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Women and Children's Safety Program- where is it? Government fails to fund essential services for women experiencing domestic and family violence

Women's Electoral Lobby, Australia (WEL) has slammed the budget for not funding a women and children's safety program including desperately needed frontline crisis services for domestic and family violence.

WEL Australia Deputy Chair Helen L'Orange said, "A good start would have been \$1 billion over five years from the Commonwealth for a long term and securely funded Commonwealth and State national program for 24-hour accessible women's refuges, frontline outreach services and transitional accommodation."

"Women's refuges save lives.

"Australia needs a properly funded women and children's safety program. Domestic and family violence services are grossly under-resourced in Australia. We are back to the seventies with community groups setting up women's refuges without government funding.

"Premier of Victoria, Daniel Andrews, has shown the way by announcing a half billion dollar program within days of the tabling of the Report of the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence.

"The Prime Minister has recently received a similarly comprehensive report from the COAG Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence Against Women. The PM is passionate in his support for the elimination of violence against women. He should act now.'

Ms L'Orange added, "Community Legal Centres are another vital service to assist women experiencing family violence.

"Inadequate funding is forcing Community Legal Centres to turn away more than 160,000 people a year, including women affected by family violence.

"Access to free legal advice and assistance is critical for those trying to escape an abusive partner."

Contact: Helen L'Orange AM , Deputy Chair, Women's Electoral Lobby Australia, 0425 244 935