provide a continuum of care, advocacy, and infrastructure support to the committee of HANADV. As one worker stated:

"How Council can help, there's all the really practical and huge things like helping with infrastructure and housing initiatives. But in some other areas for instance, they just give the local domestic violence committee \$6000 a year and that helps that means you don't have to write a submission for \$1000 to print the program".

#### Ideas and suggestions to overcome issues

Streamlining information systems to address long processing times was identified as a strategy to assist workers. Additionally, a 'wrap around' approach and continuum of service delivery was seen as a key strategy to assist families. Workers identified that due to lack of accommodation within the area much of the work has to be transferred, and that a continuum of care would provide a more responsive response to families experiencing domestic violence. A domestic violence advocate position was also identified as a responsive strategy. Workers identified that this role would provide support for women in many facets: such as counselling support, childminding and liaison with services.

#### Gaps in Service Provision

Again, the need for a refuge within the Hawkesbury region was a strong theme that emerged. As one worker stated:

"So for me to work with families around finding safe housing, you just know as soon as you hear it that there's so little we can do. Nothing in this area whatsoever. I've never been able to probably in the ten years that I've worked in family services been able to have a family relocated here in their local area". (Participant 8)

A woman with lived experiences of domestic violence stated the following:

"At what point does anyone think it's okay to pull my children from their bed, put them into another environment which they don't know, they're not comfortable in. It was like cabin fever being in emergency accommodation at basically \$300 a night. It's ridiculous. Four people in a little cramped room, two little babies, you can't make their bottles".

Inadequate services for men perpetrating domestic violence was again a common theme within gaps in service provision. Counsellors specifically trained in working with perpetrators in domestic violence was identified as a service need, and the nearest Taking Responsibility course run through Relationships Australia located in Penrith was identified as being difficult for men to access.

Service provision and police responses were seen to be both 'hit and miss'. As one worker stated:

"It's hit and miss. You get someone one day and you get so much change, next day you get a stone wall". (Participant 9)

Negative attitudes towards victims were identified as problematic and workers identified detrimental impacts for victim's trust in the system. One worker stated:

"I've encountered going to the police station with a woman I was working with and it was a horrible experience, it felt very diminished, it was like the person is desensitized to – and I doubt she would ever go back to report again".

A lack of specialist services was identified as a gap in service provision. In relation to work being done in the area, one worker stated:

"So they're doing their tick boxes, yep we've done our report, yep we're going to turn up at court, yep we'll get this guy, or whatever it might be. But then there's nothing to wrap around the family to actually support them to the next stage". (Participant 7)

Worker's also identified a need for children's services within the area, and reported the importance of building healthy relationships for children within the community. In relation to service provision, long processing times was again identified as a barrier with long wait lsit for services and delays in referrals.

Whilst also identified as a strength, interagency collaboration was also seen as a gap in service provision within the area. Compassion fatigue, and lack of communication was identified as contributing factors. As one worker stated:

"Sometimes you might be being an advocate for someone and for some reason you and the FaCS worker, it's hard to make contact, follow up. And yeah, we're on the same journey, same issues, but you don't feel like it". (Participant 8)

#### Challenges for women, children and young people

Lack of programs and interventions for men was identified by women with lived experiences of domestic violence as being a challenge. Women and workers both identified that this would be of assistance for families.

Both women and workers identified that women in the community experience victim punishment and blame. Workers identified that system supports, such as Family and Community Services, often hold women responsible. This was linked to a lack of services targeted at men. One woman stated:

"I mean everyone calls me a single mother. How about we call it an absent father? Why is it always on me? It's on me, on me, on me. I've got all the responsibility and no rights". (Participant 44)

Common challenges for women experiencing domestic violence was identified within the Hawkesbury region, such as lengthy court processing times, challenges with the Family Law Court and relocation costs following separation. It was identified that women are placed with the burden of relocating, and the financial costs associated with this. The impact of children being exposed to domestic violence was also identified.

#### Rural context

The geographic location of the Hawkesbury was identified as compounding isolation for women and children. Workers identified difficulty in accessing women and children during crises. Additionally, the presence of firearms on rural properties was identified as problematic.

