

2018

Strengthening the Engagement of Australian Civil Society in Australia's Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

SIXTH REPORT OF THE ANNUAL CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY



The Australian Civil Society Coalition On Women, Peace And Security

The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security (WPS Coalition) is a voluntary, 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 across the globe.

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



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The WPS Coalition gratefully acknowledges the financial support for the 2018 Dialogue provided by the Australian Civil-Military Centre. Also, generous in-kind and voluntary support from members of the Dialogue Working Group (Ludmilla Kwitko, Anu Mundkur, Barbara O’Dwyer, Natasha Singh Raghuvansi, and Laura Shepherd) has significantly contributed to the planning and implementation of the 2018 Dialogue. The WPS Coalition would also like to thank Kate MacMaster (Founder and Director Studio Wild) for facilitating the Roundtables and Policy Dialogue; the Roundtable and Policy Dialogue scribes; and all the Roundtable and Policy Dialogue participants, who shared their ideas, stories, and contributions to promote diverse women’s voices of Australia in speaking about women, peace, and security.

The WPS Coalition looks forward to working further with all participants on the women, peace, and security agenda, particularly as Australia moves to develop its second National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security in 2019.

COPYRIGHT



With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, this work is licensed under a creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>

ATTRIBUTION

This publication should be attributed as follows: Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security, *Strengthening the Engagement of Australian Civil Society in Australia’s Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security: Sixth Report of the Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security*. 2019.

ISSN 2209-1211

Contents

Executive Summary **4**

Section 1: **Introduction** **7**

Background 7

Final Independent Review (FIR) 8

Section 2: **The Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women Peace and Security** **10**

Aims of the Dialogue 10

The 2018 Annual Civil Society Dialogue 10

The Roundtables 11

The Policy Dialogue 11

Section 3: **Outcomes of the Roundtables and the Policy Dialogue** **13**

1. Resourcing civil society engagement 13

2. Enabling diversity 15

3. Representation, partnerships and collaboration 17

4. Strengthening accountability 18

Section 4: **Looking forward to 2019 and NAP2** **21**

Annex **22**

Civil society engagement with the WPS agenda 23

The Global context 23

The Australian context 24

Civil society's role in the implementation of Australia's first NAP 25

Endnotes 26

Executive Summary

.....

In 2018, the Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security (WPS Coalition) brought together diverse women and civil society organisations with one goal in mind: to determine how best to strengthen civil society engagement during the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of Australia’s second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP2). This report provides clear recommendations on how to strengthen this engagement.

1 RESOURCING CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

- 1A Explore options for core funding for a CSO platform or WPS Coalition.
- 1B Increase resources allocated to the Office for Women (OFW) for their role in coordinating the work of government NAP stakeholders and engagement with CSOs.
- 1C Commit to a fee-for-service model for advice provided to individual government NAP stakeholders by CSOs or a CSO platform/WPS Coalition.
- 1D Co-design a resourced Civil Society-Government Engagement Strategy that recognises the need for a range of approaches to engage with diverse CSO actors and groups.

2 ENABLING DIVERSITY

- 2A Make explicit the links between the WPS agenda and domestic understandings and issues of peace and security by connecting the WPS agenda with domestic priorities and using existing networks for shared learning opportunities.
- 2B Ensure consultations and roundtables are inclusive by making concerted efforts to resource and reach out to young women, Indigenous women, migrant/diaspora women, and women with disabilities and effectively utilising the existing expansive networks of organisations to reach out to these diverse groups.
- 2C Broaden the discussions and engagements beyond the operational focus of the NAP to focus on broader strategic discussions of peace and security (i.e. to include human security issues, preventing violence against women and Sustainable Development Goals).
- 2D Expand the understanding of needs, interests, and capacities of diverse CSOs interested in peace and security issues, locally and regionally, for transparency of purpose.
- 2E Commit to communicating in an accessible way, avoiding the use of bureaucratic and technical language in the NAP and WPS discussions, to promote broader engagement of diverse WPS stakeholders.
- 2F Gather the views of diverse women in the region on WPS issues and how Australia’s NAP affects them by reaching out to diverse women’s CSOs beyond Australia.
- 2G Initiate a dialogue on WPS agenda during deployment operations as part of information and training for deployments.

3 REPRESENTATION, PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

3A CSOs and the WPS Coalition should:

- Outline a structure for a CSO platform that draws on national and international good practice and recognises the need for a resourced Secretariat (hosted by a CSO).
- Articulate the purpose of the CSO platform or WPS Coalition.
- Develop a strategy to promote greater involvement among members of the CSO platform or WPS Coalition.
- Explore entry points, other than the NAP, to engage with the government in conversations on WPS.
- Take leadership for ‘domesticating the NAP’ by articulating key domestic issues related to peace and security and tracking government’s commitments on these issues.
- Commit to developing NAP shadow reports and contributing to other shadow reporting mechanisms on WPS issues (e.g. CEDAW).
- Clarify options for CSO engagement in NAP2 governance structures.

4 STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY

- 4A Principles of transparency and openness must govern CSO engagement with each other and civil society-government engagement.
- 4B NAP2 must include adequate resources to enable government reporting on the NAP, CSOs annual/shadow reports, and independent reviews of the NAP.
- 4C NAP2 needs to develop a clear Communications Strategy to ensure timely and effective information sharing by government around the NAP and WPS, in easily accessible language.
- 4D Mandate the need for the government to respond to recommendations in the CSO annual/shadow reports and independent reviews.
- 4E Government-led consultations should provide feedback to participants regarding the outcomes of government-civil society consultations (e.g. emerging themes, next steps, and information about which recommendations were taken up, which were not, and why).

