



**WOMEN'S  
COUNCIL**

FOR DOMESTIC & FAMILY  
VIOLENCE SERVICES (WA)



Series 8

# Strategic Plan 2008-2011

**'Ensuring that all women and children live free of domestic and family violence'**

**The Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA) Strategic Plan 2008-2011 outlines the organisation's strategic directions and priority areas of focus over the next three years. The Plan also builds on the important work carried out by the WCDFVS as the peak body and its membership over the last three decades. The Women's Refuge Movement in WA has been a catalyst for working towards social change for women and children and continues to be committed to ensuring that all women and children live free of domestic and family violence.**

## Introduction

The Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (Women's Council) Inc has determined that to function most effectively it will be guided by a strategic plan. Periodically, this plan is reviewed and updated. This report documents the major outcomes of a two-day Strategic Planning Workshop.

The Women's Council Strategic Plan identifies key issues intended to inform the activities and priorities of the organisation over the next 3 years (2008 to 2011).

This Plan has been developed with information derived from:

- Review of the 2004-2007 Strategic Plan;
- Annual Membership Survey Feedback results;
- A two day statewide Strategic Planning meeting held on 18 & 19 October 2007; and
- The Constitution.

## Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA)

The Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA) was established in 1977 as the peak body for Women's Refuges and Safe Houses in Western Australia. A name change in 2004 from the Women's Refuge Group of WA to the WCDFVS was a move to expand the membership base to include Women's DFV Services and Regional Coordinated Responses (RCRs). It also reflects the growing number of services currently delivering programs, projects and initiatives relevant to women and children experiencing domestic and family violence in WA.

## Vision Statement

To ensure that all women and children live free of domestic and family violence

## Our Purpose

The Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA) is a non-government state-wide peak organisation committed to improving the status of women and children in society

The role is to provide a voice on domestic and family violence issues that facilitates and promotes policy, legislative and program responses relevant to women and children who have experienced DFV.

The WCDFVS operates from a feminist perspective. It proactively advocates for social justice to further, empowerment, access, equity and safety for all women and children

## Statement of Principles

All women and children are people of dignity, strength and resourcefulness. DFV interferes with women and children's ability to realise their full potential

The following principles guide the actions of the WCDFVS:

- A commitment to access and equity for all women and children who are or have been experiencing DFV;
- A commitment to sustaining and developing a gendered analysis of DFV;
- A commitment to early intervention that focuses on the safety and protection of women and children;
- A recognition of DFV in same sex relationships; and

- A commitment to working collaboratively and developing partnerships with key stakeholders in the wider community.

## Objectives

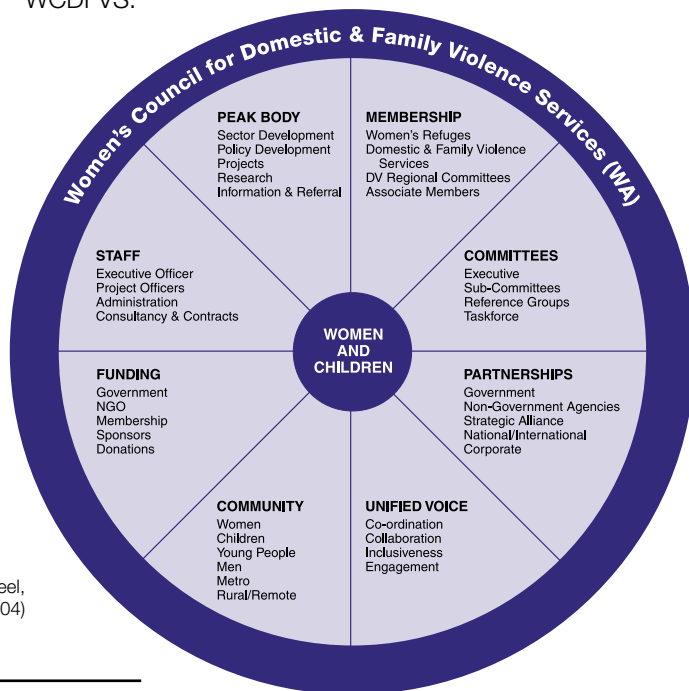
- To strengthen our unified voice on DFV issues;
- To maintain the WCDFVS as an independent, viable and credible organisation;
- To improve the access of women and children to Women’s Refuges, Safe Houses and services which seek to deal with the effects of DFV;
- To provide leadership in the area of DFV issues to key stakeholders and the community;
- To increase the community awareness of the incidence, effects and responses to DFV;
- To collaborate with key stakeholders in the development of policies, legislation and programs which impact on women and children experiencing DFV; and
- To ensure access and equity for all members in rural/ remote locations.

