




Recommendations

Strengthening Domestic and Family Violence Responses Across Eight Services in the Northern Territory

Process Evaluation of the RAMF Champions Implementation Project 2023 - 2026

An aerial photograph of a wide, winding river with a milky, greenish-brown hue, flowing through a dense, vibrant green forest. The river meanders across the landscape, creating large loops and curves. The surrounding terrain is a mix of deep green forest and lighter green, possibly grassy or less dense areas. The sky above is a clear, bright blue with a few wispy white clouds. A semi-transparent, light blue rounded rectangle is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image, containing a quote in bold black text.

“The long-term success of this project depends on adapting the RAMF and all materials to better reflect the contexts, experiences, and needs of remote First Nations communities”. - Participant 1

Recommendations

In consideration of the findings and key learnings, 16 recommendations are made by NTCOSS and the RAMF Champions. Recommendations regarding the RAMF and RAMF training and the broader DFV system are made in acknowledgment of the structural and systemic factors that directly affect implementation efficiency and effectiveness in the 8 RAMF Champion Organisations.

Recommendation 1: Continue to fund the RAMF Champions Project, including a central independent project coordinator, and introduce 5-year funding agreements for RAMF Champion Organisations to support sustainability.

- Resource a dedicated and centralised coordinator to facilitate the Community of Practice (CoP) and provide one-on-one mentoring.
- Continue to resource a RAMF Champion role in identified organisations. Support organisations to create an enabling environment, providing RAMF Champions with sufficient capacity to carry out project activities (0.8 FTE quarantined for the project), participate in at least 80% of CoP meetings, and meet monthly with the Coordinator. Continue to fund RAMF Champions with the same or overlapping footprint in the group to improve collaboration between services.
- Fund at least one in-person CoP session annually to ensure meaningful engagement for remote RAMF Champions.
- Recognise RAMF Champions as experts with both specialist and implementation knowledge, enhancing their credibility and influence within their organisations and the sector through invitations to consultations and other relevant events.
- Ensure dedicated and funded time between rounds of RAMF Champions to embed learnings and implement recommendations arising from RAMF implementation and evaluations.
- Ensure funding length is a minimum of 5-years for a RAMF Champions Implementation project round, and covers the true cost of project delivery, including full-time employment, remote travel to all project sites, operational costs, and professional development.
- Ensure administrative and reporting requirements are manageable for organisations.
- Ensure organisations working in culturally and linguistically diverse settings receive adequate resources to engage necessary cross-cultural supports including interpreters and translation.



Recommendation 2: Develop RAMF implementation phases and a maturity model. This will allow organisations to identify where they are on the RAMF implementation journey to becoming a DFV informed organisation. Include self-evaluation tools for organisations to monitor their progress.

- Define the phases of implementation for RAMF. Completing each phase of implementation corresponds with the level of “RAMF maturity” achieved by the organisation.
- Create a RAMF specific Theory of Change (see draft in Appendix M), and guidance on short-, medium- and long-term outcomes that correspond with the stages of implementation to promote organisations tracking their progress and consistent evaluations across the NT.
- Ensure the evaluation and monitoring guides help to identify previous effective activities, and do not minimise or exclude the existing strengths in communities and organisations that complement RAMF but may sit outside the system.

Recommendation 3: Create a RAMF Champions implementation project induction package. Include orientation training to inform boards and leadership, and RAMF Champions about the Project to increase commitment and readiness.

- Induction packages to be in plain English, recognise and build on the strengths and existing work of communities and organisations in DFV, and prioritise staff centred care, trauma-informed approaches, and whole-of-organisation implementation strategies.
- Key content to cover becoming an Information Sharing Entity, adapting the RAMF to the local context, developing governance structures and authorising environments to support efficient implementation, and clarifying the role of the RAMF Champion.
- Package to provide education on the socio-ecological model of violence prevention and situate RAMF within the broader context of DFV, highlighting that RAMF intersects with other legislation and frameworks and addresses one piece of a complex problem.

Recommendation 4: Produce a suite of culturally safe implementation guides and project management resources. These guides should help organisations to recognise existing community and organisational strengths, adapt the framework to their context, take a whole-of-organisation approach and reduce duplication.

- Resources to be visual, in plain English, non-prescriptive, and include case studies and lessons from RAMF Champions to highlight best practice.
- Key resources could include: a project management guide aligned with implementation phases and organisational RAMF maturity; guidance for remote contexts on translating content to fit context and tools to help adaptations that add and do not remove evidence; whole-of-organisation and team based implementation approaches with suggested governance structures; workforce mapping and organisational audit tools; staff centred care approaches to implementation and tools to support personal and professional safety; guidance on building partnerships and referral pathways; client journey mapping tools; adaptable training packages; template policies and procedure guides; and community engagement tools.

