



‘We’re women too!’



Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)

**Response to the Australian Government’s Consultation on the
National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Children**

July 2008



Winner Australian Human Rights Award 2001

Winner National Violence Prevention Award 1999

Nominee, French Republics Human Rights Prize 2003

Nominee, UN Millennium Peace Prize for Women 2000

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Women
With
Disabilities
Australia
(WWDA)

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'Labor recognises the particular vulnerability of people, particularly women, with a disability, to domestic violence and will implement measures to address this.'

Australian Labor Party National Platform and Constitution 2007, p219.

1. About Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) is the peak organisation for women with all types of disabilities in Australia. WWDA is run by women with disabilities, for women with disabilities. It is the only organisation of its kind in Australia and one of only a very small number internationally in that it operates as a national disability organisation; a national women's organisation; and a national human rights organisation. WWDA represents more than 2 million disabled women in Australia. WWDA is inclusive and does not discriminate against any disability. The aim of WWDA is to be a national voice for the needs and rights of women with disabilities and a national force to improve the lives and life chances of women with disabilities. WWDA addresses disability within a social model, which identifies the barriers and restrictions facing women with disabilities as the focus for reform. More information about WWDA can be found at the organisation's extensive website at: www.wwda.org.au

2. Background & Context

In the lead up to the Federal election in late 2007, the Australian Labor Party (ALP) articulated its commitment to reducing violence in our community, including violence against women. In doing so, the ALP recognised the need to acknowledge the incidence and prevalence of family violence in all sectors of the Australian community and to accurately name and define family violence in all aspects of Labor Party policy making (ALP 2007). The ALP specifically acknowledged the particular vulnerability of women with disabilities to violence and pledged to implement measures to address this (ibid).

In early 2008, the newly elected Rudd Labor Government announced its intention to establish a National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children. In light of the unprecedented levels of violence perpetrated against women with disabilities in Australia, coupled with the lack of action to address the issue, WWDA urged the Australian Government to ensure women with disabilities were represented in the membership of this vital advisory structure. WWDA stressed that such inclusion is critical in ensuring a national voice to a human rights issue that to date, has been largely ignored in efforts to address gender based violence.

On 26 May 2008, the Government announced the establishment and membership of the National Council on Violence Against Women and Children. Despite WWDA's appeal and the Government's acknowledgement of the '*particular vulnerability of women with disabilities to domestic violence*' (ALP 2007) – the membership of the National Council excludes women with disabilities (see Appendix 1).

The National Council has a number of roles (see Appendix 2) including the responsibility of drafting a National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children. As part of this task,

in June 2008, the Council called for public responses to inform the development of the Plan, and suggested that submissions address the following questions where possible:

- Why is domestic violence and sexual assault happening in Australia?
- What resources, programs or services are you aware of that are successful in preventing or reducing the effects of domestic and family violence or sexual assault?
- What are the barriers to family safety for women and children in Australia?
- What suggestions do you have to reduce domestic and family violence and sexual assault against women and children?

3. The Structure of this Submission

WWDA has chosen not to structure its response in line with the four consultation questions above. WWDA's recently published '*Resource Manual on Violence Against Women With Disabilities*' (WWDA 2007) gives a more detailed analysis of the global epidemic that is violence against women with disabilities. The Manual, produced in a range of alternative formats, incorporates four books:

A Life Like Mine! - Narratives from women with disabilities who experience violence

Forgotten Sisters - A global review of violence against women with disabilities

It's Not Ok It's Violence - Information about domestic violence and women with disabilities

More Than Just A Ramp - A guide for women's refuges to develop disability discrimination act action plans

A copy of the Manual has been provided to each member of the National Council on Violence Against Women and Children as supporting information for this submission.

WWDA is of the view that an integrated and inclusive human rights approach to the prevention of violence against women must take into account the variety of factors that shape and reinforce women's experiences of discrimination and violence, including disability. For the purposes of this submission, WWDA has therefore elected to focus on key, practical strategies to end and prevent violence against women with disabilities.

WWDA believes it is critical that these strategies be incorporated into the development and implementation of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children.

4. Violence Against Women With Disabilities - A Brief Overview

Regardless of country or culture, from the least developed to the most highly developed nations, women and girls with disabilities experience discrimination and negative stereotypes from both a gender and disability perspective. This perpetuates and legitimises not only the multiple forms of violence perpetrated against them, but also the failure of governments to recognise and take action on the issue. Despite increasing recognition of, and attention to, gender based violence as the '*most widespread human rights abuse in the world*' (Krug et al 2002, UNFPA 2005, Amnesty International 2006), violence against women and girls with disabilities continues in a culture of silence, denial and apathy (Raye 1999).

Research that has been conducted indicates that violence against women with disabilities is a problem of epidemic proportions, and that compared to non-disabled women, women with disabilities:

- experience violence at higher rates and more frequently;
- are at a significantly higher risk of violence;
- have considerably fewer pathways to safety;
- tend to be subjected to violence for significantly longer periods of time;
- experience violence that is more diverse in nature; and,
- experience violence at the hands of a greater number of perpetrators.

(Barile 2002, Abramson et al 2000, Jans & Stoddard 1999, Frantz et al 2006, Gilson et al 2001, Myers 1999, Curry et al 2002, Nosek et al 2003, Powers et al 2002, Hoog 2003, Nosek 1996, Curry 2002, Smith 2008).

Yet, despite these facts, legislation, policy and services for women with disabilities experiencing, or at risk of experiencing violence, are limited at best and non-existent at worst.

The nature of violence against women and girls with disabilities encompasses an almost endless list of injustices and maltreatment. Women with disabilities are at greater risk of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse as well as to other forms of violence, such as institutional violence, chemical restraint, drug use, unwanted sterilisation, medical exploitation, humiliation, and harassment. There are a wide range of factors that increase the 'vulnerability' of women with disabilities to violence, including:

- **dependence on others** - many women with disabilities are in positions where they are reliant on others to provide care and support for a range of needs; the imbalance of power and control built into caregiving relationships supports overt and subtle violence against women with disabilities by those closest to them.