The 2018 Annual Civil Society Dialogue has delivered a strong and consistent message about the important role of civil society, and the need for strengthening engagement with civil society, in contributing to the WPS agenda. These points have been noted many times over the last 15-20 years in various reports, analysis and recommendations. With NAP2 currently under development, now is the time to act.

Introduction

.....

In 2018, the Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security (WPS Coalition) brought together diverse women and civil society organisations with one goal in mind: to determine how best to strengthen civil society engagement during the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of Australia's second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP2). This report provides clear recommendations on how to strengthen this engagement.

NAP2 is still in the early stages of development. The critical issues, recommendations, and implementation options presented in this report therefore provide a timely and useful resource for the development of NAP2 during 2019. They offer a clear articulation of principles, processes, and mechanisms that will promote and strengthen ongoing engagement between civil society and the government.

BACKGROUND

Australia is in the process of developing its second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), which the Australian Government anticipates launching by mid-2019. There is a critical window of opportunity to influence the development process to ensure the meaningful engagement of civil society in the implementation, governance, and monitoring and evaluation of NAP2.

The vital role of civil society in shaping and advancing the WPS agenda has been consistently demonstrated within the global and Australian contexts and is detailed in Annex 1. Mobilisation efforts by women's civil society organisations (CSOs) were instrumental in creating space for the issues of women's rights and needs, in conflict and conflict-affected settings, being discussed as matters of international peace and security within the United Nations architecture.

The WPS agenda's conventional story began within the UN Security Council, but it was the leadership of civil society that led to the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325 – the first resolution that specifically addressed the impact of war and conflict on women and women's contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable peace. In fact, Resolution 1325:

May well be the only Security Council resolution for which the groundwork, the diplomacy and lobbying, the drafting and redrafting, was almost entirely the work of civil society, of non-governmental organisations. Certainly, it was the first in which the actors were almost all women.¹

In Australia, civil society played a vital role in advocating for the adoption of the WPS agenda and the development of the first NAP (NAP1). While this was recognised in NAP1, the Plan failed to put formal mechanisms in place to facilitate civil society's meaningful engagement in the process – a significant shortfall. The Final Independent Review, which assessed the effectiveness and impact of NAP1, specifically noted the need for a more explicit, more formalised mandate for engaging with civil society. Additionally, it highlighted the importance of appropriate funding for the success of future WPS engagement. The relationship between civil society and government:

Was held up by many stakeholders, from both government and civil society organisations, as a real strength and a key feature of Australia’s international reputation in the WPS space. This relationship is both productive and rare internationally, and should be properly resourced and supported going forward. Civil society organisations can make a valuable contribution to establishing contextual knowledge and technical expertise and this kind of information-sharing between government and civil society should be facilitated.²

Currently, civil society’s relationship with government is maintained by the willingness and capacity of civil society actors to volunteer their time and expertise. This is a significant barrier to the engagement and representation of diverse women and girls in Australian society.

FINAL INDEPENDENT REVIEW

These findings were echoed in the Final Independent Review (FIR) of NAP1, which was conducted by an independent third party contracted by the Office for Women in 2018.³

The FIR makes 19 recommendations, three of which specifically note civil society. However, it should be acknowledged that the totality of recommendations has implications for civil society engagement in informing the second NAP.⁴

Recommendation 2:

Clearly define, document and allocate budget for an appropriate mechanism to facilitate constructive and ongoing engagement with civil society; including consideration of funding a civil society secretariat for WPS.

Recommendation 13:

Ensure that civil society inputs are explicitly described in any theory of change and that there are associated measures of change in the M&E framework to monitor and measure the value of their contributions.

Recommendation 14:

Ensure that Annual Civil Society Report Cards and Civil Society Dialogues are formally acknowledged as accountability mechanisms and explicitly and purposely mapped onto /into the formal framework for monitoring and evaluation.

Despite the limited formal mechanisms facilitating engagement, and the limited resourcing, the WPS Coalition remains committed to strengthening diverse women’s substantive participation in conflict prevention and all aspects of peacebuilding, peacemaking, and post-conflict reconstruction. Civil society engagement in NAP2 is of critical importance to the advancement of the WPS agenda and a NAP that is representative of and accountable to Australian civil society.

SECTION 2:

The Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women Peace and Security





The Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women Peace and Security

The Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security (the Dialogue) is a key process through which civil society and government engage in constructive dialogue on WPS issues.⁵ Coordinated by the WPS Coalition, the Dialogue creates a platform for CSOs, diverse women and girls, diaspora women, and gender minorities, to provide input into the direction of the WPS agenda.⁶

AIMS OF THE DIALOGUE

1

Elevate the national discussion on WPS

2

Facilitate effective deliberations between civil society and government on WPS in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1325

3

Support shadow reporting on the Australian NAP

THE 2018 ANNUAL CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE

In 2018, the focus of the Dialogue was on the nature, resourcing and mechanisms for ongoing civil society engagement in the development, implementation and monitoring of the NAP2. The outcomes of the 2018 Dialogue reinforce the need for government to move beyond merely appreciating the role of Australian civil society by establishing and adequately resourcing a formal mechanism for civil society engagement. Formalising and resourcing a mechanism for civil society engagement will enable diverse voices to participate, deliver meaningful representation, and strengthen more accountable mechanisms to be implemented across the NAP.

