



AUSTRALIAN MUSLIM WOMEN'S CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
*Equality without Exception*

**Submission:**  
**National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020-24**  
**Public Consultation Paper**

**31 January, 2020**

## About us

This submission has been developed by the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights (AMWCHR). The AMWCHR is an organisation established and managed by Muslim women for Muslim women -- leading change in our own communities by creating space to empower and advance the rights and status of Muslim women in Australia. This submission is based on over 25 years of experience providing one to one support to Muslim women and children experiencing family violence, undertaking community education campaigns to raise awareness of issues affecting our communities and to shift attitudes within Muslim communities. We promote the complexity and diversity of Muslim women's identities and build an interconnectedness between women through increased awareness of their common and diverse challenges. The AMWCHR advocates to increase the community, legal and government capacity to recognise and respond to the specific needs of Muslim women using a human rights framework. As an organisation committed to Muslim women and human rights we will work to eliminate discrimination against Muslim women both from within their community and from within the broader social, economic and political spheres of Australian society.

As a secular, non-faith-based organisation and a leading voice for Muslim women's rights in Australia, we work to challenge the most immediate and pertinent challenges Muslim women face every day. We promote the rights of Muslim women to enable self-determination, recognising the inherent agency that already exists, bringing issues of inequality and disadvantage to light and working with individuals, the community and government to advocate for equality within the Australian context.

## Acknowledgment of Country

This submission recognises that gender, race and religion intersect to create multiple forms of discrimination and violence against Muslim women, particularly in the context of growing Islamophobia. It also recognises that preventing prejudice in all forms is bound to the struggles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and before we can successfully tackle issues within our own communities, we must address the ongoing impacts of colonisation, systemic racism and discrimination in all its forms in this country.

The AMWCHR acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our centre is located and where we conduct our work. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present. AMWCHR is committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

## **Preamble to AMWCHR response to the National Action Plan 2020-24**

Worldwide, more than 650 million women alive today were married as children (defined as under 18 years of age). Forced marriage is a human rights violation and a form of gender-based violence.

Forced marriage occurs all over the world, in developing and developed nations, and is not limited to any particular cultural group, religion, ethnicity or region. Therefore, there are a range of socio-economic and political factors that vary from one context to another that contribute to the perpetuation of this practice. This also means that the impact and consequences of forced marriage on women and children can vary considerably depending on the country and context.

Although both Australian and international law prohibits the forced marriage of women and children, the practice nonetheless continues to be widespread.

Forced marriage in Australia came into sharp focus in 2013 when the Australian government legislated against the practice. While it was always illegal to marry a child in Australia, the introduction of a legal prohibition against the practice of forced marriage initiated social, government and policy effort toward its eradication. Since the criminalisation of the practice, there has been an increase in the reporting of forced marriage and services have been developed to assist victims and those at risk.

While some community services and family violence services, including the AMWCHR, have been working with forced marriage victims for decades as an identified complex form of violence since before it was criminalised, its criminalisation and the increased policy and service commitment since 2013 has demonstrated that the sector is still learning about forced marriage as a social issue and a complex form of family violence. There is still much evidence to gather about women's and children's experience in the Australian context. To add to this complexity, forced marriage exists in different Australian migrant communities, each with its own history of trauma and dislocation, socio-economic uncertainty and vulnerability, along with different cultures, traditions and religious backgrounds and practices providing motivations for the practice.

The AMWCHR actively works with vulnerable and at-risk Muslim women and Muslim communities more broadly to combat forced marriage through community capacity building and awareness raising programs as well as vital support for victims with individual case management. Our approach to overcoming forced marriage has always been community based and led with a recognition of the limitations and challenges presented through the criminalisation of forced marriage. While there is no current trend data on the prevalence of forced marriage in the Australian community since the introduction of the legislation, the low number of persecutions and convictions of forced marriage and the increased preventative work being undertaken by law enforcement engaged in forced marriage cases continues to support a prevention and community based approach to tackling forced marriage rather than a punitive one.

