

**DEVELOPING A VISION FOR THE  
2<sup>ND</sup> NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN, PEACE AND  
SECURITY**

ISSUE PAPER

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## ***The Australian Civil Society Coalition for WPS***

The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security is a non-partisan and independent coalition of civil society organisations, networks and individuals working to advance the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda in Australia, Asia and the Pacific region and globally.

Our vision is a world in which gender equality, and the contributions and rights of diverse women and girls, are at the forefront of transforming conflict to build peace.

[www.wpscoalition.org](http://www.wpscoalition.org)

### ***Issue Papers***

The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women Peace and Security commissioned the writing of thematically focused Issue Papers to inform the development of Australia's second National Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2nd NAP) and to advance the discussion on women, peace and security in Australia. These Issue Papers build on key themes outlined in "[Listening to Women's Voice and Making the Connections to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Fifth Report of the Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security.](#)"

### ***Issue Paper Contributors***

The Australian WPS Coalition thanks Katrina Lee-Koo and Barbara O'Dwyer for their contribution.

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**Barbara O'Dwyer** is an aid and development specialist focusing on gender, peacebuilding and humanitarian affairs with a Masters in Peace Studies. She represents the Coalition on the Australian National Action Plan Inter-Departmental Committee and is the immediate past-president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) Australia.

## Vision of the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

National Action Plans require a consistently understood and communicated vision statement. A clearly articulated vision facilitates a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to effective implementation. In fact, the NAP's vision should be the primary driving force for designing the plan: its outcomes, activities, indicators, and measures of impact should all be directly anchored to its vision.

Without a clear vision, implementing agencies may take the NAP in different directions as agencies impose their internal institutional priorities and cultures on NAP implementation. The imposition of internal institutional priorities may lead to inconsistent, uneven, or contradictory implementation. To ensure a consistent understanding of the vision and promote better alignment with an implementation plan, some countries like the Netherlands, UK and Canada have adopted a Theory of Change approach - a one-page 'map' which outlines how change is to be achieved – to underpin their NAPs.

To be meaningful, a NAP's vision must:

- Be manageable within the enabling environment.
- Be clearly articulated and consistently understood across stakeholders.
- Resonate with the WPS agenda.
- Connect with the activities, outcomes and measures of impact.

### *A Vision statement*

The vision of the second Australian NAP should focus upon the roles that women and girls play in the prevention of armed conflict and violence, as well as their roles in the transition of existing violence into sustainable peace. For example:

*Australia's commitment to the women, peace and security agenda is founded on promoting gender equality to achieve sustainable peace through enabling the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, girls and other marginalised gender identities in all activities that prevent conflict, transition communities out of conflict, and address human insecurity.*

This vision is grounded in a feminist approach to advancing peace and security which is first and foremost about the long-term prevention of violent conflict and enabling sustainable peace. Emerging research is demonstrating that the meaningful participation of women is central to sustainable approaches to peace agreements and peace processes, disaster risk reduction strategies and humanitarian responses to disaster, countering violent extremism, and conflict prevention and communal peacebuilding. In practice, this means supporting women's substantive participation in all aspects of peace and security policy development and implementation.

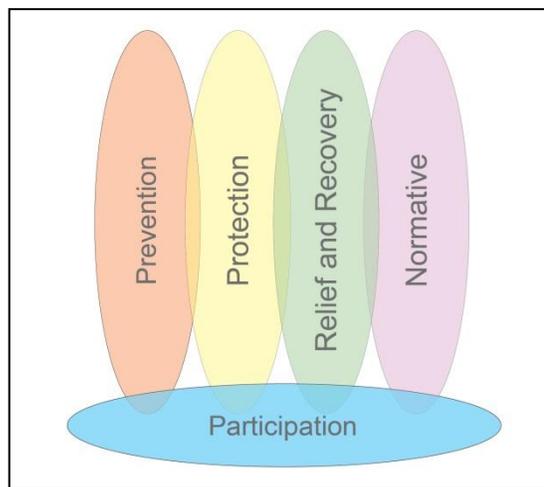
The following objectives should guide the development of 2<sup>nd</sup> NAP's vision:

- Supporting women's substantive participation in conflict prevention, protection, post-conflict reconstruction, and relief and recovery.

