

**inTOUCH SUBMISSION IN RESPONSE TO:
*SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ROYAL COMMISSION INTO
DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE***

inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence

September 2024



Multicultural Centre
Against Family Violence

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first inhabitants of this nation and the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live. We pay our respect to their Elders – past and present. We express our gratitude for the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and hope that we may move forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

Acknowledgement of Victim-Survivors

We also acknowledge the countless women who have experienced family violence, in particular women from migrant and refugee backgrounds. We recognise the courageous path they have travelled to rebuild their lives and honour their stories which continue to inspire and drive our work.

Terminology Notes

At inTouch, we prefer the use of the terms people (or women) who experience violence and people (or men) who use violence. For the purposes of this submission, we will be using to the term victim-survivors and perpetrators as it is noted in the Terms of Reference for this Commission.

Across all inTouch's services and programs, we utilise the inLanguage, inCulture model, emphasising clients' cultural needs. With over 80% of our staff from migrant and refugee backgrounds, they bring an understanding of intersectionality and cultural sensitivity to their work. Our approach ensures that clients are paired with case managers who either speak their language or grasp the cultural nuances of family violence and recovery needs. Beyond speaking the same language, our staff have experiences as newly arrived migrants, understand complex migration journeys and their intersection with visa status, as well as cultural norms that combine to impact on the nature and experiences of violence, and systemic barriers to response and recovery.

Finally, throughout the submission, for ease of reading, in some instances we have used the term 'violence' as a short form for Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence. In Victoria, the definition of family violence refers to all forms of family violence including domestic violence and violence that occurs between other family relationships (Section 5 & 8, Family Violence Protection Act 2008).

About inTouch

inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence (inTouch) has provided person-centred, integrated and culturally responsive family violence services to migrant and refugee communities in Victoria since 1984.

inTouch works across the family violence continuum, providing culturally-informed early intervention, case management, legal and migration assistance, perpetrator programs, post-crisis recovery and enhanced capacity-building across the sector and community through our learning and development and project management teams. We are proud to provide high-level leadership and guidance to all levels of government with our evidence-based policy and advocacy work.

Our services are informed by an integrated *inLanguage, inCulture* delivery model and supported by our diverse workforce, which is comprised primarily of people who are migrants and refugees themselves. Our team's unique understanding of culture and the migration journey allows inTouch to deliver expert, specialist case management to our clients in over 20 languages.

inTouch's services include:

- Case management that encompasses a first-hand understanding of the migration journey and unique cultural barriers women may face when seeking assistance for family violence.
- An integrated community legal centre (**inTouch Women's Legal Centre**) working at the intersection of family and migration law - the first multidisciplinary practice in Australia to provide this inclusive service response.
- inSpire, a post-recovery initiative for victim-survivors, focusing on economic independence, social connection and emotional wellbeing.
- A policy, advocacy and research unit that informs government legislation, service provision and media coverage and is informed by victim-survivors and our client services' team.
- Prevention and capacity-building projects and resource development for multicultural communities and the family violence sector.
- A specialised *inLanguage, inCulture* program, Motivation for Change, that works with men who use violence, focusing on trauma and the impacts of migration.
- A comprehensive suite of Learning and Development modules centred and informed by the experiences of victim-survivors and inTouch's specialist expertise working across the family violence continuum.
- NOOR Family Violence Survivor-Advocates, a group of migrant and refugee victim-survivors who influence policy, service provision and media reporting with lived experience.

For more information, visit www.intouch.org.au email [REDACTED] or call [03 9413 6500](tel:0394136500)

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Introduction

inTouch welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the South Australian Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence.

For over 40 years inTouch has been steadfast in our mission to support migrant and refugee women who have endured family violence. We offer comprehensive case management services that acknowledge and address the unique cultural challenges our clients often encounter when seeking assistance. inTouch also plays a critical role in engaging with people who use violence through our *inCulture*, *inLanguage* programs and early intervention services.

Domestic, family and sexual violence requires a holistic and integrated service system that is culturally responsive and centres victim survivors. Perpetrators must also have tailored responses to address the violence and stop it from re-occurring and escalating. There must be appropriate and trauma informed approaches available across the family violence continuum.

There is a significant opportunity to address the current systemic barriers and challenges that exist in South Australia for migrant and refugee women when seeking support in relation to domestic, family and sexual violence. There is a clear need for specialised services that support the needs of migrant and refugee women. Mainstream agencies and organisations must also embed culturally responsive practice and take an intersectional approach, providing services and programs in-language and if possible, in-culture to deliver tailored support to those experiencing and using violence.

We strongly encourage the Commission to leverage, learn from and build upon the reforms that resulted from the Royal Commission into Family Violence in Victoria. This provides a strong foundation for what is required in South Australia, and in particular, the Commission must consider what needs to be embedded in the system's response to be able to appropriately engage and connect with people from multicultural communities and particularly migrant and refugee women and children.

inTouch provides a range of services and programs to migrant and refugee women in Victoria, and expanding the holistic *inCulture* and *inLanguage* service model of inTouch to South Australia presents a valuable opportunity to provide the migrant and refugee community with tailored programs and services. This is integral to ensuring that all women who experience violence feel understood, are kept safe, can recover and heal while remaining connected to culture and community.

Importantly, domestic, family and sexual violence reform is not a 'set and forget' reform. It requires long term investment with coordination and government commitment. Government and agencies delivering the reform and services must be held accountable and the reforms must be independently reviewed and monitored to ensure sustainable outcomes.

This submission seeks to respond to the key questions posed by the Commission in its Issues Paper (July 2024) as well as other matters relevant to the Terms of Reference, and aims to demonstrate the impact of domestic, family and sexual violence on migrant and refugee women. Addressing these challenges will ensure that we can ultimately provide the most effective and appropriate responses to victim survivors, and ensure the ongoing safety of migrant and refugee women.

Recommendations

Prevention

1. Invest in prevention programs and services for migrant and refugee communities that are provided in-language and in-culture. These should include community-based initiatives, forums and information sessions engaging people of all genders at all life stages.
2. Build the capacity of those who engage and work with people who may experience or use violence to ensure a deep and shared understanding of the drivers for and impacts of domestic, family and sexual violence, including the intersectional forms of oppression that increase the complexity for migrant and refugee women.
3. Invest in Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) that address domestic, family and sexual violence to deliver key prevention activities in South Australia to multicultural communities.
4. Deliver prevention campaigns that are inclusive, culturally responsive and take an intersectional approach. Ensure that all communication and prevention marketing materials are provided in-language and in-culture.
5. Build on the existing research and evidence base to ensure a deeper understanding of the causes and drivers of violence in migrant and refugee communities and inform the development of future prevention efforts.

Early intervention

6. Ensure that all agencies and organisations who work with people experiencing or using domestic and family violence are mandated to use a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework (Refer to Victorian model as a best practice guide).
7. Deliver and legislate a Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme that promotes a culture of sharing information to inform real-time and accurate risk assessment and risk management processes.
8. Invest in ongoing workforce capacity and capability uplift for mandated agencies and organisations to ensure those working with people experiencing and using violence are trained in Risk Assessment, Risk Management and Information Sharing.
9. Invest in an integrated case management system that is shared across all relevant agencies and organisations to facilitate real-time information sharing.
10. Invest in culturally responsive early intervention programs that build greater awareness and increase capability when working with migrant and refugee women and children.
11. Increase funding for specialist family violence services and their culturally responsive practice, including the expansion of inTouch's dedicated holistic service model for migrant and refugee women to South Australia, in collaboration with local services like WSSA.
12. Increase funding for community legal centres to provide specialist legal and migration support to victim survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence.