Adapted from the Power & Control Wheel, Duluth (A. Hartwig-March 2004)

## Background

### WCDFVS Organisational Vision Wheel 2004

The Women’s Council developed an Organisational Model in 2004. The Model was developed as visual tool which incorporates the name change and expanding role of the WCDFVS.



## WCDFVS Strategic Plan

### Strategic Directions

1. Effectively represent the Non-Government Domestic and Family Violence service sector;
2. Provide a valuable service to WCDFVS members, including policy advice, advocacy and public profile;
3. Improve service sector capacity and effectiveness; and
4. Ensure sustainability of the peak body and its membership.

Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
1. To strengthen our unified voice on domestic and family violence issues.	1.1 Consult regularly with key stakeholders and the community. 1.2 Represent the sector at local, State, National and International levels. 1.3 Seek membership feedback.	Deliver key messages to relevant Government Departments and Ministers about priority issues faced by the sector. Attend conferences and relevant meetings. Conduct a membership satisfaction survey.
2. To maintain the Women’s Council for Domestic & Family Violence Services (WA) as an independent, viable and credible organisation.	2.1 Ensure good governance of the organisation. 2.2 Maintain and increase level of funding sources by securing independent and alternative funding. 2.3 Promote and build on membership. 2.4 Continue to build on the organisation.	Advocate for higher wages and remote location allowances, improved recruitment and retention strategies, and better working conditions. Explore partnerships with corporate sponsors. Implement the WA Refuges ‘online’ statewide bed-count system through the WCDFVS website.
3. To improve the access of women and children to Women’s Refuges and services which seek to deal with the effects of domestic and family violence.	3.1 Promote access, equity and participation for all women and children. 3.2 Actively promote children as primary victims of domestic and family violence and clients in their own right. 3.3 Develop and promote a diverse range of service delivery models in adherence with best practice models.	Lobby to increase the number of refuges. Advocate for funding for DFV outreach workers and two FTE child support workers in each refuge/safe house. Provide policy advice at a state and national that focus on supporting best practice models and longer term support needs for clients in SAAP Services. Ensure that successful pilot programs receive on-going funding eg. DV Police Pilots.

Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
<p>4. To provide leadership in the area of domestic and family violence issue to key stakeholders and the community.</p>	<p>4.1 Continue to promote the WCDFVS (WA).</p> <p>4.2 Facilitate and deliver professional training/forums in partnership with key stakeholders.</p> <p>4.3 To lobby and provide research and policy advice on emerging domestic and family violence issues.</p>	<p>Facilitate staff training.</p> <p>Peak body to explore RTO and/or accredited training status to deliver specialised DV training.</p> <p>Lobby for training in mental health and Drug and Alcohol (dual diagnosis).</p> <p>Ensure that a gendered analysis is maintained within policy and program development.</p> <p>WCDFVS to continue to provide representation on Government and NGO Committees, Reference and Advisory Groups.</p>
<p>5. To increase community awareness of the incidence, effects and responses to domestic and family violence.</p>	<p>5.1 Identify, plan and co-ordinate priority campaigns and projects.</p> <p>5.2 To consult with key stakeholders and coordinate response to the community.</p> <p>5.3 Develop and implement a community education strategy through prevention and early intervention activities.</p>	<p>Further explore the option to keep women who are experiencing DFV safe in the home, and have the violence leave.</p> <p>Lobby and promote the need for a DFV Prevention Month in WA, similar to the QLD model. (AGPEI).</p> <p>Continue to hold the Annual Silent DV Memorial March each year.</p> <p>Continue to work in partnership with Amnesty International to develop the Calendar of Events for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence.</p>
<p>6. To collaborate with key stakeholders in the development of policies, legislation and programs which impact on women and children experiencing domestic and family violence.</p>	<p>6.1 To monitor policies, legislation and programs that maximise the safety of women and protection of children.</p> <p>6.2 To work in collaboration with other key stakeholders and the community to ensure perpetrators are held accountable for their abusive behaviour.</p>	<p>Ensure workers have up-to-date legal training</p> <p>Advocate for affordable housing within all regions of WA.</p> <p>Support the development of strategies to address the issue of women not reporting domestic violence to the Police.</p> <p>Advocate for a greater level of support to CaLD women escaping DFV on temporary visas 457, 422 and NZ visas who are ineligible for government income and services.</p> <p>Lobby for additional refuge and DFV services to address the alarming rate of family violence and child sexual abuse, particularly in rural and remote regions.</p> <p>Promote existing good practice models for responding to DFV by services metropolitan, rural and remote locations.</p>
<p>7. To ensure access and equity for all members in remote/rural locations. Develop rural/remote strategies.</p>	<p>7.1 Develop and implement a training program that provides intensive support in rural/remote locations.</p> <p>7.2 Conduct ongoing consultation with rural/remote services to ensure access and equity within the State Strategic Plan.</p> <p>7.3 Attract and retain staff.</p> <p>7.4 Good Practice Models.</p>	<p>Consult with rural and remote services to develop a model that provides intensive support.</p> <p>Rural and remote reps on the Women’s Council to act as key resource and WCDFVS to explore opportunities for face-to-face consultations.</p> <p>Advocate and negotiate to improve wages and remote location allowances for workers in the field.</p> <p>Negotiate housing assistance and support, similar to GROH (Govt Officer’s Regional Housing) to be able to attract and retain staff in Refuges/SafeHouses.</p> <p>Promote good practice pilots and services in rural and remote to receive on-going funding eg. ‘Stronger Women’s Group’ and ‘Safe Children are Strong Children’ (Roebourne).</p>



