

## Morrison Government response to Fair Agenda

### Funding for family violence services

1. **Inadequate and unpredictable funding for family and domestic violence services limits the capacity of organisations to respond to the urgent and ongoing needs of people experiencing family violence.**

**Would your party support the implementation of guaranteed, long-term funding and a ten year plan for workforce capability and development framework for services that work to prevent gender-based violence, support women and children, and intervene with perpetrators?**

*Answers to one and three:*

The Morrison Government acknowledges the importance of confirming future funding arrangements with organisations in a timely way, to support them to plan their business and maintain service delivery. The *Community Grants Hub* will ensure providers are informed about future funding arrangements at least five to six months before grants expire, in programs where service continuity needs to be maintained.

The Coalition also has a strong record of addressing domestic and family violence, and keeping families safe and together through workforce capability and development activities. The Morrison Government has provided \$328 million as part of *the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children's Forth Action Plan*. This includes \$26 million to continue *the Domestic and Family Violence response training ( DV-alert) program* providing free, national training to increase capabilities of health and allied health and community workers supporting high-risk groups including women with disability and people from Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

**Do you commit to ensuring funding for domestic and family violence related services is allocated to service providers with specialist expertise in the gendered nature and dynamics of domestic and family violence and its impact on victim survivors?**

Organisations funded by the Government need to demonstrate expertise and understanding commensurate with the service they provide.

2. **Inadequate and unpredictable funding for family and domestic violence services limits the capacity of specialist agencies to respond to the urgent and ongoing needs of those affected. How much extra funding will your Party provide to specialist agencies to meet unmet demand?**

Please refer to the answer provided at question one.

3. **Family Violence Prevention Legal Services provide specialist and culturally safe services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, but are currently limited to just 14 locations. These services have not received the standard CPI level increase on their direct funding since 2013, the equivalent of a \$9 million real loss of funding. Would you reinstate this funding?**
4. **Would your Party commit to providing long term increased funding to properly resource the capacity of the current Family Violence Prevention Legal Services, and to increase geographic coverage of FVPLS including to urban, rural and remote areas - estimated at an additional \$28 million annually?**

**5. Will your party commit to long-term, ongoing funding for the National FVPLS Forum?**

*Answers to three, four and five:*

The Morrison Government is committed to continuing our investment in services that prevent family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Morrison Government has invested \$35 million in new funding to address domestic violence and is supporting 14 specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence prevention legal services to work with around 4,000 victims of family violence each year.

Funding for Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS) has been increased under the *Indigenous Advancement Strategy* and the Morrison Government is now providing \$121.2 million to 30 June 2020, including funding for *the National FVPLS Forum*.

Only the Labor Party has a record of not supporting FVPLS when in May 2012 it reduced funding for early intervention and prevention funding previously provided through the FVPLS.

We are committed to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians including the FVPLS on the roll out of this investment.

**6. Community Legal Centres provide vital free legal advice to hundreds of thousands of people across Australia every year, including people experiencing family violence.**

**Community legal centres continue to face funding uncertainty and are insufficiently funded to meet rising demand for services. In 2014 the Productivity Commission recommended that an immediate injection of at least \$120 million per year of additional federal funding was required by the legal assistance sector to meet demand. This would mean at least \$14.4 million additional federal government funding per year for Community Legal Centres alone.**

**Will your party commit to at least \$14.4 million additional core funding per year for community legal centres?**

The Morrison Government is committed to ongoing support of, and investment in the legal assistance sector.

A *Legal Assistance Package*, announced as part of the Budget, will provide \$918.4 million over four years for legal assistance to be delivered by legal aid commissions, community legal centres and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services. From 1 July 2020, combined with existing funding, the Government will provide \$1.2 billion over three years for legal assistance services.

From 1 July 2020, baseline funding will increase to \$369.9 million per year, which includes approximately \$226.4 million per year (ongoing) in baseline funding to legal aid commissions; \$45.4 million per year (ongoing) in baseline funding to community legal centres and making permanent new funding of \$10 million per year, indexed, to support legal assistance services.

**7. A number of community legal centres have specialist family violence units and health justice partnerships. A recent evaluation of these units and partnerships highlighted the significant difference they make in the lives of women experiencing family violence. Would your Party support and provide funding for national roll-out of these units and partnerships?**

As part of *the Women's Economic Security Package*, the Morrison Government will provide ongoing funding to Commonwealth funded specialist domestic violence units and health justice partnerships.