The AMWCHR has engaged with the *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery 2015-19* (2015-19 Plan) through funding to develop multi-layered community education programs designed to increase the capacity and awareness of community, young women and families on forced marriage. Our position has always been to increase funding support with greater emphasis on prevention, particularly through the programs that AMWCHR run, as a way of alleviating the number of cases and prevalence of forced marriage. We continue to believe that the level of complexity surrounding forced marriage is best overcome when affected communities are engaged in early prevention strategies as they ultimately hold the solutions to producing better outcomes for all. Community-led organisations and experts in the field like AMWCHR are key stakeholders to ensuring that cultural intelligence and sensitivity is adhered to through our family violence casework and human rights framework.

## Current challenges in working with the Muslim community in Australia

There are a range of socio-political issues surrounding the Australian Muslim community that profoundly impacts how they understand government, community sector and police intervention. There exists an extensive trust deficit when engaging with law enforcement agencies in any form given the political context of a post-9/11 world for many in the Muslim community. Mass surveillance, racial profiling and the conflation of all Muslims as “terrorists” with an inherently violent nature creates a large divide between communities and law enforcement agencies. This should not be a deterrent from undertaking the necessary work to bridge this gap, but it will require those engaging in this space to consider many factors that may not be accounted for when working on other issues or in other communities. The complexities of forced marriage and related cultural and community sensitivities for women and girls in Australia is an area of expertise that the AMWCHR holds in high regard.

### **The Australian approach: The individual, not the community**

The recent and growing interest and political will in forced marriage has meant that across Australia there has been a surge in work on the issue by the government and community services, including in the legal and court systems.

The Australian approach has focused predominantly on children and women who are at risk or victims of forced marriage and has taken an individual rather than community-centred approach. Currently, women and children who are at risk of or who are in marriages contracted by force must contact the Australian Federal Police (AFP) in order to access government-funded support programs.<sup>1</sup> While we welcomed the removal of the requirement to engage in the criminal justice process to access the Support for Trafficked People Program (STPP), the requirement to engage with the AFP as a first point of contact with support services remains and continues to present a significant barrier to women and girls.

Anecdotal reports indicate that most women and girls do not wish to engage with law enforcement or involve their families in criminal proceedings, and therefore do not seek help. Additionally, while girls and women who seek assistance do not wish to marry, they often do not wish to leave their families; or put their own or their families residency or visa status at risk; marriages are sometimes within families and therefore the complexity and impact on the victim and victims family can be immense and unavoidable; this can result in significant difficulties for women and service providers. Women who have insecure migration status are less likely to contact the AFP as the general perception in the Muslim community is that any engagement will place further risk to their already precarious migration status.

The education of professionals who work with women and children has also been a priority in Australia, but research into the drivers of forced marriage from a migration, socio-economic and cultural perspective along with community education, awareness-raising and programs to encourage attitudinal change requires much more focus if the practice is to be eliminated. In order for these

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<sup>1</sup> Girls Not Brides, *End Child Marriage Australia: Research Report on Forced Marriage of Children in Australia*, 2013.

programs to affect meaningful change within communities, they must be designed and led by community organisations, offering culturally safe spaces to address the root causes, motivational factors and impacts of forced marriage practices rather than merely educating about the Australian law.

Awareness raising and shifting community attitudes is as important as responding on a case-by-case basis where forced marriage is practiced. This is because once a child or a woman has been placed in a situation where she is being forced into a marriage, the outcome for the victim is likely to be complex, unsatisfactory and potentially detrimental, at least initially, to her wellbeing. This is because children and women may:

- have to leave their families when they may not be developmentally prepared or psychologically ready;
- depending on the circumstances of the case may have their families charged with an offence;
- feel that they have no option but to leave their community, culture and religion behind;
- be vulnerable to isolation, loneliness and uncertainty or more profound psychological issues such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress;
- be forced into socio-economic independence and adulthood self-care before they are ready; and
- subject to inappropriate and unstable accommodation and housing options including motels, refuges for adults and homelessness.

These can be typical outcomes for those removed from home because of abuse and this does not mean we should not be removing children when they are unsafe or providing women with options to leave their families in the context of abuse – but we should also be working towards the elimination of the practice with equal commitment to ensure that women do not have to make those decisions and children do not need to be removed from home. Community awareness and shifting attitudes and practices should then be a priority for us, and in turn for all organisations and law enforcement agencies engaging in the forced marriage prevention stream.

