

**Submission
No 37**

COMMUNITY SAFETY IN REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

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The key message of my submission to the committee is that there is an absence of funding and resources in regional NSW for appropriate therapy and counselling for young men and youth, there is a body of evidence to support mentorship programs^{[1][2]}, and a growing push towards perpetrator prevention programs or men's behavioural change programs^{[3][4][5][6]}. Programs like these can be run by social workers, councilors, and other services alike which provide a psychosocial development focus. Such programs are supported with evidence to better individuals and our communities, making where we live safer for everyone. Efforts such as these are integral by shifting the responsibility of these crimes from the victims to the perpetrators (rightfully), and I would urge the committee to consider being innovative in primary prevention services that target these issues by addressing perpetrator accountability^[7]. As this relates to First Nations peoples; their self-governance structures and existing organisations should be involved at every level of primary prevention with an entirely place-based approach. What works for one regional area will not translate across such heterogeneous cultures, the committee should be active in upholding not only partnership but the self-determination of First Nation communities.

The rise of regional-specific crimes, particularly gendered violence^[8], necessitates a comprehensive response from policymakers. It is imperative to shift the focus of responsibility from victim-survivors to perpetrators and implement proactive measures to foster safer communities for all. I extend my gratitude for your consideration of this submission and earnestly hope for a committed adoption of the concerns voiced by regional communities.

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- [1] 2006. *Mentoring and crime prevention: what is good practice?*. AICrime reduction matters no. 43. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. <https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/crm/crm43>
- [2] https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-05/Youth_Mentoring_diverting_young_people_from_justice_involvement.pdf
- [3] Commonwealth of Australia (Department of Social Services). (2022). *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2022-2032*. <https://plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au/>
https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/10_2023/national-plan-end-violence-against-women-and-children-2022-2032.pdf
- [4] Commonwealth of Australia (Department of Social Services). (2022). *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2022-2032*. <https://plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au/>
https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/10_2023/national-plan-end-violence-against-women-and-children-2022-2032.pdf
- [5] NSW Department of Communities and Justice. (n.d.). *Registered service providers of men's behaviour change programs*. Communities and Justice. <https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/children-and-families/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/support-programs/support-for-men-who-use-violence/Registered-service-providers-of-men-s-behaviour-change-programs.html>
- [6] O'Connor, A., Panayiotidis, A., Bickerdike, A., Opoku, S., & Skouteris, H. (2022). Men's Behaviour Change Program: Participants' and facilitators' perceptions. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy*, 43(4), 412–422. <https://doi.org/10.1002/anzf.1516>
- [7] NSW Department of Health. (n.d.). *Prevention and Response to Violence Abuse and Neglect*. <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/parvan/Pages/default.aspx>
- [8] *Recorded Crime - Victims, 2022*. (2023, June 29). Australian Bureau of Statistics. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/recorded-crime-victims/latest-release>