

PRESS RELEASE

Domestic violence survivors praise Victorian Government commitment

Domestic violence survivors have called today's state budget "life changing" – thanking the Victorian Government for their investment in family violence response and prevention.

In a new video just launched by community group Fair Agenda, survivor advocates thank the Andrews' Government for its funding commitments that they say will stop others from being put through what they were.

"This funding means we're on our way to making sure other Victorians won't have to go through what I did. That they won't have to know what it's like to end up in hospital, and feel like you can't tell anyone who put you there." said survivor advocate Rebeca Carro.

"We're on our way to making sure other women won't have to know what it's like to feel trapped in the place you should feel safest, and not know where to turn for help," added survivor advocate Liana Papoutsis

The duo are calling on the Victorian Opposition to also pledge its support for the funding commitments.

"This funding will save lives. It will make sure thousands of women get the help they need earlier and easier – so they don't end up in hospital, or worse." said Liana Papoutsis.

"We can't let this be treated as a political football. That's why we're calling on the Opposition to commit their bipartisan support for the funding – so more women in danger will be able to get the help they need regardless of who wins the next election." added Renee Carr, Executive Director of Fair Agenda.

Belinda Lo, family violence lawyer added: "This funding will be the difference between thousands of women accessing the services they need to be safe. Or not. And that difference can be life or death. The Victorian community can't afford for any of our leaders to stand by while this happens. We need a bipartisan commitment."

The survivor advocates are calling on other States, as well as the Turnbull Government, to step up and match Victoria's commitments.

"A woman's ability to get safe shouldn't depend on the State she lives in." says Rebeca Carro. "But across the country - other States, and the Federal Government, still aren't providing enough funding to services -- putting women affected by family violence in danger."

"When a woman tries to escape her abuser she's often at increased risk. That's why it's so vital all Governments fully fund the services she needs to get safe." added Renee Carr, Executive Director of Fair Agenda.

"Victoria has recognised the scale of response our community needs to ensure the safety of people affected by family violence. It's time other Governments followed the Andrews' Governments lead on addressing domestic violence,"

"Three women have been killed in one week in what appear to be domestic violence attacks. It's unacceptable – and well past time for action. We urgently need all Australian Governments to commit additional funding to ensure no woman is left without the support she needs to be safe." She concluded.

Video available at: <https://youtu.be/aLYwVki55cA>

Media contact: Renee Carr, Executive Director of Fair Agenda, 0435 597 976

Available for comment:

- Rebeca Carro, survivor advocate
- Liana Papoutsis, survivor advocate
- Renee Carr, Executive Director, Fair Agenda
- Belinda Lo, Family violence lawyer

Fast facts:

- Family Violence Prevention Legal Services - which provide a specialist and culturally safe services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women report that they are forced to turn away more than 30% of people who come to them for help.
- Men's Behaviour Change Programs – on average there is upwards of a 6 month waiting list for men to get into a court mandated behaviour change program.

About Fair Agenda

Fair Agenda is a community of 38,000 Australians working for a fair and equal future for women. Amongst other things, Fair Agenda members campaign to ensure no woman is left without the services she needs to escape and recover from family violence

www.fairagenda.org.

Also available for background:

- Ben Schokman, Family Violence Prevention Legal Services, 0403 622 810
- Nassim Arrage, National Association of Community Legal Centres, 02 9264 9595
- Camille Gierck, No To Violence/Men's Referral Service, 0401 337 241
- Susie Smith, Coalition of Women's Domestic Violence Services of South Australia