- **fear of disclosure** - many women with disabilities are not believed when they disclose their experiences of violence.
- **poverty & lack of economic independence** - economic disadvantage increases women with disabilities' susceptibility to entering and remaining in violent relationships.
- **lack of education/lack of knowledge** - disabled women and girls are regularly deprived of the skills to recognise and address violence; many disabled women who experience violence do not know that what is happening to them is wrong.
- **social isolation** - is a major contributor to powerlessness in the lives of women with disabilities; disabled women who are socially isolated may not learn about available services and resources or their legal rights.
- **place of residence** - women with disabilities living in institutional or residential settings are particularly vulnerable to violence due to the entrenched sub-culture of violence and abuse prevalent in institutions, as well as the removal from public scrutiny.
- **communication** - limits in communication and language skills may interact with social factors to predispose women with disabilities to violence.
- **lack of services & support** - the lack of appropriate, available, accessible and affordable services, programs and support contribute to the tendency for women with disabilities to be subjected to violence for significantly longer periods of time than non-disabled women.
- **lack of access to the criminal justice system** - many women with disabilities who experience violence are without effective recourse to justice due to legal systems which are permeated by social norms that reinforce gender inequality and disability discrimination.
- **nature of disability** - women with disabilities can encounter increased durations of violence as a result of factors related to specific disabilities, such as the inability to physically escape the perpetrator.
- **low self esteem & lack of assertiveness** - many women with disabilities are taught and 'rewarded' for, unquestioning compliance.

Women with disabilities are also greatly at risk of violence and abuse due to structural, cultural and contextual issues such as: discrimination, poverty, exclusion from the labour market, isolation, lack of services and support, lack of autonomy and so on.

The forms of violence for disabled women are similar to those for non-disabled women, however women with disabilities can often experience different dimensions to physical, psychological, and sexual violence - such as those which are derived from their sexuality, including for example, control of reproduction and menstruation. For women with disabilities, issues of abuse, neglect, discrimination and omission often provide the conditions and contexts that deny human rights and also lead to violence.

The limited and fragmented approach to violence against women with disability is a consistent theme throughout published and unpublished literature on the issue. Responses are characterised by limited recognition by governments and the service sector of the extent of the problem, inadequate research, incomplete or partial response structures and scarce resources to support advocacy in the area. All these factors mean that the complexity inherent in undertaking effective remedies can appear almost overwhelming (WWDA 2007).

The following section of this Submission focuses on just some of the key strategies to end and prevent violence against women with disabilities and for the purposes of this Submission are grouped under the following headings:

- **A Human Rights Approach to Violence Prevention**
- **Structure, Scope, & Elements of the National Plan to Reduce Violence**
- **Addressing the Social Exclusion of Women with Disabilities**
- **Building the Capacity of Women With Disabilities Organisations**
- **Legislation and definitions**
- **Data Collection and Research**
- **Inclusive and accessible services and programs**
- **Information, education and training**
- **Access to the criminal justice system**
- **Advocacy & Media Campaigns**
- **Coordination and inter/multi agency collaboration**

5. Key Strategies to End and Prevent Violence Against Women with Disabilities

5.1. A Human Rights Approach to Violence Prevention

It is now widely acknowledged that violence against women is a form of discrimination and a violation of women's human rights. It prevents women from enjoying their human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as the rights to life and security of the person, to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, to education, work and housing and to participation in public life (UN 2006, UNFPA 2005, UN 2008). Such violence perpetuates the subordination of women and the unequal distribution of power between women and men. Violence against women must therefore be addressed in the context of seeking to end all forms of discrimination, to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and to create a society in which all women enjoy their human rights (UN 2006, UN 2007).

The duty of Governments to respect, protect, fulfil and promote human rights with regard to violence against women includes the responsibility to prevent, investigate and prosecute all forms of, and protect all women from, such violence and to hold perpetrators accountable (UN 2006, *emphasis added*). An integrated and inclusive human rights approach to the prevention of violence against women must take into account the variety of factors that shape and reinforce women's experiences of discrimination and violence, including disability.

A human rights approach to addressing violence against women with disabilities means giving priority to a group whose rights are often ignored and calls for a more equitable distribution of resources in their favour (UNFPA 2005). The human rights approach also emphasises the participation of women with disabilities and their communities in decision-making processes that shape policies and programs that affect them.

Strategies for consideration include:

- 5.1.1. Ratification and Implementation of relevant International Conventions and Agreements - including implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) ratified by the Australian Government on 17th July, and ratification of its Optional Protocol; and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- 5.1.2. Implementation of recommendations that emanate from periodic reviews of reports by human rights treaty bodies, in particular those of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

- 5.1.3. Information on women with disabilities should be provided in relevant human rights treaties Periodic Reports and NGO Shadow Reports, as a matter of course. This would include information on the situation of women with disabilities under each right, including their current de-facto and de jure situation, measures taken to enhance their status, progress made and difficulties and obstacles encountered.
- 5.1.4. In keeping with the Australian Government's commitment to '*work to promote human rights and the fundamental equality of all people*¹', the Standing Committee of Attorney's General (SCAG) should act immediately to implement the 2005 recommendation of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child ² and develop universal legislation which prohibits the sterilisation of children, with or without disabilities unless there is a serious threat to health or life.
- 5.1.5. A National Action Plan on Human Rights should be developed in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action ³ and include a clear and frank assessment of the current human rights situation in Australia, including baseline and disaggregated data and an assessment of Australia's human rights performance by relevant United Nations Human Rights Treaty bodies. The human rights situation of vulnerable groups, including women and girls with disabilities, should be a priority within the Plan.
- 5.1.6. A Standing Committee on Human Rights and Disability should be established within the Australian Parliament.
- 5.1.7. The Australian Government should address as a priority, the abuse, neglect, mistreatment, and discrimination of people with disabilities living in institutions. At the very least, the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children should include the need for a Public Inquiry or Royal Commission into the abuse of people living in institutions, both historically and currently.
- 5.1.8. The Australian Government recognise and support the role of women's NGO's in the fight to eradicate violence against women and children. This includes the need to create an environment conducive to the effective functioning of women's NGO's, including adequate and sustained resourcing. Inherent in this, is the need for the expansion and development of women's NGO's working with vulnerable groups, including women and girls with disabilities.

¹ Hon Robert McClelland's Speech to the Attorney-General's Non-Government Organisation Forum on Domestic Human Rights, Old Parliament House, Canberra, Tuesday, 10 June 2008.

² Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding Observations: Australia, UN Doc CRC/C/15/Add.268 (2005) [46(e)].

³ Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (Part 11, Para. 71) Available online at: www.wwda.org.au/unhrt.htm

5.1.9. A whole of government approach to the elimination and prevention of violence against women and children should warrant the current Office for Women (OfW) being re-located from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet. This would also send a clear message to the community that the Australian Government considers violence against women and children a major policy issue of domestic and international concern.

5.2. Structure, Scope, & Elements of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Children (The National Plan)

The international community has recognised the importance of putting gender based violence high on the agenda and the development of plans of action to eliminate violence against women are considered integral to the violence prevention task.

The Australian Government's National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children should provide a fresh impetus and a new strategic direction for policy and practical action in the area of combating violence against women, in consultation and co-operation with the community.

In developing the National Plan, it will be critical for the Australian Government to ensure that the a genuine commitment to inclusion is integrated at the outset into the National Plan, not as an add-on or afterthought and that the Plan is based on policies that promote interaction, equality of opportunity, understanding and respect.

Strategies for consideration include:

5.2.1. The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children should be developed within a human rights framework and should:

- Indicate clearly what the current situation is, including baseline and disaggregated data;
- Identify what problems need to be overcome;
- Specify what action will be taken (in terms that provide benchmarks for the evaluation of progress);
- Specify who is to take the action;
- Establish a firm time frame in which action will be taken; and
- Provide for effective monitoring and evaluation of what has been done.

5.2.2. The National Plan should be practical in orientation, educational, and should inspire and encourage users. It should contain achievable targets and propose realistic activities

aimed at reaching these objectives. The Plan should also make provision for qualitative methodologies in evaluation and monitoring.

- 5.2.3. In keeping with a human rights approach, the National Plan must explicitly recognise that women with disabilities are especially vulnerable to violence and that specific and targeted measures are required to enable women with disabilities to experience full and effective enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms and full participation on the basis of equality.
- 5.2.4. The National Plan should give priority to addressing the needs of marginalised and excluded groups of women, and to addressing those forms of violence which have been recognised as under-documented and under-reported⁴. In this context, women with disabilities must form a priority within the National Plan and a percentage of the National Plan Budget should be allocated to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategies to address all forms of violence against women with disabilities. This allocation should be protected, sustained and indexed annually.
- 5.2.5. The National Plan must be a public document and be made available in all relevant languages and in all accessible formats including: Braille, Plain English, Audio cassette, CD; audio file for websites; Large print; Tactual and Bold-print Graphics; E-text, along with formats appropriate for the RPH (radio reading services) Print Radio network. Web based versions of the National Plan and related documentation and information must comply with relevant Web Accessibility Standards.
- 5.2.6. The Australian Government should issue an annual report card to every Australian household on International Day to End Violence Against Women (25 November) which reports on progress to implement the National Plan.

5.3. Addressing the Social Exclusion of Women with Disabilities

Women with disabilities are, from the government record, one of the most excluded, neglected and isolated groups in society. They remain largely invisible and voiceless, ignored by national policies and laws, even though they face multiple forms of discrimination, structural poverty and social exclusion (UNFPA 2005). Their issues and needs are often overlooked within services and programs. They remain marginal to social movements designed to advance the position of women, and the position of people with disabilities. Negative stereotypes from both a gender and disability perspective compound the exclusion of women with disabilities from

⁴ See for example the 2006 *Report of the UN Secretary-General In-depth study on all forms of violence against women* (page 66). A/61/122/Add.1. Available online at: www.wwda.org.au/unhrt.htm

support services, social and economic opportunities and participation in community life (Meekosha 2000; Frohmader 2002).

It is widely accepted that women's poverty and lack of empowerment, as well as their marginalisation resulting from their exclusion from social policies and from the benefits of sustainable development, can place them at increased risk of violence (UN 2007, 2006). The UN Secretary-General in his *In-depth study on all forms of violence against women* (2006) found that:

'Women's economic inequalities and discrimination against women in areas such as employment, income, access to other economic resources and lack of economic independence reduce women's capacity to act and take decisions, and increase their vulnerability to violence.'

In this context, it must be recognised that Governments responsibility is not limited to responding to acts of violence against women with disabilities, but extends to identifying patterns of inequality that could result in violence and taking steps to overcome them.

Strategies for consideration include:

5.3.1. National policies, agreements and frameworks developed and/or re-developed as part of the Australian Government's broad social inclusion agenda must, where relevant, make explicit recognition of the impact of multiple discriminations caused by the intersection of gender and disability, and include focused, gender-specific measures to ensure that disabled women experience full and effective enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms and full participation on the basis of equality. Examples of such policies, agreements and frameworks include:

- National Housing Strategy
- National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA)
- Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement (CSTDA)
- National Disability Strategy
- National Strategy on Homelessness
- National Mental Health Strategy
- National Child Protection Strategy/Framework
- National Women's Health Policy

5.3.2. Targets developed to reduce social exclusion must be established for people with disabilities as a population group and include gender specific targets. These targets should include recognised elements of social inclusion, such as: employment participation; education; income; access to services; and civic participation. Targets

must be built into key performance indicators of relevant government departments and agencies.

- 5.3.3. Research (encompassing qualitative and quantitative methodologies) must be conducted on recognised elements of social inclusion for women with disabilities, such as: employment participation; education; income; access to services; violence, access to safe & affordable housing; civic participation.
- 5.3.4. Mechanisms and structures should be established which enable women with disabilities to have their voices heard, and to act politically as agents in their own right. This includes the need to support and strengthen organisations, networks and groups run and controlled by women with disabilities in the pursuit of their collective interests, as defined by them.
- 5.3.5. The implementation of the Disability Standards⁵ under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) including the Access to Premises Standard and the Disability Standards for Education should be completed.
- 5.3.6. The Australian Public Service should afford a whole of government approach to disability policy development, program management and service delivery. As a priority, the responsibility for overseeing disability policy should be removed from the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and be re-located to the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet.
- 5.3.7. There is an urgent need to separate disability policy and disability support from family carer policy and support in order to increase the autonomy of people with disability and challenge the stereotype of people with disabilities as burdens of care.
- 5.3.8. The non-optional costs of disability are recognised as a significant barrier to the social inclusion of women with disabilities. The Australian Government must acknowledge that the setting of income support payment rates for people with disabilities has failed to take account of the non-optional, extra costs associated with disability. There is an urgent need to review the adequacy of income support arrangements for those with a disability across all household types.