### **Policing, security and Muslim communities**

Since the 9/11 terrorist attack, policing and surveillance of Muslims has increased across the world. Raids of Muslim homes are often captured by the media and court appearances are sensationalised. As in many societies around the world, Muslim communities in Australia feel over-policed, and that surveillance practices are becoming increasingly insidious, finding their way into nearly every aspect of public and private life in the pursuit of potential Muslim terrorists. Many communities feel they are targeted and that their very Muslim identity has become criminalised.

These experiences and beliefs profoundly shape how communities respond to police, protective services and community organisations intervening and placing forced marriage on the public agenda.

## **Crime, faith and gender-based violence**

Race and faith-based gender stereotypes are powerfully present in Australian society as they are all over the world. Who Muslim men are, how they experience their masculinity and how they relate to Muslim women is permeated with themes of violence and brutality. Similarly, meekness and victimhood continue to be primarily the way in which Muslim women are portrayed. Relationships and marriage between Muslim men and Muslim women continues to be seen through the lens of power and subjugation.

For Muslim communities, these stereotypes all lend themselves to the criminalisation of Muslim men's behaviour towards women and the tendency to want to 'rescue' Muslim women from Muslim men and their religion. Demonstrated clearly in the narratives surrounding forced marriage.

For many in the Muslim community now, there is the perception that the state has a pattern of removing their children from home – their young men are being removed to prisons and their young women are being removed to foster homes or state care. These perceptions speak to the profound alienation Muslims feel towards services that are designed to protect them and their children and must be considered by everyone working in the forced marriage space.

## **Racism and Islamophobia**

Racism is now considered to be core to current manifestations of Islamophobia, constructing Muslims as 'others', characterised by 'incivility, inferiority and incompatibility'<sup>2</sup>. Racism and Islamophobia are now realities of Australian Muslim experience<sup>3</sup>.

Those engaging in CEFM work are not immune to racism or Islamophobia and must always be keenly aware that both racism and Islamophobia have structural manifestations in 'laws, policy, programming, or formal pronouncements by state agents'<sup>4</sup>.

A failure to recognise broader cultural issues like racism and Islamophobia and the complicated, visceral and powerful relationship they have to how we see gender-based violence in minority communities leads to alienation of communities from our work with them. It prevents the development of successful campaigns to change attitudes and practices. Muslim communities will not engage with issues they believe have been identified and focused on because of racist and Islamophobic views of their community. This is especially the case with a practice like forced marriage whereby some

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<sup>2</sup> Kevin M Dunn., Natascha Klocker and Tanya Salabay (2007). *Contemporary racism and Islamophobia in Australia: racialising religion*, Ethnicities 7(4): 564–589.

<sup>3</sup> Shahram Akbarzadeh, *The Muslim Question in Australia: Islamophobia and Muslim Alienation*, Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, 36:3, 323–333, DOI: [10.1080/13602004.2016.1212493](https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2016.1212493).

<sup>4</sup> Khaled A. Beydoun, *Rethinking Islamophobia: Islamophobia is far more than merely 'dread or hatred of Muslims', or 'fear or dislike' of the faith and its followers*, Al Jazeera, 12 March 2018. Available: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/rethinking-islamophobia-180312085500278.html> (last accessed 6 May 2019). Khaled Beydoun is an associate law professor at Detroit Mercy and author of *American Islamophobia: Understanding the Roots and Rise of Fear*.

Muslim communities experience it among their members while other Muslim communities are completely unaware of it and find it an unacceptable practice. Diversity in experiences exist across all Muslim communities.

### **The human trafficking and slavery framework**

In Australia and globally, our understanding is that forced marriage is part of the human trafficking and slavery framework. Australian laws, policies and programs to eradicate the practice are based on how we understand human trafficking, slavery-like practices and servitude.

There are sound reasons for using the human trafficking framework but it presents certain challenges and must be managed carefully when working with Muslim communities. We are more inclined to prefer a greater emphasis be placed on prevention strategies rather than responses that prefer prosecutions after the fact as this only places women and children at greater risk.

When parents and families force their children and women into marriage, they do not believe themselves to be participating in any form of trafficking, slavery or servitude. Muslim communities tend to find the language of trafficking and slavery confronting, shocking and often reject the connection between forced marriage and trafficking and slavery. It is crucial therefore to be mindful of how the topic of forced marriage is to be introduced to communities and individuals. Cultural sensitivities and understanding of the complexities as well as the diversity of opinions is a necessary tool to engage many communities on this topic.