Response

13. All agencies and organisations working with people experiencing or using domestic, family and sexual violence must undertake cultural awareness training, this includes mainstream family violence services, police and courts.

14. All agencies and organisations working with people experiencing or using domestic, family and sexual violence must have appropriate processes in place to safely engage interpreters when they are required.
15. Ensure there are effective validation and rectification processes in place to address the misidentification of the victim survivor as the perpetrator with particular consideration given to the needs of women at greatest risk of misidentification including migrant and refugee women.
16. Invest and deliver culturally responsive legal services such as the inTouch Women's Legal Centre to address the unique and complex legal needs of migrant and refugee women. This must include migration and family law expertise.
17. Enhance the existing Family Violence Courts to become Specialist Family Violence Courts that provide separate and secure entrances and waiting areas, specialist magistrates, court staff and family violence practitioners, and are culturally responsive and safe.
18. Improve the Courts and other government websites to include a broad suite of accessible and culturally responsive information about domestic, family and sexual violence, the law and the court process in South Australia.
19. Embed justice system navigators in the justice system response to provide end-to-end support for people who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence. Navigators must deliver a culturally responsive and trauma-informed service.
20. Explore restorative justice approaches to meet the needs of victim survivors seeking alternative justice options.
21. Invest in a broad suite of tailored perpetrator interventions that address the different levels of risk and need of people using violence. Ensure that these programs are culturally responsive.
22. As part of the suite of perpetrator interventions, invest in the delivery of culturally specific interventions such as Motivation for Change, which provides an inLanguage and inCulture response for men who use violence.

Recovery and healing

23. Invest in community-based recovery programs that provide in-language and in-culture supports to people who have experienced violence such as the inSpire program.
24. Invest and expand access to financial coaching and counselling services who specialise in family violence and promote recovery and wellbeing.

Other matters

25. Invest in approaches that engage and embed lived experience in reforms including advocacy groups, policy and projects and service delivery. This must take into account the diversity of people who have experienced violence, and there must be adequate safeguards in place to support engagement.
26. Design the reforms using a best practice co-design approach to ensure that the diverse voices of those using and delivering the services are embedded in the services and programs they design.
27. Require strong commitment from government through the delivery of a long-term investment plan and embed accountability measures to ensure that reforms are delivered as intended by the Commission.

28. Invest in the shared data platforms, systems, capacity and capability uplift required to facilitate data collection and use across all agencies and organisations.
29. Develop and implement an agreed monitoring and evaluation approach to the reforms including an evidence-based outcomes framework to measure the impact of the reforms.
30. Ensure that all services, programs and projects designed to deliver on the outcomes of this Commission have an evaluation requirement.

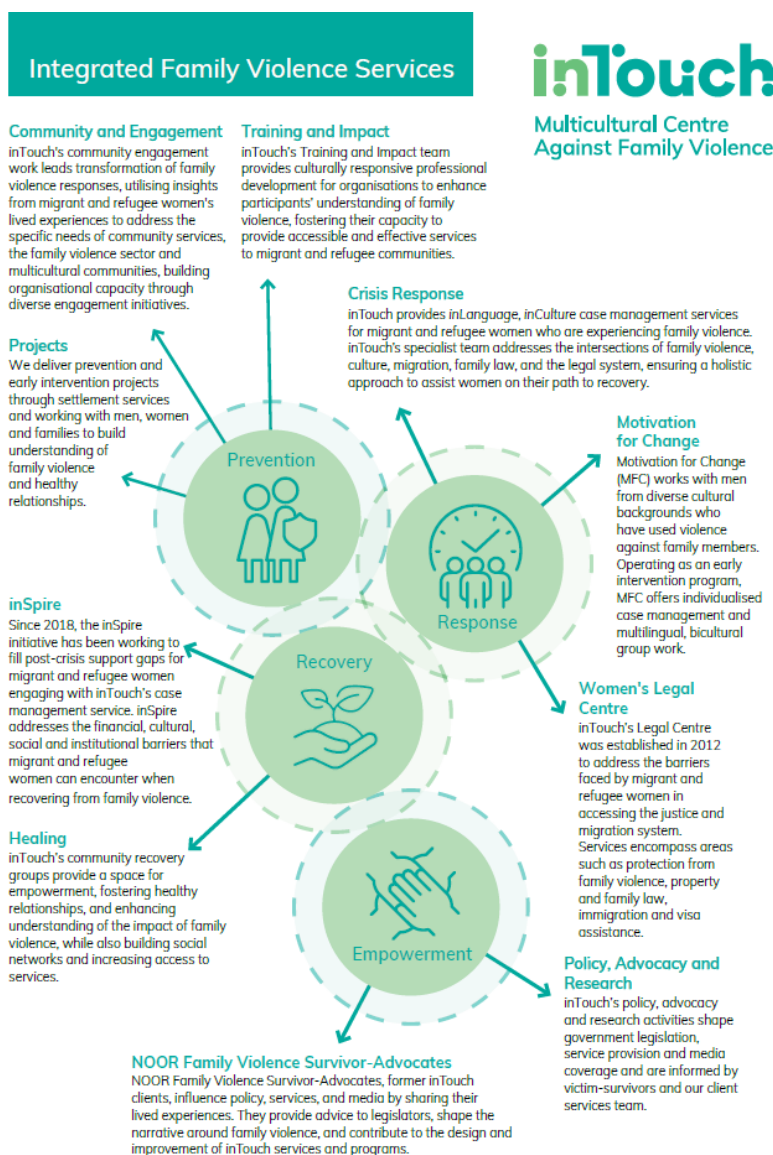
inTouch and our clients

Overview

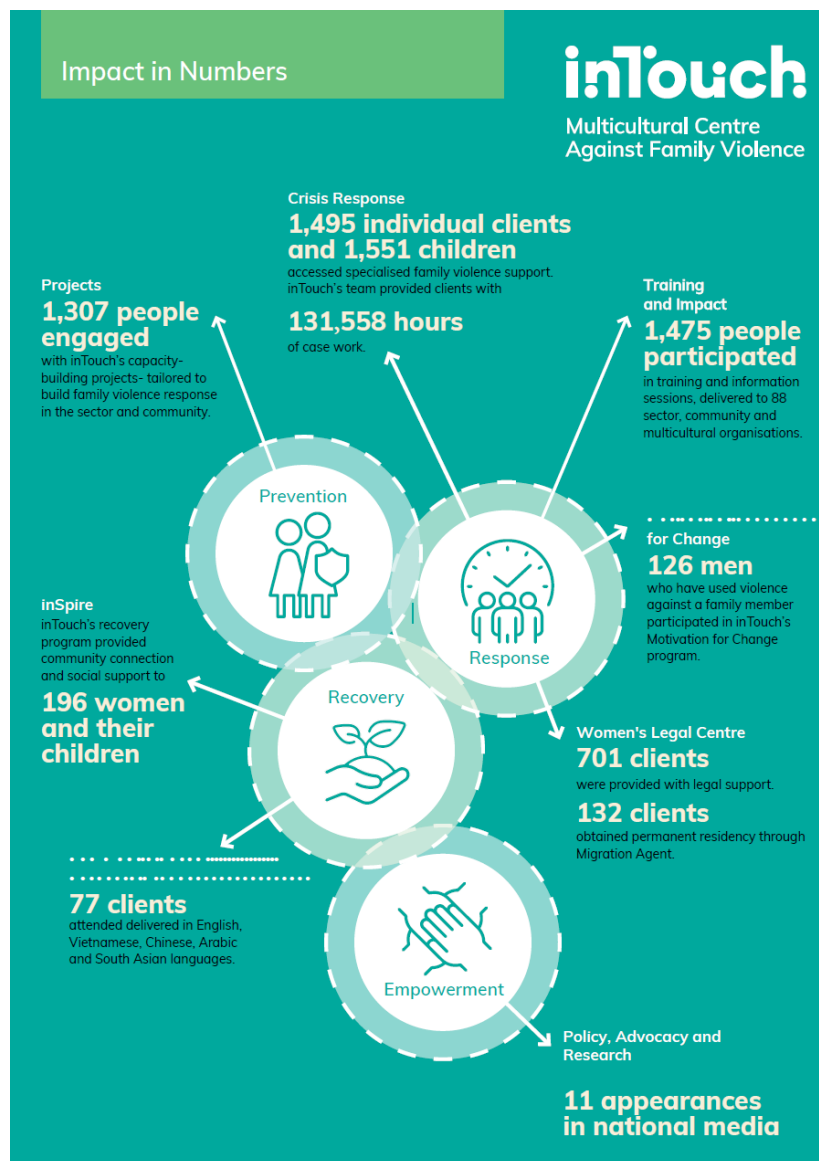
inTouch works across the spectrum of family violence services and support. We provide culturally responsive case management, perpetrator programs, legal assistance and representation, and specialised migration assistance, crisis recovery, and learning and development and capacity building programs across the sector and community.