⁵ Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), the Attorney-General may make Disability Standards to specify rights and responsibilities about equal access and opportunity for people with a disability, in more detail and with more certainty than the DDA itself provides. Standards can be made in the areas of employment, education, public transport services, access to premises, accommodation and the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs.

See: www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/standards/standards.html

5.3.9. The Australian Government implement the recommendations from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) 2005 National Inquiry into Employment and Disability⁶.

5.4. Building the Capacity of Women With Disabilities Organisations

Research has demonstrated the importance and effectiveness of women's NGO's in addressing the issue of violence against women (UN 2006, COE 1997). It is also considered critical to involve women fully and to use their experiences of violence — including the complexities that arise from multiple discrimination — as the starting point for developing policies and programs to address violence. The empowerment of women is vital in any framework to tackle violence against women and girls.

Clearly, organisations and groups of women with disabilities play an important role in raising awareness of, and alleviating the problem of violence. There is recognition that the empowerment of women with disabilities is achieved principally through women with disabilities coming together to share their experiences, gaining strength from one another and providing positive role models (DAA 1997, WWDA 2000).

In Australia, there is one national organisation of and for women with disabilities (Women With Disabilities Australia, WWDA). The organisation receives a small amount of operational funding from the Australian Government on an annual basis with no guarantee of ongoing funding from one year to the next. WWDA's funding enables it to employ only two staff: one full time Executive Director and one part time Office Manager. Of the 8 Australian States/Territory Governments, there is only one (Victoria) which funds a 'women with disabilities' organisation.

Strategies for consideration include:

5.4.1. The Australian Government recognise and support the role of women with disabilities NGO's in the fight to eradicate violence against with disabilities. This includes the need to create an environment conducive to the effective functioning of women's NGO's, including adequate and sustained resourcing. Inherent in this, is the need for financial and political support to enable the establishment of women with disabilities NGO's in each State and Territory.

5.4.2. The Australian Government recognise that addressing violence against women with disabilities requires a long-term approach and that collaboration and coordination

⁶ See the report *WORKability 2: SOLUTIONS. Final report of the National Inquiry into Employment and Disability*. Available online at: www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/employment_inquiry/index.htm

between Governments and organisations and groups of women with disabilities will be crucial in the development of effective practices to eliminate violence against women with disabilities.

5.4.3. The State Governments of South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, New South Wales, Queensland and the Territory Governments of the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory allocate funding for the establishment of a 'women with disabilities' NGO within their respective States and Territories. The Victorian Women with Disabilities Network Advocacy Information Service (VWDN AIS), funded by the Victorian Government, should be used as a model of good practice in this task.

5.4.4. The Australian Government, through the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) National Secretariat Program (NSP) fund Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) at the level of a national secretariat (as opposed to the current level of secretariat support) and extend the current funding cycle from one year to at least three years.

5.4.5. In recognition of the increased incidence and prevalence of violence against women with disabilities, the inaction of Governments to date to address the issue, and the need for a long-term approach to address the issues, the Australian Government should ensure that Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) receives dedicated, recurrent funding to employ a full time Research & Policy Officer on Violence Against Women With Disabilities.

5.4.6. The National Council on Violence Against Women and Children must include representation of Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA).

5.5. Legislation and Definitions

The law provides the institutional framework for defining and responding to violence against women - it sets the boundaries of what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable. It is also one of the most important routes whereby protection, redress, sanction, repression and justice are created (COE 1997, Goldfarb 2005). Critical for the effective use of the law is women's knowledge of the law and the protection and remedies it offers, and women's capacity to claim these rights effectively (UN 2006).

The way in which violence against women is defined and conceptualised is a critical issue, as it determines, for example:

- research agendas, findings and official statistics;
- individual and community perception;

- legal and social responses.

Strategies for consideration include:

- 5.5.1. The Australian Government, through the Standing Committee of Attorney's General (SCAG) investigate the feasibility of the development of a Model Family Violence Law for Australia.
- 5.5.2. The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children state a clear and comprehensive definition of violence against women, that is consistent with relevant international human rights treaties and instruments.
- 5.5.3. The National Plan needs to clearly articulate all forms of violence against women including those which are recognised as under-documented such as: child pornography; trafficking in women and girls; violence in institutional settings; violence in workplaces and schools. Harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage should also be included.
- 5.5.4. In detailing the forms of violence against women, the National Action Plan must clearly pronounce the practice of forced sterilisation as a form of sexual violence against women and girls. The Plan should make it clear that the use of sterilisation to control the reproductive behaviour of a particular sub-group of the female population constitutes violence against women and is a gross violation of human rights.
- 5.5.5. In keeping with the Australian Government's commitment to '*work to promote human rights and the fundamental equality of all people*', the Standing Committee of Attorney's General (SCAG) act immediately to implement the 2005 recommendation of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and develop universal legislation which prohibits the sterilisation of children, with or without disabilities unless there is a serious threat to health or life.
- 5.5.6. The Australian Government should implement in full, the recommendations from the WWDA '*Moving Forward: Sterilisation and Reproductive Health of Women and Girls with Disabilities*'⁷ report.

⁷ In 2001, Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) completed a national research study into sterilisation and reproductive health of women and girls with disabilities. This study reviewed international and national developments in the field, and integrated this for the first time with the personal experiences and perspectives of women and girls with disabilities who have experienced sterilisation and other denials of their rights to reproductive choice and parenting. The resulting report '*Moving Forward*' recommends the banning of all sterilisations of girls under the age of 18 years and the prohibition of sterilisation of adults in the absence of informed consent, except in circumstances where there is a serious threat to health or life. The report also outlines a program of reconciliation; co-ordinated legislative and policy development; information, support and service models; consent considerations; approaches to reproductive health care and education; and data collection.

5.5.7. The relationships and contexts in which violence against women occurs should be made explicit within the National Plan. In relation to 'family' and/or 'domestic relationship' any definition and/or description must be sufficiently broad to cover:

- spousal relationships (past and present);
- intimate personal relationships (past and present, including dating relationships, same sex relationships, and non-sexual intimate personal relationships);
- family relationships (with a broad definition of relative which also reflects the extent of kinship and family relationships within indigenous and CALD communities);
- formal and informal care relationships (between a person and a carer which takes place for fee or reward, or for no fee or reward); and,
- persons who are ordinarily members of a household.

