Live captioning by Ai-Media.

# KAREN BENTLEY:

Good afternoon, everyone, and good morning if you are in the West. Thank you for joining us today for the launch of the report of the young women and non-binary people's experiences of gender-based violence across Australia.

Just kidding people a few moments to join and settle in. My name is Karen Bentley, I am the host today for this 90-minute webcast. I'm a chief executive officer of WESNET, and I am also the former contract manager for the Australia member goes by the alliance, AWAVA. While we shortly be jumping into the launch of the project, I thought I might run through some quick housekeeping slides to get us all on the same page.

Today's web cast is being recorded, so in the unlikely event that you have a technical issue, it will be available later today after the event, using the same link. Before we get started, I would also like to point out some of the interactive features of the web cast player we are using today.

Below me next to the timeline there is a speech bubble. That is the 'ask a question' picture for today's web cast. If you would like to pose a question or make a comment during the webcast, just click on that speech bubble and fill out the form, and then click 'send'. Our young panellists at the end of this presentation will be able to answer your questions live.

I really encourage you to put your name and email address into that, along with your question or comment. We have a lot of people doing today, and we may not get through all of your questions but we would like to be able to follow up upwards, so if you have your email address and name, we will be able to provide some kind of response after today.

Below the live stream we were watching now, under links, you will see 'live webcast support'. If you are experiencing any technical difficulties today, please click on that link today and you will be directed to a support page where our support technician will be able to assist you. Technical questions through the support link, questions for our panellists through the speech bubble icon.

There is also a 'read this report' link under that link page, so you can read the report released today. There is a PDF available at the AWAVA website at a print ready or accessible version will be available later today or tomorrow.

If you experience any technical difficulties today, please try refreshing your browser in the first instance, if you require any other support, as I said, please click the link report.

Finally and most importantly, in terms of housekeeping, for 90 minutes we are going to be discussing violence and abuse, and this may include statistics and personal accounts around topics such as sexual assault, domestic violence, emotional abuse, physical violence and identity-based harassment. So, this content may be difficult.

Please take care and try to use your own support or support mechanisms you have around you. Just in case you need a little bit of extra help, we do have a well-being support officer on hand, Tess Moodie. She has volunteered to be our well-being support officer today. You can speak to Tess by clicking on the link below which will take you to the well-being and support breakout room to another link. You can talk to her there.

In terms of today's presentation, a big welcome from us to you. Thank you for joining us. I will shortly be handing over. What we will be doing today is going through some of the findings and then having a panel discussion.

Before we start official proceedings today, I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land where I live and work, the land of the shutter run people in central Victoria. I pay my respects to elders, past present and emerging, and to any other First Nations people joining us for this event today.

Today I pay my respects to the leaders of elders, past, present and emerging, for all the lands we are joining this webinar from today. Because they hold the memories, the tradition and culture and hopes of all of the people and communities joining us today. I express my gratitude in sharing of this land and all of the lands, my sorrow for the personal spiritual and cultural cost of that sharing, and the hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

In the context of settler colonial Australia and the ongoing genocide, we acknowledge the specific forms of gender-based violence First Nations women and non-binary people continue to experience, fuelled by colonial concepts of race and gender. We stand in solidarity with our colleagues and all other Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal women, and non-binary members, leading calls for justice. There is no gender justice without First Nations justice.

I would also like to acknowledge the experiences of all become survivors of gender-based violence who trusted AWAVA plate sharing the story as part of this project. I should mention this project represents the final piece of

work undertaken by a labour is a federally funded national women's Alliance. The project, which was far from complete when our funding entered, has been supported to its completion by a significant in-kind and paid contributions from WWDA and my own organisations, WESNET. These organisations, along with dozens of women specialist services, and to get the legacy of AWAVA alive by maintaining it as an unfunded alliance. We believe the work is too important and the need too critical not to undertake every possible opportunity to work collaboratively and constructively to end violence and end gender-based violence.

This project really highlights that need. As many of you would know, the primary source of data from an individual experiences of violence and abuse is the ABS Personal Safety Survey. While useful as a crude aggregate measure, it provides very little granular data based on forms of violence and women's experiences in negotiating systems or pursuing justice. The women's safety statement promises to do more in terms of collecting data from women's special services such as refuges but we are waiting to hear how that will be happening.

Academic institutes such as the Monash and Family Violence Prevention Centre, and peak bodies such as WESNET, have been successful in putting some of those gaps while questioning continues to happen.

Back in 2020, AWAVA recognised a significant gap in data relating to young people, and more specifically in relation to young people most likely to be marginalised or made vulnerable by unresponsive structures and systems. Existing data, even if not Australian data, made it clear that young women and non-binary people are at a higher prevalence of violence. We wanted to know more, we wanted to know about young people's and intersecting forms of experiences relating to race, culture, factual and gender identity, ability and socio-economic characteristics. This project has delivered that.

The pool of survey respondents to answer the survey is one of the most diverse range of young women and non- binary people are likely to have been surveyed across Australia. The forum, which was held after the survey to build on our aggregate data by adding debt and understanding, provide another opportunity to listen to and amplify the voices that too often go unheard. The findings, while incredibly valuable from a public policy point of view, are also incredibly painful. We acknowledge that. We are presenting and discussing the findings today to inform, clarify and advocate. We need to acknowledge that violence and abuse against young women and non- binary people is not an individual issue alone. It has terrible and painful implications for each and every individual. It is a social issue that is impacting a significant majority of young people.