Our Clients

inTouch supports a client group who have highly complex and intersectional needs. We have the daily privilege of seeing first-hand how our trauma informed, *inLanguage* and *inCulture* support enables our clients to receive services and rebuild community and connections. **Our unique and integrated service delivery model** not only supports a more effective and efficient client experience, but also provides a strong foundation for our clients’ healing and recovery, ensuring the best possible outcomes for our clients, their children and their communities.



During the 2022-23 financial year, inTouch demonstrated its commitment to supporting migrant and refugee women, providing support to 1,495 women and their 1,551 children through direct response services. The following figure shows our impact in numbers:



Our clients come from 97 different countries and it is critical to acknowledge the unique and significant challenges that our client group faces when interacting with systems not developed by or for them.

- 91 percent speak a language other than English as their first language, highlighting the importance of providing culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate services.
- 87 different languages were spoken by inTouch clients in the last financial year, and clients represented people from 98 different counties, demonstrating the diversity of our clients.

- 36 percent reported living with a disability or mental illness, emphasising the need for wraparound supports that adequately take into account these circumstances.
- 44 percent were on temporary visas, demonstrating their vulnerability and lack of stability, driven by the uncertainty about their immigration status and visa-related service eligibility criteria.
- 32 percent of inTouch clients overall have lived in Australia for less than 5 years, making it very difficult to navigate a legal system they have limited understanding of.
- 68 percent of our clients are either homeless or at risk of homelessness, underscoring the urgency of addressing housing and stability issues alongside and through legal assistance.
- 69.5 percent of clients are grappling with severe financial disadvantage and 25.6 percent of our clients had nil income at the point of engaging our service.

Client experiences in the South Australian context

██████'s Story – This case study is illustrative of our client experience

██████'s relatives forced her to marry her husband ██████ in her home country of ██████. She had no say in the matter and felt extremely upset by the whole process. She moved to South Australia to be with him in late ██████, as per his family's instructions. Once there, she was sexually assaulted by ██████ on a regular basis. He went out to work during the day and told ██████ she had to stay at home. He took complete control of their finances and refused to buy food for her, so she was left at his house, alone and hungry, every day. She quickly became very depressed. After a couple of weeks, ██████ became angry with her and hit her hard in the head. ██████ didn't know her rights and had always been scared of the police ██████, so didn't report him at this time. After this incident, ██████ left the house for several days and ██████ was left alone – with no food or money. After a couple of days, she called a family friend, who told her to contact the police. The police came to the house and she told them what had happened. However, they did not provide her with a report number or information about intervention orders or other next steps.

██████'s relatives found out that ██████ had contacted the police and were very angry. They came to the house and verbally abused her. When they left, ██████ called a friend in ██████ and asked them to book her a flight to ██████. She was too scared to stay in South Australia with ██████ and his relatives there and did not know how to seek protection.

Since arriving in ██████, ██████ has received repeated phone calls from ██████ and his family members, threatening to kill her if she did not return to be with him. She believes that they may know where she lives and does not feel safe. ██████ has now managed to obtain an interim intervention order to protect herself from ██████, although this does not provide any protection from his relatives.

██████ was referred to inTouch for case management and migration advice, as she is currently on a partner visa with ██████ as her sponsor. ██████ is too scared to return to ██████, as she fears she may be killed for running away from her husband. Her case manager has helped her to find accommodation and take steps to protect her safety. Our migration team have helped her to make an application to access the family violence provisions, in order to gain permanent residency in Australia.

With examples like this case study in mind, the content within our submission is intended to highlight the challenges for migrant and refugee victim survivors in South Australia and to identify the opportunities to address the systemic issues they face when seeking support.

Questions to consider:

1. What causes domestic, family and sexual violence?
2. What works, or will work, to prevent domestic, family and sexual violence?
3. What existing initiatives are directed to addressing the attitudes and systems that drive domestic, family and sexual violence? Are they effective?

1. Prevention

The Challenge

Prevention is an essential element to a system's response to domestic, family and sexual violence.

Gender inequality is the key driver for all forms of violence against women including domestic, family and sexual violence. It is also important to understand that **other forms of discrimination and power imbalances can also drive violence against women**. This highlights the further impact on migrant and refugee women and their children.

inTouch anticipates that the Commission will hear from a range of experts on preventing domestic, family and sexual violence, and so we have focused our submission on violence prevention for and with multicultural communities.

Recent engagement with migrant and refugee communities highlighted that while gender inequality is the main driver of violence, there must be a greater focus on the reinforcing factors. These include racism, social isolation, visa status and settlement concerns, migration, shame and community pressures and access to support. It is critical that prevention activities and education respond to these factors to be effective for migrant and refugee women. inTouch takes many learnings from the work of Our Watch and we encourage the Commission to consider the (unpublished) OurWatch consultation findings report on Primary Prevention in Migrant and Refugee Communities that makes important recommendations for future prevention efforts, some of which have been considered further below and in our submission recommendations.

Migrant and refugee women are at a heightened risk in their experiences of violence and require nuanced and culturally responsive approaches to preventing and addressing domestic, family and sexual violence. While migrant and refugee women experience the same forms of violence as

other women in the community, they also experience **other forms of family violence including systems abuse, harmful traditional practices or cultural abuse**. These include visa abuse, dowry-associated violence, forced marriage, honour killings and female genital mutilation. A large proportion of our clients (72%) are subject to significant financial abuse and the long-term impacts of this form of violence are devastating.

Family violence occurs across every culture, language and socio-economic group, and so too must our prevention efforts. Currently, there is a strong focus on community-wide prevention; while this is important, **without direct and targeted prevention activity, the impact can and will be diluted**. Ultimately, this will not address the immediate crisis, and can push the problem forward to future generations. With a gendered-lens focused on the individual needs of multicultural communities, we must engage in work with settlement providers, schools, and faith-based and ethno-centric community organisations. In addition to this, we must work directly with boys and men, as well as families, to support healthy, respectful relationships and connect through familiar settings they are already engaged with.

