Full Stop Australia

Lived expertise changes what is possible.

The impact of Full Stop Australia's Lived Expertise Ideas to Action Incubator



Impact Report, November 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

Full Stop Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and we pay our respects to them, their cultures and their Elders past and present. We acknowledge the disproportionate impact of sexual, domestic and family violence on First Nations people, and their resistance and leadership in developing solutions by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This always was, and always will be Aboriginal land.

Acknowledgement of Victim-Survivors of Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence

We acknowledge all adults, children and young people who have experienced or are experiencing sexual, domestic and family violence, and we remember those who have lost their lives. We recognise the strength, dignity and expertise of victim-survivors. Lived expertise is vital to lasting change, and it should be heard, valued, and uplifted.

A note on language

In this report, we use the terms 'victim-survivor' and 'survivor'. We recognise that people affected by sexual, domestic and family violence may describe their experiences in different ways, and that no single term fits everyone. We use these words to reflect the experience of both victimisation and survivorship, while acknowledging the limitations of this language.



If this report raises anything for you, Full Stop Australia's 24/7, free and confidential counselling service is available on 1800 FULL STOP (1800 385 578).

> ***They say you can't be what you can't see. Through the Incubator, I met people who showed me what courageous leadership looks like. For the first time, I didn't feel like I had to justify my place in the room. I belonged.***

Incubator alumna

The Lived Expertise Ideas to Action Incubator was created to help turn the knowledge and experience of survivors of sexual, domestic and family violence into opportunities for advocacy, leadership and meaningful change.
Co-designed with survivor advocates, the Incubator brought people together to build practical advocacy skills, explore ideas, form connections and discover ways to influence change on their own terms. It recognised that meaningful participation requires more than an invitation to share experiences. It requires safety, choice, connection and support that values each person's knowledge and autonomy.

This report recognises the people who shaped the Incubator, shares what this investment made possible and considers what comes next. While its funded delivery has concluded, the connections, capabilities and possibilities the Incubator created remain. With further investment, we can build on this foundation and create more opportunities for lived expertise to shape lasting change.

Why this work matters

What the Incubator set out to do

The Lived Expertise Ideas to Action Incubator was designed to build the skills, confidence and connections of victim-survivors of sexual, domestic and family violence who want to explore advocacy. It combined structured learning, practical resources, trauma-informed support and peer connection. Lived experience shaped it from design through delivery.



Why it matters

Sexual, domestic and family violence is an epidemic in Australia. Addressing it takes more than services and systems responding to people's experiences. It needs the expertise of people directly affected to be heard, valued and influential in shaping policy, practice and social change. Victim-survivors who step into advocacy should be able to do so without leaving their safety and wellbeing at the door.

What it aimed to create

- A structured, victim-survivor-led pathway into advocacy
- A place for people with lived experience to connect and support one another
- Practical skills and resources to use in advocacy
- The conditions to take part safely and sustainably, on participants' own terms

What we built together

The idea for the program was sparked by a conversation with Full Stop Australia's National Survivor Advocate Program (NSAP) Advisory Group – reflecting on what would have supported them as they began their own journey in advocacy. Together, we developed this idea into a program.



Built with survivors from the start.

The Incubator was co-designed over six months with the NSAP Advisory Group before the first session began. Advisory Group members brought lived and professional expertise, served as the project's reference group and were actively involved in program delivery. Their input shaped the program's content, how it was delivered, and how participants were supported to take part safely.



Four pillars, developed with lived experience

Skills-building:
practical tools for advocacy

Ideas to action:
support to turn ideas into plans

Connection and community:
relationships with other survivor advocates

Trauma-informed support:
safety, boundaries, self-care and awareness of vicarious trauma, built into how advocacy skills were explored and developed

The program

Three rounds: a pilot in June and July 2025, Round 1 in October and November 2025, and Round 2 in March and April 2026. Across those rounds, participants took part in:

11 in-person workshops

15 webinars with expert contributors

9 practical toolkits

3 peer connection events

Full Stop Australia's trauma-specialist clinical support was available throughout, and participants could access one-to-one coaching and mentoring.

