



RAPPORTEUR REPORT

Responding to Young Men's Use of Intimate Partner Violence

Sharing Findings and Exploring Pathways to Scale

Roundtable Discussion — Thursday 16 July 2026, 1.00pm–5.00pm

Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, Melbourne, and online via Teams

Hosted by No to Violence, funded by Family Safety Victoria (Open Expansion Phase Two)

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1. Purpose and Context

This report has been prepared in my capacity as rapporteur for the No to Violence roundtable, “Responding to Young Men’s Use of Intimate Partner Violence: Sharing Findings and Exploring Pathways to Scale,” held on Thursday 16 July 2026. The roundtable brought together researchers, practitioners, policy specialists and a survivor advocate to mark the culmination of No to Violence’s Open Expansion Phase Two project, funded by Family Safety Victoria and delivered over three phases between May 2025 and July 2026.

The day had a dual purpose: first, to share and disseminate the project’s key outputs — [The Evidence Review: Addressing young men's use of intimate partner violence](#), [the Meli Young Men’s Behaviour Change Group practice case study](#), an emergent intersectional practice guide, and [a public-facing resource library on youth intimate partner violence \(IPV\)](#); and second, to provide a convening moment for the sector, building connections across organisations and generating collective momentum around youth IPV as a public policy and service priority.

At a glance

- **Attendance:** 576 online registrations; 353 attendees joined in person and via Teams.
- **Format:** Presentations, three facilitated roundtable discussions, and closing rapporteur reflections.
- **On the record:** Participants were advised at the outset that the discussion was being held on the public record, and this report reflects that basis.

This report summarises the presentations and roundtable discussions, draws out the key themes and tensions that emerged, and sets out recommendations and conclusions arising from the day — consistent with the synthesis I offered in my closing rapporteur reflections.

No to Violence thanks the speakers, participants and Family Safety Victoria for their contribution to this roundtable and the Open Expansion Phase Two project.

2. Summary of Sessions

2.1 Opening and Project Overview

Annie King, Survivor Advocate and Chair, opened proceedings with an Acknowledgement of Country and framed the day’s dual purpose of dissemination and sector convening, underscoring the importance of centring victim-survivors throughout the discussion. Dr Lisa Wheildon, Research Lead at No to Violence, then provided a project overview, acknowledging Family Safety Victoria’s investment and outlining the three phases of work: Foundation (stakeholder mapping, evidence review, initial consultation); Consultation and Framework Development (the Meli case study, Strategic Advisory Board meetings, sector briefings); and Dissemination (publication of the evidence review, case study, resource library, Delphi-informed practice guide, and this roundtable itself).

2.2 Rethinking ‘Violence as a Choice’: The IVY Study

Riley Ellard (Associate Director, Research, Advocacy and Policy, Centre for Innovative Justice, RMIT University) spoke in conversation with me about the concurrent, national IVY Study, which combines practitioner and young-person research with a multi-sector survey mapping how and where young people are presenting to the service system in relation to their use of IPV. The conversation challenged the framing of youth IPV as a simple, deliberate choice, instead locating it within developmental, relational and trauma contexts — while maintaining that young people are responsible for the harm they cause. This reframing became a touchstone for much of the day’s subsequent discussion.

2.3 Reviewing the Evidence on Youth IPV

Hannah Petocz (Research Officer, No to Violence) presented the project’s Evidence Review, an Australian and practitioner-focused synthesis structured around four questions: what we know about youth IPV, the pathways into it, what works to address it, and the implications for practice and policy. Key pathways identified included violence in the home and the absence of healthy relationship models, young people exiting out-of-home care, gender roles and entitlement (including manosphere influence), and the ongoing legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic. The review found that effective responses require centring gender and young women’s safety, applying an age-appropriate developmental lens, taking a whole-person, relational approach, and building a whole-of-society ecosystem response. Significant evidence gaps remain: the evidence base largely reflects service contact rather than population prevalence, is geographically concentrated, and evaluation of effective models, protective factors and resilience mechanisms, particularly for 15–17-year-olds, remains thin.