Effective recovery must also be seen as prevention. We must integrate recovery and women's empowerment into how we address domestic, family and sexual violence. Supporting women and children by investing in their physical and mental wellbeing, financial independence, employment opportunities, education, housing and social connections, enabling women to live independently, free from violence, must be integral to system reforms. The following must be considered as part of any prevention efforts:

- Corporate sector (for example, Banks) must partner with specialist family violence services to run programs that provide financial literacy training and advice, and inform the design of financial products that reduce the risks of financial abuse.
- Partnerships that provide mentoring and skill-building to support women to navigate employment pathways.
- Community and social connection events that build networks, friendships and community through meaningful community participation.
- Accessible and affordable childcare that enables women to work and have independence.
- Mental health supports should be available in language.
- Enable pathways to safe, secure and affordable housing.
- Access to free or affordable legal support to resolve family law and migration matters.

The opportunities

Prevention activity provides effective strategies that offer long-term benefits by raising awareness of family violence causes, and challenging and transforming the social norms that enable abuse. Promoting healthy relationships and using strengths-based, trauma-informed approaches are key. At inTouch, we provide a range of programs to communities to enhance the understanding of family violence. It is important that these services are tailored and provided in-language and in-culture to ensure relevance and understanding for the participants. We empower women impacted by family violence through community education and early intervention with men who use violence. We work with national and state organisations to enhance their ability to prevent family violence through awareness.

Examples of our **targeted prevention and community awareness initiatives** include:

- Working Together – inTouch collaboration with Western Bulldogs Community Foundation, East African Women’s Foundation and the Australian Vietnamese Women’s Association raising awareness and establishing support pathways for women experiencing family violence. The program has been evaluated showing it has been effective in increasing knowledge amongst communities about how to define, identify and respond to family violence.
- Respectful Relationships in Multicultural Regional Communities – inTouch worked with youth groups, community leaders and the Afghan community in regional cities to deliver Respectful Relationship Forums.

Capacity building is an integral component of prevention and early intervention efforts against domestic, family and sexual violence. Ensuring that communities, and those who provide services to communities, have a deep understanding of violence, its impacts and its interactions with intersectional forms of oppression is essential. inTouch draws on the expertise of our trainers, case managers, NOOR Family Violence Survivor-Advocates and feedback from our clients to develop and tailor professional development opportunities for a range of organisations. Further detail on these programs can be found in the Section 2 of this submission.

These programs are effective as they are delivered safely to communities with the community, *inLanguage* and *inCulture*. We must recognise and engage in **community led approaches to prevention**, supporting grassroots organisations who can most effectively engage with multicultural communities.

This is also further demonstrated in programs like inTouch’s **Settlement Engagement and Transition Support** (SETS) project, which enable the delivery of key activities that support prevention priorities including:

- **Education for community and faith leaders** on gender equality and family violence to support engagement with their communities and build their capacity to promote healthy relationships, identify family violence, highlight red flags (through marriage counselling etc) and refer to services where required.
- Supporting the **development, capacity building and visibility of female community and faith leaders** to create safe spaces and close the gap on authoritative equity.
- **Community events** conducted *inLanguage*, *inCulture*, targeted to newly arrived migrant or refugee cohorts that promote community engagement, social cohesion, respectful relationships, positive parenting and awareness of the service landscape.
- Equipping community, faith and cultural leaders with strategies for grounding **equitable relationship messaging in their cultural strengths and contexts**.
- Develop the skills and capabilities of practitioners in identified local service providers including mainstream services, in **culturally responsive practice** in prevention, early intervention and response while working with refugee and migrant communities in line with the intersectional service model.

Taking [REDACTED] **story** into consideration, if tailored prevention activities such as the above were available when she newly arrived in Australia, they could deliver positive short-term outcomes that may have resulted in preventing or reducing the level of risk to [REDACTED]. These include:

- Younger migrant and refugee individuals have developed a shared understanding of what respect and safety look like in relationships.
- Younger migrant and refugee individuals are equipped with the communication and conflict resolution skills to navigate shifts in relationships, gendered expectations and family dynamics in their migration journey.
- Younger migrant and refugee individuals are aware of services available to support their safety, wellbeing, health and economic needs in their migration journey.
- Individuals and community, cultural and faith leaders understand violence as a social issue rather than a private one.

In addition to community-based programs and support, prevention efforts need to be supported by ***inclusive and culturally responsive public communications and awareness campaigns***. Providing communications and social media campaigns that are culturally responsive will ensure that all women and men have a deeper understanding of the unacceptable nature of violence against women and their children and contribute to positive shifts in social norms.

Research and evidence building is also a fundamental element of prevention activity. New research in the area of domestic, family and sexual violence must take an intersectional approach to deeply understand the causes and drivers of violence and to develop new and effective ways to prevent and drive down the high numbers of women experiencing violence. Research should have a particular focus on the gaps in prevention efforts tailored to multicultural communities.

Recommendations:

1. Invest in prevention programs and services for migrant and refugee communities that are provided in-language and in-culture. These should include community-based initiatives, forums and information sessions engaging people of all genders at all life stages.
2. Build the capacity of those who engage and work with people who may experience or use violence to ensure a deep and shared understanding of the drivers for and impacts of domestic, family and sexual violence, including the intersectional forms of oppression that increase the complexity for migrant and refugee women.
3. Invest in Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) that address domestic, family and sexual violence to deliver key prevention activities in South Australia to migrant and refugee communities.
4. Deliver prevention campaigns that are inclusive, culturally responsive and take an intersectional approach. Ensure that all communication and prevention marketing materials are provided in-language and in-culture.
5. Build on the existing research and evidence base to ensure a deeper understanding of the causes and drivers of violence in migrant and refugee communities and inform the development of future prevention efforts.

2. Early Intervention

Questions to consider:

4. What systems, including systems outside of government, receive information which may allow for the identification of individuals who are at high risk of experiencing or perpetrating domestic, family and sexual violence?
5. What is needed to allow for this information to be used by government and specialist domestic, family and sexual violence services?
6. What interventions should be considered to manage the risk of a person who is identified as being at high risk of experiencing or perpetrating domestic, family and sexual violence?

The challenge

While prevention efforts aim to prevent violence from occurring, it is essential that there are effective systems in place to ensure that all domestic, family and sexual violence is identified early, and interventions put in place to reduce and manage the risk of future occurrence and escalation.

Early intervention builds on prevention efforts and requires a skilled workforce, evidence-based risk assessment and risk management processes and a culture of information sharing, using a culturally responsive and intersectional approach.

When there is a ***lack of a shared understanding of domestic, family and sexual violence***, people who experience violence and those who use violence can get lost in the system and fall through the gaps. All parts of the system need to have an informed understanding of domestic, family and sexual violence to consider the dynamics and impacts of the violence across all cultures and to therefore be able to effectively identify and respond.

Understanding the complexity and less visible nature of ***coercive control*** is also vitally important in early intervention. There are compounding factors to consider when supporting migrant and refugee women who are experiencing coercive control. inTouch has developed resources [for migrant and refugee women](#), and [for service providers working with multicultural women](#) to assist in understanding, improved identification and providing culturally responsive supports.

For the service system to work effectively in early identification of domestic, family and sexual violence, it must be supported by a legislative framework. Without a mandated framework to guide services and agencies on how to effectively identify and respond to violence; there will continue to ***be inconsistency and poor practice***, missed opportunities to intervene and the violence will escalate leaving many women and children unsafe and at serious risk.

Considering [REDACTED] **Story** and her experience of isolation and lack of connection to community, there were already indications of family violence and the risk of escalation. If [REDACTED] local services including her local health provider or community leaders had an awareness and understanding of family violence, particularly nuances relevant to multicultural communities, they may have been able to identify and offer support and referrals to culturally appropriate services earlier.

The opportunities

The Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence Report and its 227 recommendations led to a significant body of work within Victoria to reform the way services, systems and government identify and respond to family violence.