Again, access to services and safe accommodation is seen as impacted by the Hawkesbury's geographic location. Transport for both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence to the local court, children's services, and men's programs in Blacktown, Blue Mountains and Penrith areas was identified as challenging in the rural context.

#### Advice to policy makers and statutory bodies

Workers identified that implementation of the Staying Home Leaving Violence program in the Hawkesbury would be beneficial. Many workers identified the need for increased services in relation to accommodation, training for professionals, implementation of domestic violence advocate support positions and counsellors trained in working with men who are domestically violent. Increased interagency collaboration and communication was additionally identified as an area for improvement.

#### What works here?

"I feel as though with every government change, local, state or federal, then projects are started, funding is provided, ideas are launched. However it is essentially a repackaging of the same projects. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. There are services in the Hawkesbury doing great work. The Hawkesbury Action Network Against Domestic Violence (HANADV), has been a very proactive network achieving some great work with the resources we have for many years. Why replace a working project with another? I feel providing support, resources, funding and man power to the services already established will help. Women and children in this situation deserve the right to have access to services that will give them options to increase their safety." (Focus Group Participant, non-statutory worker)

"We're starting to see that shift in community attitudes where people aren't saying, 'well it's a family issue, we don't get involved' to 'no I'm going to pick up the phone and call the cops because there's something going on and it shouldn't be occurring." (Focus Group participant)

"There's not a lot of services but the services we do have like the Women's Cottage and things like that, if only we could duplicate them, and make them bigger, because they're amazing services that we have good relationships with." (Focus Group participant)

#### Challenges

- No women's refuge, lack of transition and/or safe and affordable local housing.
- Navigating a complex system and secondary victimisation.
- Not enough capacity within existing services to meet demands of helping women and children recover from trauma.
- No Men's Behaviour Change Program in the local area.
- Not enough done to PREVENT family and domestic violence before it occurs.
- Inadequate court house.
- Geographical constraints.

"Have patience. Don't give up on them or judge them. They will know when they're ready to make the move to leave. Threats and coercion don't work, if anything it can distance them from trusting you. Their fear of their partner is greater than anything you can throw at them. Always be the empathic ear. Always believe them. You have no idea how much that means to be believed." (Participant interview, woman with lived experience)

"At the courthouse, please shove all the perpetrators in the 'safe room' and let the women outside. It's the perpetrators who deserve to be locked up in that tiny room to await their mentions and hearings. The victims have BEEN THROUGH ENOUGH without being told that the only safe place is a tiny hot room while all the perpetrators laze around outside in the morning sun. It's DEMEANING AND HUMILIATING." (Survey respondent, woman with lived experience)

"Be non-judgemental. Support women in an ongoing way. Not just for a couple of months. It took me years to come through the tunnel of hell." (Participant Interview, woman with lived experience)

#### Interview schedule for Focus Groups - Women Survivors

Discussions with women survivors will be guided by feminist research methodology, which will situate the participants as experts in their own lives. A discussion will be held with participants at the onset to ascertain how they would most like to proceed in the focus group. Discussion will be held about the importance of confidentiality, safety and the voluntary nature of this research. Participants will be asked if they are willing to discuss the anchor points below. If participants are in agreement, the focus groups will proceed. Efforts will be made to ensure that the environment is emotionally and physically safe, and woman centred.

The format of the 'interview' will be informal, semi-structured interview questions guided by the following anchor points.

- a) Help seeking experiences how have workers assisted you in your journey away from family and domestic violence (FDV)?
- b) What advice would you give to workers/policy makers who are striving to prevent family and domestic violence in this area?
- c) What advice would you give to workers who are striving to help women, children and young people journey away from FDV?
- d) How can workers and policy makers better assist women, children and young people?
- e) What do think that your local Council should be doing to prevent FDV?
- f) What are the major challenges/barriers that women, young people and children face when trying to get assistance to journey away from FDV?
- g) What ideas/solutions do you have to overcome these challenges/barriers?

