



## DVNSW Policy and Advisory Committee

### Draft Terms Of Reference

June 2016

#### Organisational Principles:

The work of Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW) is underpinned by the following principles:

**The Association works from a feminist perspective.** Domestic and family violence must be understood in a social justice framework that recognises women and children are the primary victims of domestic and family violence and that gender inequality impacts women's capacity to reach their full potential.

**Domestic and family violence includes all types of violence and abuse.** Domestic and family violence includes any behaviour, in an intimate or family relationship, which is violent, threatening, coercive or controlling, causing a person to live in fear. It is usually manifested as part of a pattern of controlling or coercive behaviour. Behaviours that may constitute domestic and family violence include, but are not limited to:

- *physical violence including physical assault or abuse;*
- *sexual assault and other sexually abusive or coercive behaviour;*
- *emotional or psychological abuse including verbal abuse and threats of violence;*
- *economic abuse, for example denying a person reasonable financial autonomy or financial support;*

- *stalking, for example harassment, intimidation or coercion of the other person's family in order to cause fear or ongoing harassment, including through the use of electronic communication or social media;*
- *kidnapping or deprivation of liberty, as well as unreasonably preventing the other person from making or keeping connections with their family or kin, friends, faith or culture;*
- *damage to property irrespective of whether the victim owns the property and*
- *causing injury or death to an animal irrespective of whether the victim owns the animal.*

**Domestic and family violence occurs in all types of relationships.** An intimate relationship refers to people who are (or have been) in an intimate partnership whether or not the relationship involves or has involved a sexual relationship, that is, married or engaged to be married, separated, divorced, de facto partners (whether of the same or different sex), couples promised to each other under cultural or religious tradition, or who are dating. A family relationship has a broader definition and includes people who are related to one another through blood, marriage or de facto partnerships, adoption and fostering relationships, sibling and extended family relationships. It includes the full range of kinship ties in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, extended family relationships, and constructs of family within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer (LGBTIQ) communities. People living in the same house, people living in the same residential care facility and people reliant on care may also be considered to be in a domestic relationship if their relationship exhibits dynamics which may foster coercive and abusive behaviours.

**Domestic and family violence is a breach of human rights.** Domestic and family violence is a fundamental violation of human rights. It is a crime against the individual and impacts broadly on communities and the whole of society. It is not just an individual or private problem.

**Domestic and family violence requires a comprehensive and integrated professional response.** The Association is committed to collaborative service provision that places those affected by domestic and family violence at the centre of the response, prioritises their safety and enhances their ability to make informed decisions.

**Access and equity.** The Association recognises and values diversity. DVNSW is committed to promoting access to and equity of services for all women. DVNSW recognises that additional disadvantage and barriers are experienced by particular groups. These communities are more vulnerable because they are less likely to seek help, identify family and domestic violence in their relationships, or may perceive that their needs might not be met by mainstream services or dealt with sensitively and in confidence.

## Purpose of the DVNSW Policy and Advisory Committee

The DVNSW Policy and Advisory Committee (DPAC) operates as an advisory body to the DVNSW office and a subcommittee to the DVNSW Board and will be consulted on a regular basis to ensure policy positions taken by DVNSW are reflective of:

- I. the diverse needs of women, children, families and communities affected by domestic and family violence and
- II. the diverse perspectives of the NSW domestic and family violence sector and women's services

The DPAC shall:

- advise the DVNSW Office and Board on research, policy, information and any associated promotional activities;
- establish sub-committees or working groups and appoint individuals to these bodies as the DPAC deems fit; and
- exercise all such functions as directed by the DVNSW Board.

## **DPAC Composition**

The DPAC shall consist of up to 14 members of the NSW domestic and family violence sector nominated through an EOI process from the DVNSW organisational membership. An individual may represent one or more of these skills and experiences.

Where possible the DPAC membership will include:

- a. two representatives from the DVNSW Board
- b. two representatives from FaCS funded organisations
- c. one representative from rural NSW
- d. one representative from regional NSW
- e. one representative from the NSW Men's Behaviour Change Network
- f. one representative from an Aboriginal organisation
- g. one representative from a CALD organisation
- h. one representative from a legal organisation
- i. one representative from an organisation working with children

Composition of the DPAC will aim to include a diversity of geographical representation from across NSW as well as ensuring a range of skills, service types and cultural diversity.