The Dialogue provided an opportunity to discuss the use of the NAP2 as a tool for bringing about change in how government and civil society work together for peace and security, gender justice, and to strengthen diverse women's substantive participation in conflict prevention, and all aspects of peacebuilding, peacemaking and post-conflict reconstruction.

The 2018 Dialogue was structured in two complementary parts: The Civil Society Roundtables (the Roundtables), and the Civil Society-Government Policy Dialogue (the Policy Dialogue).

THE ROUNDTABLES

The Roundtables were held on 13-15 November 2018 in Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra, with a teleconference on 16 November 2018. They provided an opportunity to discuss the role of civil society in the development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of NAP2, the processes and mechanisms required within civil society and between civil society and government to successfully tackle WPS issues, and the significant issue of how to resource them. In attendance were civil society organisations (CSOs), especially women's CSOs, and diverse women and girls, diaspora women, and gender minorities.⁷

The Roundtables centred around the following questions:

1

LOOKING BACK

- What worked well in the NAP1 engagement?
- What didn't work effectively?
- What needs to be changed?

2

LOOKING AROUND

- Exploring good practice from around the world

3

LOOKING FORWARD

- What will enable us to work effectively?
- Who should be involved in the development and implementation of NAP2, and how can we make that a reality?

THE POLICY DIALOGUE

Held in Canberra on 29 November 2018, the Policy Dialogue focused on drawing out the implications of findings from the Roundtable. Key NAP government stakeholders, diverse women's organisations and other CSOs participated in discussions centred around three broad questions:

1

What are some of the good practice examples of government-civil society engagement in terms of WPS and other policy areas? In your view, what enables success, what makes it effective? What do you find challenging about engaging with civil society?

2

How do the issues raised at the civil society Roundtables confirm, challenge, and/or develop understandings of civil society's engagement in NAP development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation?

3

What mechanisms and processes should be established to promote ongoing engagement between civil society and government, including government departments, around NAP2? How should these mechanisms and processes be resourced?

Outcomes of the Roundtables and the Policy Dialogue

Four key themes emerged as critical issues in the Roundtables and were unanimously agreed at the Policy Dialogue:

1 resourcing	2 enabling diversity	3 representation	4 accountability
-----------------	-------------------------	---------------------	---------------------

The recommendations on each of the critical issues, have important implications for the development, implementation, governance, and monitoring and evaluation of NAP2.

1. RESOURCING CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

Resourcing was identified as the most significant issue for civil society's effective and meaningful engagement in developing NAP2. Crucially, resourcing was identified as necessary for both meaningful engagement between civil society and government, and in order to support and sustain a civil society platform like the WPS Coalition. This would create a formal resourced space for CSOs, WPS Coalition and government to engage in a meaningful manner to ensure equal representation of diverse views on peace and security. The creation of a formal space will drive and institutionalise government-civil society engagement, particularly in a climate of shrinking civil society spaces.

Second, CSOs need space to facilitate more regular and sustained engagement outside formal mechanisms that focus on engaging with government. This would enable an expanded discourse on peace (beyond 'a lack of conflict') and security (protection of borders/counter-terrorism) towards a progressive, holistic human security approach.

International examples

In reviewing examples of NAP practices globally, a broad range of models of civil society-government engagement were identified. These include activities funded by national governments to resource civil society and government engagement, from monitoring and reporting on NAP commitments, to organising roundtables and consultations within CSOs and between civil society and governments.

In some cases, national governments contribute, in part, to core funding for a WPS network, alliance, or coalition. GAPS UK is a standout example, where organisations who are members of the WPS peak body pay a membership fee to fund dedicated staff and the UK Government provides specific grants to fund NAP-related activities (e.g. CSO consultations for NAP development). Across the board, networks, alliances, and coalitions are heavily reliant on the voluntary labour of members to resource their work.⁸

Valuing civil society expertise

There is an implicit expectation by governments – and to some extent civil society networks, alliances, and coalitions – that engagement in these spaces is voluntary. As an unfortunate result, the technical advice and expertise provided by civil society on the WPS agenda, and the NAP in particular, has resulted in government significantly undervaluing the knowledge and skills that diverse women and their organisations have brought, and continue to bring, to the WPS table over the years.

In Australia, the Government's contribution has been to fund Annual Civil Society Dialogues and Reports since 2013. This has been a positive foundation for civil society-government engagement. However, reduced funding has affected the ability to build broader and more inclusive participation in the Annual Dialogues. Also, there is a lack of core resourcing for the WPS Coalition to carry out its role in organising the Dialogues, sustain ongoing engagement with members and other CSO partners, and to represent civil society on NAP governance bodies, which is a fundamental challenge. These activities are maintained on behalf of civil society by individual volunteers and in-kind contributions from CSOs.

RECOMMENDATION 1A:

Explore options for core funding for a CSO platform or WPS Coalition

CSOs, in partnership with NAP2 government stakeholders, should develop a costed options paper to fund a secretariat for a CSO platform or WPS Coalition. The options paper, keeping in mind that the independence of CSOs is of paramount importance, should:

- Assess the funding requirements based on obligations for staffing the Secretariat and resourcing the work of the CSO platform or WPS Coalition
- Explore the feasibility of potential funding models ranging from GAPS UK membership fees to mechanisms that fund the Australian National Women's Alliances to ad hoc and dedicated government grants, and philanthropic funding.
- Document and record volunteer contributions from CSO members of the CSO platform/ WPS Coalition.