2.4 Practice in Action: The Meli Young Men’s Group Case Study

Kristy Berryman (Manager, Family Violence) and Lisa Robinson (Director, Family Safety & Therapeutic Services), both from Meli—a Victorian not-for-profit committed to strengthening communities through supporting people—presented a practice-grounded case study of the Young Men’s Group (YMG), designed for young men aged 18–25 using IPV. The model combines 14 group sessions with 10 individual sessions, a Family Safety Contact Worker for affected family members, and a single practitioner providing both individual support and group facilitation — explicitly combining accountability with trauma-informed practice. Flexible, responsive delivery (outreach, walking appointments, transport support, crisis response) and embedded practical/case-management support have driven retention rates from approximately 12% to over 80%. Key lessons included that young men using IPV who are service engaged are a distinct cohort characterised by trauma, disadvantage, homelessness, AOD issues and child protection involvement; that relationship is the primary mechanism for change; that emotional literacy underpins accountability; that stabilisation is often a precondition for meaningful accountability work; and that flexibility is essential, not optional.

2.5 Technology-Facilitated Abuse: eSafety Commissioner

Dr Hannah Klose (Youth Council Program Advisor, eSafety Commissioner) presented findings from the eSafety Commissioner’s Track, Harass, Repeat report and her related book on women and girls’

experiences of online harms. Young people showed a higher likelihood of normalising behaviours that can foster controlling dynamics in intimate relationships, including constant messaging, location tracking and controlling social media posting, with significant acceptance of expected password-sharing among younger participants and those in intimate relationships. Her research further found that public profiles and workplace information enable those engaging in this behaviour to monitor victim-survivors, that harassment commonly converges across platforms once a perpetrator is blocked on one, that location-sharing and geolocation features heighten stalking risk, and that normalisation of abuse leads many women to expect harassment as a routine part of online participation.

2.6 Roundtable Discussion 1: What Does an Effective Response to Youth IPV Look Like?

Facilitated by Annie King and Hannah Petocz, this discussion surfaced a wide range of practical and systemic barriers. Participants noted that support models built around phone-based engagement (e.g. Men's Behaviour Change-style programs) do not fit young people's communication preferences and raised real questions about the safety of text-based contact. There was strong emphasis on offering young people choice in how support is delivered, and on the compounding effect of inadequate financial entitlements and brokerage funding for young people using violence. A significant thread concerned the tension between addressing trauma and the risk of criminalising it: participants described an increase in young women being charged with violence-related offences, misidentification of the predominant aggressor, and case examples of young women being criminalised for behaviour rooted in trauma and self-protection. Regional, rural and border-community contexts were raised as a distinct challenge — including service gaps, jurisdictional restrictions on accessing services across state borders, transport barriers, limited alternative social environments for young people, and, for refugee and migrant communities, the impact of migration history and mistrust of authority on long-term engagement with behaviour change programs.

2.7 Working with Young People Using IPV: Delphi Study Findings

Dr Lisa Wheildon presented findings from a three-round Delphi consultation with 19 practitioners and researchers across the family and domestic violence, alcohol and other drugs (AOD), and youth sectors, representing 17 organisations across Victoria, NSW, Queensland and South Australia. The study tested whether an existing European practitioner guide (produced by the Working with Perpetrators European Network) could be adapted for Australia. The panel found the European guide's emphasis on making violence visible, its collusion/neutral/persecutory practitioner-stance framework, response-based practice principles and motivational exercises to be strong and transferable — but concluded the guide needed to be substantially rebuilt, rather than simply transplanted, for the Australian context. Five gaps were identified: the absence of an engagement framework; a need for a theoretical foundation that holds both harm and history without collapsing one into the other (with the Power Threat Meaning Framework proposed as the most essential addition); the need for genuine intersectionality as a lens rather than an add-on section (the existing guide was heteronormative, and absent on neurodiversity, First Nations content, and accessible language); the need to reflect the Australian legal and systems context (mandatory reporting, coercive control laws, risk frameworks such as MARAM, referral pathways); and attention to the conditions of safe use, including practitioner vicarious trauma and wellbeing, which the European

guide did not address at all. The Delphi produced an endorsed foundational framing paragraph and a four-part structure organised around centring victim-survivor safety, meaningfully and safely engaging young people on their own terms, establishing youth-friendly settings of engagement, and creating pathways to behaviour change. Participants agreed that First Nations content must be developed through a separate, First Nations-led process, with the guide including a clear statement of its current limitations in this regard.