Funding includes \$31.8 million in the first three years, from 1 July 2019, to allow service providers to maintain their services and expand delivery to include financial counselling and literacy services.

This measure builds on the \$300 million the Coalition has already invested in measures to improve women's safety.

- 8. Would your Party provide additional federal funding to expand perpetrator responses and interventions, including men's behaviour change programs, case management, fathering programs and other specialist interventions, estimated by No To Violence to require an additional \$88.2 million of federal funding annually?**

The Morrison Government recently announced the largest ever Commonwealth investment of \$328 million in funding as part of *the Fourth Action Plan*, which includes programs for perpetrators of abuse, programs to encourage men to be positive role models, new national standards for sexual assault responses including victim and perpetrator programs, and a framework for reporting against the standards.

- 9. Our Watch is the National Foundation for the Prevention of Violence Against Women and their Children. It oversees and leads the implementation of the national strategy to prevent violence against women. Does your Party support the provision of long term, core funding of Our Watch of \$5 million annually?**

*Our Watch* was established as a National Plan Partner specialising in prevention activities. The Morrison Government's recently announced commitment to *the Fourth Action Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children* includes a \$64 million prevention package, with funding for Australia's first Prevention Hub to coordinate prevention activities nationally; continuation of the successful *Stop it at the Start* national campaign; and continuing prevention programs through workplaces, sports clubs and other community organisations.

- 10. Does your party commit to develop a new National Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children after 2022 based on consultation with the specialist sexual, domestic and family violence sector and incorporating learnings from the evaluation of the current plan?**

*The Fourth Action Plan* is due to be launched mid-2019 and run for three years. Funding is set aside to ensure the plan is evaluated to ensure next steps are evidence based.

- 11. Would your Party support investment to build the capacity of practitioners in community groups, government, organisations and key sectors to ensure they have expertise in the prevention of violence, and are able to expand the reach of current primary prevention activities?**

The Morrison Government's record commitment to *the Fourth Action Plan* includes a \$64 million prevention package, with funding for Australia's first Prevention Hub to coordinate prevention activities nationally; continuation of the successful *Stop it at the Start* national campaign; and continuing prevention programs through workplaces, sports clubs and other community organisations.

- 12. Would your Party commit to reviewing the domestic and family violence system to identify the funding gaps that are within the Commonwealth's area of responsibility?**

The Morrison Government's record commitment to *the Fourth Action Plan* includes \$9.2 million in research funding to support *Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety* (ANROWs) and agencies such as *the Australian Bureau of Statistics* and *the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare* to undertake ongoing work to understand gaps and produce high quality reports on family, domestic and sexual violence. It will also support evaluations of the National Plan.

- 13. Does your Party commit to develop a national strategy for ensuring all people affected by domestic and family violence can access emergency, transitional, long-term and affordable housing, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse and LGBTIQ people and people with a disability?**

The Morrison Government has a comprehensive plan to address housing affordability, which was delivered in the 2017-18 Federal Budget. This includes \$1.5 billion annually in funding to states and territories under *the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA)*, which supports states and territories in their responsibility for providing housing and homelessness support.

Included in the NHHA is dedicated homelessness funding of \$620 million over five years, which must be matched by states and territories. This funding must be targeted at the National Priority Cohorts, which include women and children escaping family and domestic violence. To receive funding under the NHHA, states and territories must publish their housing and homeless strategies online, setting out clearly how these will address the Priority Cohorts.

In addition to this, under the Fourth Action Plan, the Morrison Government announced a \$60 million Safe Places package, which will provide capital grants to establish new and expand existing emergency or crisis accommodation for women and children escaping family and domestic violence. \$18 million is also being provided towards *the Keeping Women Safe in Their Home Program*.

**14. How much additional funding would your Party commit to ensuring children and young people who are experiencing, or at risk of, domestic and family violence receive early and ongoing specialist support that is tailored to their unique and complex needs?**

The Morrison Government is providing an unprecedented \$328 million under *the National Plan's Fourth Action Plan*. This brings the total invested by the Australian Government since 2013 to more than \$840 million.