RECOMMENDATION 1B:

Increase resources allocated to the Office for Women (OFW) for their role in coordinating the work of government NAP stakeholders and engagement with CSOs

The 2019 budget and subsequent budgets, during the life of NAP2, should include specific resources allocated to OFW for its work associated with WPS, NAP2 development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, governance, and coordination and support for civil society engagement.

RECOMMENDATION 1C:

Commit to a fee-for-service model for advice provided to individual government NAP stakeholders by CSOs or a CSO platform/ WPS Coalition

- Explore paying sitting fees and cost reimbursements for civil society participation on NAP governance mechanisms.
- Clarify governance mechanisms for NAP2, especially the roles of civil society (if any) in such mechanism so that CSOs/CSO platform/WPS Coalition can operate as a market-based technical assistance provider.



RECOMMENDATION 1D:

Co-design a resourced Civil Society-Government Engagement Strategy that recognises the need for a range of approaches to engage with diverse CSO actors and groups

- The purpose of the Strategy would be to identify strategic opportunities for CSOs and government to work together to advance the WPS agenda. The Strategy should be based on shared values and objectives with a strong focus on monitoring and evaluation, learning and sharing of best practice on achieving WPS and NAP commitments.
- The Strategy should identify:
 - Key points for engagement throughout the NAP's lifespan, the purpose of engagement at each of these points and engagement mechanisms that are most appropriate for each stage (e.g. online discussions, face-to-face consultation, expert roundtables, etc.).
 - Different levels of engagement (ministerial, NAP governance structures, national/state etc.).
 - Frequency of engagement (e.g. Annual Ministerial Roundtable; issue-based discussions every two months; side meeting with the IDC every time they meet etc.).
 - Multiple modes of engagement in order to support diverse groups (especially the most marginalised voices) to engagement on WPS issues including but not limited to annual dialogues, communities of practice, webinars, websites, teleconferences, and meetings.
- The Strategy should include a fit for purpose monitoring and evaluation framework that allows CSOs and the Government to undertake an annual *Health of the Partnership* check.
- Explore engagement with CSOs in conflict-affected areas.

2. ENABLING DIVERSITY

A second theme emerged around enabling more effective engagement across the diversity of women and CSOs. Reaching out more widely to young women, Indigenous women, migrant and diaspora women, and disabled women, as well as the organisations that represent them, was seen as challenging for both government and the WPS Coalition. This theme connected two significant issues: the alienating 'bureaucratic and technical language' of the NAP, and the need to make a tangible, explicit link between the NAP, which is internationally focussed, and the relevance and meaning of the NAP in domestic and local contexts. This theme reinforces the findings of the 2017 Dialogue, which listened to the diversity of voices from women and girls in expressing their views on what peace and security mean in practice today.⁹

This theme is of particular importance in 2018. The peace and security agenda has been framed as an aid and foreign policy agenda. As such, it has been internationally focussed, which has left domestic women's organisations, and the lived experience of Australian women, largely out of the equation. At home, there is a strong perception that CSOs working overseas are more involved in dialogue with government. When combined with the continued lack of resourcing provided to local CSOs and limited outreach to diverse women's groups, this has meant that engaging with complex and diverse communities of women remains challenging. The message here is simple: one size does not fit all.

Specifically, the current NAP has impacted on whether individuals or domestic organisations feel part of the WPS conversation. This means that we need to rethink engagement and create spaces beyond roundtables and dialogues. We need new engagement spaces that are safe, valued, respectful, and respected. We also need to broaden the way we think about civil society more generally, expanding the conversation beyond just domestic and international NGOs. We need to reflect on who has (and does not have) the capacity to speak and be heard, particularly where bureaucratic and technical language makes the WPS discussion inaccessible.

CSOs and government will also need to consider good practice in engaging men and working on masculinities in the WPS agenda.

More needs to be done by both government and civil society to engage diverse voices in all aspects of NAP development and implementation (including monitoring and evaluation) and WPS issues more broadly. Equally important is ensuring that any civil society platform (like the WPS Coalition) and government framework reflects diversity in its governance structures.

RECOMMENDATION 2A:

Make explicit the links between the WPS agenda and domestic understandings and issues of peace and security by connecting the WPS agenda with domestic priorities and using existing networks for shared learning opportunities

Actors involved in WPS should work to connect across WPS issues and activities (e.g. violence prevention, refugee advocacy, stopping the flow of small arms and light weapons); both government and civil society organisations should facilitate these connections through practice and policy.

RECOMMENDATION 2B:

Ensure consultations and roundtables are inclusive by making concerted efforts to resource and reach out to young women, Indigenous women, migrant/diaspora women, and women with disabilities and effectively utilising the existing expansive networks of organisations to reach out to these diverse groups

The ability of the most marginalised groups to participate in consultations, focus groups, and other deliberative activity is often limited by resource and time constraints. Government and CSOs should plan well in advance to facilitate such participation in WPS activities and there should be specific resources available to support inclusion.

