

4. National FGM/C prevention and support

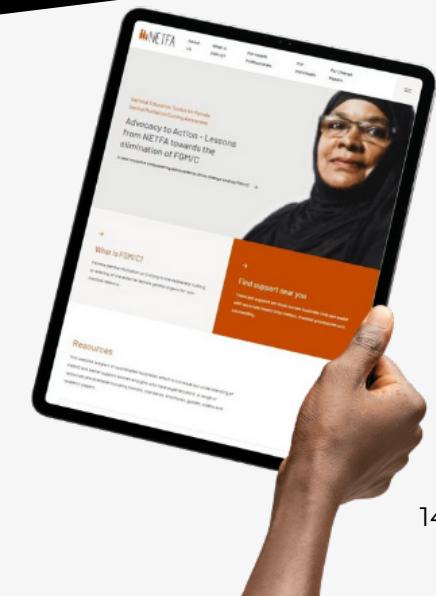
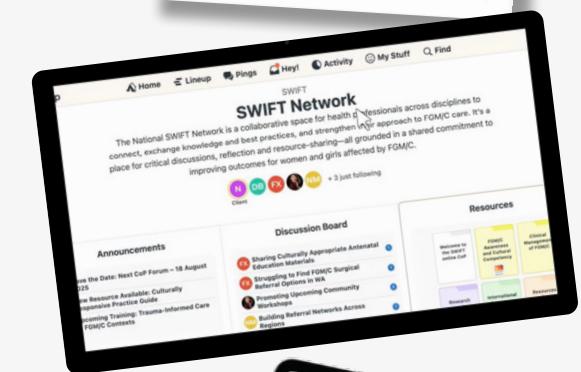
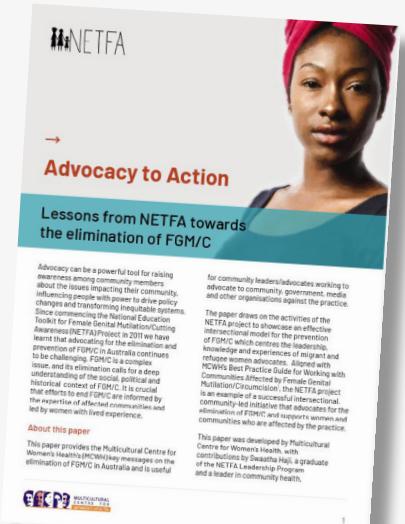
According to the most recent estimate in 2019, there are approximately 53,000 women and girls living in Australia who have undergone FGM/C.¹⁷ Since 1998, MCWH has been working with communities affected by Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C). In 2013, that work extended to a national level, collaborating with community advocates and health professionals and services to prevent and address FGM/C in Australia through two the delivery of two key projects.

The National Education Toolkit for FGM/C Awareness (NETFA), funded by the Commonwealth Government from 2013 to 2025, was developed by MCWH to provide a community voice for women affected by FGM/C. The NETFA program built the capacity, skills and confidence of women with lived experience of FGM/C to advocate and take leadership in their communities and in health systems to prevent and address FGM/C in Australia.

The SWIFT Project: Supporting Workers in FGM/C Training supports health workers across Australia to effectively prevent and respond to FGM/C through culturally responsive, trauma-informed training, practical resources, and a national Community of Practice. SWIFT, funded by the Commonwealth Government until 30 June 2026, has developed a range of vital resources, including a map of all FGM/C services across Australia, an analysis of national workforce gaps, in-language resources, webinars and podcasts, as well as a National Community of Practice and online network for health workers across disciplines.

Much has been achieved through the NETFA and SWIFT projects to date. However, there is an ongoing need to continue to engage with affected communities to prevent FGM/C and to work with health professionals to ensure that women and girls who have experienced FGM/C are treated equitably and safely in the health system. The SWIFT national workforce analysis found that expertise is fragmented across jurisdictions and disciplines, with limited opportunities for health professionals to learn from each other, share practice-based insights, or access consistent, up-to-date information. GPs are often the first point of contact for migrant and refugee communities, yet many report limited knowledge and confidence in responding to FGM/C.

Continued funding would ensure that the national momentum that has been established since 2013 is not lost, and that communities and health practitioners are supported to address the issue of FGM/C in an evidence-based, consistent and cohesive way.



How do we know SWIFT/NETFA works?

MCWH's resource 'Advocacy to Action: Lessons from NETFA towards the elimination of FGM/C' has been viewed



times on the website since February 2025.

The NETFA website is an important resource for health professionals, community members and anyone supporting prevention efforts in Australia.

323,195 
website views
since October 2020



The SWIFT Community of Practice currently has **79 members** made up of health professionals from nursing, midwifery and maternal health, allied health, health promotion and education, and general practice in every state and territory.

Testimonials from participants:

- " Previous knowledge on FGM/C was further strengthened by the clinical aspects of the presentation
- " This space is very important for us to come together to share thought into practice
- " This content has helped me on how to approach the FGM/C discussions with my patients
- " It was great to have access to resources and up-to-date information on current practices

In 2026-27 MCWH calls upon the Australian Government to:

Provide ongoing funding to MCWH to continue to work with communities and health practitioners to prevent and address FGM/C in Australia by:

- delivering the SWIFT Community of Practice and online Network of health professionals;
- co-designing and developing evidence-based resources for health professionals and communities;
- addressing key issues relevant to lived experience of FGM/C, including stigma, mental health, sexual health and sexuality;
- supporting community-led advocacy by women with lived experience through delivery of the NETFA leadership program
- updating national data collection and research to enable more targeted and effective service planning across Australia.

Over 4 years \$2,047,400.