A centrepiece of the reforms in Victoria was the introduction of **the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Risk Management (MARAM) Framework**. MARAM is much more than a risk assessment tool. It establishes the foundations for the whole of community to have a shared understanding of family violence, the shared responsibility to identify and manage risk and to ultimately keep people experiencing family violence safe. With a strong focus on intersectionality and cultural safety, MARAM provides for an evidence-based framework to guide a system to better prevent, identify and respond to family violence.

MARAM is a legislated framework ([Part 11 of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008](#)) and supported by **the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme** ([Part 5A of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008](#)). Best practice risk assessment and management must be informed by effective and mandated information sharing.

Organisations and agencies are prescribed under these legislative frameworks and are required to align to the MARAM framework and pro-actively share information about people who are using family violence. More information about MARAM and information sharing reforms can be found [here](#).

As a family violence service provider in Victoria, inTouch is a MARAM organisation and a prescribed information sharing entity. Having a dedicated and specialist service, like inTouch, that can provide best practice risk assessment and risk management to women from migrant and refugee communities *inLanguage* and *inCulture* has led to culturally informed risk assessment, culturally responsive support, better-quality and safer outcomes for clients, and improved connection with other parts of the system including police and courts. We strongly encourage the Commission to consider the impact MARAM and information sharing frameworks could have on the existing response in South Australia.

To enhance our ability to ensure a more comprehensive risk overview can be established and managed, we must have effective systems in place to enable MARAM and information sharing practices. There must be **integrated case management systems shared amongst agencies to facilitate real time information sharing** which will have a significant impact on improving our response to domestic, family and sexual violence. The importance of information and data sharing and usage is further explored in Section 5 of this submission.

In addition to MARAM and information sharing, inTouch also delivers a range of **early intervention programs and services** including the establishment of our National Training Academy and initiatives with other sector organisations to enhance their capacity and capability when working with migrant and refugee women. These initiatives include:

- Culturally Responsive Practice in Identifying and Responding to Family Violence in Migrant and Refugee Communities
- Working with Women on Temporary Visas
- Working with Interpreters in Family Violence Setting
- Facilitating Cross-Sector Learning and Collaboration in Refuges.

Further information on our early intervention efforts can be found in our [Annual Report 22/23](#).

There is significant ongoing demand on services and agencies to support those experiencing violence, with long waiting lists or having to turn people away. The workforces in these agencies are stretched and cannot meet the complex needs of clients. There must be **further investment in specialist family violence services and community legal centres** to meet the growing and unmet demand, with equitable funding structures that recognise the increased complexity and time investment required for case support to migrant and refugee clients.

While general specialist services offer critical support to people experiencing violence, they do not specialise in the needs of multicultural communities. This is why it is also important to ensure that there are **specialist services tailored for the diverse needs of the community**. A specialist service like inTouch works to address the many barriers that migrant and refugee women face when seeking support and there should be further investment in these services in South Australia.

inTouch is working on growing its national presence and is well positioned to collaborate with key local services like Women's Safety Services South Australia (WSSA) and support expansion of our services in South Australia. The Commission must consider the current unmet need to provide a **dedicated specialist service response for migrant and refugee women** in South Australia and make recommendations to address this, while supporting mainstream services to strengthen their service quality to better meet the needs of these cohorts.

Recommendations:

6. Ensure that all agencies and organisations who work with people experiencing or using domestic and family violence are mandated to use a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework (Refer to Victorian model as a best practice guide).
7. Deliver and legislate a Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme that promotes a culture of sharing information to inform real-time and accurate risk assessment and risk management processes.
8. Invest in ongoing workforce capacity and capability uplift for mandated agencies and organisations to ensure those working with people experiencing and using violence are trained in Risk Assessment, Risk Management and Information Sharing.
9. Invest in an integrated case management system that is shared across all relevant agencies and organisations to facilitate real-time information sharing.
10. Invest in culturally responsive early intervention programs that build greater awareness and increase capability when working with migrant and refugee women and children.
11. Increase funding for specialist family violence services and their culturally responsive practice, including the expansion of inTouch's dedicated holistic service model for migrant and refugee women to South Australia, in collaboration with local services like WSSA.
12. Increase funding for community legal centres to provide specialist legal and migration support to victim survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence.

3. Response

Questions to consider:

7. What are the barriers to reporting domestic, family and sexual violence to police or seeking support from domestic, family and sexual violence?
8. What are the elements of a best practice crisis response which will meet the needs of:
 - a) a victim-survivor?
 - b) a victim survivor who is a child?
 - c) a perpetrator (acknowledging that one need is to hold a perpetrator to account for their use of violence)?
9. What are the elements of a best practice health response?
10. What are the elements of a best practice police response?
11. What are the elements of a best practice justice system response?
12. Taking into account your responses to questions 8 to 11, which elements are already in place in the domestic, family and sexual violence systems in South Australia.

██████████ **Story** highlights the complexity for migrant and refugee women when seeking support and safety. Having only newly arrived in Australia, in a forced marriage, no control over finances and a lack of close family supports in South Australia, ██████████ was isolated from a traditional support network. When justice agencies including the police and courts first respond to incidents of family violence, it can be very frightening for someone like ██████████ who is fearful of the police for numerous reasons, including institutional racism, risk of mis-identification, and a distrust of authorities. This initial contact is an extremely critical point of intervention and this opportunity must be maximised.

The challenge

Migrant and refugee women experiencing violence face **significant barriers when it comes to seeking support and reporting abuse**. A system that is disjointed, siloed, is unclear on roles and responsibilities, is over-complicated, has a lack of understanding and puts the burden on the victim survivor, exacerbates these barriers and makes it incredibly difficult for women and their children to seek help, protection and safety. The system that prevents and addresses domestic, family and sexual violence must be designed around supporting and responding to our most marginalised communities.

inTouch clients have reported a non-exhaustive list of challenges including language, cultural barriers and misidentification.

Migrant and refugee women are put at risk when they do not have access to the support they require to ensure their safety. **Language barriers** limit a migrant or refugee's understanding of their rights, Australian laws and the service systems that are in place to provide them with support. It also makes it difficult for a victim survivor to communicate and detail the violence that has occurred. Interpreting services must be appropriately and safely engaged to address these barriers. There are complexities when engaging interpreting services in the family violence context and it is important that interpreters are appropriately trained on rights-based and ethical interpreting for family violence, engaged through trusted providers, using female interpreters where possible and allowing sufficient time for bookings.

Another hurdle in reporting violence can occur when migrant and refugee communities are pressured by **cultural norms and beliefs that censure disclosures of violence**. Our clients have reported that strict cultural norms and beliefs can mean that it is considered inappropriate to discuss one's domestic or sexual relationship issues with family, friends, or community. Many women feel too embarrassed and ashamed to convey intimate details, despite their suffering. In some communities, **the risk of social and financial sanctions from family and community** after reporting violence to authorities, can be a strong deterrent to reporting, underlining the importance of referrals and wrap-around support.

Where fear of community repercussions compounded by social isolation dissuades migrant and refugee women from reporting their experiences of violence to justice agencies, access to wrap around, specialist services that work *in-language* and *in-culture* are critical. Engagement with these services can provide culturally-informed risk assessment, counselling, advice, safety planning and explain reporting pathways in a way that avoids re-traumatisation and recognises the cultural nuances and needs of the individual.