We need to understand that no one measure or approach will improve systems and structures for all young women or non-binary people. What improves access to justice for one young person may open up a barrier for another. So, embedding inclusivity and intellectuality is essential to good policy-making and service delivery. We need to keep working together, strong national leadership on the issue of violence towards women, and pushing for better evidence and informed answers, and more and better targeted funding to the right places.

We are sure to be discussing some of these issues in the panel questions and answer session a bit later on.

Shortly I will pass to Sandra to speak about the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance. Following Sandra, Heidi La Paglia from Women With Disabilities will present the key findings of the report. After a short five-minute break, we will move to a panel and question and answer panel.

I would now like to introduce Aunty Sandra Creamer to speak about her grips involvement and loss were explored. They were a key project partner in this report and as my great Professor to introduce Professor Sandra Cremer AM. Sandra is an indigenous woman and she is the CEO of NATSIWA, as well as a lawyer and an adjunct professor in the public health at the University of Queensland. She was awarded a member of the order of Australia for her to give him work in Indigenous women and peoples. Sandra advocated human rights for Indigenous women, both in Australia and internationally, she currently co-chairs the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council, which will be informing the next national plan, and will also support the implementation of the Closing The Gap target.

A long-time member of the AWAVA advisory group, a longtime advocacy are about First Nations women and issues has been very important to the leadership of AWAVA. Over to you, Sandra.

# AUNTY SANDRA:

Thank you very much Karen. First level, it's it's an honour to be here with you and all work you have done for women in this country, including indigenous women. It is an honour to be here. Greetings to all.

As you know, my name is Sandra Cremer, and I would like to acknowledge the land I want to do, I am on (unknown term) country. My skin name is (inaudible). Karen has raised what I do and where I am in my work. I really enjoy doing that. Personable, I would also like to thank NATSIWA always partnering with the labour and also AWAVA, Paul continuing to be that was when they were divided. I appreciate the work we've done, I've been here for four years and we've always part of the game. Your submissions, your projects, in doing this report, it is really a pleasure and honour to be on. We are very privileged to be working with you.

I would like to acknowledge my elders, past and present, for the strength, resilience and knowledge for paving the way where we are today. It was them who stood tall with great parts and strong spirits to make changes for our rights, and gave voice to our culture and language. I'd also like to acknowledge it is (unknown term) week for Aboriginal uncut odometer women, and I like to acknowledge all the women who have suffered or know someone who have suffered or have been affected by domestic violence, sexual violence, family violence, all of that behaviour.

We are here with you. To raise your voice, because women can no longer be pointless. I like to acknowledge the work that indigenous women have helped me with this. Michaela French from (unknown term) and also Louise Wellington from the Central Desert area, will be speaking today. They have provided the voices for young women to contribute with me and come on and taken the time. I really appreciate that. I know Michaela spoke about how it was with the legal system for her, as a young indigenous lawyer, and how it was and how she was the only young lawyer sitting in a room representing a case with all older white men, and how she felt. And that is how it is for a lot of a young lawyers who go in today in the legal system.

When you have young women working at the table with us. The country to be elders, the same old same old. We need young women as leaders with that, it's been a real privilege to work with them in different areas as well. I would also like to talk about the work we do. We do have a lot of young women who come onto a business programs that we do when we go to Alice Springs or in Canberra. It is helping them also become economic people in their own communities. A lot of them don't want to go on the goal or a lot of them don't want to be doing nothing, but they all have a talent within themselves.

When we do our Westpac work to help them read through the talent but it also gives them information about how to be young businesswomen or leaders in the community. That's why we got to… It's important for us to give guidance, but also for us to listen to you. The importance of young women and their voices, you have different concerns. We need to understand them. That's why this report is so important. It is reported that is about young women. It is a report that can go out to everyone so that we can understand where you are coming from, know your issues, and know how to advocate. I can't speak on your experience and issues, but I do survey and this report has been so important. Again, I am very privileged that NATSIWA have been able to come in to this.

We note in ourselves when we come to the justice system, as Michaela who was speaking for us at maths were on our last webinar we had last year, how she spoke about how it was in the courts when she was young lawyer. How intimidating she felt. About how that is for our young women when they go in. One way is not the only way anymore, we have to give an understanding of all the different issues, different beliefs, values, and we have to be in the justice system to make sure that those laws that we can somehow break or make changes. I'm a firm believer in taking things to court because then that sets a precedent for change, when people challenge something.

I just want to raise something that I just thought of. I remember a young girl who was 16 years of age who made the changes for Centrelink because she felt that she had a right to be on Centrelink, and she did not have to go to grade 11 or 12 like you said. School wasn't fitting for her. She took it all away to the Supreme Court to make changes for all young people to get Centrelink benefits, even if they haven't finished grade 12. That is the bravery of young women are doing today. How brave is it for a young 15 year old to take the challenge up?

There are so many brave women out there. In my family, my daughter's are the most beautiful women understand with strong hearts and strong spirits. That's why for me it is an honour to be here. To read that report is very important. You look at the surveys done, but then it is, and how we, by doing all of that, then bring in the balance to make that change. And for society start accepting change, because that's what it could happen. We have to work together as a collective doing sure that changes me.

If you look at the system and read the Constitution, and I'm not being discriminatory when I say this, it was all old white males who done that. We need to make a change. We are becoming such a multicultural world but will have different cultures, different beliefs and different values. By doing this report it speaks about that, it shows that. That's why evidence is important, by writing this report is so important, because it heard the voices of young women around this country. We need to have that as a collective. All young women come together as a collective to try to make that change, and to make society and to make those who aren't aware more aware of the voices of young women.

