

Multicultural Summit in Response to Sexual Violence: Feedback and Recommendations Report

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Overview

The inaugural **Multicultural Summit in Response to Sexual Violence**, held on **31 July 2024** and organised by the Multicultural Response to Sexual Violence Working Group, aimed to illuminate the unique barriers faced by culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) populations in Queensland regarding sexual violence. The Summit sought to foster collaborative strategies to enhance access to information, support, and services.

Bringing together over 130 participants, the event featured experts from sexual assault services, multicultural agencies, legal and human rights organisations, healthcare, advocacy groups, and community welfare sectors. It provided a dynamic forum for cross-sector dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and the development of actionable strategies to address the pressing needs of CALD communities.

Background and Rationale

This Summit provided a platform for cross-sector discussions, uniting participants from multicultural, sexual assault, legal, and academic backgrounds. The key objectives were grounded in the following principles:

- 1. Acknowledging Diversity**
Recognising Australian multiculturalism and affirming the right of every individual to safety and support, regardless of cultural background.
- 2. Responding to National Needs**
Aligning with the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*, the Summit addressed challenges CALD communities face, including migration-related abuse, limited access to services, and heightened vulnerabilities due to intersecting forms of discrimination, such as racism and sexism. The National Plan underscores the disproportionate impact of gender-based violence on migrant and refugee women and the compounded risks posed by cultural, linguistic, and immigration barriers.
- 3. Fostering Equity**
Creating a community where individuals from all cultural backgrounds have equitable access to support services and can effectively engage in efforts to combat sexual violence.
- 4. Responding to Identified Needs**
Addressing service gaps for CALD victim-survivors of sexual violence by enhancing cross-sector collaboration and building knowledge and skills within relevant organisations.

Participant Feedback Highlights

Feedback from participants underscored the Summit's value in raising awareness, sparking dialogue, and inspiring action. Key themes included:

Multicultural Response to Sexual Violence Working Group 2024 encourages services, organisations, and CALD communities to make use of this Report. The Working Group ask that use of this Report's content be respectfully referenced thus acknowledging the individuals and communities who attended the inaugural Multicultural Summit 2024, lived experiences and contributions.

1. Raising Awareness and Broadening Perspectives

- Participants deepened their understanding of sexual violence in CALD communities, including complexities such as wartime sexual violence and its long-term impacts.
- Presentations highlighted barriers faced by CALD women and inspired attendees to explore ways to improve service delivery beyond traditional approaches.

2. Fostering Collaboration

- Attendees emphasised the need for partnerships with knowledgeable individuals and services to create more effective support systems.
- The diversity of expertise in the room was celebrated as a catalyst for cross-sector collaboration, enhancing accessibility for marginalised groups.

3. Empowerment and Accountability

- Many attendees acknowledged their responsibility to amplify the voices of victim-survivors and advocate for systemic change.
- A strong call was made for improved practices to reduce barriers to help-seeking for victim-survivors of sexual violence and domestic violence.

4. Action-Oriented Feedback

- Participants proposed leveraging the expertise from the Summit to influence policies at key institutions, such as the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG), Queensland Police Service (QPS), and Queensland Health.
- Suggestions included addressing systemic gaps and improving trauma-informed, culturally responsive practices across sectors.

Key Takeaways

Participants identified the following benefits from the Summit:

- Increased awareness of services available to CALD communities.
- Recognition of the need for trauma-informed training for QPS officers and other service providers.
- Greater understanding of systemic challenges, including visa-related and legal barriers faced by CALD victim-survivors.
- Renewed commitment to creating inclusive spaces that challenge cultural stereotypes and uplift the voices of CALD women.

Recommendations for Future Initiatives

1. Policy and Training

- Develop culturally responsive, trauma-informed training programs for law enforcement, healthcare, and social service providers.
- Advocate for policy reforms to address visa-related barriers and improve justice access for CALD victim-survivors.

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2. Collaborative Advocacy

- Engage CALD community leaders and experts in co-designing strategies to address systemic barriers.
- Strengthen partnerships with services specialising in CALD experiences of sexual violence, domestic violence, and human trafficking.

3. Community Engagement

- Organise follow-up events and consultations to maintain collaboration with CALD communities and service providers.
- Develop culturally appropriate educational materials and outreach campaigns to raise awareness and encourage help-seeking.

4. Data and Accountability

- Establish mechanisms to track outcomes and ensure accountability for organisations responding to CALD victim-survivors.
- Collect and disseminate data to inform evidence-based advocacy and improve services.

Feedback from Speakers Q&A

Participants posed insightful questions, demonstrating a strong interest in systemic change. Key topics included:

- Enhancing protections and workplace rights for migrant workers, particularly under the PALM scheme.
- Improving trauma-informed responses from QPS and addressing intersectional oppressions.
- Advocating for better reporting mechanisms and legal protections for CALD victim-survivors.
- Reducing stigma and barriers to help-seeking for sex workers and other marginalised groups.

Conclusion

The Multicultural Summit in Response to Sexual Violence successfully raised awareness, fostered collaboration, and inspired action among its diverse participants. Continued dialogue and advocacy are essential to addressing the barriers faced by CALD populations in Queensland.

The insights and recommendations from the Summit provide a strong foundation for building a more inclusive and effective response to sexual violence in Queensland communities.

About the Multicultural Response to Sexual Violence Working Group

The Multicultural Response to Sexual Violence Working Group, coordinated by the Brisbane Rape and Incest Survivors Support Centre (BRISSC), values diversity and is committed to promoting culturally inclusive practices, policies, and access in efforts to address and eliminate sexual violence. We strive to create a community in Australia where all individuals, regardless of cultural background, feel safe, well-informed, and where all victim-survivors of sexual violence receive adequate support.

The Working Group addresses barriers to accurate information, access, and support faced by culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) populations in Queensland. This is achieved through roundtable discussions, consultations with key stakeholders, and collaborative efforts to develop and implement practical, culturally informed solutions that enhance inclusivity across all sectors addressing sexual violence and the wellbeing of communities.

The current 15 members of the Working Group are: BRISSC, Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Service, Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS), Basic Rights Queensland, True Relationships and Reproductive Health, World Wellness Group, Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT), Multicultural Australia, Refugee Health Network Queensland, Community, Centre Against Sexual Violence (CASV), Settlement Services International (SSI), UQRespect, Romero Centre and one individual community member.