Listening and adapting

Participants gave feedback after each session on safety, relevance and delivery quality. Reflection activities, focus groups and one-to-one conversations showed what was working and what needed to change. Each round of the program delivered was improved with participant feedback and Advisory Group advice; when the Advisory Group raised burnout prevention, it was added to the program straight away.

> It felt like genuine co-design – we were supporting the design from the beginning to the end. Our input was taken seriously and implemented.
>
> *NSAP Advisory Group member*

> I raised concerns about burnout prevention and that was acknowledged and swiftly included within the program.
>
> *NSAP Advisory Group member*

The reach and participation of the Incubator

150+
Enquiries received

86
Expressions of interest submitted

42
Offers made

36
Participants commenced

33
Completed the program across three rounds

92%
Completion rate

Listening, learning and measuring impact

Participation in advocacy does not happen separately from the realities of people's lives. Survivor advocates may be navigating the ongoing impacts of trauma, legal proceedings, employment, job seeking, caring responsibilities and the many challenges that can accompany rebuilding life after violence. The Incubator recognised that participation and advocacy need to be supported with flexibility, choice and an understanding of these realities. We also witnessed the care and connection that grew between participants, extending well beyond the workshop sessions. When someone was unable to attend, or needed to step away from the program, others offered to share notes and learning, exchanged contact details and checked in on one another. These acts of support reflected something deeper than practical assistance: a genuine empathy and understanding that came from shared experience, and a willingness to be there for one another without judgement.

While 33 of the 36 people who commenced completed the program, the value of someone's contribution or lived expertise cannot be measured solely by their ability to complete a program. The connections, encouragement and support participants offered one another were themselves an important part of the Incubator's impact.

5/5

safe and supported

Across three rounds, the Incubator used a mixed-methods evaluation approach, including participant evaluations following workshops and webinars, reflective focus groups and facilitator feedback.
After every workshop and webinar across all three rounds, participants rated whether they felt safe and supported. Every response was 5 out of 5, except one rating of 4 for a single pilot session. Feedback on session content and guest contributors' knowledge reflected satisfactory to highly satisfactory experiences.

Beyond the ratings, participant reflections highlighted growth in advocacy skills and confidence, stronger peer connections, greater understanding of self-care and boundaries, and an increased sense of possibility about how they could contribute to change.



*Impact evidence drawn from program records, participant feedback and NSAP Advisory Group feedback.

Alumni continuing to make a difference

The Incubator was one part of each person's wider journey. Since taking part, alumni have continued to build on their existing work, pursue new opportunities and contribute to change in ways that reflect their individual interests, experiences and capacity.

Across the alumni community, this has included continuing to develop survivor-led charities, foundations and initiatives; writing and publishing books; producing podcasts; contributing to research and academic work, including doctoral research; and sharing lived expertise through speaking, media and advocacy opportunities. Some have developed or progressed their own advocacy ideas, others have chosen to contribute to existing campaigns, volunteer with survivor-led organisations or collaborate with others working towards change.

There is no single pathway for survivor-led advocacy. For some, the Incubator helped bring an idea into focus; for others, it strengthened a sense of belonging, confidence and connection, or reinforced that the responsibility for creating change does not rest on their shoulders alone.

We celebrate the many ways alumni continue to use their knowledge, experience and leadership, on their own terms and in their own time.

> *This program has inspired me so much and given me drive to push forward with my ideas.*
>
> Participant feedback





> ***The Incubator program made me feel proud to be a survivor. I feel more powerful and creative.***
>
> Lea Ng, Incubator alumna

In their words

The people who took part in the Incubator are best placed to describe what it meant. These reflections come from participant feedback during the program, and from alumni who chose to contribute to this report. Contributors chose how they wanted to be named. Feedback from the program is shared anonymously.