We need to have that. Why? Because it comes down to funding. We need to look at different areas that need funding, to look at the different services and resources that are needed. That is one thing that is missing. That is a big gap. That is one of the things that I am on the national plan is, looking at closing the gap, writing that specific indigenous plant that is part of the national plan for Indigenous people, because it is under target. To sit on the table, I can tell you I was very nervous. I get nervous because I have been a victim of domestic violence, and at times I get nervous. It doesn't matter my age. We'll go through things and I sometimes we can still get traumatised. We all have to be strong.

I want to tell all the young women out there, be strong. Be who you are. Do your own mind. Stand tall, stand strong, because you have that strong spirit. If you see somebody out there who isn't or is not in a situation, and

you don't know, always give them hope. Be there for somebody, even if we just listen to them. If you see a young woman in a shop and she had two little children, she was struggling to pay her… She put back a toothbrush and toothpaste, just a few other things, I said "hey, I pay for that". We have to help each other through our prices because you know what? When I do that for her she was so happy. That is what we have to do. That happiness can give strength to somebody. They don't want to go home and say "you know what? This is how I live, I am likely to have that."

When we see each other support each other, and again I would like to thank AWAVA for this, for supporting the voices of young women in this country. All young women, but especially Torres Strait Islander women, women of different cultures, pledge, and women in general. It is you who are our future. I have so much faith in the future because I know I have young women in my life in our tour who are strong, you have a voice, and we must continue to advocate. Love this report, for women who may be voiceless. Thank you very much, and asked for, I would like to thank Mali. From the bottom of my heart, thank you so much for pushing this through, getting this together, and keeping us all going through the times we have been busy. You have been the backbone behind this report. I know you are only a young girl, I fully support all the work that you do. From the bottom of a heart, thank you very much.

Please read the report. It is very important. Like asset, it would be great to hear from any of you. Thank you very much.

# KAREN BENTLEY:

Thank you so much, Sandra, I am always inspired by listening to you and I thank you for all the work you do and try to get people have much more understanding. I know that you are incredibly busy and I working on many different levels all the time, I respect and thank you for all the work you are doing.

I think it is probably also timely to say thank you very much to some of the key people who help in this report, and Mali Hermans is definitely one who has been the brainchild of this, with the AWAVA team back in 2020 along with Pam, Kitt, Tina, Maren who was also around as well. And Sumi, who came in at the last minute from Singapore to help us write this report. A huge thank you to those women and all the other women who donated their time and energy to be part of the forum.

I'm going to hand over Matthew Heidi La Paglia, to speak about some of the main findings of the report. (READS FROM SLIDE)

Heidi has been a long-time member of the AWAVA advisory group where she has provided many valuable insights. She has strong issues in ensuring the efforts in to support the safety of women and reproductive rights in on winery people are inclusive of all people with disability. Heidi, I meant you had attitude to present some of the main findings.

# HEIDI LA PAGLIA:

Thank you, and thank you everyone for joining us today. I would first like to acknowledge that I am calling out from (unknown term) country. The land of the people in Hobart Tasmania. But also like to pay respect to our elders, past and present, and extend that to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander listeners.

As Karen mentioned today, I will be taking you through the report on behalf of AWAVA, focusing on key elements and key findings. In doing so, I will be focusing on the survey results. These results give some great high-level insights. It's important to note that the report compromises to elements, the survey and the forum. The poem served to add depth to our understanding, particularly around people's experiences leading to inform views regarding policy and service improvements.

Our panel later on will go into more detail, not just in relation to the survey but also with respect to the forum and particular cohorts of young women and non-binary people.

As an overview, I will focus on the following five areas, and they are: (READS FROM SLIDE)

PERSONABLE, who responded to the survey? An early objective of the project is to deliberately seek out young women and non-binary people from a variety of diverse backgrounds. This was the basis for our involvement from the beginning. We understand that many voices, including those from First Nations and non-binary people, tended to be significantly underrepresented in more traditional policy and research. They were the voices we also knew anecdotally had unique and multilayered experiences of violence, and of system response to violence.

The survey was open between April and June 2021, and were shared widely between our combined networks and three organisations. In total there was 301 responses to the survey, people aged 15 to 32 years. 90.3% of these identified as women, 10.8% as non-binary, 3.5% has neither.

The diversity data in terms of other women and not worry people this from the bacon. 62% identified as LGBTQI. 7.2% were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, 24% live in a rural or regional location, 5.2% were sex workers,

41.2% were undertaking some form of education, 17.6% were from a culturally and linguistically diverse program, and 80% were barbers or refugees. So, what forms of violence are young women and nonvoluntary people expecting? We only know that the prevalence of forms of violence vary by age and that young people express violence differently to older cohorts. However, the previously existing data at the top are limited to women and not to segregated by gender diversity or other identities. Per example, the ABS personal safety survey tells us that women in the 18 to 24-year-old age group were the most likely to have experienced violence. In 2016, an estimated 12% of women aged 18 to 24 experienced whilst in the 12 months prior to reporting. Prior to the survey, sorry. According to ABS crimes data, in 2017 young women aged 15 to 19 have the highest rates of reported sexual assault of any age group.

Drawing on US data, over half of transgender and not worry people have experienced some form of intimate partner violence. Including acts involving coercive control and physical harm. As I mentioned, data in Australia around this is limited. This survey drill down into more detail about specific forms of violence, as well as allowing respondents to describe the abuse themselves.