It is also important to be aware that Muslim women activists globally have not primarily utilised the human trafficking framework to tackle forced marriage. Instead they have relied on reframing patriarchal interpretations of Islam, reclaiming Muslim marriage and tackling discriminatory laws in relation to Muslim and state law. Australian Muslim women activists have been working on forced marriage since the 1970s, primarily using the domestic and family violence framework. Some Muslim women's organisations and activists continue to do so today because they believe a family violence framework produces less resistance from Muslim communities and address the power and control dynamic innate within both forced marriage and family violence abuses.

Therefore, it is important to understand how communities understand harmful practices as well as their framework and efforts to eradicate them. Muslim women have an incredible amount of agency and have always resisted forced marriage, but they have done so based on their context and they have selected strategies that may not be visible to those outside their context or community. Examples of these are young women excelling in education and professional careers to avoid familial pressure to marry, demonstration of religiosity in other ways than marriage and family, staying within the family home rather than seeking independent living, engaging allies within broader family or community to support their choices and act as a mediator.



## **Diversity, plurality and intersectionality**

There are approximately 1.8 billion Muslims across the world who come from profoundly different cultures, traditions and countries.

Intra-faith diversity is almost as old as Islam itself. The major source of intra-faith diversity in Islam is that between the Sunnis and Shias. Sunnis form about 80 per cent of the global Muslim population and Shias (or Shiites) most of the remaining 20 per cent. It is our view that these are conservative figures, and that the Shia communities constitute a greater proportion of the Muslim community than is currently recognised.

Over time, more sub-groups have developed within these two overarching branches, and the original split between Muslims has widened to encompass social, political and theological differences.

Australian Muslims herald from 179 countries, 70 ethnicities, and there are more than 130 linguistic groups, making them one of the most ethnically and nationally heterogeneous communities in Australian society. The majority of Muslims in Australia are Sunni. But there are also significant populations belonging to the Shia, Alawi, Alevi, Ismaili, Druze, Bohra and Ahmedi communities.

Australian Muslim migration is intensely complex and varied. A great number of Muslims have arrived in Australia as refugees and humanitarian entrants, while others have migrated as skilled migrants. Some Muslims have arrived with no history of education and employment while others have arrived with high levels of education and significant vocational success and achievement.

Like all minority women, Muslim women lie at the intersection of race, class, sexual orientation and ideological persuasion. Forced marriage cannot be addressed without considering the immense diversity of the community and the interplay between the different layers of identity and considering how they might relate.

There are also matters of intersectionality that must be considered. Intersectionality requires us to look at the ways in which different forms of discrimination – such as racism, sexism or class discrimination – are interconnected and reinforce each other. Muslim and minority women have a complex array of powers and different forms of discrimination impacting on their lives at any one point.

## **The problem of consent**

The concept of consent continues to be one of the most beneficial and yet challenging concepts in feminist and legal practice. We all believe we understand when consent has been given and not given and we assume that culturally in Australia there is reasonable consensus on the nature of consent.

But the term is contextually defined – a personally, culturally and politically complex term – and there are widely differing views as to what consent is in any specific circumstance. For example, Collectivism vs individualism is a significant determinant for a person's ability to give consent to something such as marriage.

Feminist legal scholars have demonstrated how understanding of consent can vary widely across sexual assault cases. This is also the reality of working on forced marriage as sometimes it is clear that consent was not given, while in other circumstances the procurement of consent raises concerns as to whether that consent was provided freely.

Women and children (sometimes young men and boys) can be forced into marriage in many ways, including:

- persuasion through genuine love, affection and concern
- being persuaded that the marriage is best for everyone
- direct force including physical, emotional and psychological abuse
- emotional pressure, threats, tricks or blackmail
- isolation or marginalisation from family and community
- being told that rejection of the marriage shames their family and harms their family's standing in the community
- being told that parents have a right to make them marry without consent
- being persuaded that the marriage is important to the preservation of their cultural or religious heritage, norms and rules
- being told that the marriage is their responsibility or duty to their family
- temptation through incentives or bribes such as more money or freedom from strict parental control, freedom to be independent and pursue goals
- use of fear tactics about consequences if the marriage is refused, for example how the health of one or both parents may be affected (including possible self-harm)
- deception, for example being taken overseas on the premise of a holiday or trip and being forced into marriage or not being told what the significance of certain ceremonies is.