5.6. Data Collection and Research

The importance of research and data collection in the efforts to eliminate violence against women is clearly articulated in a number of international human rights instruments such as the *UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993)*⁸. However, a serious obstacle to progressing the elimination of violence against women is the inadequate and uneven data on various forms of violence against women and on how they affect different groups of women, including women with disabilities (UN 2006). There is an urgent need to strengthen the knowledge base on all forms of violence against women to inform policy and strategy development (UN 2006, 2007, Walby 2007).

The lack of research and data collection on violence against women with disabilities is a consistent theme throughout the published literature on the issue (WWDA 2007). In the Australian context, the most immediate and apparent finding in researching and analysing violence against women with disabilities is the limited information available on any aspect of the issue (WWDA 2007). This neglect in research of women with disabilities in Australia has been highlighted by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)(2006)⁹.

Strategies for consideration include:

5.6.1. The Australian Government must ensure that accurate data on the incidence and forms of violence against women and girls is collected, collated, disaggregated according to

⁸ See: UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993) Article 4 (k). Available on line at: www.wwda.org.au/unhrt.htm

⁹ United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Concluding comments regarding the Australian Government's Report 'Women in Australia' (the combined Fourth and Fifth Reports on Implementing the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), February 2006. CEDAW/C/AUL/CO/5.

factors such as age, disability, Indigenous status and ethnicity, and published annually. Government's should initiate and support research which uncovers the extent of unreported cases and more complex issues involved.

5.6.2. Data collection and research on violence against women with disabilities, in all its forms is a priority and this must be clearly articulated within the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children. Such data collection and research should encompass the following:

- extent and prevalence;
- forms and nature of the violence;
- causes, consequences and effects, including the structural causes of violence against women with disabilities;
- the perpetrators and the relationships between the perpetrators and women with disabilities;
- rates of arrest, prosecution and conviction of perpetrators;
- efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in meeting the needs of women with disabilities subjected to violence;
- service system responses and barriers for women with disabilities in accessing services.

5.6.3. Comprehensive research and data collection on violence against women with disabilities must be understood to encompass both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and include state, regional, local and service levels. Of paramount importance, is the need for all aspects of research to include women with disabilities.

5.6.4. Population based surveys to measure violence against women (such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics National Personal Safety Survey¹⁰) should routinely collect data on women with disabilities. Indicators used to collect data on the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator/s must reflect the fact that women with disabilities often experience violence from more than one perpetrator. If the Commonwealth Statistician rules that the design of the Personal Safety Survey precludes the routine collection of data on women with disabilities integral to the survey, then a separate regular survey of women with disabilities should be commissioned.

5.6.5. The Australian Government should ensure that the *International Indicators to Define and Measure Violence Against Women*¹¹ being developed by the United Nations

¹⁰ The Personal Safety Survey (PSS) was conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) from August to December 2005. The survey provides information on people's safety at home and in the community and, in particular, on the nature and extent of violence against men and women in Australia. See: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) 2006 Personal Safety, Australia (Re-issue) Cat. No. 4906.0. Available online at: www.abs.gov.au

¹¹ On 19 December 2006, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted without a vote a resolution entitled 'Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women' (A/RES/61/143). The resolution requested: *the Statistical Commission to*

Statistical Commission in consultation with the Commission on the Status of Women, are inclusive of women with disabilities, and enable collection of data which encompasses the experiences of women with disabilities.

5.6.6. The Australian Government should expand and support the role of the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse¹² and, in recognition of the need for a long-term approach to address violence, ensure that funding is sustained and enables the Clearinghouse to plan long-term.

5.6.7. A Domestic and Family Violence Resource Centre should be established in those States & Territories where they currently do not exist. The Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (DVRCV) should be used as a good practice model for the development of such Centres. The Centres should provide a comprehensive range of services and functions such as:

- information, education and referral;
- research; policy development and responses;
- referral to specialist support services;
- professional training courses;
- clearinghouse function;

5.6.8. All services that come into contact with women who have experienced or who are at risk of experiencing violence, should be required to include disability as an indicator in their data collection systems. Examples of such services would include: health centres/services, police stations, courts, housing and other social welfare services, refuges, legal aid services, advocacy organisations.

5.6.9. The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)¹³ National Data Collection Agency (NDCA) data collection forms must be consistent across all States and Territories and include a specific disability indicator. Data collected should be disaggregated by gender & disability, analysed and published in the National Data Collection Agency (NDCA) Reports. This data must also identify women with disabilities in their roles as single mothers.

develop and propose, in consultation with the Commission on the Status of Women, and building on the work of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, a set of possible indicators on violence against women in order to assist States in assessing the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women.

¹² The Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse is a national organisation funded by the Australian Government to provide high quality information about domestic and family violence issues and practice. The Clearinghouse publishes newsletters and papers on key issues, policy, legislation, training and new initiatives. It maintains a library of research and resources and an online database of good practice programs. See: www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au

¹³ The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) is a jointly funded Commonwealth/State program that was established in 1985 as Australia's primary policy and program response to homelessness. Further information on SAAP can be found on the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) website: www.fahcsia.gov.au

5.7. Inclusive and Accessible Services and Programs

It is the responsibility of society to make it possible and safe for women to leave a violent or potentially violent situation. Women subjected to violence need access to a range of services and supports, including for example refuges/shelters, medical, psychological and other support, housing, advocacy, and legal aid. A human rights approach to addressing violence against women emphasises the responsibility of Government's to ensure that victims/survivors have access to services they need.

The lack of inclusive services and programs for women with disabilities experiencing or at risk of experiencing violence, is well documented and is widely recognised as a barrier to women with disabilities escaping the violence perpetrated against them (WWDA 2007).

Society attempts to respond to violence through the legal and judicial systems on the one hand and through service systems which provide protection, support, treatment and education on the other hand (Roehrer Institute 1994). Women with disabilities are not only marginalised and ignored in many of these responses, but paradoxically, experience violence within and by the very systems and settings which should be affording them care, sanctuary and protection. For example, violence and abuse of women with disabilities continues to be endemic in many service environments, particularly institutions, where violence is a deeply entrenched part of the culture (WWDA 2007).