# Interview schedule for Focus Groups - Specialist Women's Services and Statutory Services

The purpose of the research and structure of the focus group will be described. Discussion will be held about the importance of confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of this research. The interview will be semi-structured and guided by the following anchor points:

- a) Help providing experiences what are your experiences of responding to women, children and young people who are affected by FDV?
- b) What strategies do you perceive as being helpful in assisting women, children and young people to be able to journey away from family and domestic violence (FDV)?
- c) What advice would you give to policy makers/government officials about how they can develop policies that would assist you to do your job more effectively?
- d) What are the gaps in services/systems that make it difficult for women, children and young people to journey away from domestic violence?
- e) How can workers and policy makers better assist women, children and young people?
- f) What do think that your local Council should be doing to prevent FDV?
- g) What are the major challenges/barriers that women, young people and children face when trying to get assistance to journey away from FDV?
- h) What ideas/solutions do you have to overcome these challenges/barriers?

#### References

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# Appendix B – Hawkesbury Family and Domestic Violence Forum Community Workshop on 10 November 2016

The following summarise key discussions for each of the six table topics that formulated the community consultation undertaken for this action plan. Please email safety@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au with your full contact details to request the full "mind map" diagrams and transcription of the community discussion.

FDV Forum Summary - It Takes a Villag	e e
Assigned Questions	How can we prevent FDV from occurring in the first place?
	What can Council do to assist in these endeavours?
	What are some actions that could be taken right now to support Hawkesbury's response to FDV?
Key Discussion Points	Identifying local organisations, NGOs, government agencies and other community services that could become a caring Hawkesbury village to assist persons experiencing FDV issues.
	Lack of awareness about what services are actually out there.
	FDV is a complex issue and providing a solution requires the whole of community.
	Local crisis and long term housing is not being made available in the Hawkesbury.
	• FDV solution is more than just providing accommodation; it's about addressing the whole family dynamics and impact.
	Existing programs include Staying Home Leaving Violence Program, White Ribbon Day, and 16 days of Activism.
	<ul> <li>More attention needs to be placed on addressing the underlying issues causing FDV.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Need to acknowledge that some people experiencing FDV are not willing to be engaged (and may have a valid reason).</li> </ul>
	• What are the roles of men's groups and how can we better mentor young men (e.g. role of fathers and sons to tackle FDV).
	<ul> <li>Council role could include: social media page, signage, support of local programs and events – at no cost, advocacy role. Make forum a yearly event. Council to express FDV as a core issue, and advocate the same for Hawkesbury to State Govt. Express DA approvable system for refuges. HCC staff in recognisable DV roles.</li> </ul>
Key Responses to "One action you can	More partnering and support for complex issues and needs to make solutions sustainable.
do?"	Try to connect clients to services and work in conjunction with other services.
	Foster relationships between NGO's, Community Services and faith-based organisations regarding DV programs.

FDV Forum Summary - It Takes a Village	FDV Forum Summary - It Takes a Village					
Key Responses to "One action your org/service can do?"	<ul> <li>Early intervention services to stop the spiral.</li> <li>More regular opportunities to meet share resources/swap information (Council could perhaps take on a leadership role).</li> <li>Foster relationships between Aboriginal community groups, men's groups and Community Services.</li> </ul>					
Key Responses to "One action or role Hawkesbury City Council should have in supporting our responses?"	<ul> <li>More cooperation from Council staff to expedite DA approvals for affordable housing.</li> <li>Visible signage and printing of materials to support the fight against FDV.</li> <li>Encourage Men's Events to address changes in behaviour.</li> <li>Update Council's Homelessness Policy to address FDV issues.</li> <li>Keep FDV on the agenda.</li> <li>Host annual FDV Forum.</li> </ul>					
Wish List	<ul> <li>Refuge.</li> <li>Innovative models could be increased and expanded.</li> <li>Create refuge from existing accommodation, churches, rotary, community ownership, community builders funding, St John of God (SJOG HDHS Hospital) empty minister housing, make a new Women's cottage.</li> <li>Council social media, HCC staff in recognisable DV roles.</li> </ul>					

