

12 August 2024

Natasha Stott Despoja AO.  
Royal Commissioner  
[RoyalCommissionDFSV@sa.gov.au](mailto:RoyalCommissionDFSV@sa.gov.au)

Dear Royal Commissioner,

**Re: Response to the Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence**

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Royal Commission into Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence on behalf of the Multicultural Communities Council of SA (MCCSA). As the peak multicultural agency representing culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in South Australia, we are grateful to share insights from the 120 ethnic communities we serve. Our response is informed by input from our membership, as well as our Women's and Men's Councils.

Established 50 years ago, MCCSA is committed to serving, empowering, and advocating for CALD communities in South Australia. Our vision is to create an equitable, cohesive, and thriving state. We commend the Commission's comprehensive approach in examining the four key areas: prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery and healing. This holistic framework is crucial for addressing the complex issue of domestic, family, and sexual violence effectively. We applaud the Commission's goal of designing a system that better meets the needs of those it serves and aims to deliver generational change.

The MCCSA's recommendations comprehensively address these focus areas with strategies designed to create a culturally sensitive approach to combating violence in CALD communities. Our proposals emphasise the importance of cultural competence, community involvement, education, and tailored solutions at every stage. By targeting each of these critical stages, we aim to break the cycle of violence, provide timely and effective support, and foster long-term healing and empowerment. This integrated framework ensures that the unique needs and challenges faced by CALD communities are adequately addressed throughout the entire spectrum of addressing domestic, family, and sexual violence.

## **Recommendations:**

1. CALD Community Involvement:
  - Ensure CALD representatives are involved in designing and implementing new systems and reforms
  - Regularly consult with community leaders and organisations
2. Government Accountability:
  - Establish clear responsibilities and measurable targets for the South Australian government
  - Implement regular reporting and evaluation mechanisms ensuring CALD statistics are identified
3. Targeted Prevention and Education:
  - Invest in culturally-specific initiatives with measurable outcomes
  - Focus on schools and communities for early education
  - Address cultural norms and beliefs that may contribute to violence
4. Community Champions:
  - Train and compensate individuals from CALD communities to raise awareness
  - Focus on topics like FDV paid leave and navigating visa-related issues
5. Comprehensive Support:
  - Offer language support for early intervention and crisis services
  - Recognise that the average cost of leaving an abusive situation is \$18,000 and typically requires seven attempts. Provide more than \$5,000 per survivor
  - Create a "one-stop shop" for streamlined services and protection from technological tracking
  - Ensure culturally appropriate legal support and representation
6. Community-Led Education:
  - Allocate specific funding for CALD community organisations to deliver impactful community education
  - Support programs targeting ethnic schools
7. Perpetrator Support:
  - Develop community-based interventions considering cultural sensitivities
  - Focus on breaking the cycle of violence through tailored programs
8. Faith Leader Engagement:

- Work with religious leaders to improve awareness and responses to abuse
- Provide training on respectful behaviour, intervention, and referral to appropriate authorities.

9. Culturally Relevant Services:

- Develop safe houses and services specifically for women from Muslim, and Indian backgrounds ensuring that they have the resources and guidance needed to offer culturally sensitive care and support to those in need.
- Ensure DFV staff are trained in cultural competence

10. Trauma-Informed Care:

- Offer counselling and therapy that respects cultural healing practices
- Focus on promoting resilience and strengthening self-esteem

11. Survivor Empowerment:

- Provide education and upskilling opportunities
- Assist in achieving financial independence
- Connect survivors with supportive and safe networks
- Provide Long-term support for rebuilding lives in a new cultural context

We emphasise the importance of involving CALD communities in the codesign and implementation of any new systems or reforms. Their lived experiences and cultural insights are invaluable in creating effective, inclusive strategies to combat domestic, family, and sexual violence. As discussed with Kim during our meeting on the 14th August, we will arrange for the Royal Commission to meet with some of the communities face to face early November 2024 to hear first hand of their experiences and needs.

The MCCSA is committed to supporting the Commission's work and can provide further detailed information on these points if required. We look forward to continuing this important dialogue and contributing to positive change for all South Australians.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



**Helena Kyriazopoulos OAM**  
CEO