

FAIR  
AGENDA

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Budget test on domestic violence crisis. A test the government has failed.**

WEDNESDAY 13<sup>th</sup> MAY 2015

A new Fair Agenda report on Australia's domestic violence epidemic launched on The Project on budget night has shown that thousands of women are being turned away from family violence services because the federal government isn't providing them with enough funding.

Yet family violence was almost entirely absent from the new budget. And with no new announcements of funding for services made on budget night, "we can expect thousands of calls for help will keep going unanswered, thousands of women will be left to face court and their abusers without support, and women and children seeking refuge will keep being turned away." Says Renee Carr of Fair Agenda

The *What it will take* report – launched on The Project in a segment now going viral – shows that last year Australia's national phone counselling service 1800RESPECT had to let 18,631 requests for assistance go unanswered; community legal centres – where domestic violence support makes up about a third of the work – had to turn away more than 150,000 people; and homelessness services – another critical family violence support service – turned away 423 people every night in 2013-14.

On budget night, the call to #showmethemoney to end domestic violence trended nationally. Renee Carr from Fair Agenda – the community campaigning organisation behind the report – says "Budget night was a chance for the federal government to show us the money – and their commitment to keep women affected by domestic violence safe. Instead, we heard no new announcements of funding to tackle this issue. Budget night was a test of the government's commitment to dealing with our domestic violence crisis, and it's a test they failed."

"To escape domestic violence, women need to know they've got somewhere to go. Family violence services act as a safety net; but right now that safety net is stretched to breaking point, and people are falling through the gaps."

"After public pressure created by Fair Agenda members and many other Australians calling for action," added Ms Carr. "The Treasurer has said that we can expect additional announcements. We expected them on budget night. The Treasurer must commit to serious, full funding. Funding that ends the situation where women in need are turned away from the services that are supposed to be able to help them. Funding that supports serious, nation-wide programs that help stop this violence. And Fair Agenda and the 35,000 voters who've signed our petition so far won't rest until we get that commitment."

Australians who care about women being turned away from services; and failed by this system, should join us at: [fairagenda.org/whatwillitake](http://fairagenda.org/whatwillitake) .

The *What it will take* report lays out the additional federal funding experts say is needed across 9 categories of family violence services. The resource and associated campaign are available at: <http://www.fairagenda.org/whatwillitake>. The video launching the report has been watched more than 300,000 times in under 24 hours.

FOR INTERVIEWS AND MEDIA ENQUIRIES  
Renee Carr, Fair Agenda, [media@fairagenda.org](mailto:media@fairagenda.org), 0435 597 976

#### NOTES TO THE EDITOR

For comment on the campaign: Renee Carr, Fair Agenda, 0435 597 976

#### KEY FIGURES FROM 'WHAT IT WILL TAKE' PRE-BUDGET REPORT

- Crisis and counselling services are in need of \$8.0 - \$8.8 million of additional funding
- \$200 million in additional funding per year is needed for legal assistance services (where family violence work makes up a third of the work)
- Family Violence Prevention Legal Service units need an additional \$28 million additional funding per annum
- In 2013-14, on average 423 people had to be turned away from homelessness agencies every night.
- 1 in 5 women affected by family violence first disclose this to their GP
- Indigenous parenting and family safety programs need \$12.2 million in multi-year funding
- Men's behaviour change initiatives need a \$8.5 million funding injection

#### ANALYSIS OF THE BUDGET ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1800 RESPECT – received no additional funding in the budget
- Community legal centres – had no additional funding provided in the budget; and with cuts in the funding model in some jurisdictions, and cuts made in the forward estimates (from mid 2017), NACLCLC expect turn aways from Community Legal Centres will get worse.
- Family Violence Prevention Legal Services – that support Aboriginal victims and survivors of domestic violence received no additional funding in the budget.
- Homelessness – received the previously announced \$230 million to extend the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. This doesn't include indexation which means a real cut to services of \$12.58 million (over the current year and two years of extension). Services can't meet the increasing demand without sufficient and fair increases, so we can expect more women will be turned away unless this is rectified.
- Men's behavior change programs – received no new funding
- Primary prevention – no additional investment in strategies for primary prevention. Unless that becomes the focus of the still to be defined national awareness campaign. Regardless, investment is still vastly inadequate.
- Family & relationship services – it's unclear if any additional funding has been provided for these services.
- Services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities – it's unclear if any additional funding has been provided.

For further information on the service areas highlighted in the report:

- 1800 RESPECT: Karen Willis, Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia, 0419 438 907 or (02) 8585 0333
- Crisis response: Annette Gillespie, Safe Steps, 0487 970 019
- Family and Relationship Services: Jackie Brady, Family & Relationship Services Australia, 0406 628 239 or [communications@frsa.org.au](mailto:communications@frsa.org.au)
- Community Legal Centres: Michael Smith, National Association of Community Legal Centres, 0421 437 883
- Specialist legal assistance services for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women: Antoinette Braybook, Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service, (03) 9244 3333

- Accommodation and housing: Homelessness Australia, (02) 6247 7744
- Women's health services: Kelly Bannister, Australian Women's Health Network, 0408 061 901
- Specialist services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities: Gulnara Abbasova, Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils, (02) 6282 5755
- Men's behaviour change: No To Violence, Jacqui Watt, 0425 406 659 or Rodney Vlasis 0433 040 398