FDV Forum Summary - Working with W	FDV Forum Summary - Working with Women and Children					
Assigned Questions	<ul> <li>What needs to change in order to better assist women and children living FDV?</li> <li>What do you think Council can do in this regard?</li> <li>What are some actions that could be taken right now to support Hawkesbury's response to FDV?</li> </ul>					
Key Discussion Points	Key challenge is that the Hawkesbury is so big, government funding needs to be increased and invested into future generations, especially those who experience FDV in the home.					
	<ul> <li>DV &amp; TECHNOLOGY – Education Services/Systems – Check in with new technologies for D veg. stalking with GPS/Social Media.</li> </ul>					
	• Education for schools and families to define and recognise FDV, raise awareness that FDV exceeds physical abuse as it is financial, technological, emotional, sexual, psychological; impact of drug and alcohol.					
	Must reduce stigma and change the bystander perception.					
	Mentor or support young women in the community with positive female role models - e.g. The Hawkesbury Mayor.					
	Healthy relationship intervention programs in schools; Support all Hawkesbury schools to become a White Ribbon School; Establish key contacts within Services and Schools to enable good communication and involvement.					
	<ul> <li>NGO Services often have duplication, need co-operative agency work through NGO's to work together (e.g. Relationship's Australia in Hawkesbury).</li> </ul>					
	Aboriginal Medical Services needed in Hawkesbury – AMS.					
	HANADV needs more members, should be the Hawkesbury communications for anti-FDV activities.					
	<ul> <li>Women's Cottage could have a 99year lease – appreciate that it has 10 years funding from HCC. Services need to provide lifelong work to help survivors heal. Cottage to become the 1-stop shop for FDV assistance.</li> </ul>					
Key Responses to "One action you can	Raise awareness – sharing stories helps remove stigma and change perceptions.					
do?"	Having conversations, encourage others to be proactive and not as bystanders.					
	Education around how we can respond.					
	Building a strong sense of community – know your neighbours.					
Key Responses to "One action your	Education on what FDV is and how we can respond appropriately.					
org/service can do?"	Promotion of research/newly funded programs.					
	Social media promotion.					

FDV Forum Summary - Working with Women and Children		
Key Responses to "One action or role Hawkesbury City Council should have in supporting our responses?"	<ul> <li>Free community events to promote communal connections, discreet information.</li> <li>Bring back the neighbourhood watch.</li> <li>Open discussions within the community, publication to include community, social media promotion.</li> <li>Publications and promotions to include the community more actively.</li> <li>Support all Hawkesbury schools to become White Ribbon schools and provide education in Healthy Relationship.</li> </ul>	
Wish List	<ul> <li>Women's Refuge.</li> <li>Women's Cottage as the Hawkesbury FDV 1-stop information hub.</li> <li>Technology (phone app) to access FDV operational hours and to promote local services.</li> <li>Research into FDV damage to unborn child.</li> <li>Council to use social media.</li> </ul>	

FDV Forum Summary - Changing the Process		
Assigned Questions	What are some actions that could be taken right now to decrease the barriers for assisting women and children living with FDV in the Hawkesbury?	
Key Discussion Points	<ul> <li>Current Strengths         <ul> <li>Strong partnerships in this area.</li> <li>Council could act as a lead agency and advocate for crisis refuge.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Current Weaknesses         <ul> <li>Stigma around perceptions and reporting.</li> <li>Lack of staffing and resources.</li> <li>Partnerships are not well known.</li> <li>Few local Hawkesbury services.</li> <li>Lack if crisis refuge forcing women and children to sleep at the police station.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Current Barriers         <ul> <li>Knowing who to speak to? What is the procedure? Knowing where to report DV?</li> <li>Fear of having FaCS involvement. Children could be removed.</li> <li>Court system processes are too long/difficult.</li> <li>Safe travel for children to continue to attend the same school.</li> <li>Cultural barriers pushing people experiencing FDV outside their communities.</li> <li>Current Opportunities</li> <li>Education in early intervention.</li> <li>GP kits to perinatal health nurses and doctors.</li> <li>Courtent Opportunities and doctors.</li> <li>Current Opportunities and doctors.</li></ul></li></ul>	
Key Responses to "One action you can do?"	Campaign for more safe (self-contained) accommodations for individuals and families which are pet friendly and affordable as a long term option.	
Key Responses to "One action your org/service can do?"	<ul> <li>Support early intervention program right through from daycare to schools e.g. "Healthy Relationship" program.</li> <li>Provide resources to FDV and family or community events.</li> </ul>	
Key Responses to "One action or role Hawkesbury City Council should have in supporting our responses?"	Information and education kits to key contacts: GP, community centres, churches, business, including brochures with opening hours.	