In terms of overall prevalence, 86.4% of respondents indicated they had experienced some form of violence or abuse. The most common forms of abuse were emotional or sexual abuse, verbal abuse, physical abuse.

System failures were very apparent, with 131 young people saying they had suffered institutional betrayal. New and emerging forms of violence were also evident, with 107 respondents reporting online and technology abuse.

The life circumstances of young people and their peers also played a significant role, with 28 people reporting reproductive coercion, 20 noting institutional violence, 19 reporting cultural or spiritual abuse, 17 said that they had experienced college or university hazing, and seven identified as experiencing dowry abuse.

Reporting violence. Who did you tell about your experiences of violence or abuse? Under 80% of respondents who experience violence said they had told someone about it. Most young people did not use formal reporting mechanisms, instead favouring telling friends or family or a psychologist or counsellor. One in five people told no one at all. Why didn't…

Why didn't you tell someone about your report or experience was another question. The main reasons for not reporting were being embarrassed or ashamed, fearful of not being believed or being judged or due to a lack of trust in the systems.

Reasons also emerged that again reflect the distinct experiences resulting from culture and life circumstances, so, for example, 13% did not report because they community did not have a good relationship with the policing or justice systems, and we know this can be common First Nations and disabled young people.

Young people were also concerned about potential ramifications on employment, housing and the social circle as well as facing barriers relating to location and lack of financial resources.

Then another question was, how did you report the violence? Almost all people who reported, reported in person. In addition, one in three and all also reported by phone. More than one in 10 reported by email, SMS, website or had a friend or support person to report for them.

What were the outcomes of reporting? Disappointingly, over two thirds of respondents who reported said that nothing happened and nothing changed. In contrast, only one third said they were believed and validated and supported to achieve safety and to heal. One in five did agree they had been given access to support they otherwise would not have had, and only a small number of respondents said their perpetrator had been held to account all there was resulting institutional change or the perpetrator had apologised.

Support experience was another area, and one of the more surprising and quite worrying findings of the report was the number of respondents who did not seek or access support. While just over half of those who had experienced violence sought support that means that almost half did not. Sources of support were wide-ranging for those who did seek it. Over three quarters who accessed these types of support. Approximately one quarter of respondents access sexual assault services, medical professionals, women's domestic and family violence services and/or phone counselling. Just 15% sought it from the police.

What types of supports to young women and non-binary people access? Diverse, providing insight into the diversity of responses. There was one form of support sort out and that was programs to help with healing including counselling and trauma recovery. Roughly one in three and in all accessed information and referral services and all medical and health-related support. Other support types included disability support adjustments, legal and advocacy services, housing and financial support and visa and migration advise.

What were the barriers that prevented young people from getting help or support? Given that almost half of respondents did not seek out support, this is a critical question. The respondents to these questions had notably diverse responses, even in comparison to other questions that elicited a very large range of responses as well.

The most commonly held reasons, however, included a lack of trust in being believed or a lack of trust in the system and fear of not being taken seriously.

Beyond these reasons, a lack of information and not knowing where to go or not understanding the experience as violence was cited frequently. Other commonly identified reasons include not being ready to talk, fear of being blamed or are being discriminated against, bad past experiences and insufficient financial resources. And we have a quote on the screen from someone who talked about barriers to accessing help.

What does justice look like for young people? The final area we wanted to touch upon was what does justice look like for young women and non-binary people? This is a question that is seldom asked an area where victim survivors may feel least likely to be heard. Almost all of respondents envisage justice as meaning safety, recognition and perpetrator accountability. In fact, all of the most supported descriptions related to perpetrator accountability. Young women and non-binary people clearly perceive a lack of accountability as being a major barrier to accessing justice. It is important to note a very significant reason underpinning underreporting was identified as a fear of perpetrator retaliation. Accountability must be pursued in tandem with safety.

This brings me to the end of the survey results presentation. While I was pleased to highlight some key findings of the survey, there are a number of other data items contained in the report that I have not had time to cover. The forum also explored many of the issues raised in the survey in greater detail and considered more broadly issues relating to prevention along with potential policy and service solutions. This is also reflected in the report.Now I will pass to the panel and Q and a session which will no doubt go into many of these issues.

# KAREN BENTLEY:

Thank you to Heidi and WWDA for ensuring the survey went off. Very well. We will now take a short, five-minute break just to let people have a breather, maybe take a break, walk outside after we have had all of that data shown to us. Thank you, Heidi. If we could come back, please, at quarter to the hour, wherever you are, and we will introduce our panellists. If you have questions for the panellists and I can see a couple are coming in, please let the speech bubble, asked the questions because we will have some questions for the panellists and then we will open it up to the audience. Thank you again, Heidi. A short, five-minute break. See you back at quarter to the hour or quarter past if you are in one of the central states.

# KAREN BENTLEY:

Welcome back, everyone. I hope you could get a breath of fresh air or a tea break or something like that. It is my very great pleasure to introduce you to our panellists of young people to take some questions and answers session today about this report. I would like to introduce our panellists for today. If I can have… Thank you.

Our first panellist is Is Hay is a queer and young person, a lived experience worker in theLGBTIQA+ space and spend their time advocating for radical intersexual approaches and transformative justice. They fundamentally believe that there is nothing about us without us and ensuring disabled and queer voices are leading our own advocacy is the only way to achieve liberation. Welcome.

