

Domestic violence experts slam Morrison Government commitment to combating domestic violence

For immediate release

Domestic violence specialists have slammed the [Morrison Government's recent announcement of a measly \\$2.4 million for perpetrators interventions](#) in the wake of the horrendous murder of Hannah Clarke - pointing out their woeful resourcing of safety interventions in the domestic violence space.

“For years, survivors, service experts and the community have been calling for the government to properly resource the services required to help women escape and recover from abuse.” said Renee Carr, Executive Director of Fair Agenda.

“Time and time again the Coalition Government has made budget decisions that leave women and their children without access to the services they need to be safe.”

“In this moment, to see the Morrison Government choosing to promote a measly \$2.4 million commitment to perpetrator intervention - a drop in the bucket of what’s needed - is appalling.” added Jacqui Watt, CEO of No To Violence and Men’s Referral Service, Australia’s largest organisation working directly to stop men’s use of family violence.

“If we’re going to actually stop men choosing to use violence, we need a massive injection of resources into services that focus on changing men’s abusive behaviour.” Ms Watt added.

“Right now, government funding decisions have left many services that work with men at risk of using violence with six month waiting lists. That means every week men who are seeking help to change their behaviour, or who have been referred by judges for help because they’re a risk to their partner, are having to be sent home without any intervention. It’s unconscionable.” added Ms Watt.

“Our analysis shows a minimum of \$88.2 million is needed from the Morrison Government to adequately fund behaviour change programs, case management, fathering programs and other specialist interventions. This \$2.4 million announcement is a drop in the bucket for perpetrator response; not to mention the serious gaps we know victim services also face.” Ms Watt concluded.

“Legal assistance services, refuges and specialist services are all vital for women and children’s safety; but aren’t funded to help all the women who are courageously picking up the phone or walking through their door. The Government have made funding decisions that just accept that some women desperate to get safe will have to be told they can’t be helped.” said Ms Carr.

“What’s more, services that provide [safe technology to survivors](#); and which [provide a national voice for First Nations victims of violence](#), are having to fight the Morrison Government to even *maintain* funding for their vital work. It’s appalling.” added Ms Carr.

“To address this crisis we need everyone who is reaching out for help to be able to get it - that means being able to access specialist and culturally appropriate services, when and where they need them.” added Ms Carr.

“We know that every year, three out of four of the people who come to specialist homelessness services like refuges are women fleeing violence, and that everyday more than 150 women are turned away from those services. The government’s decision to completely under resource these services means women are left on their own to try and manage their safety at an incredibly dangerous and high risk time.” added Joanne Yates, CEO Domestic Violence NSW.

“Having access to legal assistance, including specialist women’s legal services, is a vital first step for many women to escape abuse - to help them protect their children and themselves, to navigate the family law system, and/or deal with financial abuse. But Government funding decisions mean legal assistance services turn away 170,000 people a year - including women seeking support to escape and stay safe from an abuser.” added Nassim Arrage from the Community Legal Centres Australia.

Culturally safe services are also under resourced. Family Violence Prevention Legal Services have noted that [in the greater Sydney area alone, tens of thousands of women have no access to culturally safe family violence prevention legal services](#); because the specialist work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led organisations isn’t resourced.

Media contact: Renee Carr, Fair Agenda, 0435 597 976

Available for comment:

- Jacqui Watt, No To Violence, 0429 030 318
- Renee Carr, Fair Agenda, 0435 597 976
- Joanne Yates, Domestic Violence NSW, 0400 936 192
- Nassim Arrage, Community Legal Centres Australia, 02 9264 9595