- Identifying and addressing the structural, cultural and political barriers to women’s participation.
- Protecting and promoting women’s human rights in disaster and conflict-affected societies.
- Making explicit the link between achieving gender equality and peace and security.

### **What Does This Mean for Australia’s Next NAP?**

The creation of a vision is the opportunity to build a common focus for the National Action Plan. A vision statement offers implementing actors and stakeholders a focus which can guide their decisions and activities, and a goal against which impact can be measured. The meaningful participation of women, girls and other marginalised gender identities will be the key to addressing all intersecting peace and security challenges. Visualising the intersecting five pillars of the Australian National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security as follows might be useful:



**Figure 1: Full, equal and meaningful participation forms the foundation for the remaining pillars of the women, peace and security agenda.**

Australia is well-placed to focus its women, peace and security efforts upon transforming peace and security through the meaningful participation of women, girls and other marginalised gender identities. Australia has already committed to supporting women’s participation and leadership in the region through aid and development policy.

Furthermore, the meaningful participation of women connects (a) with implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (in particular goals 5 and 16), (b) World Humanitarian Summit Grand Bargain commitments, (c) first NAP commitments, (d) on the Human Rights Council, and (e) departmental policies to integrate gender into everyday practice (e.g. DFAT’s Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Strategy, AFP’s International Operations Gender Strategy and Defence Implementation Plan).

Where policy design and programming is concerned, it is important to consider the following in efforts for pursuing women’s meaningful participation:

- **Inter-sectionality:** women are not a homogenous group and efforts must always be made to ensure the inclusion of the *most marginalised women* – which may include women of ethnic or religious minority groupings, differently abled women, rural women, and women

from lower socio-economic groupings, women with different sexual orientations, among others

- **Inter-generationality:** young women and older women are often excluded from WPS discussions and activities. However, they have unique needs and insights. For example, young women in the Pacific are showing leadership on climate change in ways that reflect both generational and gender-based difference
- **Home and abroad:** facilitation of women's participation needs to happen in domestic peace and security policymaking as well as the sites abroad where Australia operates

Furthermore, the NAP's design must account for the following:

- **Define meaningful participation:** a clear definition of what constitutes meaningful participation must be established and agreed to by all stakeholders, especially implementing actors.
- This definition and following implementation must **align with gender equality and a human rights-based approach**
- Women's meaningful participation must be **integrated across all areas of peace and security policy making**
- Develop a meaningful approach to **measure the impact of women's meaningful participation**. Assessing impact must move beyond quantitative accounts of 'how many women participate' to a mixed method approach which articulates the short-term and sustained impact of women's participation.

## **Recommendations**

The Coalition recommends that the Australian government should:

1. Undertake broad consultations with stakeholders to determine the vision of the next NAP
2. Consider placing women's meaningful participation – particularly in conflict prevention - as a core part of the vision of the next NAP
3. Ensure that the vision is communicated clearly, taking time to define terms and discuss the justification for the vision and its relationship to the WPS agenda
4. Ensure that the vision guides the development of the NAP and sits at the heart of all activities, priority areas or focus countries
5. Develop monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks which test whether the vision is being achieved
6. Consider doing so through the development of a Theory of Change.

## **Want to know more?**

Barbara K. Trojanowska, Katrina Lee-Koo, Luke Johnson, National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security: Eight Countries in Focus. 2018.

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[http://wpscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CivilSociety\\_2018\\_report\\_ART\\_web.pdf](http://wpscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CivilSociety_2018_report_ART_web.pdf)

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