Safer Communities

LABOR’S PLAN FOR REDUCING FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE
Foreword

Domestic and family violence affects all Territorians and has the potential to negatively alter a person’s life.

It is one of the biggest challenges to the health, safety and wellbeing of Territorians.

Collective, positive action to reduce violence may give every Territorian and, most importantly, our children the most precious reward of a life lived free of violence.

Territory Labor supports an integrated response to harm and a holistic approach to preventing domestic and family violence, including tackling gender inequality.

Territory Labor has supported the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women since it started and established the Integrated Response for Domestic and Family Violence in 2011 that has been expanded across the Territory over the last three years.

We have plans to further improve the Government’s actions in this very serious area. We look forward to receiving your feedback.

Sincerely

Michael Gunner
Leader of the Opposition
Support for an Integrated Response to Family Violence

Territory Labor supports the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their children and will work with other jurisdictions through COAG processes to implement the plan in the Northern Territory.

Territory Labor developed and funded the Alice Springs Integrated Response for Domestic and Family Violence in 2011 which established a central coordination point and a clear line of accountability for service delivery. This approach improved coordination between the work of NT Police, the court system, health services child protection services and community based social services in directly responding to domestic and family violence. This model was expanded Territory-wide as the Safety is Everyone's Right Framework over the last 3 years.

Labor supports evaluating this approach and continuing to improving community education, and improving service delivery through a coordinated Government response.

New Initiatives to Prevent Family Violence and Raise Community Awareness

Territory Labor will keep perpetrators of violence accountable for their violence. Strong specialised justice responses, increased access to evidenced based behaviour change programs, and grass root programs such as ‘No to Violence’ and ‘No More’ campaigns all need to work together to ensure a coordinated and consistent response to offending. Increasing safety will be the focus and goal of all interventions.

Stopping violence against women requires significant cultural change. Territory Labor will work with ‘Our Watch’ to develop evidence based and contemporary strategies to prevent family violence occurring in our society.

Across the country almost two women a week die from violence with NT women over represented. Territory Labor will establish a review mechanism for family violence related homicides, similar to the child death review process. We need to improve our services and invest resources in the areas that are effective and guide future policy and service responses to family violence related homicide.

Territory Labor believes that to expand the integrated response model further a co-location model of NGO’s and government services in a shared space should be encouraged. This approach provides a victim focused response that allows victims of crime easier access services in a safe and supportive environment.
Increasing Community Safety

Territory Labor will commit $6 million towards building a new Alice Springs Women’s Shelter to support women and children who need to relocate from their home. It is the busiest and largest shelter in the Territory and the demand for services continues to rise.

Labor will also conduct an infrastructure needs analysis of all existing emergency women’s shelters to develop a 5 year master plan for those services using a Territory Housing property.

Territory Labor will establish a further remote women’s safe house in Galiwinku. Discussions with community leaders and service providers have identified that there is a need for such a service and we will work with the community to establish a suitable facility and model for its operation.

Territory Labor will re-introduce the Banned Drinkers Register, reducing the supply of alcohol in our community which will reduce the severity and impact of domestic and family violence. The Banned Drinkers Register provides a further tool to reinforce domestic violence orders to better protect women and children.

Territory Labor supports the establishment of alcohol management plans and community led approaches in managing alcohol in our communities such as permit systems.

Territory Labor will recruit the additional 120 police officers that the CLP has failed to deliver for our community.

Reducing Sexual Violence

The rate of sexual violence offences reported to police in the Northern Territory is higher per capita than other parts of Australia. Sexual Violence has traditionally been underreported.

Territory Labor will develop a Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework providing a roadmap that identifies where we can improve our services and where the opportunities are to work towards prevention and long term recovery. This will be developed in our first term.

Improving female leadership in our community

Territory Labor will increase female leadership as one way to address the underlying causes and outcomes of domestic violence -gender inequality.

Territory Labor has already stated that we aim to have 50:50 female representation on Government Boards and Committees by 2020.
Territory Labor acknowledges that indigenous women are significantly over represented in every measure of violence as well as many measures of wellbeing and gender equality. A Ministerial Advisory Committee of Indigenous Women will be formed to complement the existing Indigenous Men’s council. This will make sure a broad range of voices from across the Territory have ongoing input into government planning, actions and evaluation.

**Focusing on Early Childhood Development and More Support for Parents**

Children will be placed at the centre of government under Territory Labor. Domestic violence impacts children’s physical, emotional and social development. It is often the hidden issue driving a whole range of other concerns that may come to the attention of the community service sector.

Territory Labor has committed $8 million over the next four years to expand the successful nurse family partnership program. This program will be rolled out to an additional 5 communities, with 30 child and family nurses and 15 Aboriginal Family Workers supporting vulnerable children and their families through up to 50 home visits over a 2 year period.

Territory Labor will enhance the Department of Health Yellow book with e-health capabilities and recall capacity to make sure children are immunised on time, and have their health check every year from birth to school. These are vital measures to make sure toddlers and children are meeting their physical and behavioural developmental milestones and early intervention can occur for any issues identified.

Respectful and fulfilling domestic relationships are a cornerstone foundation to safer homes and communities. We will implement best practice and evidence based prevention initiatives such as NAPCAN’s school-based ‘Lovebites’ program to improve community education about respectful relationships.

Territory Labor will be making further announcements about greater child and family support for at risk families.

**COSTINGS**

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** All other initiatives to be funded from within existing resources