2.8 Roundtable Discussion 2: Feedback on the Draft Practice Guide

This substantive discussion, facilitated by Dr Lisa Wheildon and Annie King, tested whether the draft guide reflects the realities of practice with this cohort, what is missing or needs strengthening, how it might be piloted, and what a pathway to broader adoption could look like. Consistent with the Delphi findings, participants reinforced that neither a pure ‘choice’ framing nor a pure ‘skill deficit’ framing adequately describes what practitioners observe; a framework that holds both the young person’s history of harm and the harm they are causing was seen as essential. Participants stressed the need for scenario testing of the guide across different relationship types, cultural contexts and community settings before it is finalised.

2.9 Scaling What Works and Building the Coalition

Dr Wing Hsieh (Scalability Expert) and Roj Amedi (Director Advocacy, Policy and Communications, Women’s Legal Service Victoria) offered two back-to-back provocations. Wing Hsieh set out four themes for considering scalability of youth IPV responses: program design, cost, delivery nuances and context — cautioning against assuming a single model can be scaled uniformly without accounting for local variation. Roj Amedi argued that coalition building is the critical next frontier for the sector, emphasising the need to start with a clear, shared sense of purpose and an understanding of the broader service ecosystem, and stressing that resourcing and trust-building through low-barrier entry points and clear communication are prerequisites for an effective coalition.

2.10 Roundtable Discussion 3: Pathways to Scale — What Would It Take?

Facilitated by the Chair with online co-facilitation, this discussion considered what a scaled, sustainable response to youth IPV would look like in Victoria and nationally; the system, workforce, funding and cultural enablers and barriers; the role of lived experience in shaping and delivering that response; and collective next steps. Participants shared examples of collective-impact approaches already underway in regional areas — including cross-sector practitioner training to build capacity to support young men and boys — and argued strongly for involving young people directly in coalition-building so that their perspectives and lived experience inform the response, not just its evaluation. There was broad agreement on the need to build practitioner confidence and capacity across generalist service settings, not only specialist family violence services, so that more of the workforce already in contact with young people is equipped to respond appropriately.

3. Key Themes and Issues

Across the day, several cross-cutting themes emerged consistently across presentations and discussions:

3.1 Youth IPV is a distinct phenomenon requiring a distinct response

Presenters and participants repeatedly distinguished young people's use of IPV from adult-perpetrated family violence. It is shaped by developmental stage, trauma history, out-of-home care experience, disadvantage and, increasingly, online and technology-facilitated dynamics. A one-size-fits-all adaptation of adult perpetrator programs was consistently rejected in favour of age-appropriate, developmentally informed models.

3.2 Moving beyond 'choice' versus 'skill deficit'

A central intellectual thread of the day — introduced in the opening IVY Study conversation and reinforced through the Delphi findings — was the inadequacy of framing young people's violence as either a simple deliberate choice or a straightforward skills deficit. The framing that gained the most traction held both the harm caused and the harm experienced simultaneously, without one being used to excuse or explain away the other.

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Neither the choice framing nor the skill deficit framing adequately describes what I observe in practice... The framing I find most useful holds both things — the young person's history of harm and the harm they are causing — without collapsing one into the other.

— Delphi study participant, Round 2

3.3 Relationship, trust and flexibility drive engagement and change

The Meli case study's dramatic increase in retention (from approximately 12% to over 80%) was repeatedly cited as evidence that consistent practitioner relationships, individual trust-building ahead of accountability conversations, and flexible, responsive delivery (outreach, crisis response, practical support) are what enable engagement and, ultimately, behaviour change — not the accountability framework alone.

3.4 Accountability and trauma-informed practice must coexist

A recurring tension — raised in relation to both service design and the criminal justice system — was the risk of conflating trauma-responsiveness with an unwillingness to name harm, or conversely, of criminalising trauma responses (particularly among young women). Participants were clear that accountability and trauma-informed practice are not opposing approaches and work best together.

3.5 Centring young women's safety and gender

Both the Evidence Review and roundtable discussion emphasised that responses to young men's use of IPV must be explicitly gendered and must centre the safety of young women and victim-survivors, including guarding against the misidentification of the predominant aggressor and the criminalisation of young women's trauma responses.