The Incubator helped me realise that my lived experience is not merely part of my history. It is knowledge, it has value, and it can be a powerful instrument for change.

Rania Asfour, Incubator alumna

Witnessing all the different ways of advocating and finding my own path made me brave to reclaim my voice and share it in different avenues.

Participant feedback

Before participating in the program, I was interested to learn more about advocacy but didn't believe it was something I could do. In the program, I gained new skills and most importantly, I was connected to a community of survivor-advocates.

Incubator alum

We can build a different system, a way of working that's trauma-informed, values-aligned, and doesn't ask us to hide our truth, to shrink to fit in.

Participant feedback

The care that was taken in every workshop created a really safe space. The set up and group agreements gave us permission to care for ourselves as we needed, and also care for others.

Participant feedback

Maybe I'm just one of many women you've inspired, but I want you to know how much you've changed me. And I will carry this forward. Because this is legacy work.

Participant feedback

One of the strongest outcomes of the Incubator was the solidarity in the group, and when we got to meet the other groups, it was striking and strengthening to feel the solidarity across all the groups.

Participant feedback

I feel so inspired by the drive and determination of the group and those we spoke to make change, and this has helped me regain a sense of confidence and power to pursue the causes I care about.

Participant feedback

I feel that peer solidarity is such a potent force, both healing and strengthening.

Participant feedback

I was feeling quite lost because I didn't have the connections I now have thanks to the incubator. Fast forward to now and I am connected to resilient, strong women who get it- who without words can empathise with my experience.

Participant feedback

The safety I felt within the group helped me feel that no matter the outcome, I was safe and would be supported. It isn't just the content of the program that is empowering. The safe space created for connection has brought me a sense of belonging and understanding.

Participant feedback

I'm now able to build a culture of care, solidarity, and celebration around my advocacy work but also finding joy and creativity in the many ways of surviving.

Freya Wolf, Incubator alumna

The biggest gift wasn't advice. It was being seen. Full Stop helped me realise that our stories and lived experiences are not weaknesses to overcome. They are sources of wisdom.

Ratu Nida, Incubator alumna

With gratitude

The Lived Expertise Incubator was shaped by the generosity, knowledge and commitment of many people. Our sincere thanks go to the NSAP Advisory Group for their lived expertise and collaboration in co-designing the program; to our expert contributors for generously sharing their knowledge and skills; and, most of all, to our Incubator Alumni, whose expertise, perspectives and leadership enriched the program and strengthened our collective understanding of what survivor-led advocacy can make possible. **We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to the Incubator and helped make it what it was.**

What's next

Building the future of survivor-led advocacy

The Incubator showed what becomes possible when survivor advocates can connect, build their skills, develop their ideas and contribute their expertise in a trauma-informed, supported environment. It also confirmed something we already believed: meaningful change does not happen in isolation.

Survivor advocates need ways to connect with one another, influence decisions, contribute to public conversations and bring their knowledge into the places where policy, practice and systems are shaped. They need organisations and partners willing to listen, make room for their leadership and invest in the conditions that make advocacy sustainable.
Alumni have told us they want the Incubator to continue, and many want a role in what comes next as mentors, session hosts and co-authors.

Our vision

A future where lived expertise is recognised as essential to preventing and responding to sexual, domestic and family violence. Survivor advocates have real opportunities to lead and influence decisions, and their expertise is treated as integral to change, not an afterthought.
We can't build that future alone. Full Stop Australia is committed to sustaining and growing this work. We'll build on what the Incubator and our National Survivor Advocate Program have taught us, and reach survivor advocates in metropolitan, regional and diverse communities across Australia.

Help us build what comes next

Partner with Full Stop Australia to invest in survivor-led advocacy and create more opportunities for lived expertise to drive change.

Email us at: donations@fullstop.org.au

Credits
The Lived Expertise Ideas to Action Incubator was funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

Full Stop Australia