FDV Forum Summary - Changing the Process	
Wish List	<ul> <li>One stop shop (hub) where all the needs can be addressed in one place (i.e. co-ordinated approach)</li> <li>Perhaps 2 hours per week for drop-in service</li> <li>FDV process of 1 entry point and 1 intake form.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>FDV stalls in shopping centres (i.e. i.e. White Ribbon for men).</li> <li>Provide preloaded Opal cards to children experiencing FDV so that they can attend their regular schools.</li> </ul>

FDV Forum Summary - Prevention as a Strategy	
Assigned Questions	<ul> <li>How can we prevent F&amp;DV from occurring in the first place?</li> <li>What can Council do to assist in these endeavours?</li> </ul>
Key Discussion Points	<ul> <li>Education strategies         <ul> <li>Use events such as White Ribbon. Lithgow trivia, etc. as a platform for ongoing events/ initiatives that change behaviour and act as platforms for education.</li> <li>Bystander campaigns to activate community conscience. Encourage how to identify DV and make safe and credible reporting plus reduce fear of retribution. Involve peer prevention strategies, anti-bullying, placing posters on 'Dunny Door', support and media education to behaviour change and make cultural shift to report.</li> <li>Resource development required to train in schools. Use person with experience / sports 'hero. Collate safety resources for easy access by people.</li> <li>Perpetrators need programs that are state-wide with consistent message, peer prevention strategies /education, men's education and involved in solutions and provide opportunities for intergenerational mentors culture shift for perpetrators, programs for unacceptable behaviours / delivered by champions, name the perpetrator for what they have done.</li> <li>Media messaging around local issues – in schools, education campaigns for school aged children, design safety relationship logos/ message, social media, local campaigns.</li> <li>Programs such as Dad's and Daughter programs, child focused programs re impact to the child.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Community strategies         <ul> <li>Capacity building activities for information, education sessions, healthy relationships, community awareness to take responsibility for safety of women and children.</li> <li>Cultural shift to create a public stand against DV, enlist women, sports figures/ celebrities /politicians to send messages to shift responsibility to the perpetrator.</li> <li>Community accountability to enquire what important to community /access how people think about safety AND responds to community needs; identify community activities / positive modelling; foster community connectedness; Public acknowledgment to say "NO" to DV.</li> <li>Networks such as Rotary, Men's Shed, churches, etc. to develop approach; provide DV training for Police, Council, Chamber of Commerce, Business community, etc.; support youth services to develop DV policy.</li> <li>Council could have more female representatives to open conversations; provide activities that shifts misogynistic cultures; have Facebook page to communicate messages /initiatives; get community involvement and implement actions; promote Councils DV staff leave policy to local businesses; become involved with White Ribbon Day e.g. Council challenge for coming year to hop on board in your workplace.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

FDV Forum Summary - Prevention as a Strategy	
Key Responses to "One action you can do?"	<ul> <li>Attend FDV events.</li> <li>Take action as a bystander.</li> <li>Promote White Ribbon message in our contacts with schools / services.</li> <li>Use language / messages to decrease stigma.</li> </ul>
Key Responses to "One action your org/service can do?"	<ul> <li>Provide resources to FDV and family or community events.</li> <li>Education programs around healthy relationships.</li> <li>Attend HANADV to work towards a collaborative approach to FDV.</li> <li>Programs and resources aimed at working with perpetrators of FDV.</li> </ul>
Key Responses to "One action or role Hawkesbury City Council should have in supporting our responses?"	<ul> <li>Work with HANADV to host local or new FDV events that are preferably free to the community and participating services.</li> <li>More females councillors to support FDV cause.</li> <li>Promote Councils DV staff leave policy to local businesses.</li> <li>Community Consultations re community safety from DV.</li> <li>Continue Council's advocacy role.</li> </ul>
Wish List	<ul> <li>Facebook site to promote messages of 'Stop DV'.</li> <li>Council to announce White Ribbon Day - Council challenge for coming year to hop on board in your workplace.</li> </ul>