3.6 Technology and online spaces are now central to the problem, not peripheral

The eSafety Commissioner's research demonstrated that tech-facilitated coercive control (constant messaging, location tracking, password sharing, cross-platform harassment) is increasingly normalised among young people, reinforcing that any effective response to youth IPV must explicitly address digital and online dynamics rather than treating them as an adjunct issue.

3.7 Intersectionality must be a lens, not a section

The Delphi study found the existing European guide heteronormative and silent on neurodiversity, First Nations experience, and accessible language and communication. Participants and researchers agreed intersectionality needs to be embedded throughout any Australian practice guide, and that First Nations content specifically requires a separate, First Nations-led development process.

3.8 Structural and geographic inequities compound the problem

Regional, rural, remote and border-adjacent communities face compounding barriers: fewer specialist services, transport constraints, jurisdictional restrictions on cross-border service access, limited alternative social environments for young people, and, for refugee and migrant communities, additional barriers of trust in authority and long-term program engagement.

3.9 Evidence and evaluation gaps limit confidence about 'what works'

The Evidence Review was frank that the evidence base largely reflects who presents to services rather than the full population affected, is geographically concentrated, and that evaluation of effective models — particularly for the 15–17 age group — remains thin, as does research on the role of manosphere content across socioeconomic groups and on protective/resilience factors.

3.10 Scale requires coalition, not just program replication

The closing sessions made clear that scaling effective responses is not simply a matter of replicating the Meli model or the practice guide elsewhere. It requires attention to program design, cost, delivery nuance and local context, alongside deliberate coalition building across the sector — underpinned by a shared sense of purpose, adequate resourcing, low-barrier entry points for new partners, and meaningful inclusion of young people and lived experience voices.

4. Rapporteur Reflections

In closing the roundtable, I offered the following synthesis of the day's discussion, which I restate here as the basis for the recommendations below.

The day moved the sector from a still-emerging evidence base to a genuinely practical and shared language for talking about young people's use of intimate partner violence — one that resists both the temptation to see it as a simple, deliberate choice and the temptation to explain it away entirely

through a skills-deficit or trauma lens. What came through most strongly, across research, practice and lived-experience contributions alike, was the need to understand the function that violence serves for a young person, and to respond to that function through age-appropriate, developmentally attuned, trauma-informed practice that never loses sight of victim-survivor safety.

Equally, the day made clear that this is not solely a service-design problem. It is a workforce problem, a funding problem, and ultimately a public policy problem that requires a genuinely national conversation — one that takes seriously the functions of violence in young people’s lives, applies a developmental lens consistently across the system (including the justice system), and resources the relational, flexible, wraparound practice that the evidence and the Meli case study show actually works. The energy and expertise in the room — across research, direct practice, technology-safety, legal and scalability expertise — represents the foundation of the coalition this work will need going forward. The task now is to ensure that foundation is properly resourced and does not lose momentum.

5. Recommendations

Drawing on the presentations, the Delphi findings, and the three roundtable discussions, the following recommendations are proposed for consideration by No to Violence, Family Safety Victoria, and the broader sector coalition:

1. Pilot and iteratively test the draft intersectional practice guide with a diverse range of services (metropolitan, regional, rural and border-adjacent; mainstream and culturally specific) before finalising it, incorporating the scenario-testing approach raised in Roundtable Discussion 2.
2. Commission a separate, First Nations-led process to develop First Nations content for the practice guide, rather than retrofitting existing material, and ensure the published guide is explicit about this limitation until that process is complete.
3. Embed the [Power Threat Meaning Framework](#), or an equivalent theoretical foundation that holds both harm and history, as the conceptual backbone of the practice guide, replacing a simple ‘choice’ or ‘skill deficit’ framing.
4. Explicitly build technology-facilitated abuse — tracking, cross-platform harassment, digital coercive control — into practice guidance and practitioner training, drawing on the eSafety Commissioner’s findings, rather than treating it as a secondary issue.
5. Address the Australian legal and systems context directly in future guidance and training, including mandatory reporting obligations, coercive control legislation, risk assessment frameworks such as MARAM, and clear referral pathways — gaps identified consistently across all three Delphi rounds.
6. Invest in practitioner wellbeing and vicarious trauma support as a core condition of safe practice, given this was identified as entirely absent from the existing European guide and essential to sustainable delivery.