Recommendation 5: Update the RAMF, including training, based on community consultation, to strengthen its application in remote contexts.

A review and update to RAMF could consider:

- A dedicated remote edition of the framework.
- Accessibility, including consideration of plain English and visual aids.
- Guidance for communities and services that do not have access to a Family Safety Framework.
- Whole-of family and whole-of-community experiences of DFV, remote-focused tools, content on healthy relationships, lateral violence, and responding to sexual violence and people using violence.
- Guidance and case studies about early intervention, risk management strategies, and how it can reduce risk.
- Developing client facing cross-cultural tools for explaining the cycle of violence and safety planning.
- Case studies that demonstrate how Information Sharing works between organisations, and case studies where organisations are not Information Sharing Entities.
- Guidance and tools on working with adults using violence, particularly for workers in remote contexts. Ensure this expansion includes comprehensive implementation guides and training.
- The development of a tool that demonstrates how RAMF intersects with other legislation and frameworks, including the Clinical Guideline for Culturally Safe Health Service Responses to Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence in the Northern Territory, the Safe and Together Framework, and the Child Safe Standards.
- An evidence-based, culturally informed update of the CRAT and creation of a pictorial version.
- Embedding staff centred care and staff safety, both personally and professionally, as a key component at the beginning of the framework.
 - Flexibility to ensure implementation aligns with cultural protocols and security in the NT.
 - Addressing needs of staff experiencing violence or vicarious trauma.
- Training modules that correspond with the tiered levels of responsibility (Recommendation 6).
- Reinstating RAMF training in remote communities that has been co-designed and co-delivered with local community leaders.
- More opportunities for RAMF Champion Organisations to complete RAMF train the trainer sessions. Allowing RAMF Champion Organisations to deliver RAMF training to their staff, and to train up local people in remote locations to deliver in communities where RAMF training does not currently occur.
- Supporting RAMF Champions to co-design and develop resources in language for remote locations.

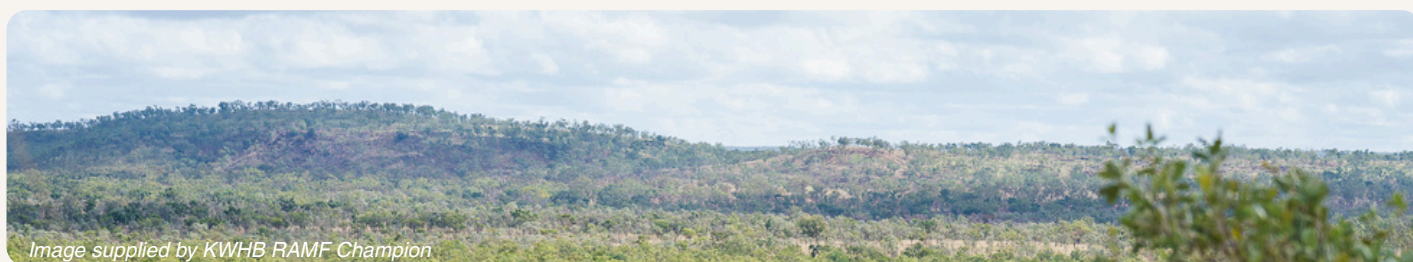


Image supplied by KWHB RAMF Champion

Recommendation 6: Introduce a three-tier, role-based RAMF responsibility framework to replace the current distinction of universal and specialist services.

Key components to include:

- Levels of responsibility: foundational/universal, intermediate, and comprehensive.
 - Foundational / Universal roles are responsible for initial risk identification, initial assessment and appropriate escalation.
 - Intermediate roles are responsible for risk identification, contribution to further assessment, and supported decision-making.
 - Comprehensive roles are responsible for leading risk assessment, completing CRATs, and holding decision-making accountability.
- Clear accountability for CRAT use:
 - Comprehensive-level workers are responsible for leading and completing CRAT assessments, with other roles contributing to risk identification, initial assessment and escalation processes.
- Context-based role expectations:
 - Workers operating in remote settings, where access to other services or police is limited, should be trained and supported to operate at a comprehensive level.
- Workforce mapping tool:
 - Development of a tool to support organisations in mapping roles against RAMF responsibility levels, ensuring alignment between expectations, capability, supervision and remuneration.

