

Open Letter to the Australian, State and Territory and Local Governments

For many Australians, animals are beloved family members. People who use domestic and family violence often threaten, harm and kill animals as forms of coercive control and to intimidate women and children. Domestic and family violence impacts companion animals (also known as pets), assistance, farmed and wild animals. Across Australia, people and animals experiencing domestic and family violence face significant additional barriers to safety due to the lack of animal-inclusive services that recognise and respond to their needs.

We believe and recognise that:

- Every person and animal has the right to be safe from domestic and family violence.
- The safety, wellbeing and recovery of people and animals are interconnected.
- People and animals should be supported to be safe and heal and recover together.

We call on the Australian, State and Territory and Local Governments to:

1. Respond to the *National Roadmap for Change to Prevent and End Family Violence against People and Animals* by publicly stating how the recommendations will be implemented and the investment that will be made from 2027 to 2032 and beyond.
2. Incorporate the National Roadmap recommendations into the Second Action Plan of the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*, and relevant State and Territory and Local Government strategies and plans.
3. Fund Lucy's Project to support governments and services to translate the National Roadmap into policy and practice, and to continue its longstanding work to lead systems change through collaboration, advocacy, research and education.

Practitioners and services across Australia must have the capability, pathways and partnerships required to respond holistically to people and animals experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence. The safety of a human and animal victim-survivor should not depend on their postcode and the service they approach.

No person should be forced to continue living with a partner, parent or other person who uses violence because there is nowhere safe to go with their beloved animals. No person or animal should face the risk of being harmed or killed, becoming homeless, being abandoned or euthanised because there is nowhere safe to live together.

We urge all Governments to formally respond to and implement the National Roadmap and to work with Lucy's Project, victim-survivors and leaders across sectors to create a future where every person and animal across Australia is safe from domestic and family violence.

The time to act is now. The lives of women, children and animals depend on it.

Background on Lucy's Project and the National Roadmap

Lucy's Project is a national organisation working to create a future where every person and animal across Australia is safe and can live free from domestic and family violence. Lucy's Project drives systems change by leading cross-sector collaboration, advocating for systems change, promoting research and evidence-based responses, delivering education to strengthen cross-sector capability, and centring the voices of people with lived expertise.

In August 2026, Lucy's Project launched the *National Roadmap for Change to Prevent and End Family Violence against People and Animals*. The National Roadmap sets out 33 recommendations for systems change to improve the safety, wellbeing and recovery of people and animals experiencing domestic and family violence across Australia.

The National Roadmap calls for: animal-inclusive housing and accommodation; legal protections for animal victim-survivors; animal-inclusive risk assessment and safety planning; animal-inclusive primary prevention and recovery; accountability for using violence; cross-sector collaboration; workforce and organisational capability across sectors; data collection and research; and the leadership of people with lived expertise.

The National Roadmap is informed by findings from the National Roundtable convened by Lucy's Project in 2025. The National Roundtable brought together over 100 participants from 80 organisations across the domestic and family violence, community, homelessness, veterinary, animal welfare, legal and research sectors. The participants included survivors with lived expertise, practitioners, advocates, researchers and policymakers.

Lucy's Project welcomes the opportunity to discuss the National Roadmap, the reforms required and the investment needed to create tangible and lasting change. Please contact advocacy@lucysproject.com to arrange a meeting.



We acknowledge that we live and work on the lands of First Nations peoples and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We recognise the strength and resilience of human and animal victim-survivors of domestic and family violence and their right to safety.