



WA Jurisdiction Report



Purpose for our visit

The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission (the Commission) undertook a jurisdictional visit to Western Australia to coincide with the final week of the 16 Days of Activism. The visit focused on listening to frontline services, community-led organisations, government partners and specialist providers across Perth and the Kimberley. The objective was to deepen the Commission's understanding of what is working, where pressures are emerging, and how national reform efforts are experienced in regional and remote contexts.

The visit also reflected the Commission's commitment to maintaining a visible presence, building trust, and ensuring policy advice and reporting are informed in authentic lived, place-based insights.

Background

Western Australia presents a distinct operating environment shaped by vast geography, remoteness, workforce constraints, and strong Aboriginal community leadership. Services consistently described the compounded impact of distance, housing shortages, limited specialist availability, and short-term funding cycles.

These challenges are particularly acute in the Kimberley, where service coverage spans thousands of kilometres and community trust has been eroded by repeated short-lived programs.

Across discussions, stakeholders emphasised that responses to domestic, family and sexual violence must be culturally grounded, locally driven, and sustained over time to achieve meaningful impact.

Who we engaged with

- Stopping Family Violence
- Office for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence, Department of Communities
- Government House, 16 Days in WA – Stop Violence Against Women Campaign
 - The Hon Chris Dawson AC APM, Governor of WA
 - The Hon Jessica Stojkovski MLA, Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence
- Living Proud, Pride in Respect Campaign Launch with WAAC, TransFolk WA and GRAI GLBTI Rights in Ageing Inc.
- Centre for Women’s Safety and Wellbeing (CWSW)
- Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia (AHCWA)
- Broome Regional Aboriginal Medical Service (BRAMS)
- Men’s Outreach Service Aboriginal Corporation and Family Outreach Service
- Kimberley Community Legal Services (KCLS)
- Broome vigil to end the 16 Days in WA Campaign, hosted by Men’s Outreach Service
- Bibimbiya Jan– Ga Buru (known as The Broome FDV Hub)
- Broome Youth and Families Hub

What we heard

Several consistent themes emerged across all meetings:

- The need for sustained, community-led, place-based approaches, particularly within Aboriginal communities.
- Concern about the growing normalisation of sexual violence, particularly impacting girls and young women, and the lack of sustained policy focus on sexual violence in WA.
- Gaps in services for children and young people, including counselling, early intervention and prevention programs.
- The impact of short-term funding arrangements, pilot programs and frequent retendering on workforce stability, community trust and program continuity.
- Housing as a central safety issue, affecting crisis response, recovery, and long-term stability for victim-survivors.
- The need for coordinated, whole-of-system responses that recognise the interconnected challenges of DFV, mental health, suicide, substance use, homelessness and poverty.

Men's services, prevention and accountability

Meetings with men's services highlighted the growing sophistication of local approaches to working with men who use violence. Stakeholders described integrated models that link men's behaviour change, cultural healing, mental health and social support.

Services highlighted that accountability and safety must remain central, while recognising the need for appropriate housing and crisis options for men to prevent escalation and reduce harm to women and children. The absence of safe accommodation or respite options for men was identified as both a gap and opportunity.

Children, young people and intergenerational impact

There was strong consensus throughout the visit that children and young people are experiencing the impacts of domestic and sexual violence early and intensely. Stakeholders described limited access to youth-specific supports, particularly in remote communities.

Services working in schools and youth programs reported that many young people have internalised violence as normal, with very low expectations of safety in relationships. Early intervention and prevention efforts were described as under-resourced, despite their critical role in disrupting intergenerational harm.

Financial support

In Broome, stakeholders discussed the delivery of the Leaving Violence Program pilot. Services described the importance of responding to each person's circumstances and priorities, with support tailored to individual needs. Services consistently emphasised that safety was strengthened when culturally safe case management was combined with access to

financial counselling, mental health support, and practical safety planning, alongside active referrals and support to connect people with other services in the community. This coordinated, community-led approach was described as critical in supporting people to leave violence and navigate the systems they need over time.

Sexual violence

Sexual violence was emphasised as an under-addressed issue across the WA system. Stakeholders described limited specialist services, minimal public discourse, and policy gaps that leave people who have experienced sexual violence without appropriate pathways to support.

We heard from several services that girls as young as 13 or 14 no longer expect relationships to be free of sexual violence, instead focusing on managing risk.

Housing, legal support and system navigation

Housing was consistently identified as foundational to safety. Legal services outlined severe failures in public housing maintenance, delays and accountability, which directly undermine safety for people who experience violence.

Stakeholders also highlighted major gaps in support for women navigating court processes, including limited engagement from prosecution services and victim support officers.

These gaps leave women vulnerable to pressure to withdraw charges and disengage from the justice system.

The need for supported and accessible transitional housing for people experiencing violence, particularly women and children was raised by stakeholders as a need across both Perth and Broome.

Community-led prevention and cultural strength

Community-led initiatives, including prevention campaigns and culturally grounded healing programs, were widely respected and strongly supported by local communities. These initiatives were described as effective because they are designed, delivered and owned locally.

Emphasis on the need for inclusive approaches that reflect the diversity of communities, including

LGBTQIA+SB people. Campaigns such as Pride in Respect were cited as critical in challenging discrimination, promoting visibility, and ensuring that people feel safe and supported.

Stakeholders underlined that many of these initiatives risk ending prematurely due to lack of sustainable funding, despite strong community uptake and impact.

Marking the end of the 16 Days of Activism

The Assistant Commissioner attended an event hosted by the Governor of Western Australia at Government House (Perth) to acknowledge and thank those supporting the campaign, with a strong focus on recognising frontline workers. The engagement provided an opportunity to publicly celebrate the commitment, leadership and tireless efforts of services, advocates and community organisations across Western Australia who support people that experience violence, and to reinforce the importance of valuing and sustaining the workforce at the heart of the response.

The WA visit concluded with the Commission attending a vigil in Broome to honour women who have lost their lives to domestic violence. The vigil underscored the human cost of system failure and the urgency of sustained reform.

One of the speakers at the event articulated a message heard throughout the visit: **that every woman, every child and every family deserves to live safe, strong and free.**

We sincerely thank everyone who generously shared their time and insights with us.