**Parents Next**

**1. The Australian Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Law Centre have criticised the ParentsNext program as inconsistent with Australia's human rights obligations, saying it unjustifiably discriminates against women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Will your Party abandon the current ParentsNext program?**

The Morrison Government is committed to breaking the cycle of intergenerational welfare dependency by helping parents build their work readiness and prepare to re-enter the workforce by the time their youngest child reaches six years old, including through *ParentsNext*. We don't want parents and their families consigned to a life of welfare.

Since July 2018, the program has helped over 22,000 parents commence education and training and has assisted tens of thousands more parents commence their journey towards employment through non-vocational and other forms of assistance.

It should be noted that the Coalition has recently changed the program to improve outcomes for participants.

**2. Will your Party end the application of compliance frameworks that threaten parenting payments based on the completion of activities?**

The Coalition has made a number of changes to the program to improve or clarify existing flexibility in the program and to reduce the compliance burden of the program. These include:

- ensuring parents who are studying can use this to fully satisfy their activity requirements;
- ensuring communications reinforce that parents can bring children to the appointments and that services are family friendly;
- working with the *Department of Human Services (DHS)* to minimise initial appointments being held close to a parent's reporting date;
- removing activity reporting requirements for those in approved full time study;
- reducing activity reporting frequency to once per fortnight;

- removing activity reporting requirements for flexible activities;
- allowing Centrelink to administer a greater range of exemptions under the program;
- encouraging providers to not schedule requirements near a participant's Centrelink reporting day; and
- developing reminder notifications for participants to ensure they do not forget a reporting date.

The Morrison Government continues to consider the most appropriate settings for the program to ensure that it is delivering on its goal to support parents to build their work readiness.

**3. Will your Party make the receipt of parenting payments unconditional for parents with children under six years (i.e. not impose activity requirements as a pre-condition to receiving the parenting payment)?**

The Morrison Government has been working with stakeholders to ensure that the operation of *ParentsNext* is effective. The Government will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure that the program settings for *ParentsNext* are appropriate, while achieving the goal of reducing intergenerational welfare dependency and helping parents to proactively prepare for their future careers.

**4. Will your Party commit to work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to co-create voluntary programs that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to achieve their goals and promote self-determination?**

The Morrison Government has been working in close partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the country. A guiding principle of the *Indigenous Advancement Strategy* (IAS) has been that community designed and locally delivered services result in the best quality service delivery. That is why under the IAS, the Coalition has increased the percentage of local Indigenous organisations delivering services from around 30 per cent to 60 per cent since we came to Government. The Coalition has also lifted Commonwealth purchasing from Indigenous businesses from just 30 businesses winning \$6.2 million in Commonwealth contracts in 2012-13 to over 1,500 Indigenous businesses winning \$2 billion in Commonwealth contracts since the introduction of *the Indigenous Procurement Policy* in 2015.

These reforms are placing control back in the hands of local communities and have already yielded important dividends like a 23.3 per cent increase in the number of Indigenous Australians with a job since 2011 and a 30 per cent increase in the number of self-employed Indigenous businessmen and women. The Coalition has also invested \$35 million in new funding to address domestic violence and is supporting 14 specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence prevention legal services to work with around 4,000 victims of family violence each year. Exciting new local governance reforms are now underway including the Empowered Communities trials and place-based initiatives like Pama Futures in Cape York.

## **Campus Sexual Violence**

**1. Sexual violence is the most significant safety issue on university campuses right now. Too many universities and residences are still failing to appropriately respond to, and prevent, sexual violence. Will your party commit to establish an independent and expert-led Taskforce to track, assess and publicly report on university and residences' measures to prevent and improve responses to sexual violence?**

The Morrison Government recently announced the largest ever Commonwealth investment of \$328 million investment in *the Fourth Action Plan* includes a total of \$9.2 million in research funding, including the \$5.64 million for ANROWS. The remaining funding will support key agencies such as the

Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to undertake ongoing work to address data gaps and produce high quality reports on family, domestic and sexual violence.

The Fourth Action Plan also includes:

- a \$64 million prevention package, with funding for Australia's first Prevention Hub to coordinate prevention activities nationally; continuation of the successful *Stop it at the Start* national campaign; and continuing prevention programs through workplaces, sports clubs and other community organisations such as university campuses;
- \$64 million to continue funding *1800RESPECT*, the national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service, until 2021. This funding will support an estimated 575,000 contacts, including university students;
- \$10 million to expand *Specialised Family Violence Services*, providing those affected by domestic and family violence with specialised counselling, programs and support, including university students;
- \$2.6 million to develop new national standards for sexual assault responses, including victim and perpetrator programs; and
- \$26 million to continue *the DV-alert program* providing free, national training to increase capabilities of health and allied health and community workers supporting groups including university students.