7. Advocate for funding and program models that support relational continuity and flexibility — including a single practitioner across individual and group work, outreach and crisis response capability, and integrated practical/case-management support — consistent with the retention outcomes demonstrated by the Meli Young Men’s Group.
8. Address the criminalisation of trauma responses, particularly among young women, through cross-sector work with police and justice stakeholders on predominant aggressor identification and developmentally informed responses to young people’s use of violence.
9. Prioritise investment in regional, rural and border-community service access, including addressing jurisdictional barriers to cross-border service use, transport support, and tailored engagement approaches for refugee and migrant communities.
10. Commission further research and evaluation to address identified evidence gaps, particularly: effective models for 15–17-year-olds; the role of manosphere content across socioeconomic groups; and protective factors and resilience mechanisms.
11. Build practitioner capability and confidence across generalist and universal service settings — not only specialist family violence services — so that more of the workforce already engaging with young people can identify and respond to youth IPV appropriately.
12. Formalise and resource a cross-sector coalition on youth IPV, with a clear shared purpose, low-barrier entry points for new organisational partners, and meaningful, ongoing involvement of young people and lived-experience advocates in shaping both the coalition and the response it builds.
13. Use the roundtable’s outputs — the [‘Evidence Review: Addressing young men’s use of intimate partner violence’](#), the [Meli Young Men’s Behaviour Change Group case study](#), the emergent practice guide and the [Young person IPV resource library](#) — as the basis for a sustained national conversation on youth IPV as a public policy priority, rather than treating this roundtable as an endpoint.

6. Conclusion

This roundtable marked a significant milestone for No to Violence’s Open Expansion Phase Two project and, more broadly, for the Australian family violence sector’s response to young people’s use of intimate partner violence. It brought together a robust and complementary evidence base — spanning research, frontline practice, technology safety and legal expertise — with a shared practical language for understanding and responding to this cohort: one that holds young people accountable for the harm they cause while recognising the developmental, relational and trauma contexts in which that harm occurs.

The Meli Young Men’s Group case study demonstrated what is achievable when relational, flexible, wraparound practice is properly resourced. The Delphi-informed practice guide provides a promising, Australian-specific foundation for scaling that practice — provided it is piloted, intersectionally strengthened, and paired with genuine First Nations leadership on relevant content. And the day’s closing sessions made clear that scale will not be achieved through program

replication alone, but through deliberate, resourced coalition building across the sector, with young people and lived-experience voices genuinely at the table.

The recommendations above are offered in that spirit: as concrete next steps to carry the energy, expertise and shared purpose generated in this room into a sustained, national response to youth intimate partner violence.

Report prepared by Kristine Ziwick, Rapporteur, on behalf of No to Violence. Participants were advised the roundtable discussion was on the public record; this report summarises that discussion accordingly. The recording of the roundtable is [here](#).

Appendix: Roundtable Speakers and Participants

Speakers

- Lisa Wheildon, Research Lead, No to Violence
- Riley Ellard, Associate Director, Research, Advocacy and Policy, Centre for Innovative Justice, RMIT University
- Kristine Ziwica, Journalist/Rapporteur
- Hannah Petocz, Research Officer, No to Violence
- Kristy Berryman, Manager, Family Violence, & Lisa Robinson, Director, Family Safety & Therapeutic Services, Meli
- Hannah Klose, Youth Council Program Advisor, eSafety Commissioner
- Roj Amedi, Director of Advocacy, Policy and Communications, Women's Legal Service Victoria
- Wing Hsieh, Scalability Expert

Participants

- Tamara Blakemore, Name.Narrate.Navigate Program for Youth Violence, University of Newcastle
 - Andy Blaney, Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place
 - Jesse Brown, Thorne Harbour Health
 - Shaymaa Elkadi, Ruqi Consulting
 - Maggie Hamilton, YSAS
 - Ellie McGrath, Berry Street
 - Kate Melvin, DHS SA (online)
 - Joelle Peters, YSAS (online)
 - Tom Williams, Uniting Communities
-