Our second panellist is Margherita Dall'Occo, is the youth development worker for WWDA and is involved in CIDA. Inclusivity diversity and specifically through sharing her own experience and encouraging others to do so. She is currently studying law and Human Rights the Australian National University where she is working on various human rights projects.

Third, Mali Hermans, a disabled organiser, writer and community worker living in Brisbane. She is a Wiradjuri and European woman, deeply invested in disability justice and abolitionist were committed to challenging ableism and oppressive systems. She is the policy and project officer at Women with Disabilities Australia working across the WWDA LEAD project and the National Alliance work. She has a degree (inaudible) and is a postgraduate student stirring the Charles Sturt University. She has organising experience within grassroots community groups. She has previously worked in the gender-based violence prevention.

And finally our fourth panellist is Louise Wellington from Central Australia and is a small business owner of two Northern Territory based businesses. She creates Aboriginal art. Louise's work within the business consultancy focuses on local decision-making and codesign highlighting and sustaining Indigenous voices and lived experiences in the community. She says it is important to her to feel a sense of purpose in her life that looks different for everyone and that is defined by you and you only and can be an evolving thing and she is enjoying pushing the boundaries of her beliefs about the world. She believes everyone has something unique and valuable to impact the world and she wishes every person should have an equal and equitable opportunity to express that in their lifetime.

Prior to diving into entrepreneurship she worked in leadership positions across diverse industries around Australia including community housing, building and construction, for the performing arts, visual arts women's programs. She has a wealth of experience in First Nations and socially conscious settings across the country as well as representing (inaudible) and in turn on the United Nations status of women held in New York a few years ago, so welcome.

A stunning panel of young people today. Just a reminder to our audience – if you have a question for any of these amazing young people, please use the speech bubble to put that question in and we will save it and present it to our panellists.

I might go to you first, Mali. Having been involved in this project from the beginning, I wondered if you could briefly describe some key principles that you used to design the project, that was or ensure the inclusivity of young women and non-binary people?

# MALI HERMANS:

I would like to acknowledge the ancestors and Elders of the country I'm currently living on I am in Brisbane on Yuggerah land. A lot of us are thankful for investing in capacity building for young women and diverse people within the violence prevention space. We raised this with a lot of the AWAVA team and said violence is affecting us in specific ways that were not seen in the work that AWAVA is doing all the sector more broadly. We need to do something about it.

So, we took a codesign approach to ensuring that the project was essentially led by young women and gender diverse people, so we before we even drafted the survey or propose the community forum we knew we needed to talk to a lot of the young advocates and activists in the space who are speaking up but are not necessarily being listened to by the mainstream sector.

We spoke to Georgette and a lot of activists at the It's Not a Compliment campaign, a campaign against street harassment and we also spoke to other young women and non-binary people working in the legal industryand collecting things in the data allowed us to target the types of questions we wanted the survey and in particular I really want to acknowledge that the final section of the survey which to me is the most important and the most groundbreaking is the section that ask young victim survivors what does justice look like to you because that is a question we don't ever get asked and that question was included because of the young people that AWAVA worked with in codesign who said that is the most important piece of evidence and data we want to know, so I think codesign was a really important principle and another important principle was always maintaining a trauma informed lens as well, so we didn't want to be its extractive and taking the stories of young victim survivors without acknowledging the generosity and pain that come with sharing the stories, so we valued young victims' contributions, acknowledging the sheer task of often having to repeat the stories, especially because we know from the data so many young victim-survivors were re-telling their stories over and over and not getting listened to.

So, I think those two big, overarching themes of codesign and trauma informed awareness were integral to ensuring the project was respectful and accountable to young people.

# KAREN BENTLEY:

Thanks, Mali. That probably gives insight into the back work that happened even before we got to launch in the survey. Thank you. Margherita, I might turn to you as WWDA's youth development officer. What are barriers to ensuring involvement of young people with disability and how are these overcome?

# MARGHERITA DALL'OCCO:

I'm calling in from stolen Ngunnawal country, from Canberra. Ultimately I think many of the barriers to ensuring involvement of young people with disability are the barriers put in place by institutions and services because we as a community are often an afterthought. Things like accessibility, which is often not considered or even talked about, means that most young people are not even able to get through the door. It is often labelled as too hard, which to me just seems that young disabled people are not seen as valuable enough to make the spaces accessible. Young people with disabilities also faced challenges due to the nature of being a young person and the majority of cases we face systemic discrimination on a variety of levels. The report itself shows how many young women and non-binary people have intersecting experiences where diverse groups of young people who have multiple identities and many of which pose limitations to if we feel welcomed or are not welcome in certain spaces. All of this means that although we have incredible wealth of experience, our involvement is either considered too difficult or not worth it or too much of an afterthought that then it is impossible to even put anything in place for our involvement.

Many services and institutions don't even have intersectional approaches to their youth projects which also makes it harder considering as I said before the systemic discrimination based on so many levels and makes it harder to access resources and involvement in general. There are a multitude of other ways in which young people with disability are excluded. I think I would be going on for too long if I had to go through all of them, but I think that many of these can be overcome by establishing meaningful design processes like Mali was talking about, occur during this report and also putting the needs of disabled youth at the forefront. It is about putting these perspectives first, being gui and in ded by young people and also allowing our pre-existing beliefs to be challenged.

If we don't allow ourselves to challenge the thought that we (inaudible) thought were very accurate or challenge the thoughts that might not have been the right way, proper change cannot happen.