### **Workplace Sexual Harassment**

- 1. More than 100 groups recently launched the "Power to Prevent" roadmap to address workplace sexual harassment in Australia. These questions relate to your party's commitment to the five areas of reforms called for by those organisations. What are your party's policies to ensure dedicated prevention efforts to address the underlying gendered drivers of sexual harassment?**

The Morrison Government's position is that preventing violence before it occurs is the most effective way to stop the cycle of violence against women.

\$64 million will be invested in prevention strategies to help eradicate domestic and family violence in our homes and communities. This funding will cover a number of initiatives, starting with the development of Australia's first Prevention Hub to provide a coordinated response to prevention activities across the country.

The Prevention Hub will bring together governments, experts, the community sector and corporate partners to oversee and coordinate prevention efforts.

Prevention strategies will seek to raise community awareness of sexual violence and increase understanding of issues such as consent and healthy sexual relationships, particularly for young people.

The Morrison Government is committing \$16.7 million to continue and build on the success of *Stop it at the Start*, the national campaign to reduce violence against women and \$12 million will fund prevention programs for highly vulnerable or at-risk groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

- 2. Will you invest in integrated strategies for primary prevention, aligned with the national framework, Change the Story – both within workplaces and across the broader community, and build capacity of employers to prevent sexual harassment?**

Yes. Please see response to question one.

- 3. What are your party's policies on providing stronger and clearer legal duties on employers to prevent sexual harassment at work, and to ensure regulators are more effectively able to tackle sexual harassment?**

Please see response to question five.

- 4. Will you amend work health and safety regulations and Codes of Practice to create an enforceable framework to prevent and address sexual harassment?**

Please see response to question five.

- 5. Will you ensure Commonwealth work health and safety agencies are resourced and trained to effectively address sexual harassment?**

The Morrison Government has zero tolerance for any form of harassment in Australian workplaces. We recognise that for affected individuals the personal and career consequences of workplace sexual harassment are very significant. Effects on workplaces are also substantial, including reduced productivity, increased staff turnover, absenteeism, compensation claims and early retirement.

While remedies against sexual harassment are primarily found in State and Federal anti-discrimination laws, *the Fair Work Act 2009* also contains remedies for alternative recourse in certain workplace scenarios, including remedies to address workplace bullying, remedies for general protections for adverse actions for discriminatory reasons and unfair dismissal. The Morrison Government remains committed to these protections.

The Morrison Government has also provided additional funding to increase the 2018 National Survey into Workplace Sexual Harassment from 2,000 to 10,000 participants. The results of the 2018 survey are more detailed and robust than ever before and provide an important evidence base to inform the work on *the Australian Human Rights Commission's National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in the Workplace*.

The Morrison Government is supporting this world leading National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in the Workplace with \$500,000 of funding. The first of its kind in the world, the Inquiry is a positive and meaningful step forward in reducing sexual harassment at work and ensuring that, when it does occur, it is dealt with sensitively and appropriately. It is also the first time that economic modelling will be drawn upon in Australia to provide the evidence around the cost to individual business and the economy. The Inquiry is due to report in the second half of 2019 and is intended to inform consideration of the effectiveness of existing remedies.

The Morrison Government is clearly committed to having effective remedies but it would be premature to propose specific actions until the report and recommendations are received and considered.

- 6. Will you update Commonwealth anti-discrimination laws to impose an enforceable positive duty on employers to prevent sexual harassment, supplemented by guidelines for compliance?**

The Commonwealth's Sex Discrimination Commissioner is currently undertaking a national inquiry into sexual harassment in Australian workplaces.

That inquiry involves an in-depth examination of sexual harassment in the workplace, nation-wide consultation and extensive research. The inquiry will provide employees, employers and all members of the public with an opportunity to participate in developing a solution to ensure Australian workplaces are safe and respectful for everyone.

The inquiry is an independent, impartial process conducted by experts in the field of discrimination law and informed by very widespread consultation across all sectors of the economy.

