

Joint statement: Thousands of women remain in danger

Dear Prime Minister,

Last year you declared that domestic violence was a national priority, affirming the right of women and children to feel safe and live without fear of violence.

We welcome your commitment, and last September's Women's Safety Package. However, we are extremely worried that women's safety is at risk because of inadequate government funding of the services that respond to and prevent domestic and family violence.

We express our utmost concern that thousands of women are being left in dangerous situations, because the specialist services they rely on to achieve safety are not being adequately resourced. These include:

- Specialist family and domestic violence services - which aren't resourced to respond to more than a fraction of police referrals they receive, or to provide the breadth of outreach and case support the women affected by abuse need;
- Specialist crisis and transitional accommodation services - which aren't able to provide refuge to all the women who can't safely stay at home;
- Family Violence Prevention Legal Services - which are a vital specialist service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, but aren't resourced to meet the significant demand for their service, particularly in metropolitan and urban areas;
- Community legal centres including women's legal services - which are being forced to turn away thousands of women affected by violence; leaving them without the legal information and advice that can be critical to escaping abuse; and
- Men's behaviour change programs - which are in such high demand that men who have used violence are having to wait up to 6 months to even be assessed as eligible for programs. That's a waiting list to even go on the real waiting list.

Finding a way to escape an abuser is difficult and often dangerous. For most women it's impossible to do without support. But right now, inadequate funding is effectively closing the escape route of thousands of women.

Prime Minister Turnbull, you've declared that domestic violence is a national priority. National priorities must also be budget priorities.

We, the undersigned, urge the Commonwealth Government to immediately commit the dedicated, secure and ongoing federal funding needed to:

- Ensure every woman reaching out for help to live free from violence can access it. That means adequately resourcing: specialist family and domestic violence services; related sexual assault services; crisis and transitional accommodation services; legal assistance services - particularly women's legal services and other community legal centres; Family Violence Prevention Legal Services; family and relationship services; and related specialist services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from

culturally and linguistically diverse communities, women with disabilities, and others who face barriers to service access.

- Expand the capacity of, and access to, evidence-based perpetrator interventions like Men's Behaviour Change programs; and
- Guarantee long-term support for the expanded primary prevention programs needed to address the underlying drivers of violence.

Yours in anticipation,

Fair Agenda

Never Alone

Domestic Violence Victoria

Domestic Violence New South Wales

Family Violence Prevention Legal Services

No To Violence/Men's Referral Service

National Association of Australian Community Legal Centres

Australian Women Against Violence Alliance

Tara Costigan Foundation

Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia

WESNET

Australian Women's Health Network

Qld Domestic Violence Services Network

Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria

Domestic Violence Crisis Service (ACT)

Women's Community Shelters

Women's Housing Limited

Junction Australia

WISHIN

North Coast WDVCS

WWDACT

Emerge Women and Children's Support Network

Domestic Violence Legal Workers Network (WA)

Domestic Violence Service Management

Doris Women's Refuge

Older Women's Network Australia Inc.

Women's Council for Domestic & Family Violence Services (WA)

Women's Law Centre of WA Inc.

Djinda Services

Patricia Giles Centre

Peel Community Legal Services

Shelter WA

Federation of Community Legal Centres

SCALES Community Legal Centre

Melbourne City Mission

Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Centre

PMH Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Service

The Humanitarian Group

Carrie's Place

Canberra Rape Crisis Centre
Sydney Women's Counselling Centre
Barwon CASA
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (Qld) Ltd.
Women's Legal Service NSW
South West Refuge Inc.
Zonta House Refuge Association Inc.
Sexual Assault Support Service (Inc.)
Women's Health Victoria
NSW Council of Social Services
Share & Care Community Services Group
Midland Information Debt and Legal Advocacy Service Inc.
Coalition of Women's Domestic Violence Services SA
Penrith Women's Health Centre
Beryl Women Inc.
Good Samaritan Inn Crisis Accommodation
Mallee Family Care
Eastern Region Domestic Violence Services Network Inc.
Geraldton Resource Centre Inc.
WDVCAS NSW Inc.
Warrina Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Service's Cooperative Ltd
Eastern Domestic Violence Service (EDVOS)
Mudgin-gal Aboriginal Women's Centre
Wurringa Baiya
Women's Health NSW
Security 4 Women
Women's Electoral Lobby
National Foundation for Australian Women
Australian Council of Social Services
Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia
National Council of Jewish Women
Oxfam Australia
Country Women's Association of NSW
YWCA Victoria
YWCA Housing
Women with Disabilities Victoria
Jessie Street National Women's Library
Australian Cross Disability Alliance
Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition
Australian Federation of Graduate Women
Immigrant Women's Speakout Association of NSW
Ethnic Community Services Cooperative Ltd
Addison Road Community Centre
Soroptimist International Australia
Sisters Inside
National Council of Single Mothers and their Children
Migrant Women Lobby Group of SA