# KAREN BENTLEY:

Thanks so much, and I think it is so important to get outside your own bubble but also making sure that things are accessible to everybody first and everybody in the mainstream will not have a problem with that. Thanks for those comments. Is, I might come to you as a writer and worker in an with lived experience. Was the massive distrust in institutions that was evidenced in the findings in the survey consistent with your own experience? To follow on are there ways to make existing institutions more responsive or should we be trying to look to complete (inaudible) new models?

# IS HAY:

I want to lose that I am sending him from stolen land. My short answer to the question is yes, it is in line with my experiences, distrusting institutions, and yes, we should be looking towards new models. My lover Angela is when you are a person with marginalised experiences or someone who has experienced violence, you cannot be any of those things separate from each other. That makes you seem like really challenging to any institution who attempt to interact because we don't fit into a single box.

I think of it as an analogy with paint. Although different identities are different colours but I'm not a rainbow, I am the brown that comes when you mix the colours together. So I can't just interact with a service or institution, plotting support as a survivor, I can't let interact with something as a trans, a disabled person, I am all of these things at once. So, the entirety of intersectional communities.

I think because of that we have to recognise that the institutions themselves because violence to happen. Violence is something that I experience as an individual, but it is also something I experience as a victim of the system, of the institution. Ultimately, a lot of these institutions that have power, whether it is the legal system or anything like that, are based on the systemic kind of… We need is patriarchy, transphobia, et cetera, collect my personal expense of violence.

Recognising that the institutions lead to violence, for me, shows that the role of institutions is not to support us after violence because they are not very good at doing that. Instead, use the institutional power to attempt to stop it beforehand. In a second, I'm going to tell you why we should throw them away anyway.

Fundamentally, the experiences of myself and those with the experiences is that we aren't allowed to trust ourselves of the society we live in with things we know to be true. Even language around violence is gate kept. We are gate kept from receiving support and we have to choose whether we engage in support will report an experience, will be affirmed in our identities, we don't get to have you both. Fundamentally, if we had to choose between getting support and being affirmed, that is the choice. Ultimately, with a picture I painted of institutions and how we interact with them as multiply marginalised people... I am a big fan of revolutions. The big thing is this is not good enough, we need a massive overhaul. We should be dismantling these institutions and removing their power. But I recognise that in the meantime, I don't have the power to do that dismantling. There are few things that we need to be doing to make these institutions which we don't trust for valid reasons slightly more trustworthy.

I think as Mali documented, trauma-informed care is important, not just care in terms of I know it, is that I'm with you in that context, but I could be a perpetrator of that, by existing within ancient fusion benefiting from your marginalisation. Benefiting from your volunteer experience.

I think the removal of ego and roles of power within these interjections, not being interacting with the system. "We are helping this poor, poor victim who is frankly disabled," that ego that exists within the systems of the role of the helper and helpee need to be overridden so we can engage with ourselves. Furthermore, we did have these institutions filled with people with good experience, but also making sure they go through regular revision are changed by us. Not just being like OK, we have a board that has three survivors on it, it's about completely removing all the people without the experience and replacing them with survivors, with trans people, people of colour, First Nations people, disabled people. When reviewing them and being OK, you have the changes right now, take care that is inconvenient for your bureaucracy.

I also think that justice, it is more than just a perpetrator being confirmed as guilty by these institutions. By our so- called justice system. For me, just as if this kind of transformative, academic support for me as an individual, as one of many individuals individuals who experience these sorts of things. Recognising the roles that institutions can and do play that support gives us a clear direction as to new models for responding to survivors who distrust the systems that put us there in the first place.

That is my long way of saying yes indeed. KAREN BENTLEY:

Thank you so much, I can see that thought about all of this and your life experience on it. We should look out for the revolution, watch Is Hay. I really agree we have to have the survivors voices, but we also need to be thinking about the diversity of every workforce, every system we have got. We got a long way to go in trying to break down some of these inequities we have on so many levels throughout all of our system and society.

My last question for individual panellists is to you, Louise. There has been a consistent theme in a report about a lack of accountability. The report raised some possibilities around transformative justice. It certainly came up very much in the Young People's Forum.

First Nations communities, particularly women, are leading the way in this kind of work. I wanted to ask, what does transformative justice mean to you, and why is it particularly resonant for indigenous women, girls are nonvoluntary people?

# LOUISE:

Thank you for the question. I'm here from Alice Springs and I want to acknowledge that support over the years. It's really important when you're doing work like this, it is essential for communities to participate in these conversations but it is also triggering and difficult as well. We definitely need to lean on our support systems and networks when we have got them, and develop them.

I also just want to acknowledge the victims and survivors of gender violence that are here listening. It is a really hard topic, and I see you.

Transformative justice, it is so important in our community. I can only speak from my experience and what I see around me in my community. First Nations women's experiences are diverse and different around the country. I will speak about what I can see around me.

We live in tightknit communities with extensive extended family groups, in a lot of situations, and that includes complex kinship systems. When we have perpetrated in our community that are incarcerated, and then released and bailed back to the community, we are constantly being retraumatised by the same people. This isn't everybody's experience but a lot of the time it is people we love. It is sometimes our fathers, brothers, sons, people we know in our community. I'm really glad the report touched on what justice means to people, is not just punishment that matters to people, they want changed behaviour, law reform, action, support for victims most importantly.

Sorry, this is an emotional topic for me. KAREN BENTLEY:

Thank you, I can see that it is very close.