FDV Forum Summary - What is Happening Right Now in the Hawkesbury?	
Assigned Questions	What are the most pressing issues that need to be addressed in our area?
Key Discussion Points	<ul> <li>Safe and Affordable Housing</li> <li>Required long term, not just during a crisis.</li> <li>Impacts where you can live safely.</li> <li>Innovative ideas from commune to community.</li> <li>Tap into community goodwill.</li> <li>Older single women have nowhere to go.</li> <li>Short term safety and support.</li> <li>Public housing impacts where you can live safely.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Court House</li> <li>Not set up to assist victims.</li> <li>Limited security – not possible to add security.</li> </ul>

FDV Forum Summary - What is Happening Right Now in the Hawkesbury?	
	<ul> <li>Not suited to FDV.</li> <li>Lack of accommodations <ul> <li>Real estate discrimination – private discrimination against single parents / Centrelink recipients.</li> <li>Call centre needed to provide 'real person' for hotline.</li> <li>Collect data on how many women are turned away.</li> <li>Link Police and hospitals to West Connect (Crisis).</li> </ul> </li> <li>Men's Programs <ul> <li>Reactive, not preventative.</li> <li>Stop men from perpetrating.</li> <li>Lack of programs in the Hawkesbury.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Key Responses to "One action you can do?"	<ul> <li>Lobby for funding through community.</li> <li>Get local women in Council and Business Chamber of Commerce to help advocate.</li> </ul>
Key Responses to "One action your org/service can do?"	<ul> <li>Get real estate agents on side.</li> <li>Support Relationships Australia to help men.</li> </ul>
Key Responses to "One action or role Hawkesbury City Council should have in supporting our responses?"	<ul> <li>Leverage the high percentage of women councillors on council.</li> <li>Lobby Attorney General to re-purpose the court house then use land adjoining police station.</li> <li>Improve process to expedite DAs related to FDV centres, especially those to assist women.</li> </ul>
Wish List	<ul> <li>Gather together all managers and CEO's together to meet and see who can help fund actions</li> <li>Philanthropic funding</li> </ul>

FDV Forum Summary - Early Intervention		
Assigned Questions	If Council were to advocate for early intervention in schools, what would an anti-FDV program look like?	
Key Discussion Points	<ul> <li>Funding is critical to provide early intervention programs         <ul> <li>Student involvement and finding resolutions.</li> <li>Picking a safe person '5 Heroes'.</li> <li>Hawkesbury Council, HANADV, schools all working together.</li> <li>More male mentors - male students lacking strong role male model.</li> <li>Age appropriate mentors.</li> <li>Class to teach good relationship skills.</li> <li>Local services to come to the school to present to students, teacher, welfare.</li> <li>Helping to understand the perpetrator.</li> <li>Removing the taboo to acknowledge bad behaviour so we can hear from perpetrator.</li> <li>Multi-pronged effect (doctor, schools, parish, council, community sector).</li> </ul> </li> <li>Education could focus on         <ul> <li>Defining DV.</li> <li>Respect, empathy and compassion (for victims).</li> <li>Protective behaviours.</li> <li>Resources e.g. DV, conflict resolution training, printed materials.</li> <li>Identify good role models.</li> <li>Calling people out on bad behaviour (not be a bystander).</li> <li>Tracking relocating children.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
Key Responses to "One action you can do?"	<ul> <li>Fundraising.</li> <li>Attend local collaborative network meetings.</li> <li>Put into action the 'stop DV' messages into the local community, local programs, local schools, etc.</li> </ul>	
Key Responses to "One action your org/service can do?"	<ul> <li>Hold kids' competitions for slogan, poster, billboard to explain healthy and safe relationships.</li> <li>Recovered/remorseful perpetrators advocating for change.</li> <li>Help foster solidarity.</li> </ul>	
Key Responses to "One action or role Hawkesbury City Council should have in supporting our responses?"	<ul> <li>Print materials, organise more frequent fundraisers (e.g. Walk Against Domestic Violence).</li> <li>Put "Stop Domestic Violence" messages and signs throughout the Hawkesbury Local Council Area</li> </ul>	

FDV Forum Summary - Early Intervention	
Wish List	Children to recognise healthy relationships.  Diversity or value to a total class with an eight of the AAA.
	<ul> <li>DV survivors volunteer to stand alongside another victim (like AA).</li> <li>Social media and its isolating effects.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Stop gender stereotyping a nation e.g. McDonalds Happy Meals.</li> </ul>
	Professional delivery of Policies.
	Bus Monitors.
	Music and concert events to raise awareness and fight FDV.