Misidentification of the predominant aggressor is a significant concern for our client group. Women from migrant and refugee communities who have experienced family violence are at a heightened risk of misidentification, with at least a third of our client group having experienced misidentification during their engagement with the justice system. When a victim survivor is misidentified, this places them at further risk, making them unsafe, disconnected from the support they need, and leads to further mistrust in the system. Our [position paper](#) on misidentification provides a more nuanced understanding of the impact of this issue for our client group illustrated through case study examples. We strongly encourage the Commission to consider the matters outlined in this paper and make recommendations to prevent and address misidentification.

A system cannot effectively respond to domestic, family and sexual violence without holding the perpetrator accountable and keeping them in view. There is a significant need for an increase in the suite of interventions required to address the use of violence. Currently, there is a **lack of tailored and appropriate interventions for people who use violence**, with an over-reliance on Men's Behaviour Change Programs that are not suitable for all perpetrator cohorts. There needs to be a nuanced approach to interventions that address different levels of risk (provided in custodial and community settings), and contributing factors such as alcohol and drug use, and interventions should be provided *in-language* and *in-culture*.

Difficulties with **accessing justice and legal support** can also put a victim survivor at further risk and harm. Victim survivors often have other complex legal matters that also need to be addressed to enable them to be safe and protected. Migrant and refugee women require specialist legal support with family law, migration and visa matters. It is essential that at the point of contact with the justice system, women from migrant and refugee communities are supported by specialist organisations who deliver *in-language* and *in-culture* legal support, like inTouch's Women's Legal Centre, which is discussed further below.

Attending **Court can be a daunting and intimidating process**, and a victim survivor must feel supported and safe while at Court. Court provides another critical opportunity for intervention and **Courts must be safe and accessible**. This needs to be delivered through appropriate infrastructure, signage and services. A victim survivor can be made to re-tell their story multiple times and may have to sit in the same waiting area as their perpetrator. Separate entrances, and safe and secure waiting areas are essential in keeping a victim survivor safe. Specialist family violence services and legal support should be available at court and provided in-language and if possible, in-culture. If there is a language barrier, an interpreter should be appropriately engaged. Processes should be streamlined, and family violence proceedings should be prioritised and fast tracked where possible.

Consideration must be given to the limitations of the criminal justice system in addressing the needs of people experiencing domestic, family and/or sexual violence. We believe that victim survivors should have the choice, agency and support to pursue justice outcomes aligned with their needs and beliefs, whether that be criminal prosecution and/or other **restorative justice options**.

It is important to recognise that migrant and refugee women have often encountered multiple authorities in their journey to Australia, including detention centres, refugee camps and that they may have had harmful interactions with authorities and possible trauma in a migration and/or refugee journey. Communities that experience significant structural inequality and systemic discrimination also weigh up the risk of state and institutional violence when engaging with the justice system. There may be occasions where a victim survivor does not view police and the formal justice system as a safe option for them and their family, or as an option that adequately addresses the harm they have experienced.

There is also a **lack of accessible and culturally responsive information** about domestic, family and sexual violence, the law and the court process in South Australia. Learnings from the reforms in Victoria has shown that people who are experiencing violence must have access to information about what to expect when going to court, their safety at court and what services are available to them. We have seen the importance of providing sufficient information in a culturally appropriate and accessible format including through court and government websites and other online platforms.

It is critical that all elements of the justice system including correctional settings share the same understanding of family violence, are culturally responsive and approaches are trauma informed. The justice system must be considered an essential component of the broader family violence service system working together and alongside specialist family violence services, health and human services and other government departments and agencies.

The opportunities

To appropriately and adequately respond to domestic, family and sexual violence, the service system must be truly integrated. All parts of the system (including specialist services, police, courts, justice agencies, child protection, health including hospitals and child and maternal health nurses, schools, and other government agencies) must **deliver an integrated service system response**. Underpinned by a shared understanding of family violence, informed by best practice, shared responsibility of risk assessment and risk management, a culture of information sharing and collaborative partnerships, the service system should facilitate that no matter which door a victim survivor opens they will receive a consistent, culturally responsive and trauma informed response – a ‘no wrong door’ approach.

It is essential that women have access and **clear referral pathways to seek culturally responsive help** to respond to violence, through both mainstream and specialist services. Establishing referral pathways and informal and formal reporting opportunities by training healthcare professionals, maternal and child health providers, counsellors or community leaders in culturally responsive care, can provide opportunities for victim survivors to share their story in a safe, inclusive space.

Having culturally responsive workforces ensures that migrant and refugee women and children will be provided with the services they require in a safer way and will also facilitate referrals to specialist services like inTouch. While it is essential that all parts of the system have an understanding of the diverse needs of multicultural communities, this must be supported by a **dedicated and specialist service that provides a broad suite of inLanguage and inCulture services** that meet the currently unmet needs of migrant and refugee women and children.

inTouch has a unique understanding of culture, family violence, family law and immigration and uses this to support our clients and the broader service system. Being able to refer migrant and refugee women and children to a service like inTouch ensures clients receive integrated, culturally responsive case management based on our *inLanguage, inCulture* delivery model. We co-case manage where we collaborate and engage with other service providers to successfully deliver a comprehensive range of support that our clients require. In addition to this, we provide secondary consultations and advice to support other specialist and mainstream service providers in navigating supports and systems for migrant and refugee women.

A victim survivor must have access to adequate legal support. Having an in-house Women’s Legal Centre at inTouch presents a unique opportunity to deliver an integrated practice model which provides legal advice and representation to clients who are already receiving support from inTouch case managers. We work at the intersection of family violence, family and migration law, which **meets the complex legal needs of migrant and refugee women**.

Police must be trained in **understanding the complexities for multicultural women** when seeking help for family and sexual violence and have the right supports in place to address any language or cultural barriers. This includes appropriate processes for engaging an interpreter and making referrals for specialist support and can assist in providing a safer environment for the victim survivor to share their story. It will also reduce the risk of them being misidentified as the predominant aggressor.

Without **a pro-active policing approach to domestic, family and sexual violence**, many people experiencing violence will be put at further risk. The system must prioritise the needs of the victim survivor and consider their own assessment of safety. This is where tools such as MARAM and information sharing can support these processes and ensure that police and other parts of the justice system are taking the necessary action to keep victim survivors and their children safe.

There is opportunity to enhance the existing Family Violence Courts in South Australia. Learning from the Victorian model, **Specialist Family Violence Courts** can be designed to support the safety of the person experiencing violence and hold the person using violence to account. This model aims to deliver best practice responses through having all magistrates, registrars, practitioners and other court staff specialised and trained with a cultural lens in domestic, family and sexual violence. All related domestic, family and sexual violence matters should be heard together before the one magistrate where possible. Court buildings should be physically safe with separate and secure waiting areas and entrances, as well as trained security personnel. Remote hearing facilities should also be available if a person experiencing violence does not want to be in the same court room as their perpetrator. We encourage the Commission to consider the Specialist Family Violence Court model developed in Victoria as a guide for best practice. An effective and culturally responsive justice system requires ongoing investment in workforce, resources and infrastructure to appropriately address these forms of violence.

inTouch recognises that systems, services and support for restorative justice processes that sit alongside or outside of the criminal legal system are not widely understood or available at present. We would support further investment in initiatives like the [Centre for Innovative Justice's Open Circle Restorative Responses to Sexual Violence Program](#), to provide **restorative justice services, research and policy engagement**. These can include facilitated dialogues between the victim-survivor and the perpetrator, or another person with whom they want to address harm (e.g. a family member who didn't support them when they disclosed the sexual violence). Such programs provide a principles-based, trauma informed, therapeutic and intersectional process to support victim survivors' justice needs.