Strategies for consideration include:

- 5.7.1. The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children should make explicit the need for all services that come into contact with women who have experienced or who are at risk of experiencing violence, to ensure that their services and programs are available, accessible, acceptable, appropriate and affordable.
- 5.7.2. The legislative, policy and practice framework of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) should be developed and/or re-developed within a human rights model. This would include the need for SAAP legislation, policy framework, service standards, accountability frameworks, codes, and guidelines to include in a measurable way, implementation of relevant human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

- 5.7.3. A percentage of Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP)¹⁴ funds should be allocated to specifically address the issue of accessibility of crisis accommodation for women with disabilities, particularly women's refuges. This should constitute a requirement within the Bilateral Agreements of the Commonwealth/State/Territory Housing Agreement (or its successor).
- 5.7.4. A national audit of SAAP funded services must be conducted to assess levels of accessibility for women with disabilities and to determine service/agency needs in meeting relevant anti-discrimination legislation requirements.
- 5.7.5. The SAAP policy framework, service standards, accountability frameworks, codes, and guidelines should make explicit recognition of women with disabilities as a target group, and include focused, specific measures to ensure that disabled women are served on an equal basis with others.
- 5.7.6. Every women's refuge in Australia should be required to develop a Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Action Plan that complies with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. This requirement must be built into service agreements as a requirement of funding. DDA Action Plans must be lodged with, and approved by, the Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC).
- 5.7.7. Every women's refuge in Australia should be provided with a copy of the accessible Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) *Resource Manual on Violence Against Women With Disabilities (2007)*.
- 5.7.8. Attitudes, knowledge and skills required by SAAP workers to meet the needs of women with disabilities must be clearly articulated and embodied in service agreements and staff position descriptions.
- 5.7.9. Women with disabilities experiencing violence in their domestic setting should be supported to remain in that domestic setting should they wish to do so. The presumption should be that it is the perpetrator who is removed from the domestic setting. A range of supports, including emergency supports would need to be developed, particularly where the perpetrator is the carer. Such supports may include: emergency funds for personal care and other disability related costs; tenancy transfers; carer allowance transfers.

¹⁴ Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP) funds are used primarily to assist with the capital costs of providing capital for crisis accommodation. CAP funds are used for the establishment of suitable accommodation for a number of Supported Accommodation Assistance Programs (SAAP). CAP funds are also used to assist with relevant programs that target crisis accommodation needs.

5.7.10. Policies, procedures and protocols need to be developed to aid in the early identification of violence against women with disabilities including for example screening and assessment tools.

5.7.11. Support and assistance for under-recognised and under-documented forms of violence need to be developed. For example, for women and girls who have been the victims of trafficking, for women and girls exploited in prostitution and pornography, for women and girls in relation to female genital mutilation, for women with disabilities experiencing violence by carers (paid and unpaid); for girls and women with disabilities who have been sterilised without their consent.

5.8. Information, Education and Training

The combination of information, education and training is a key strategy in preventing violence against women and girls with disabilities. Information, education and training will assist these groups to protect themselves against all forms of violence, and seek effective recourse to justice. Fulfilling the promise of human rights for women with disabilities calls for transformations in the underlying value systems that legitimise violence and discrimination. Human rights education, information and training is therefore essential to sensitise those responsible for protecting the human rights of women with disabilities (WWDA 2007).

Strategies for consideration include:

5.8.1. The curricula of relevant professional, technical and academic institutions (ie: judicial, legal, medical, nursing, social services/welfare, social work, educational, police, immigration), should be required to include information, education and training on the human rights of women with disabilities. This should also include education and training on the relevant human rights treaties, particularly the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

5.8.2. Training and awareness programs need to be developed and implemented to educate all personnel that come into contact with women with disabilities who have experienced or who are at risk of experiencing violence. Such training should require demonstration of competencies in knowledge of human rights of women with disabilities.

5.8.3. The Australian Government must recognise and support the role of organisations and groups of women with disabilities in the development, implementation and evaluation of violence information, education and training strategies. This includes the need to create

an environment conducive to the effective functioning of these organisations and groups, including adequate and sustained resourcing. Inherent in this, is the need for financial and political support to enable the establishment of women with disabilities NGO's in each State and Territory.

- 5.8.4. Violence prevention education programs should be conducted in all schools across all levels. The requirement for the implementation of such programs should be tied to funding agreements/contracts. Equality between men and women and respect for human dignity and diversity should be the foundation of violence prevention education strategies in schools.
- 5.8.5. The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children should make explicit the need for all violence prevention information to be produced in all relevant languages and in all accessible formats as a matter of course. Such formats would need to include: Braille, Plain English, Audio cassette, CD; audio file for websites; Large print; Tactual and Bold-print Graphics; E-text, along with formats appropriate for the RPH (radio reading services) Print Radio network. Web based versions of violence prevention information and related materials must comply with relevant Web Accessibility Standards¹⁵.
- 5.8.6. A Domestic and Family Violence Resource Centre should be established in those States & Territories where they currently do not exist. The Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (DVRCV) should be used as a model for the development of such Centres. The Centres should provide a comprehensive range of services and functions such as:
- information, education and referral;
 - research; policy development and responses;
 - referral to specialist support services;
 - accredited professional training courses;
 - clearinghouse function.
- 5.8.7. Each State and Territory Government should fund the development and implementation of a specific training course for relevant service providers on violence against women with disabilities. The Victorian Women with a Disability Family Violence Learning Program¹⁶ could be used as a good practice model in this task. Participation in, and completion of such training should be mandatory for those service providers working

¹⁵ For more information refer to the website of the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) at: www.w3.org/WAI/

¹⁶ The *Women with a Disability Family Violence Learning Program* is funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services (Disability Services Division). This cross-sectoral program aims to build the capacity of workers in the disability and family violence sectors to respond to women with a disability who are experiencing family violence. The '*Resource Manual on Violence Against Women With Disabilities*' produced by Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) has been used extensively in the design and development of the learning program.

with women with disabilities who have experienced or who are at risk of experiencing violence.

5.8.8. Communication aids/systems used by women with disabilities should incorporate symbols and/or signs which stand for violence and sexual abuse. This should be a mandatory design requirement.

5.8.9. Organisations which deliver sexual health courses should have specific ongoing funding for continued delivery of courses specifically developed for people with intellectual disabilities (such as the So SAFE course used by Sexual Health and Family Planning).