RECOMMENDATION 2C:

Broaden the discussions and engagements beyond the operational focus of the NAP to focus on broader strategic discussions of peace and security (i.e. to include human security issues, preventing violence against women, and Sustainable Development Goals)

The WPS agenda was developed in a context of shifting security discourse at the UN, where human security as a concept was becoming more widely used. With its broad focus on conflict prevention, the WPS connects to human security, development, peacebuilding, and the prevention of violence in the household. These connections should be drawn out explicitly and explored to leverage the expertise of Australian civil society on these issues and strengthen the WPS agenda in Australia.

RECOMMENDATION 2D:

Expand the understanding of needs, interests, and capacities of diverse CSOs interested in peace and security issues, locally and regionally, for transparency of purpose and outcomes

Dedicated resources to fund the creation of an expert map would assist in developing an enhanced understanding of the wide range of expertise within Australia and across the region.

RECOMMENDATION 2E:

Commit to communicating in an accessible way, avoiding the use of bureaucratic and technical language in the NAP and WPS discussions, to promote broader engagement of diverse WPS stakeholders

Many participants in Roundtables and Policy Dialogues have commented that the use of jargon, acronyms, and technical terminology can be alienating and result in self-selection out of WPS work. This may also reflect the underlying issue of not understanding the WPS agenda, and specifically its link to domestic agendas. Care must be taken to communicate in plain language. Resources could be made available to translate key documents into languages other than English.

RECOMMENDATION 2F:

Gather the views of diverse women in the region on WPS issues and how Australia's NAP affects them by reaching out to diverse women's CSOs beyond Australia

Many CSOs across Australia and across the region have extensive networks and work regularly with women's organisations whose perspectives are not yet included in WPS work in Australia. Once an expert map is produced (under 2D above), the map could be used to bring in more diverse perspectives.

3. REPRESENTATION, PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Linked to the theme of 'enabling diversity' is the issue of representation, particularly the question of how civil society representatives reflect diverse voices in discussions with government on current NAP governance structures (i.e. the Interdepartmental Committee and its Subcommittee)¹⁰. This is part of a much broader question about what civil society and government understand as civil society's role in NAP governance and the NAP overall.

For example, participating inside the current NAP governance model means operating within a bureaucratic framework of non-disclosure clauses and short response times to documentation. This makes it especially challenging to widely canvass CSOs for their input and hinders their ability to provide meaningful feedback on discussions. There is also a concern among CSOs regarding the instrumentalisation of their engagement, where civil society is seen as a resource to inform policy and provide expertise and knowledge, rather than a partner and collaborator in policymaking. This is particularly clear as government stakeholders own the NAP and lead on development and implementation. This leaves civil society with an important accountability role, and also a role that is currently complicated by differing principles around openness and transparency. CSOs also need space to facilitate more regular and sustained engagement outside formal mechanisms that focus on engaging with government.

Photo credit: Kate MacMaster, Studio Wild



Looking at good practice from across the world¹¹, two consistent patterns emerge. First, formal resourced spaces for civil society-government engagement can take many forms, including advisory groups, annual meetings, informal periodic meetings, annual consultations, and roundtables, and can reflect what works best in a particular country context. Second, the civil society-only space (e.g. networks, alliances, coalitions) needs hosting by a CSO or NGO, and clear and effective governance structures. Currently, a member of the network often provides some administrative support to the Coalition as an in-kind contribution.

RECOMMENDATION 3: CSOs and the WPS Coalition should:

- Outline a structure for a CSO platform that draws on national and international good practice and recognises the need for a resourced Secretariat (hosted by a CSO) that drives engagement with diverse women and their organisations as well as engagement with the Australian Government and departments with portfolio responsibilities in the NAP.
- Articulate the purpose of the CSO platform or WPS Coalition – including but not limited to raising awareness about the WPS agenda and the NAP among civil society; engaging diverse CSOs, women and their organisations to exchange knowledge and share expertise in advancing the WPS agenda; supporting the government to bring diverse women’s voices to discussions on WPS; acting as an advocacy platform that holds government accountable to its WPS and NAP commitments (through reporting, monitoring and evaluation).
- Develop a strategy to promote greater involvement among members of the CSO platform or WPS Coalition.
- Take leadership for ‘domesticating the NAP’ by articulating key domestic issues related to peace and security and tracking government’s commitments on these issues.
- Commit to developing NAP shadow reports and contributing to other shadow reporting mechanisms on WPS issues (e.g. CEDAW).
- Clarify options for CSO engagement in NAP2 governance structures.

4. STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability was acknowledged as a critical issue to be addressed in NAP2. In particular, CSOs are concerned about the lack of information sharing by government around the NAP and WPS. Where information was shared, it was not easily accessible as a result of overly bureaucratic and technical language.

Currently, the only form of public accountability that exists is vertical, when government tables its biannual NAP Progress Reports before the Australian Senate. There appears to be little discussion of the reports’ content in the Australian Parliament. Equally, there appears to be no obligation on government to respond to recommendations and assessments in the Civil Society Annual Dialogue Reports or the recommendations in the Interim (2015) and Final (2018) Independent Reviews, undertaken as part of the monitoring and evaluation of NAP1.

A significant challenge, repeatedly highlighted and acknowledged by government and CSOs, is the lack of a robust monitoring and evaluation framework informed by a theory of change. This gap makes it difficult to assess progress and the impact of the NAP. Along with the lack of information sharing by government (and despite NAP Progress Reports), it remains difficult to determine what is happening in WPS in Australia, and to assess its effectiveness.