## The way forward

An important pathway for the eradication of forced marriage is to ensure that communities take ownership and play a lead role in developing and implementing mechanisms aimed at tackling the practice.

To address forced marriage, individuals and professionals and activists must work together to create a narrative and enabling environment that gives out a message of support, collaboration, joint ownership and collective responsibility towards change. Communities must be supported to change in a way that is meaningful to them that addresses their cultural, religious and familial needs as well as those of the victims.

For our Australian context an effective strategic approach would be to work at multiple levels simultaneously with communities and the support and justice system in order to effect both social (i.e. within communities) and structural change. Some informed suggestions for enhancing services and their responses to forced marriage include:

- consultation and ongoing engagement with specialist community organisations working on this issue, noting that forced marriage is a gender justice issue for Muslim women rights movement and they have been working on this issue for many years
- consultation and ongoing engagement with cultural groups to understand their history, context, diversity, power dynamics, resources and strengths, using community-based participatory methods
- cultural competence and specialised training in handling sensitive issues, including those relating to gender, gender-based violence, children, family, parenting, religion and sexuality. This training needs to be rolled out not only to forced marriage services but more broadly to family violence, youth, mental and physical health services, schools, child protection and welfare services.
- awareness of socio-political power dynamics and concepts especially in the context of race, including a good understanding of concepts of culture, class, gender, identity, stereotyping, oppression, prejudice, racism, ethnocentricity, privilege, marginalisation and discrimination
- professionals and organisations engaging in forced marriage must increase awareness of, and challenge personal and institutional biases, cultural assumptions, profiling, stereotypes and discrimination in the kind of service and support offered
- collaborations and genuine partnerships and alliances with community-based or ethno-specific services -- not just consultations but supporting service and program delivery as consultations take time, energy and resources and take the specialised expertise away from community and ethno-specific orgs to ensure both greater community participation and a more positive and sustainable impact
- knowledge of existing services working on similar issues or with the relevant community

- understanding of and training in gender and other related issues, such as historical context, poverty, socio-political contexts in the community's home countries, family violence, child abuse, barriers to and mechanisms of support and redress
- familiarity with available reports and further research forced marriage in the communities, including lessons learnt and best practice models
- continuous process of learning and applying knowledge to tailor services to the needs of clients
- awareness of the impact of language and how organisations speak publicly about forced marriage because this reflects both professional and organisational attitudes, including personal biases, sense of 'cultural superiority', and/or judgement of the client's 'culture or religion'
- an 'ally' approach rather than a 'saviour' approach
- build awareness raising, attitudinal change and gender education programs into strategies simultaneously.

## Responding to the Proposed goals of the 2020-24 Plan

### 1. Do the 12 goals capture key areas of focus for Australia over the next five years?

The goals appear to be too broad and do not reflect a specific focus particularly on prevention. In order to prevent forced marriage, there needs to be key areas of focus which address the many factors that affect the prevalence and occurrence of forced marriage. These factors include family, traditions, faith, identity, sexuality and honour.

In many societies, family, faith, tradition and cultural values are honoured and there is a strong emphasis on their preservation. Traditional interpretations of religion and traditional cultural communities hold the importance of family above all else and view the needs of women and girls as subservient to the preservation and continuation of family and culture. These drivers are only amplified for minority communities that are marginalised and politicised and hold traumatic migration histories.

Moreover, some families may enforce marriages because it is considered normal to do so and there is little or no awareness that forced marriage has a detrimental impact on the life of girls and women and no awareness it may be against the law.

The AMWCHR's research on young women's decision making around forced and early marriage found that social and religious expectations and culturally embedded norms about the role of women and the importance of family are also driving factors for some immigrant families living in Western societies. Forced marriage may be a way to ward off cultural change and preserve tradition, to maintain standing and community cohesion in their small minority community or to assist others to migrate from difficult circumstances in their home countries.

Family honour continues to be seen by many communities as intricately linked to the behaviour of women. Some cultural communities in Australia continue to see the preservation of girls' and women's virginity as necessary to a family's honour and maintaining standing and inclusion in the community. For some communities, all sexual contact outside marriage is seen as immoral and for some families the risk of sexual activity outside marriage will encourage forced marriage.