5.9. Access to the Criminal Justice System

Legal systems are permeated by social norms that reinforce gender inequality and disability discrimination, foster mistrust by women, and leave many women with disabilities without effective recourse to justice (UNFPA 2005). All too often, women with disabilities are let down by the criminal justice system, subject to discriminatory, insensitive, aggressive and/or doubting attitudes from those working in it (WWDA 2007).

Strategies for consideration include:

5.9.1. Mandatory disability, cross cultural, human rights, and gender sensitivity training modules should be conducted in order to enhance the operations of police, criminal justice officials, practitioners and professionals involved in the criminal justice system that deals with violence against women, in all its forms.

5.9.2. There is a need for increased awareness of the difficulties that women with disabilities face in accessing the criminal justice system. Dedicated research is required to develop an enhanced understanding of the particular barriers women with disabilities face.

5.9.3. There is a need to review and revise criminal procedures to ensure that women with disabilities subjected to violence are able to testify in court proceedings in an equitable manner.

5.9.4. Police services should have in place clear policies, procedures and protocols for dealing with women with disabilities who have experienced violence.

5.9.5. Gender equity in the training and recruitment of judges and magistrates should be promoted, as well as mandatory awareness training for all court officials in the realities of violence against women with disabilities.

5.9.6. Strategies to make criminal proceedings more gender and disability sensitive may require simplification of legal procedures, victim confidentiality through in-camera proceedings where appropriate, victim support and protection measures and trained personnel.

5.9.7. A National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children should promote the need for projects which are explicitly designed to increase access to legal redress for women with disabilities and any other group of victims/witnesses having special needs in the court room. Such projects should continue until equity of access is achieved.

5.10. Advocacy & Media Campaigns

There are a number of high profile global and national advocacy campaigns which aim to increase the visibility of violence against women including for example: the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (IDEVAW); the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence campaign; Amnesty International's Stop Violence Against Women campaign; and the White Ribbon Campaign.

Advocacy efforts, especially campaigns to expose and convey the unacceptability of violence against women, continue to be instrumental in stimulating change and are good practice. They enhance women's awareness of their rights and of available remedies and services.

However, despite increasing appreciation of the heterogeneity of women and the need to address such factors as race, ethnicity and class, disability has not been recognised within these campaigns and it is this exclusion which renders the experiences of disabled women, including their experiences of violence, essentially invisible (WWDA 2007).

Strategies for consideration include:

5.10.1. The National Council on Violence Against Women and Children ensure that any national media and/or advocacy campaign developed as part of a national strategy to reduce and prevent violence against women and children be inclusive of women with disabilities. Such campaigns should be developed in close consultation with women with disabilities.

5.10.2. Access for women with disabilities to participate in existing and new violence prevention campaigns at all levels, including at the planning, implementation and evaluation levels should be promoted and fostered.

5.10.3. The Australian Government should collaborate with the UN Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality¹⁷ to consider ways and means to enhance the effectiveness of the *United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women*¹⁸ as a system-wide funding mechanism which is inclusive of women with disabilities as a target group, regardless of country of origin.

5.11. Coordination and Inter/Multi Agency Collaboration

The importance and necessity of interagency collaboration and cooperation in the field of violence prevention has been stressed for over two decades (UNDAW 2005). Violence prevention involves a number of systems, including for example, criminal justice, health, welfare and social service systems. An effective intervention approach requires that all of these systems work co-operatively. Community wide collaborative efforts are becoming the standard for effective violence prevention. However, women with disabilities are often forgotten in these collaborations (Barile 2002).

Strategies for consideration include:

5.11.1. The Australian Government recognise that addressing violence against women with disabilities requires a long-term approach and that collaboration and coordination between relevant stakeholders and organisations and groups of women with disabilities will be crucial in the development of effective practices to eliminate violence against women with disabilities.

5.11.2. The Australian Government recognise and support the role of women with disabilities NGO's in the fight to eradicate violence against with disabilities. This includes the need for adequate and sustained funding and a recognition that a genuine commitment to including women with disabilities in inter-agency violence prevention work will require additional resourcing.

¹⁷ The Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) is a network of Gender Focal Points in United Nations offices, specialized agencies, funds and programmes. See: www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge

¹⁸ The UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women was established by General Assembly resolution 50/166 in 1996 and is managed by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The Trust Fund is the only multilateral grant-making mechanism that supports local, national and regional efforts to combat violence. See: www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women/trust_fund.php

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Appendix 1

Correspondence to Prime Minister re exclusion of women with disabilities from the National Council on Violence Against Women and Children



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Hon Kevin Rudd MP
Prime Minister
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

June 11, 2008

Dear Prime Minister

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) is the national peak organisation representing more than 2 million disabled women in Australia. WWDA is run by women with disabilities for women with disabilities and works systemically to address issues of concern to its constituents. One of the most pressing human rights issues facing women with disabilities in Australia is violence.

WWDA therefore congratulates you on your Government's commitment to reducing and preventing violence against women and children, and welcomes its approach to tackling violence against women as part of a broader framework of social inclusion. This approach has great immediacy for WWDA, given that women with disabilities remain largely invisible and voiceless, even though they face multiple forms of discrimination, structural poverty and social exclusion. Regrettably, violence against women and girls with disabilities continues to thrive in a culture of silence, denial and apathy. Compared to non-disabled women, women with disabilities:

- experience violence at higher rates and more frequently;
- are at a significantly higher risk of violence;
- have considerably fewer pathways to safety;
- tend to be subjected to violence for significantly longer periods of time;
- experience violence that is more diverse in nature; and,
- experience violence at the hands of a greater number of perpetrators.

Yet, despite these facts, legislation, policy and services for women with disabilities experiencing, or at risk of experiencing violence, are limited at best and non-existent at worst.

WWDA strongly supports the establishment of the *National Council on Violence Against Women and Children*, and has articulated the importance of WWDA representation on this vital advisory structure. Our work on the issue of violence against women with disabilities has found that meaningful engagement must be inherent in the key strategies to address violence against them so that their experiences and their views are integral to identifying potential solutions and building successful interventions.

WWDA was therefore extremely disappointed to learn that the membership of the *National Council on Violence Against Women and Children* excludes women with disabilities.