Recommendation 7: Invest in strong and visible First Nations leadership across the DFV system, including in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, to improve culturally secure and responsive implementation.

Recommendation 8: Strengthen the NT DFV Workforce and Sector Development Plan to include recommendations that reduce exposure to system level trauma, and role design and supports that improve worker safety. Reference these measures in the section within the RAMF about a supported, safe and capable workforce.

Recommendation 9: Support the development of tools and grants that strengthen staff wellbeing (personal and professional safety) within organisations, ensure they align with the RAMF and current component 5.

Recommendation 10: Increase sustainable opportunities for local community members in remote communities to receive culturally secure, trauma informed RAMF and DFV education, including train the trainer workshops.

Recommendation 11: Develop a live map of all DFV services and projects across the NT to support local service knowledge, referral pathways and regional service coordination, and funding for ongoing updates of all information to ensure currency, completeness and accuracy. Ensure this map collates and builds upon existing mapping projects and consider incorporating this into the existing [NTCommunity](#) Directory and resource updates to the site appropriately.

Recommendation 12: Advocate for and continue to invest in best practice, evidence based DFV education and response systems for statutory services and all NTG workers.

Recommendation 13: Expand local community and organisational capacity to work effectively and safely with adults using violence by providing increased access to training, resources and tools that align with or are part of the RAMF.

Recommendation 14: Increase funding opportunities for culturally secure spaces and services that work with boys and men, and people using violence.

Recommendation 15: Evaluate the impact of RAMF implementation and expansion on the Family Safety Framework (FSF) and resource the FSF according to the findings.

- Expanding RAMF into universal services will increase identification of risk and result in higher referral volumes to the FSF, as more frontline workers are trained to recognise and refer high-risk cases, and the system needs to be able to respond to this increase without bottlenecks and delays.

Recommendation 16: Advocate for flexible, community-wide funding grants to support innovative, whole-of-community DFV responses, particularly in remote communities.

“Nobody experiencing violence arrives at a service needing only a risk assessment. They arrive needing to be believed, supported, and kept safe, and the organisation they walk into needs to be ready for all of that. Healing and prevention too. Clients don't experience violence in neat categories, and organisations can't respond to it that way either. RAMF is a tool, and a good one, but the real question was never just 'are we using the RAMF?', it was 'are we genuinely becoming an organisation that can respond to violence in all its forms?' That's a much bigger ask, and a much more important one”.

- Participant 2



Acknowledgements

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout the Northern Territory (NT) and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present. Aboriginal sovereignty has not been ceded.

Victim-Survivors

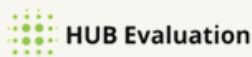
NTCOSS acknowledge and honour the courage, strength, and dignity of all victim-survivors of domestic and family violence (DFV), and of those who speak out, act, and work to improve our community's safety. We remember the people who have lost their lives to DFV in the NT, across Australia, and around the world. We stand in solidarity with victim-survivors, their families, and communities, and recognise the ongoing collective work required to end DFV and create safer, more respectful futures for all.

Authorship

Strengthening Domestic and Family Violence Responses Across Eight Services in the Northern Territory is a publication by the Northern Territory Council of Social Service. The evaluation was conducted and written by Meghan Wright (NTCOSS Coordinator for the Risk Assessment and Management Framework (RAMF) Champions Implementation Project).

Thank you

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Positionality Statement

The Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) is a non-government organisation and the peak body for the social and community service sector in the Northern Territory (NT). NTCOSS's membership is comprised of community managed, non-government, not for profit organisations, which work in social and community service delivery, sector development and advocacy. NTCOSS advocates for and with the domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) sector (the Sector) in the NT to improve safety, wellbeing, economic and social justice outcomes for impacted individuals and communities. The Sector includes Aboriginal Community Controlled DFSV services, Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Services, remote safe houses, women's shelters, DFSV specialist counselling services, women's legal services and specialist sexual violence services. The Sector and associated peaks are committed to working with the NT Government to support and enable partnership.

The NTCOSS Coordinator Meghan Wright (she/her) is an Australian-born, non-Indigenous person, and has been living in Mparntwe/Alice Springs since 2022. She is an academically trained domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) researcher, policy and advocacy worker with lived experience. She recognises that her social location, experiences and perspectives may shape this work and its findings and is committed to ongoing reflection and strengthening her intersectional practice.





Contact information:

M: 2/5 Goyder Road, Parap NT 0820

T: 08 8947 2665

E: admin@ntcoss.org.au

W: ntcoss.org.au

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