## Methodology

The process began with an overview of the previous Strategic Plan (2004-2007). Key issues for individual Refuges, Safe Houses and DFV services were canvassed in small groups then reviewed by the whole group. A large map of all issues was created. Participants then identified strategic directions, priorities and/or partnership opportunities for the Women's Council. Finally, key issues were prioritised for action over three timeframes: immediate, 1-2 years and 3-4 years.

## Strategic Directions

At the Strategic Planning Days, the major issues facing services were identified and recorded on a 'mind map'. The results of a SWOT analysis informed the strategic directions, along with the immediate, medium and longer term priorities.

### Immediate Priorities

#### Workforce Planning and Capacity

- Increase Refuge and DFV wages by 30% over the next three years to enable the sector to attract and retain experienced staff.
- Increase the number of DFV Advocacy and Refuge-based DFV Outreach staff.
- Secure funding for a minimum of two FTE Child Support Workers for Refuges to provide individual case management and support programs to children who are traumatised as a result of DFV.

- Increase in core funding for a WCDFVS Policy Officer position.
- Affordable housing options to offer as salary packaging incentives for DFV workers in rural and remote regions, similar to the Government Regional Officer Housing scheme.

### Housing

- Increase in safe affordable public and private rental housing options for women and children escaping DFV.
- WCDFVS submission to the Federal Government's Green Paper on reducing homelessness with a focus on the specific issues faced by women and children escaping DFV and/or exiting Refuges.

### Other immediate issues included:

A Safe House for young women aged 14-18 and their children who are homeless or escaping DFV.

### Priorities for next year

Provide a greater level of support and funding resources to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to address family violence and child sexual abuse, particularly in remote regions of WA.

Advocate for the needs of women and children escaping DFV on Temporary Visas, in particular 457, 422 and NZ visas, and are ineligible for government services and income support.

Increase the support provided to women escaping DFV who require drug and alcohol counselling and programs.

### Priorities over the next 2-3 years

- Strengthen the inter-agency protocol responses between government and NGOs.
- Maintain a primary prevention focus on children and young people.
- Continue to raise community awareness about the effects of DFV.
- The WCDFVS to continue to provide training services on DFV to government and NGOs.
- Work in collaboration with the Police, Magistrates, Courts and other key agencies to decrease the incidence of DFV occurring and to ensure safety for women and children, and that perpetrators are

held accountable through the social justice system.

The WCDFVS would like to thank the 35 Refuge Managers and staff from metropolitan, rural and remote who attended the Strategic Planning Days on 18 and 19 October 2007, and to the Refuge Managers who were unable to attend but provided their input and feedback at face-to-face consultations meetings held with the Executive Officer, Angela Hartwig in May and June 2008 in Port Hedland, Karratha and Roebourne. A special thanks to consultant Lynn MacLaren who did an excellent job of facilitating the WC Strategic Planning Days. We would also like to acknowledge and thank LotteryWest for providing the funding for the state wide consultation and this report.

### Glossary of Acronyms

<b>AGPEI</b>	Advisory Group on Prevention and Early Intervention
<b>CaLD</b>	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
<b>DFV</b>	Domestic and Family Violence
<b>FTE</b>	Full Time Equivalent
<b>GROH</b>	Government Officer's Regional Housing
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Government Organisations
<b>NZ</b>	New Zealand
<b>QLD</b>	Queensland
<b>RCRs</b>	Regional Coordinated Responses
<b>RTO</b>	Registered Training Organisation
<b>SAAP</b>	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
<b>SWOT</b>	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
<b>VRO</b>	Violence Restraining Order
<b>WA</b>	Western Australia
<b>WCDFVS</b>	Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services



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