WWDA respectfully requests that urgent consideration be given to ensuring a woman with a disability is co-opted as a member of the Council. This inclusion is vital in ensuring a national voice to a human rights issue that to date, has been largely ignored in efforts to address gender based violence. WWDA is happy to assist by providing a list of suitable candidates who possess experience not only in the issue of violence but also in the work of a national advisory structure.

We look forward to the opportunity of working collaboratively with the National Council members and other stakeholders to reduce and prevent violence against women with disabilities.

Yours Sincerely

Annie Parkinson
President

Appendix 2

The National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children

Terms of Reference

The aim of the National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children (the Council) is to oversee the Government's commitment to establish the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children (the Plan).

Immediate key deliverables under the Plan include:

- White Ribbon Day education activities in rural and regional communities to promote culture-change around violence against women
- Respectful relationship resources for all Australian high schools. The Government will sponsor high school visits by community role models (such as White Ribbon Day Ambassadors) and experts to promote respectful relationships and the importance of not using violence
- Tougher and nationally consistent laws and best practice. The Government will work with the States and Territories to toughen and harmonise domestic violence and sexual assault laws to better protect and prevent women and children
- Funding to boost the Australian Institute of Criminology's National Homicide Monitoring Program to investigate domestic violence-related homicides to inform future interventions to protect women and children from violence
- Research into international best practice models for working with perpetrators of violence - to make them confront their violence and its impact on their partners and children.

The primary role of the Council is to assist the Government achieve the Plan through the provision of expert advice and direction, and specifically to:

- provide leadership for sustaining change and consolidation of good practice and policy development to prevent violence against women and their children
- based on data analysis, research and consultation as appropriate, recommend priorities for national initiatives under the Plan
- identify opportunities for strategic collaboration between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories and the non-government sector
- establish goals, timelines and responsibilities to ensure all levels of government and agencies are making progress against the key deliverables
- promote sharing of knowledge and the dissemination of information on preventing and responding to domestic violence and sexual assault
- contribute to the Plan's initial content and its subsequent updates and determine a framework for its ongoing monitoring and evaluation
- report on the Council's progress to the Minister for the Status of Women twice a year.

Membership

Council members will be selected on the merits of their subject matter expertise in domestic and family violence and sexual assault. Prospective members will also be selected on the basis of their ability to represent various population groups.

Expert Advice

Expert research advice will be provided by the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse (ADFVC) and the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA) and directors will attend Council meetings as requested. Advice will also be sought from representatives in the community who have researched or worked on outstanding and innovative initiatives preventing and responding to domestic violence and sexual assault. Advisors will be invited to make presentations to the Council during one of its quarterly face-to-face meetings.

Operational Matters

The Council will meet face-to-face quarterly with any additional meetings conducted via teleconference. The Australian Government will fund members to attend meetings of the Council. Where appropriate, the Council will utilise teleconferencing facilities. The Office for Women will provide administrative support to the Council.

Appointment to the Council will be for 12 months.

Membership List

Libby Lloyd (Chair) ACT
Heather Nancarrow (Deputy chair) QLD
Associate Professor Moira Carmody (Council Member) NSW
Dorinda Cox (Council Member) WA
Maria Dimopoulos (Council Member) VIC
Dr Melanie Heenan (Council Member) VIC
Rachel Kayrooz (Council Member) QLD
Andrew O'Keefe (Council Member) NSW
Vanessa Swan (Council Member) SA
Lisa Wilkinson (Council Member) NSW
Pauline Woodbridge (Council Member) QLD

Appendix 3:

Promotional Flyer for WWDA Resource Manual on Violence Against Women With Disabilities – Page 1



Promotional Flyer for WWDA Resource Manual on Violence Against Women With Disabilities – Page 2



A Life Like Mine *narratives from women with disabilities who experience violence*

This Booklet contains individual stories and poetry by women with disabilities who have experienced violence. The women who contributed these narratives did so in an effort to support other women with disabilities to break the cycle of violence in their lives. These intensely personal accounts are confronting, brutally honest, and deeply moving. But they also show great courage, resilience and strength – and offer hope for all women with disabilities who experience violence in their lives.

These incredible narratives, accompanied by hauntingly powerful images, are an inspiration for all women and a tribute to those women who were prepared to share their stories.

● AUDIO & PDF VERSION INCLUDED ON CD-ROM

Forgotten Sisters *a global review of violence against women with disabilities*

This booklet is about violence against women with disabilities – a global epidemic of crisis proportions that is largely ignored in efforts to address violence against women. The booklet reviews what is known about the incidence and prevalence of violence against women and girls with disabilities. It examines the nature and many forms of violence against women with disabilities, along with the consequences of such violence. Violence as a cause of disability is discussed with particular attention given to disability caused by violence in institutions, and harmful traditional practices. The Booklet examines responses to violence against women with disabilities, including policy, legislative, research and service system responses. Key strategies to prevent violence against women with disabilities are also considered. Included in the Booklet is an Annotated Bibliography of known published and unpublished resources on violence against women with disabilities.

● AUDIO & PDF VERSION INCLUDED ON CD-ROM



It's Not OK – It's Violence *information about domestic violence and women with disabilities*

This Booklet provides information for women with disabilities about domestic violence. It explains, in simple terms, what it is, how it affects us, our rights, and where and how to get help. It provides information for relevant service providers on some of the barriers women with disabilities face in escaping domestic violence and looks at some easy ways that services can be more inclusive and responsive. Accompanying the text of the booklet are delightfully simple drawings that display powerful messages about domestic violence. Included at the end of the Booklet is a comprehensive Services Directory, providing contact details of crisis, domestic violence, and sexual assault services, at national, state, regional and local levels.

● AUDIO & PDF VERSION INCLUDED ON CD-ROM

More Than Just A Ramp *a guide for women's refuges to develop disability discrimination act action plans*

This Booklet is a step by step guide for women's refuges (and other similar services) to develop disability discrimination act action plans. An Action Plan identifies barriers which may result in discrimination against women with disabilities who need to use a service. The Action Plan recommends strategies to eliminate these barriers and devise ways for monitoring and evaluating the plan's implementation. The Booklet provides detailed information on how to re-orient services to better meet the needs of women with disabilities experiencing, or at risk of experiencing violence. The Booklet contains case studies which highlight the types of discrimination experienced by women with disabilities when seeking refuge.

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