End-to-end justice system navigators have been found internationally to be an effective approach to addressing victim-survivors' needs for facilitating links to services and advocating on their behalf through their justice journey. A justice navigator model must provide a tailored option ideally delivered with bilingual and bicultural workers in order to be responsive to the needs of migrant and refugee women from the start of the justice process to the end.

We encourage the Commission to consider [our submission and recommendations to the Australian Law Reform Commission on Justice Responses to Sexual Violence](#) which provides further details on some of these aspects.

The person experiencing violence must be at the centre of the system's response to family violence. They must primarily be protected and safe, provided with crisis response supports they need to escape the violence, and then supported to recover and thrive.

At the same time, the system must also have a focus on the perpetrator. They must be in view of the system and provided with the responses they need to address their use of violence. There must **be investment in a broad suite of tailored perpetrator interventions**. These interventions also need to be provided in-language and in-culture.

An example of this would be our **Motivation for Change** (MfC) program. MfC utilises inTouch's innovative *inLanguage*, *inCulture* delivery model to challenge harmful attitudes and behaviours using culture, language and community as a strength-based response. Currently, MfC is delivered to Afghan (in Dari) and South Asian (in English and Hindi) men with over 80% completion rate in most groups. The program works with men who use violence, recognising the complex and intersecting barriers that can make prevention and response challenging.

The key components of MfC include individualised case management, family safety contact work, alongside a 20-week trauma informed, culturally tailored group program. MfC was initially planned to operate as a prevention initiative, however due to the lack of appropriate intervention options for migrant and refugee men, MfC has been used as a key intervention program to support men who use family violence.

The MfC was evaluated by the Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre in 2023, and highlights the importance of in-language and in-culture programs. We encourage the Commission to consider the findings of [this evaluation](#) to inform its recommendations on perpetrator interventions, and culturally tailored programs and services more broadly.

Recommendations:

13. All agencies and organisations working with people experiencing or using domestic, family and sexual violence must undertake cultural awareness training, this includes mainstream family violence services, police and courts.
14. All agencies and organisations working with people experiencing or using domestic, family and sexual violence must have appropriate processes in place to safely engage interpreters when they are required.
15. Ensure there are effective validation and rectification processes in place to address the misidentification of the victim survivor as the perpetrator with particular consideration given to the needs of women at greatest risk of misidentification including migrant and refugee women.
16. Invest and deliver culturally responsive legal services such as the inTouch Women's Legal Centre to address the unique and complex legal needs of migrant and refugee women. This must include migration and family law expertise.
17. Enhance the existing Family Violence Courts to become Specialist Family Violence Courts that provide separate and secure entrances and waiting areas, specialist magistrates, court staff and family violence practitioners, and are culturally responsive and safe.
18. Improve the Courts and other government websites to include a broad suite of accessible and culturally responsive information about domestic, family and sexual violence, the law and the court process in South Australia.
19. Embed justice system navigators in the justice system response to provide end-to-end support for people who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence. Navigators must deliver a culturally responsive and trauma-informed service.
20. Explore restorative justice approaches to meet the needs of victim survivors seeking alternative justice options.
21. Invest in a broad suite of tailored perpetrator interventions that address the different levels of risk and need of people using violence. Ensure that these programs are culturally responsive.
22. As part of the suite of perpetrator interventions, invest in the delivery of culturally specific interventions such as Motivation for Change, which provides an *inLanguage* and *inCulture* response for men who use violence.

4. Recovery and healing

Questions to consider:

13. Acknowledging that every victim-survivor will have different needs depending on their personal circumstances, are there universal needs that will arise for all victim-survivors?
14. What are the best practice approaches to supporting a victim-survivor to recover from trauma and the mental, physical, emotional and economic impacts of violence?
15. Taking into account your response to question 14, what best practice approaches are already in place in the domestic, family and sexual violence systems in South Australia?

The challenge

Promoting recovery and financial literacy amongst those who have experienced domestic and family violence is critical. An integrated service system approach that engages with the community will enable a holistic and wrap around response to victim survivors.

If we consider [REDACTED] **Story**, ensuring that she has the wrap around supports required to recover and thrive is essential. Promoting her economic independence, social connection and emotional wellbeing, as well pathways to employment will ensure recovery and healing. [REDACTED] should not have to leave her home and travel to another state to get this level of culturally responsive support.

The opportunities

Promotion and investment in **programs and services focused on recovery** from domestic and family violence will enable this. Program's such as inTouch's inSpire have been established to support migrant and refugee women post-crisis.

The **inSpire** program was designed and is utilised by migrant and refugee women who have experienced domestic and family violence. The program focuses on empowerment and has four core streams of programming:

- **Economic independence** - which includes a suite of programs that focus on financial security and wellbeing and supports the growth of professional and personal networks and pathways for victim survivors. It involves career mentoring with bicultural mentors, small grants to

provide women with learning and information technology, childcare and technical training, skill audits and connections with recruiters. This stream builds the skills, knowledge and confidence of victim-survivors when it comes to engaging with community and the Australian job market.

- **Connections & Engagement** - which includes supporting victim survivors to experience belonging and connection in their communities. With a focus on access to relevant and meaningful service and community supports and may involve funding scholarships to enable participation in community and sporting events, bringing communities together to mark cultural holidays with special celebrations and connecting mothers and their children in child-friendly events, service navigation and advocacy to create cultural safety in service and community engagement.
- **Post-crisis Case Management** - which includes removing barriers by providing safety and stabilisation supports and connections, and the development and coordination of response services in partnership with other agencies, so that our victim survivors can meaningfully engage with post crisis recovery programs, moving from survival to healing and thriving.
- **Wellbeing & Therapeutic Programs** - which includes Trauma informed short term individual counselling including safety and stabilisation practices, and therapeutic interventions such as psychosocial education, recovery group work and education, warm referrals to relevant mental health services and social connections and support.

For more information on our best practice inSpire program, we encourage the Commission to watch this short [video](#) and visit our [website](#).

Currently, this program is not funded by government, and we rely on community, including the philanthropic sector to support these types of initiatives.

There also needs to be increased access to **financial coaching and counselling services** who specialise in family violence and financial abuse. Services such as those provided by [Good Shepherd](#) provide a good example of financial counselling focusing on wellbeing and recovery.

Recommendations:

23. Invest in community-based recovery programs that provide in-language and in-culture supports to people who have experienced violence such as the inSpire program.
24. Invest and expand access to financial coaching and counselling services who specialise in family violence and promote recovery and wellbeing.

5. Other Matters

Considering other matters relevant to the Terms of Reference including:

- Funding and Resourcing
- Integration and Coordination
- Role of Government
- Workforce Capacity and Capability
- Data, Monitoring and Evaluation

The challenge

A truly integrated service system must be supported by strong enabling functions. Services, agencies and the community cannot deliver a best practice response to domestic, family and sexual violence without ***strong leadership, coordination and commitment from government***.

Government must lead the way by committing to ***long term investment and coordination*** of the system and its enablers (including workforce, technology, data, monitoring and evaluation). Without sufficient and ongoing funding and resourcing, services and agencies will not be able to deliver best practice, let alone a basic level of service response.

The system must also be ***designed and informed by lived experience***. The starting point to ensure this, is to have lived experience represented on advisory and advocacy bodies. It is also integral to note that experience of domestic, family and sexual violence is diverse and therefore so should the representation on any of these groups. Advisory and advocacy bodies will not deliver good outcomes without a diversity of culture and language represented.

The opportunities

This Royal Commission presents a significant opportunity to ***completely reform the current family violence system in South Australia***. The reforms must have lived experience at the centre, and it must consider that violence occurs across all cultures and languages, and the system must be designed to provide support to all who experience and use violence.