At the same time, the WPS Coalition, or any form of CSO platform, network, or alliance, must be accountable to its members. The inclusion of civil society representatives in the current NAP governance structure has implications for downward accountability to WPS Coalition and CSO platform members. If the current NAP governance structure were to continue, then the WPS Coalition or any future CSO platform, network, or alliance must consider the implications of non-disclosure clauses and manage the associated risk to membership accountability.

The development of NAP2 presents an opportunity to strengthen accountability and governance for NAP commitments as well as WPS commitments more broadly.

RECOMMENDATION 4A:

Principles of transparency and openness must govern CSO engagement with each other and civil society-government engagement

- Recognise that full transparency and openness may not be possible due to confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements.
- Determine how accountability and transparency can be operationalised across CSOs, and between CSOs and government.
- Determine to whom and for what CSOs are accountable and what the broader implications are for civil society.

RECOMMENDATION 4B:

NAP2 must include adequate resources to enable government reporting on the NAP, CSOs annual/shadow reports, and independent reviews of the NAP

- The 2019 budget and subsequent budgets, during the life of NAP2, should include specific resources allocated for NAP monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.
- The CSO platform or the WPS Coalition will also have access to adequate funds to undertake shadow reporting and monitoring activities.

RECOMMENDATION 4C:

NAP2 needs to develop a clear communications strategy to ensure timely and effective information sharing by government around the NAP and WPS, in easily accessible language

- Ensure that NAP2 utilises clear and accessible language.
- Ensure that the Communications Strategy clearly defines the structure and roles of the NAP regarding governance, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.
- Include details on how and where timely WPS and NAP information can be accessed.

RECOMMENDATION 4D:

Mandate the need for the government to respond to recommendations in the CSO annual/shadow reports and independent reviews.

- As part of NAP2, clarify the parliamentary and public reporting requirements and build the shadow reports and independent reviews directly into the monitoring and evaluation framework.

Recommendation 4E:

Government-led consultations should provide feedback to participants regarding the outcomes of government-civil society consultations (e.g. emerging themes, next steps, and information about which recommendations were taken up, which were not, and why).

- Ensure that government publicly communicates the timing of NAP2's draft release, and what the process for consultation will be. Additionally, ensure a mechanism exists for government to incorporate CSO recommendations and provide a rationale for recommendations that were not incorporated.



Looking forward to 2019 and NAP2

.....

The 2018 Annual Civil Society Dialogue has delivered a strong and consistent message about the important role of civil society, and the need for strengthening engagement with civil society, in contributing to the WPS agenda. These points have been noted many times over the last 15-20 years in various reports, analysis and recommendations.¹² With NAP2 currently under development, now is the time to act.

Participants in the Roundtables and the Policy Dialogue unanimously agreed that there needs to be a clearly articulated role for ongoing engagement, both within civil society and between government and civil society, on WPS issues during NAP2 development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. This requires clear definition of roles, policy, and principles focused around the four key areas identified across the Roundtables and Policy Dialogue, namely: resourcing civil society engagement; enabling diversity; representation, partnership, and collaboration; and accountability.

The outcomes of the Dialogue also emphasise that the process surrounding the development and implementation of NAP2 needs to be accessible to civil society. Technical and bureaucratic language needs to be discarded, and diverse voices must both contribute and be heard.

The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women Peace and Security looks forward to working in partnership with all stakeholders, including government, civil society organisations, and the diversity of civil society to build, promote, and sustain a WPS agenda that respects gender equality, takes a human security approach to peace and security, and works for women’s meaningful participation in conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding.

ANNEX



Civil society engagement with the WPS agenda

.....

This Annex sets out the global and Australian contexts for the consideration of key issues, principles and mechanisms that underpin civil society engagement with the government and across civil society more broadly, around Australia’s second NAP. It provides important historical and policy framing for the extensive and diverse engagement of civil society in contributing to shaping the WPS agenda across different institutional and national contexts.¹³

The Global context

.....

The main policy architecture of the WPS agenda consists of the resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council under the title of ‘Women and peace and security’. At the present time, there are eight Security Council Resolutions (SCR) which together shape the agenda, published across a 15-year period: UNSCR 1325 (2000); UNSCR 1820 (2008); UNSCR 1888 (2009); UNSCR 1889 (2009); UNSCR 1960 (2010); UNSCR 2103 (2013); UNSCR 2122 (2013); and UNSCR 2242 (2015).

The resolutions spell out the commitments and themes of the WPS agenda, which are organised into four pillars:

- the *prevention* of conflict and specific forms of violence related to conflict, such as sexualised and gender-based violence;
- the *participation* of women in peace and security governance, including their participation in peace processes and security institutions;
- the *protection* of women’s rights and bodies in conflict and conflict-affected settings; and
- the importance of using a ‘gender lens’ when evaluating, planning, and implementing *relief and recovery* efforts following conflict and disasters.

The conventional story of the WPS agenda situates it within the UN Security Council – indeed, it is widely referred to as ‘the UN’s Women, Peace and Security agenda’. As Cynthia Cockburn notes, however, that UNSCR 1325

*may well be the only Security Council resolution for which the groundwork, the diplomacy and lobbying, the drafting and redrafting, was almost entirely the work of civil society, of non-governmental organisations. Certainly, it was the first in which the actors were almost all women.*¹⁴

Mobilisation efforts by women’s CSOs, including sustained lobbying and advocacy in New York in the months leading up to the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in 2000, were instrumental in creating space for the issues of women’s rights and needs in conflict and conflict-affected settings to be discussed as matters of international peace and security.