Members of the DPAC are appointed for their expertise, not to represent their specific service or organisation.

The DPAC will be chaired by an elected Advisory Committee Convenor who will be responsible for:

1. Convening the DPAC, communication and liaison with DVNSW Office and the DVNSW Board.
2. Assisting with ongoing development of internal processes and policies in relation to the work of the DPAC.
3. Nominating a rotating minute taker for each meeting.

The DPAC may also assign additional roles as they see fit. The two members of the DVNSW Board along with the DVNSW Policy Manager will work with the elected Convenor to ensure an effective feedback and reporting process with the DVNSW Board.

## **Nomination of DVNSW Advisory Committee Members**

Individuals employed by DVNSW member services can lodge an expression of interest for DPAC membership to the DVNSW Office via the CEO in the 12 weeks before a new DPAC commences. [1st September 2018 onwards]

If more expressions of interest are received than the required 14 positions, the DVNSW Board will select individuals based upon the principles of encouraging a diversity of practice expertise, culture and geographical representation.

Individuals may be approached to fill any gaps in representation as prioritised in DVNSW's *Policy and Advisory Committee Composition policy*.

Where vacancies occur, the DPAC may choose to nominate a replacement in consultation with the DVNSW Board. Where individuals representing a specific priority on the DPAC vacate their role, the DPAC vacancy will be recruited for by another EOI distributed to all member services.

## Responsibility of DPAC members

Term of membership of the DPAC is for 2 years.

Where possible and practical, DPAC members commit to:

- Be available by phone and email
- Participate in ongoing online discussions in relation to policy issues
- Respond to urgent requests for information or advice within 72 hours
- Respond to non-urgent requests for information or advice within 10 working days.

## DVNSW's commitment to DPAC members

DVNSW recognises that involvement in the DPAC is voluntary and that DPAC members may have competing demands from their workplace or conflicts of interest which mean it is difficult to participate from time to time.

DVNSW commits to:

- Being accessible to DPAC members when needed.
- Ensuring DPAC members are provided with resources and guidance to support their involvement in DVNSW's work in a timely manner.
- Being given adequate time to respond to requests by DVNSW for advice and
- Providing clear deadlines for any urgent or non-urgent policy matters.

- Providing DPAC members with relevant and concise information regarding policy issues including briefing or position papers, background materials and assistance.
- Making DPAC members aware of wider organisational plans such as the DVNSW Strategic Plan and providing a clear vision of the intersection of the work of the DPAC with any relevant governance plans.
- Giving DPAC members adequate notice of meetings and teleconferences/videoconferences.
- Ensuring DPAC members have adequate communication technology to participate in videoconferencing.

### Frequency of Meetings

The DPAC shall meet face to face, twice annually.

Teleconferences and/or videoconferencing will be established when necessary in between these meetings.

DVNSW will reimburse reasonable travel and accommodation costs for DPAC members to attend face to face meetings in accordance with the DVNSW travel policy.

### Decision Making Process

DPAC meetings will focus on having open, respectful discussions on issues and proposals from the DPAC to the DVNSW Board. DVNSW recognises that there may be times when a single common organisational policy position is unfeasible or unachievable. In this case, the DPAC will reflect the diversity of positions agreed upon through its policy.

If necessary and appropriate, a vote may take place at a DPAC meeting by those present or by proxy by absent members and passed by a simple majority. Wherever possible, the DPAC should reach consensus (even if it is to agree a diversity of positions) so that a clear statement can be shared with members.

### Performance Measurement

DVNSW will evaluate the success and influence of the DVNSW DPAC. Performance measurement will use the Results Based Accountability (RBA) approach.

## How Much?

# emails/conversations with DPAC members to gather feedback

# communication responses from DPAC members

# meeting occurring on time and as planned

## How Well?

% of DPAC members who respond to feedback requests

% of DPAC members who report favourable experiences of being a DPAC member on an annual basis

% of feedback that is rated 7-10 on the Likert scale of usefulness by DVNSW Policy Manager

## Is anyone better off?

# of proposed suggestion/policies integrated into government processes or policy