Migrant and refugee women who have survived violence are powerful advocates for change and inform the work we do at inTouch at every level, internally and externally. By sharing their

experiences, survivor-advocates influence the design of our own programs, sector and government reforms, the development of policy, media reporting and attitudes to family violence in the broader community. Our **NOOR Survivor-Advocates** are a great example of the critical need and strong outcomes that follow when governments and organisations **embed lived experience**. Noor means 'light' in many languages and also stands for 'Narrating Our Own Resilience' – this reflecting the multicultural nature of the group and acknowledges the strength and resilience of these expert advocates.

We encourage the Commission to consider recommendations relating to embedding lived experience and that any **advisory and advocacy bodies leading reform must have a diversity of culture and language represented, including people with experience navigating the family violence system as a migrant or refugee**.

As highlighted in earlier sections of this submission, delivery of these reforms will only be possible with a **well-resourced, diverse, workforce** that has the capacity and capability to effectively respond to domestic, family and sexual violence with a culturally responsive and trauma informed approach.

While there is recognition and support for a greater need to **understand domestic, family and sexual violence** amongst workforces, there needs to be a **focus on cultural awareness, humility and responsiveness**. Workforces must have the ability to not only recognise and respond to family violence, but must also understand what it means in the cultural context, and how to engage and connect effectively and in culturally safe ways with people from diverse communities.

Increased accessibility and readily available **data on domestic, family and sexual violence** would significantly assist in improving the current response to victim survivors and to hold perpetrators accountable. This would enhance the ability for agencies to ensure a more comprehensive risk overview can be established and managed. Greater information flow allows for dynamic risk management which is critical in responding to violence. Strengthening pro-active and timely information sharing through **improved data management practices** can assist with the prevention of further family violence from occurring and escalating. Ensuring that **services are equipped with the systems, capacity and capabilities to facilitate real time data use and sharing** will have a significant impact on improving our response to family violence.

Effective data reporting also supports decision making and **ensures funding is directed and allocated to where it is needed**. Consistency and transparency in the allocation of funding, and ensuring agencies have access to the data required by decision makers (including government) would enable agencies to more effectively seek investment in programs that meet both community need and government requirements and ensure there is clear demonstration that activities are achieving the intended outcomes.

It is also important that we continuously and consistently **measure our impact** through effective monitoring and evaluation. Access to both quantitative and qualitative data is essential to effective evaluation of programs and services. There must be strong investment in data, monitoring and evaluation to ensure that we can understand the nuances involved in delivering services (including in-language, in-culture programs) and ensure that we are delivering tailored interventions and support that are culturally appropriate and informed.

Lastly, governments and agencies that are part of the integrated service system must be held accountable. There must be **effective accountability measures** put in place to monitor the reforms and ensure they are designed appropriately, service delivery is culturally responsive and trauma-informed, and that victim survivors and the broader community are kept safe and see improved outcomes. There must be a well-designed and agreed to **outcomes framework** to guide the reform with the ultimate goal towards a state free from violence.

Submissions to other inquiries to be considered

inTouch have recently produced submissions to a broad range of Inquiries (some of which have been mentioned throughout this submission) that we consider relevant to the work of this Commission and they can be accessed via the links below:

- [Australian Law Reform Commission – Justice Responses to Sexual Violence](#)
- [Inquiry Into capturing data on family violence perpetrators in Victoria](#)
- [Inquiry into the financial services regulatory framework in relation to financial abuse in Australia](#)
- [Submission to the Independent Review of the National Legal Assistance Partnership](#)
- [Submission in response to the Not-For-Profit Sector Development Blueprint Issues Paper](#)
- [Inquiry into Family Violence Orders](#)

Victim survivor experiences

Recommendations:

25. Invest in approaches that engage and embed lived experience in reforms including advocacy groups, policy and projects and service delivery. This must take into account the diversity of people who have experienced violence, and there must be adequate safeguards in place to support engagement.
26. Design the reforms using a best practice co-design approach to ensure that the diverse voices of those using and delivering the services are embedded in the services and programs they design.
27. Require strong commitment from government through the delivery of a long-term investment plan and embed accountability measures to ensure that reforms are delivered as intended by the Commission.
28. Invest in the shared data platforms, systems, capacity and capability uplift required to facilitate data collection and use across all agencies and organisations.
29. Develop and implement an agreed monitoring and evaluation approach to the reforms including an evidence-based outcomes framework to measure the impact of the reforms.
30. Ensure that all services, programs and projects designed to deliver on the outcomes of this Commission have an evaluation requirement.

█████'s Story – this case study is illustrative of our client's experiences

█████ married her husband █████ in █████ in 2005 and gave birth to their █████ in 2010. They lived together in █████, South Australia. In █████, █████ was going through a stressful situation at work and started to take it out on █████ when he got home from the office. Over the years, verbal abuse turned to physical abuse, which became increasingly serious. █████ would often beat █████ until she bled – sometimes in front of their █████

One day, after one such incident, █████ kicked █████ out of the family home. They spent two nights on the streets as they didn't know where to go. █████ called a friend in █████, who told her to join her there. █████ didn't have any other options and agreed to go.

█████ had reported █████'s abuse to the police in █████, who lodged an intervention order (IVO) on her behalf and obtained an interim order to protect █████. When the next court hearing came up, █████ had moved to Melbourne, so the South Australian police told her that they would attend on her behalf. After this hearing, they told her that her case was baseless and that it didn't matter now that she was living in a different state.

However, █████ still required protection. She had received a number of threatening phone calls from █████'s friends and family, urging her to drop the IVO or she would be forced to relinquish custody of █████. █████'s parents also lived in █████ and told her that they would let her know if they saw her. █████ was terrified that if the IVO was not extended, they would not be safe and that █████ might be taken away. She also learnt that █████ had filed for a divorce, though she had not received any paperwork.

█████ was referred to the legal advice clinic at inTouch, where our lawyer helped █████ to understand her rights and options. We explained to █████ that the IVO was still important, given that they are enforceable interstate, and what her next steps should be. We also advised her and made referrals in relation to her divorce and property matters. With this information, █████ was educated about their rights and empowered to act to protect herself and her son, as well as to defend her interests in the divorce and property matters.

██████'s Story – this case study is illustrative of our client's experiences

██████ married her husband ██████ in ██████ and their first ██████ was born in ██████ ██████ had ongoing substance abuse issues and throughout the course of their marriage, subjected ██████ to increasing physical, verbal and financial abuse, as well as regularly threatening to kill her. ██████ fell pregnant with their second child in ██████ and the abuse did not abate. After one particularly serious incident of physical violence, ██████ reported the abuse to the police. The police helped her to obtain an intervention order (IVO) and referred her to hospital, where she stayed for three days before being referred to crisis accommodation with her ██████

In spite of the IVO, ██████ was terrified of ██████ who was a ██████ and knew many people around the city. She fled ██████ and came to live with family in ██████ for the safety of herself, ██████ and her unborn ██████ ██████ continued to contact her, demanding shared custody of ██████

Due to the financial abuse she had suffered, ██████ had very little money to get legal help when she arrived in ██████. She was unable to afford private representation and called a few legal centres who did not have capacity to assist, before finding inTouch.

██████ was assessed by our intake team, who gave her information regarding housing, hospitals, public transport and the police, and allocated her a case manager. Her inTouch case manager referred her to our Women's Legal Centre, who gave her an urgent appointment in our legal advice clinic. There, she was able to access free legal advice about mediation, her rights, the intersection of South Australian and Victorian Law, and how to apply to Legal Aid for free ongoing legal representation.

Contact

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**If you are experiencing family violence and need immediate support,
please call 1800 RESPECT on 1800 737 328**