The close involvement of civil society with the WPS agenda has not only been sustained in the two decades since the adoption of UNSCR 1325; it has, in fact, grown. UNSCR 1325 and the other resolutions that make up the policy architecture of the agenda are unique in this regard, in that they have what has been described as a ‘global constituency’.¹⁵ Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, co-founder of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), has addressed this idea of the agenda’s civil society constituency, commenting:

I still recall one GNWP member from the conflict-affected Mount Elgon district in Kenya who said to me: “The first time I read Resolution 1325, I held it close to my chest. This is ours; this belongs to us”.¹⁶

Civil society engagement with the WPS agenda takes a variety of different forms in different institutional and national contexts. It has become customary, for example, for the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security to facilitate the briefing of the UN Security Council on the occasion of the annual Open Debate on WPS, by a female leader from civil society.¹⁷ There are also regional examples of civil society engagement, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Civil Society Advisory Panel on Women, Peace and Security (CSAP).¹⁸ At the national level, various configurations of civil society organisations are formed into coalitions, networks, and advocacy groups to engage their respective national governments on the principles and practices of the WPS agenda.¹⁹

The Australian context

.....

Australian civil society and particularly women’s organisations have long been active in a broader context working for peace, women’s empowerment, gender justice and gender equality since World War 1, both domestically and internationally in the aid and development arena, and in supporting the groundwork for UNSCR 1325.

CIVIL SOCIETY ADVOCACY FOR AUSTRALIA’S FIRST NAP²⁰

The specific advocacy work that laid the foundation for the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018²¹ dates back to 2004 when the Australian Section of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF Australia) received funding from the Commonwealth Office for Women (OFW) to develop an Australian website promoting UNSCR 1325.²²

In the same year, the Australian government invited WILPF Australia to suggest ideas on the best way forward to implementing a NAP, as part of preparatory work for the UN Commission on the Status of Women. In 2008, in partnership with UNIFEM Australia (now UN Women National Committee Australia), WILPF Australia proposed to the then Minister for the Status of Women that not only should Australia develop a NAP but that the WPS agenda should be one of the top ten women’s priorities for action. As a result, in 2008 WILPF Australia was funded to undertake national consultations to inform the Australian government on the next steps towards the development of Australia’s first NAP.

The recommendations derived from national consultations were captured in a discussion paper released in 2009 titled *Final Report: Developing a National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (Final Report)*.²³ The *Final Report* provided a comprehensive account of the appropriate scope of the NAP, and recommendations regarding governance structures, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms. Following the release of the *Final Report*, OFW convened the Women, Peace and Security Inter-Departmental Working Group (IDWG), comprising representatives from the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Defence (ADF), Attorney General (AG), AusAID (now DFAT), the Australian Civil-Military Centre (ACMC), and the Australian Federal Police (AFP). The IDWG was tasked with determining ‘how Australia could better implement UNSCR 1325’ and overseeing the ‘development of a consultation draft National Action Plan, which was informed by key suggestions from WILPF Australia’s work’.²⁴

Civil society's role in the implementation of Australia's first NAP

Despite civil society's vital role in advocating for Australia's adoption of the WPS agenda, Australia's current NAP (2012-2018, extended to June 2019) has not clearly articulated an integral role for civil society engagement in NAP implementation and monitoring. The NAP notes the importance of engaging with civil society as both experts on peace and security issues and as advocates for gender inclusive peace, security and sustainable development:

There are a number of non-government organisations in Australia that have substantial expertise in Women, Peace and Security. These organisations have played a key role in advocating for and developing this National Action Plan.²⁵

Strategy 3 of the NAP focuses on engagement with CSOs (both domestic and international), and also encourages the non-government sector to develop publicly available shadow progress reports.²⁶

Australia's NAP is identified as the government's NAP. From the outset there was no existing common platform or mechanism for CSOs to engage with the Australian Government on WPS issues, other than as individual organisations. Therefore, CSOs have worked largely independently to create a space to engage with government since the Australian NAP was launched, and to support implementing the actions aligned with Strategy 3.

First, prior to the launch of the first NAP in 2012, WILPF, UNIFEM (now UN Women) and the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) announced their intention to conduct an Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security with government and produce an Annual Report Card on the implementation of the NAP. Since 2013, six Annual Civil Society Dialogues have been held. The first three (2013-2015) received funding from OFW and ACFID, and the remaining three (2016-2018) were funded by ACFID.

Second, in 2013 these CSOs and other non-government organisations (NGOs) came together to create the Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security (the WPS Coalition). The WPS Coalition is a voluntary, non-partisan, independent coalition of civil society organisations, networks and individuals working to advance gender inclusive approaches to peace and security in Australia, Asia and the Pacific region and globally. The WPS Coalition is managed by a voluntary self-nominated Steering Group.²⁷ The Steering Group canvasses views from members (and non-members) and runs quarterly teleconferences with members.