For these reasons, it is imperative that the key areas of focus are centred on awareness raising, attitudinal change and gender education as part of a wholistic approach towards prevention of forced marriage. This preventative focus should subsequently be reflected in the proposed goals. The current use of terms such as 'combat', 'frontline officials', 'effective investigations' and 'prosecutions' is likely to incite fear and cause women to disengage with service providers. The framing of the goals perpetuates the gap that continues to exist between communities and law enforcement agencies. Such language should be focused on collaborative, community-led solutions that can drive necessary changes for many women who are at risk of forced marriage.

**2. Should there be additional goals to address other areas of focus, emerging issues or trends? If so, what should they be?**

- Focus on addressing cultural stereotyping and biases in the system – major factor for young women's reluctance to engage, and to train the community sector on cultural sensitivities.
- Focus on addressing the intersection between settlement, migration, and cultural-religious factors that interact with forced marriage in Muslim communities.
- Capacity-building: competency needs to be extended to include cultural competency/Islam awareness, understanding of diversity and culture specific interventions. Training should include: a) specialised training which are led by communities themselves in handling sensitive issues, including issues of gender, gender-based violence, children, family, parenting, religion, sexuality, etc and b) attitudes of professionals – tone, body language, bias, ally versus saviour approach. It is important that service sector workers and professionals adopt strength-based approaches. For example, valuing the capacity and knowledge of girls and women and allowing them the opportunity to make their own decisions which are in their best interest.
- Invest in community-based/led strategies and include awareness raising, attitudinal change and gender education programs into strategies simultaneously. These initiatives should have targeted messaging for Muslim communities and be led by women community leaders.
- Build on existing community-based initiatives.
- Adequate funding for long-term projects for most vulnerable communities.
- Training for community/religious leaders, including on the law and identifying the difference between will and consent. Consent is contextually understood – it is a personally, culturally and politically complex term and there are widely differing views as to what consent is in any specific circumstance. Sometimes it is clear that consent was not given, while in other circumstances the procurement of consent raises concerns as to whether that consent was or could have been provided freely and fully.
- Work with/through ethno-specific orgs and build on existing resources, research and networks. Provide professional development to support workers to work with their communities and lead on the issue of forced marriage.
- Consultation and ongoing engagement with a variety of cultural groups to understand their history, context, diversity, power dynamics, resources and strengths, using community-based participatory methods.
- Innovative strategies, motivational activities which seek to enhance awareness of options for Muslim women including vocational and tertiary education routes, greater understanding of progressive interpretations of their religious obligations for those that desire it.

**3. The Government is committed to ensuring victims of modern slavery are supported, protected and empowered. Are there ways in which the Government can better reflect the voices of victims and their lived experiences in the 2020-24 Plan and Australia's response to modern slavery?**

- An increase in meaningful, community-led consultations with women's/young girls' groups need to be done in order to understand their lived experiences and implications of the law, for example, the criminalisation of forced marriage. Reporting remains low because it is extremely challenging for many young Muslims to report their families, engage with law enforcement, be separated from the family, live in out of home care etc. Also trust in the system perceived by many as being biased, is lacking.
- Community-based research in collaboration with ethno-specific services can help improve understanding.
- Establish alliances with community/ethno-specific organisations with similar values. Working with community-based professionals from the area means that the process of undertaking community education is not fragmented or compartmentalised but has community input at every stage of the process.
- Explore whole family approaches, addressing and mediating all needs.
- Family Relationship Centres with CALD specialisations are potentially well positioned to provide family mediation to resolve issues of forced marriage
- Secure long term supports to address the significant vulnerabilities of young victims of forced marriage, address accommodation, education, income, mental and physical health issues, engaging long-term to give victims a chance to stabilise and rebuild a sense of future.

**4. The Government is committed to ensuring that we can measure the impacts of the 2020-24 Plan. Are there evaluation methods, data sources or metrics the Government should consider in developing an evaluation framework?**

- Data information on CALD communities needs to be gathered and interpreted through a cultural lens. Plurality and diversity within Islam must be acknowledged as forced marriage cannot be addressed without considering the immense diversity of the community and the interplay between the different categories of identity and considering how they might relate.
- The evaluation framework should focus on prevention, measuring the impacts of raising awareness, attitudinal change and the success of gender education programs.