# Appendix C – Participants in the Hawkesbury Family and Domestic Violence Forum

Leading up to the Forum, the University of NSW lecturer Dr Susan Heward-Belle interviewed 28 Hawkesbury participants and collated data to form the basis of her Hawkesbury FDV presentation on 10 November 2016. The 28 Focus Group participants came from these organisations:

- Colo High School
- Family and Community Services (FACS) Hawkesbury
- Hawkesbury Community Services Inc.- Brighter Futures Program,
- Hawkesbury Local Area Command Superintendent Egginton and two DV Liaison Officers
- Nureen Women's Housing
- Peppercorn Services Inc. Family, Community & Youth
- Richmond Community Services Inc. & Neighbourhood Centre
- Susan Templeman, MP
- eight women with lived FDV experience (online surveys with resulting telephone interviews).

#### **Forum Morning Presenters**

- Personal story of ongoing survival from a Hawkesbury businesswoman.
- Dr Susan Heward-Belle, Lecturer in Social Work and Policy.
- Superintendent Stephen Egginton APM Commander Hawkesbury Local Area Command.
- Moo Baulch, Chief Executive Officer, Domestic Violence NSW.

#### **Forum Afternoon Community Moderators**

- Vicki Wilde, Family Worker Training + Development Programme Inc.
- Christine Paine, former councillor of Hawkesbury City Council.
- Shannon Hall, NSW Health (Integrated Violence Prevention & Response Service).
- Nicolle Lewis, Manager of The Women's Cottage.
- Catherine Murphy, Manager of the Bligh Park Neighbourhood Centre.
- Senior Constable Leslie King Domestic Violence Liaison Officer Hawkesbury Local Area Command.
- Scott Phillips, Presenter for Hawkesbury Radio 89.9FM, and Vice-President of Hawkesbury Valley Toastmasters.

The afternoon community consultation exercise was a facilitated discussion providing the Hawkesbury services, high schools and public with the opportunity to share their experiences and challenges with others. In the style of World Café, they contributed and identified local responses to family and domestic violence.

#### **Forum Participants**

The 56 Forum participants came from these organisations (as per registration details):

- Bligh Park Community Services Inc.
- Department of Education and Communities
- Department of Human Services
- Family and Community Services (FACS) Hawkesbury
- Family Worker Training + Development Programme Inc.
- Glossodia Community Centre
- Greater West for Christ (GWFC)\Hawkesbury Valley Baptist Church
- Hawkesbury Area Local Command
- Hawkesbury City Council

- Hawkesbury City Salvation Army
- Hawkesbury community Mental Health
- Hawkesbury Community Outreach Service INC.
- Hawkesbury Community Services
- Hawkesbury Radio 89.9FM
- LINCS Volunteer Scheme
- Merana Aboriginal Community Association for the Hawkesbury Inc.
- Nepean Blue Mountains local Health District
- North Richmond Community Centre
- NSW Health, Integrated violence prevention and response services
- Nureen Women's Housing
- ONE80TC Teen Challenge
- Peppercorn Services
- Richmond Community Services
- Richmond High School
- The Rock Church
- The Women's Cottage/Hawkesbury Area Women & Kids Services Collective Inc.
- University of Sydney
- Wentworth Community Housing
- Windsor High School
- Hawkesbury Public five residents.