It is expressly tasked to make recommendations to address sexual harassment in Australian workplaces.

It is appropriate to let the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Commissioner complete their inquiry before committing to changes to discrimination law.

**7. Will you grant the Commonwealth human rights commission greater investigation powers, the power to enter into enforceable undertakings, and the power to issue compliance notices, to more effectively address sexual harassment?**

As with the answer to question 6, the Sex Discrimination Commissioner is in the process of conducting a national inquiry into sexual harassment in Australian workplaces. That inquiry is expressly tasked with making recommendations to more effectively address sexual harassment in Australian workplaces.

The Morrison Government will not pre-empt the findings of the Sex Discrimination Commissioner's inquiry.

**8. What are your party's policies to ensure access to fair, effective and efficient complaints processes?**

In 2017 the Coalition passed the *Human Rights Legislation Amendment Act 2017*. This reformed the complaints handling processes of the Commission to give effect to recommendations of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights. In particular, it made procedural changes to the Commission's complaint-handling process to streamline conciliation.

**9. Will you amend the Fair Work Act to protect workers from sexual harassment with a stand-alone civil remedy provision to enable the Fair Work Commission to receive complaints and the Fair Work Ombudsman to tackle sexual harassment?**

The Morrison Government will consider any changes to the existing protections in *the Fair Work Act 2009* following completion of *the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in the Workplace*. For further information, see response to questions three to five.

**10. Will you amend Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation to extend the time limit for bringing a complaint to 6 years?**

The terms of reference for *the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces* that is currently underway specifically require the Sex Discrimination Commissioner to consider the current legal framework with respect to sexual harassment.

Currently, the President of *the Human Rights Commission* has the discretion to terminate a complaint if a complaint is lodged more than six months after the alleged acts, omissions or practices took place. That power is conferred by the *Australian Human Rights Commission Act*, and so forms part of the legal framework for handling of complaints about sexual harassment. It is currently within the scope of Ms Jenkins' inquiry.

The Morrison Government will not pre-empt the recommendations of that inquiry.

**11. Will you resource the Commonwealth human rights commission to reduce the current wait times for conciliation?**

In 2017 the Coalition passed the *Human Rights Legislation Amendment Act 2017*. That Act reformed the complaints handling processes of the Commission to give effect to recommendations of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights. In particular, the Act made procedural changes to the Commission's complaint-handling process to streamline conciliation.

However, the Human Rights Commission is an independent body. Beyond legislative fixes such as the laws passed by the Coalition in 2017, the operational aspects of complaint handling are a matter for the Commission. It would be inappropriate for Government to interfere with the Commission's complaints-handling and conciliation processes. While the Coalition increased funding available to the Australian Human Rights Commission in the Budget, it has no intention of compromising the Commission's independence.

**12. What are your parties' policies to ensure access to appropriate advocacy and support for workers who experience sexual harassment, including access to information, counselling and legal services?**

The Morrison Government is committed to ongoing support and investment of the legal assistance sector. A Legal Assistance Package, announced as part of the Budget, will provide \$918.4 million over four years for legal assistance to be delivered by legal aid commissions, community legal centres and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services. This means that from 1 July 2020, combined with existing funding, the Government will provide \$1.2 billion over three years for legal assistance services.

From 1 July 2020, baseline funding will increase to \$369.9 m per year, which includes approximately \$226.4 million per year (ongoing) in baseline funding to legal aid commissions; \$45.4 million per year (ongoing) in baseline funding to community legal centres and making permanent new funding of \$10.0 million per year, indexed, to support legal assistance services.

**Will you fund specialist support services to assist people who have experienced sexual harassment?**

The Morrison Government has committed an additional \$64 million to continue funding *1800RESPECT*, the national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service, until 2021. People experiencing sexual harassment are able to see support through this service. This funding will support an estimated 575,000 contacts.

**13. What are your party's policies to ensure accessible reporting tools for workplace sexual harassment?**

The Government will consider any changes to existing tools and enforcement following completion of *the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in the Workplace*. For further information, see response to questions three to five.

**14. Will you pilot an online reporting tool that assists people to report and address problem behaviour and seek support, and identify trends to assist with prevention and enforcement efforts?**

The Morrison Government will consider any changes to existing tools and enforcement following completion of *the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in the Workplace*. For further information, see response to questions three to five.