# LOUISE WELLINGTON:

It is important, and it is important to be heard as well. I do want to touch on some of the barriers to reporting that women are experiencing. Women in Northern Territory particularly in remote communities have zero police resources, they don't in the past they never have. Responses are minimal or non-existent, given that we have one of the highest police rates per capita in Australia. Something is not adding up for remote women. Access to services also is difficult in remote situations where there is no actual phone coverage, so amazing services like 1800 Respect and any kind of services you can access online are unavailable. There is no 4G, there is no reception, and in a lot of places no women's shelters. So, where do you go? It's a really hopeless situation.

I do want to focus on solutions, not the problems, but when you are in a situation where nothing is going to be done, it feels really hopeless and it can be a really helpless situation and you don't know how to help those people.

Transformative justice is rebuilt into a traditional culture, it is not a new concept for Aboriginal people. We really had it culturally when something breaks traditional law does something wrong in the community, they are held accountable. There are systems of laws in place to carry out traditional justice. If that looks different for First Nations groups, it is there and always has been. It is also time to rely on our Elders and access that traditional knowledge and culture.

# KAREN BENTLEY:

Thank you Louise, I think there are probably some other places and spaces and groups and communities that could also potentially benefit from transformative justice approaches, we should look at those as well.

Just to cover another question quickly, this is a little bit cruel because people put on the spot now. Two questions to all of you, if you could just get very briefly give us a key takeaway so we have some things we can move forward on.

The first question is was there anything that particularly surprised you about the project report findings? Or was it all pretty much as you anticipated? I might just go to you first, Is. It's a

# IS HAY:

The report didn't surprise me but what surprised me it is the first of its kind, it is very radical and informative which is pretty absurd given these are our experiences. That makes it all the more important.

# MALI HERMANS:

Like Is, I don't think a lot of the data surprised me because it reflected my experiences and in the experiences of other young people around me. There was, in particular, one statistic that I saw that I asked why haven't I think this before, despite the community always voicing this. That was the group that was most likely to experience discrimination when interacting with the police was women and gender-diverse people working in the sex industry, sex workers. I think it's really important to highlight because because we know a lot of sex workers experiencing gender-based violence in their lives, there aren't mechanisms for people to continue work but also to stay safe and heal as well.

# KAREN BENTLEY:

Louise, jumping to you?

# LOUISE WELLINGTON:

I really love the recommendations that came out of it and I love the children were acknowledged as victims in their own right. When we place children at the centre of every policy and law reform, I think we will go a long way, when we can have those child-focused conversations. I am just really glad that young women and gender diverse report came up with that. Really happy to see it.

# MARGHERITA DALL'OCCO:

Like everyone else I wasn't surprised at the statistics and the experiences of stories that came from the report, but I was almost glad and thankful and partly surprised that a lot of the things happening day to day in these communities and that we experience later they were actually put into words. Some of the things about staff not trained well enough, trauma-informed care, all of those things impact our day-to-day lives and were finally put into words as opposed to the overarching statistics that were put in the report.

# KAREN BENTLEY:

So, to try to move this forward and also to try to capture some of the way forward from this, my other question is the report doesn't offer up a range of possible policy and systems reforms. That was very much the focus of that amazing one-day forum with young people. What are your key takeaway? What is your one key takeaway? I might cycle through you in the same order again.

# IS HAY:

It is hard to pick one. All are so important. Something I haven't seen recommended before is connected to that transformative justice approach and for me what that looks like is just as not being viewed as, OK the perpetrator is guilty of the crime, is in jail, whatever, that not being the end of the line for what that justice is, it being a requirement for that entire system to reassess how it happened in the first place. I don't want my abuser to go to jail, I want them to know why they should not have done it and deeply contribute to the system, not allowing it to happen again, so what that looks like for me and is my key takeaway.

# MALI HERMANS:

Yes, such a similar takeaway. I think again the fact that the majority of young people who responded to the survey, their vision for the future was one rooted in transformative justice I think speaks to the fact that we have and need completely different ways of responding to violence. I think another key takeaway that is very relevant to service delivery is the fact that a lot of young people expressed that they experienced oppression and discrimination due to different parts of their identity but also that training was not enough.

So, it is not enough just to have antiracist training, not enough to have disability inclusivity training if your workforce is still predominantly white middle-class women, for example, which we know is the case within the mainstream, family domestic violence and sexual assault services, so touching on the importance of lived experience workers and having a more diverse workforce so that if you are a First Nations women, if you are a disabled woman, if you are a woman of colour or don't speak English as your first language, you can go get support and access healing from somebody who fundamentally understands your experiences of violence.

# KAREN BENTLEY:

Louise, would you like to go next?

# LOUISE WELLINGTON:

Yes, it was one particular thing. It was just the knowing that we can't focus on one. We deserve all of it. We deserve every recommendation and the focus to be on all of it. We cannot just put all of our efforts into one thing because it all connects together, to have the best outcome, and people deserve that. Victims deserve it, and the

next generation deserves it, so yes, the government does need to get on board, society needs to get on board and listen and follow through with the recommendations from people with lived experience and experts in the field.

# KAREN BENTLEY:

Margherita.

# MARGHERITA DALL'OCCO:

I cannot agree more with what has been said. It is highlighting the intersectionality, that people bring everything and all that they are to these experiences and to institutions and services and we cannot leave all of us at the door and with transformative justice, it doesn't happen without that inclusion, and we need to highlight and listen and really prioritise sharingand including these experiences of young women and non-binary people at the beginning of everything.

