

FAIR AGENDA

PRESS RELEASE
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Federal Government continues to fail domestic violence victim survivors

"The Federal Government has again chosen to leave domestic violence victims in danger - by failing to adequately fund domestic violence services in this budget." says Renee Carr, Executive Director of community campaigning group Fair Agenda.

"Victoria has just announced \$1.9 billion of additional funding to address domestic violence in just one state. We should be seeing that scale of commitment matched by all Governments, including the Federal Government."

"A woman's ability to escape domestic violence shouldn't be dependent on the state she lives in." She added.

Fair Agenda notes that a number of vital family violence services remain unable to meet demand:

- Family Violence Prevention Legal Services report that up to 30% of women contacting the service have to be turned away because they don't have the resources to support them.
- In South Australia, the Crisis Service estimates the increase in demand for their service over the last year could be as high as 30%. What's more, the other frontline services they rely on to assist women in crisis are also consistently at capacity – making it extremely rare that a woman in crisis can be placed into a specialist service directly.
- Community Legal Centres are no longer facing cuts – but still don't have the funding they need to address the fact that they have to turn away more than 160,000 people a year, including women affected by family violence.

"Prime Minister Turnbull has recognised domestic violence as a national disgrace. But this budget suggests it's still not being treated as a national priority. Women will continue to be left without the services they need to get safe." Ms Carr added.

MEDIA CONTACT: Renee Carr, 0435 597 976

Background: budget analysis

Fair Agenda's breakdown of the domestic violence related federal budget measures is below.

Funding for additional capacity:

- \$3.4 million over two years to expand the trial of Domestic Violence Units in legal centres, and
- \$10.7 million over four years to employ additional family violence consultants at Family Law Courts.
- \$12.7 million to establish Parenting Management Hearings - a new forum for resolving family law disputes between self-represented litigants.
- ~ \$5 million of additional investment in Community Legal Centres (There is also ~ \$34 million in cuts reversed)
- \$18.2 million to establish Family Advocacy and Support Services by Legal Aid Commissions, which will provide integrated duty lawyer and family violence support services.

Relevant new funding that won't create additional capacity:

- \$375 million to extend homelessness service funding – is a vital extension of funding for homelessness services (including domestic violence services) that will allow them to continue assisting people at the same level. This is a positive announcement, but won't enable additional capacity.
- The previously announced \$55.7 million of funding for legal assistance services is also a positive announcement – but is almost entirely a reversal of cuts to services. Only about \$5 million of this will go towards additional capacity (spread over three years).

Existing funding commitments mentioned in the budget which have been part of previous funding announcements (i.e. not new money):

- \$7.5 million to support a series of trials to test technology to improve the safety of women and children affected by domestic violence