Third, through an ad hoc process, civil society (represented by the WPS Coalition) has gained representation on the Australian NAP governance mechanisms: one representative on the Inter-Departmental Working Group (IDWG - now the Inter-Departmental Committee (IDC)) from 2014 and two representatives on the IDC's Sub-Committee (from 2015).²⁸ The first NAP and the work of the IDC and Sub-Committee is coordinated by OFW (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet) and implemented by the following government departments: Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australian Federal Police (AFP), Attorney General (AG), and Defence (ADF) (including the ACFID). Civil society representatives participate in a voluntary capacity.

The role and status of civil society representation on the first NAP governance structure, however, remain in question in terms of the ability to meaningfully influence the implementation of the first NAP and in the development of the second NAP.

ENDNOTES

1. Cynthia Cockburn, *From Where We Stand: War, Women's Activism and Feminist Analysis* (London: Zed Books, 2007), p. 141.
2. 'Final Independent Review of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018', Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2018, <https://www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/office-women/final-independentreview-national-action-plan-women-peace-and-security-2012-2018>, pp. 3-5
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. pp 4-5.
5. Reports from past Dialogues are available at <https://wpscoalition.org/annual-civil-society-dialogue-on-women-peace-and-security-2/>
6. The Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace and Security is a non-partisan, independent coalition of civil society organisations, networks, and individuals working to advance women, peace and security agenda in Australia, Asia-Pacific region, globally. <https://wpscoalition.org/>
7. Civil Society Roundtables also included a teleconference (held 16 November 2018) and on-line survey for participants unable to attend Roundtables (13-15 November 2018) in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne.
8. This review focuses on civil society networks in Canada, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden Switzerland, United States and the United Kingdom. See the 2018 Roundtables background papers. <http://wpscoalition.org/background-papers-for-the-2018-annual-civil-society-dialogue/>
9. See the 2017 Fifth Annual Dialogue Report. <https://wpscoalition.org/annual-civil-society-dialogue-on-women-peace-and-security-2/>
10. The WPS Coalition has one representative on the Interdepartmental Committee on the National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (IDC) and two representatives on the IDC's Subcommittee
11. This brief presents rapid research outlining the work of civil society networks in Canada, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden Switzerland, United States and the United Kingdom. See the 2018 Roundtables background papers. <http://wpscoalition.org/background-papers-for-the-2018-annual-civil-society-dialogue/>
12. For example, see the 2009 WILPF Australia Final Report on developing Australia's first NAP, the 2015 Independent Interim Report on the first NAP, previous Annual Dialogues (2013-2017), the 2015 UN Global Study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325, the 2018 ACMC and Monash study, the 2018 Final Independent Review and the 2018 WPS Coalition Submission on the development of the second NAP.
13. See 2018 Civil Society Roundtable Background papers. <http://wpscoalition.org/background-papers-for-the-2018-annual-civil-society-dialogue/>
14. Cynthia Cockburn, *From Where We Stand: War, Women's Activism and Feminist Analysis* (London: Zed Books, 2007), p. 141.
15. Quoted in Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini, *Women Building Peace: What They Do, Why It Matters* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2007), p. 7.
16. Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, 'It Is Time to Walk the Talk and Fulfill the Promise of UNSCR 1325', *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture*, 17(3/4) (2011), p. 23.
17. NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, 'Advocacy' (2018). <http://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/our-work/advocacy/>.
18. NATO, 'New Civil Society Advisory Panel on Women, Peace and Security' (2016). https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_136119.htm.
19. For a brief report on these different forms of engagement, see the 2018 Roundtables background papers. <http://wpscoalition.org/background-papers-for-the-2018-annual-civil-society-dialogue/>
20. This section is based on a previous publication: Anuradha Mundkur and Laura J. Shepherd, 'Civil Society Participation in Women, Peace and Security Governance: Insights from Australia', *Security Challenges* Vol. 14, no. 2 (2018).
21. Extended to 2019.
22. WILPF Australia, as part of WILPF International, has been a strong advocate for the WPS agenda, including supporting the groundwork that led to UNSCR 1325.
23. WILPF Australia Section, Final Report: Developing a National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2009). <http://www.1325australia.org.au/textdocuments/FinalReportJuly2009.pdf>
24. Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2012-2018). https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/aus_nap_on_women_2012_2018.pdf (accessed 25 September 2017), p.16.
25. Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018, p.16, <https://ofwengage.pmc.gov.au/35731/documents/77828>
26. Ibid. NAP Strategy 3 suggests working with domestic and international civil society organisations (p. 22); and encourages shadow reporting by Australian NGOs (p. 27).
27. 'About us', The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women Peace and Security, 2018, www.wpscoalition.org.
28. The IDWG and the IDWG Sub-committee, in 2017 were renamed the Inter-departmental Committee (IDC) and IDC Sub-committee.

2018

Strengthening The Engagement Of
Australian Civil Society In
Australia's Second National Action Plan On
Women, Peace And Security

.....

**SIXTH REPORT OF THE
ANNUAL CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE ON WOMEN,
PEACE AND SECURITY**

*Dialogue Working Group: Ludmilla Kwitko, Anu Mundkur, Barbara O'Dwyer,
Natasha Singh Raghuvanshi and Laura Shepherd on behalf of the WPS Coalition*



The WPS Coalition gratefully acknowledges the financial support for the 2018 Dialogue provided by the Australian Civil-Military Centre. Generous in-kind and voluntary support from members of the WPS Coalition has significantly contributed to the implementation of the 2018 Roundtables and Policy Dialogue.