# KAREN BENTLEY:

Thanks, Margherita. We can now open up and take a few questions from the audience and we have a few questions that have come through. We will probably have about five minutes of questions now. Please, if you haven't asked a question and you have one burning away in your mind, put those through. I don't think we will get through all questions but we will if you put your email address and name endeavour to send these onto the panel and try and get your response if you don't get through to your question today. I've got the first question and maybe someone can raise the hand if they would like to answer it, how can organisations demonstrate they are trust worthy and take into consideration the concerns of young women and non-binary people? That is from Jade.

# IS HAY:

Organisations are so good at telling us all the things they are doing well and it will tell us the things they are doing wrong but I find that if an organisation is like, "Here is how we made a mistake in the past and what we have done to change it, here was an issue and what we have done about it," makes me trust them because they are holding themselves accountable. They are publicly declaring that it is not good enough or they will ask you to tell them what you need. It is that admission of faults and the steps to moving forward and making the public.

Secondly, it is filling the organisations with people who will engage with those organisations. I don't want to interact with a violence prevention service that has a white… Old white man who is the person I'm interacting with first. I will not interact with that organisation if that is what it is about so it is about filling organisations with the people that want to use and should be able to use them so I know I can enter a space and be seen and I can trust that that is happening, I suppose.

# KAREN BENTLEY:

Thanks. I might move on to other questions. Casey asks, "What is the definition in the survey of institutional betrayal?"

# MALI HERMANS:

I'm happy to speak to this one. I was involved in drafting and publishing the survey and though I can't remember the exact definition we used word for word I think we refer to institutional betrayal,we were referring to instances where young victims and survivors reach out an institution, whether willingly or non-consensually after experiencing gender-based violence and for whatever reason, they were let down by that institution and they felt they were re-traumatised, so a classic example would be for young people attend a university campus. They felt they were betrayed by the universities when those universities chose not to pursue any form of justice.

Another form of institutional betrayal looked like First Nations women and gender diverse people who responded to the survey and said instead of having any type of support or healing when approaching the police, I was further retraumatised, further discriminated against, and further harm was perpetrated against me.

So, I think institutional betrayal in the context of the survey and broader project was a way to describe how these institutions are letting us down and are essentially re-traumatising us, and as we have discussed, are perpetrators of violence themselves in a lot of instances for a lot of, in particular, marginalised young people.

# KAREN BENTLEY:

Thanks, Mali. Margherita, I might throw this question to you but others jump in as well. Maria says, "What measures have been taken or what measures are planned on being taken together more accurate and in-depth data on gender-based violence for people who are nonspeaking or have complex communications needs?"

# MARGHERITA DALL'OCCO:

A good question in terms of also pointing out that a lot of the way that we gather data leaves out a significant group of people. As was said before, also, for example, women and non-binary people in rural areas who don't have access to the surveys we might be putting out and the things we are trying to put in place and advocating for is for individualised survey collection as well as making sure that we essentially plan out the surveys to us people (inaudible) what their accessibility needs are and how we can best gather that data for them, so if this

means sitting with them for a little bit and having an experience, individualised as opposed to filling out an online survey or a multitude of other things as well.

# KAREN BENTLEY:

Thank you. Mali, did you want to add something as well?

# MALI HERMANS:

This is a challenge we face in reaching people in institutionalised settings, young people in care, young people living in disability group homes and there is not an easy solution or answer and I think that goes to show that young people who are institutionalised and incarcerated, their voices are deliberately kept from us because these young people often experience the most grievous forms of violence but one thing that we were particularly happy to be able to do as part of the survey was produce an easy English translation and version, so WWDA provided the funding to AWAVA to produce that Easy English translation and I think that was pretty groundbreaking because AWAVA is not a disability-specific organisation and often throughout the broader women's sector, the only organisations that do produce Easy English content are disability-specific organisations, so I think looking towards accessible formats are collecting data that include Easy English as well as translations in English and language other than English which unfortunately is not something we had capacity to do with survey but I think that is one way to be reaching people with different access needs.

# KAREN BENTLEY:

Thanks very much. We have a couple of questions from Heather and Tina about getting into and digging, just aggregating some of the data and what our plans after that. We have the data, the data in this survey is an amazing mine for us to use, so if you are interested, we are very happy to collaborate with people about providing may be some disaggregated data on that.

That is all that we have got time for in terms of questions and answers today. I want to thank all our panellists. I'm sure all the people, wherever they are viewing this are, are standing up and applauding. Thank you very much for all of your time today and sharing the sometimes incredibly personal experiences. I feel that we have a brand- new plan… Panel here of young voices that we really need to be listening to in terms of the very eminent next national plan to end gender-based violence and I say gender-based violence advisedly because I think we need to broaden this discussion to all the forms of gender-based violence being experienced by all ages of Australians.

I hope with everyone else, you have got something out of the day's launch and the report. Please read it. The report is now available on the website and the easy, accessible version will be available shortly. We would love to hear your feedback, so please click on the 'i' icon and click on the feedback survey to let us know how we have gone, have we met your needs and provided accessibility?

I thought I would give a plug for a couple of other things. WWDA's leader strip statement on International Women's Day will be launching and please look out for that and sign up for that. It has been codesigned by women and non-binary people with a disability. The launch will talk about how the statement was developed and a link will be provided in the links below. If you are not already, we strongly urge you to become a friend and supporter of AWAVA and you can sign up for our fortnightly roundup where we write and tell and share everything that we know that is going on to end gender-based violence. Thank you again to all panellists and speakers today. That is it. Thank you and goodbye.