# Feedback and Participants on 10 November 2016

### Hawkesbury Family and Domestic Violence Forum

<ol> <li>Excellent initiative, so happy to have been involved.</li> <li>Excellent opportunity to put plans into action.</li> <li>Survivors quotes drove home the severity of the issue for survivors.</li> <li>Very Emotive.</li> <li>Well done by all.</li> <li>Interested in more information particularly outcomes of consultations and best practice.</li> <li>Table mediators were excellent.</li> <li>So Inspiring – survivor story.</li> <li>Great to hear (from) workers and other services, and the various issues surrounding addressing DV.</li> <li>Speakers had great and progressive attitudes to express.</li> <li>Very useful to hear from the CEO of DV NSW.</li> <li>Excellent hearing from all of the participants in the World Café.</li> <li>Well Done. Very informative and beneficial.</li> <li>I thought it was great. It was great.</li> <li>Amazing, it was very valuable to hear a story firsthand.</li> <li>Great speech from Superintendent Egginton.</li> <li>More group discussions (how could we improve the Forum).</li> <li>It was great to speak openly with other organisations.</li> <li>Have more (how could we improve the Forum).</li> <li>I didn't really learn anything new but am more aware of other people in the area that have similar goals.</li> <li>World Café – Great Idea, thanks.</li> <li>Our 'watch' can change the story.</li> <li>Excellent depiction of a woman and her family faces when trying to leave violence. The barriers and hardships they have to face.</li> <li>Getting to hear and meet Moo was a highlight. Fabulous.</li> <li>I'd just like to say how privileged I felt to be a part of the World Cafe yesterday. I enjoyed every moment.</li> <li>I am more than happy to give my time and impart any of my knowledge as a Domestic Violence Overcomer in any future projects you may run. Please don't hesitate to contact me for assistance in this area.</li> <li>I find it a bit disturbing that universities do not have a subject</li></ol>	Participant	Comment
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Participant	Comment
31.	Email: I just wanted to thank you for all the hard work you did to put yesterday's forum together. I had a really productive day and found the forum both useful and informative. I hope we can leverage on the success of the day to see some real changes in the Hawkesbury.
32.	Email: Can I also add that the Forum was amazing and I feel that it injected a lot of interest and enthusiasm into the community. A big thank you.
33.	Email: And I love the day - thought it went off spectacularly well!
34.	Email: Thought Susan had a lot more to say and would like to hear her speak again.

## Appendix D – Protocol for Family and Domestic Violence

The NSW Government reforms to its initiative "It Stops Here: Standing together to end domestic and family violence" aim to improve the way government agencies and non-government organisations respond to and prevent domestic and family violence across NSW. The following is extracted from the webpage <a href="https://www.women.nsw.gov.au/violence\_prevention/It\_Stops\_Here">https://www.women.nsw.gov.au/violence\_prevention/It\_Stops\_Here</a>

Through "It Stops Here: Standing together to end domestic and family violence" the NSW Government is implementing an integrated and coordinated state-wide system that ensures the safety of victims and their children is paramount, by strengthening our approach to violence prevention; changing the way we deliver services and support to victims of violence; and delivering programs and services that hold perpetrators accountable and reduce re-offending.

The reforms provide a consistent level of support based around individual needs, which is achieved through:

- a policy framework that promotes a common understanding of, and response to domestic and family violence (such as a common definition)
- research to determine activities designed to support men, women, children and young people to understand and develop healthy, respectful relationships
- improving the consistency and effectiveness of the system response through new referral pathways of service coordination, including consistent screening through an evidence based risk identification tool; an electronic Central Referral Point (CRP) to ensure referrals are made and acted on quickly; Local Coordination Points (LCPs) across NSW to provide victims with case coordination and access to local services; and local Safety Action Meetings (SAMs) to reduce the risk to victims identified as at serious threat of further harm
- on-the-ground initiatives such as minimum practice standards, which ensure victims of family and domestic violence receive a consistent level of response that helps them to recover regardless of the point at which they enter the system
- training to support workers implementing the reforms, as well as to generally up skill the sector to better support victims.

The reforms were developed in parallel to the Domestic Violence Justice Strategy which aims to strengthen the criminal justice response to domestic and family violence, for example, by holding perpetrators accountable and preventing re-offending.

For more information about "It Stops Here: Standing together to end domestic and family violence", please contact <a href="mailto:womennsw@moh.health.nsw.gov.au">womennsw@moh.health.nsw.gov.au</a>

