

## Domestic violence package “leaves holes in the safety net women need at this time”

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Campaigning group Fair Agenda have said today’s Morrison Government announcement of \$150 million to address domestic violence is a good start, but falls well short of what is needed during this pandemic.

“Extra investment is desperately needed to ensure women can access the services they need to be safe at this time. So this funding boost is a positive development -- but it’s nowhere near what’s needed.”

[“Experts have already told the Morrison Government](#) that even just for safe at home programs alone, \$180 million is what’s needed to meet demand. Today’s commitment appears to be \$150 million spread across at least 6 different service areas.”

“Critically, this package also doesn’t reverse the dangerous cuts to vital work like WESNET’s Safe Phones program or the work of the National FVPLS Forum - which means critical functions currently in place for women’s safety will be ended in coming months; when their work will be absolutely vital in dealing with this escalating emergency. These cuts are unconscionable and must be immediately reversed.”

“While the Government is investing in promoting the support services people can access, they need to make sure services can pick up every call, and also connect every woman to the support she needs - including case management and safety planning with specialist services. Today’s commitments fall well short of that.”

“We already know that demand for service has jumped even in the early days of this pandemic. The risks facing women experiencing abuse and violence will be an escalating emergency during this crisis. It’s vital that services are resourced to support everyone who needs them during this time.”

“We can’t expect any campaign focused on educating people about service support to work, if the women it’s supposed to reach don’t have access to safe technology to make that call. Yet the Morrison Government are still set to stop funding to the safe phone program that provides hundreds of women every month with the safe and secure mobile phones they need to make those calls.”

“Without the Safe Phone program, hundreds of women will be left without the capacity to make calls, or get online. Cutting funds from a program like this, at a time like this, is cruel and absurd.”

“As people stay in and are trapped in constant contact with their abuser; the impacts of abuse and violence in the home will become an escalating emergency. Managing this risk and danger has to be at the core of government planning and response.”

“Experts have already told the Morrison Governments what is needed to help women facing abuse manage their safety in this time, and today’s response has left massive gaps in what should be a safety net for women at risk. Today’s announcement must be urgently chased with commitments to address those gaps.”

“The Morrison Government also needs to: fund refuge capacity so women who can't stay safely at home have somewhere to go; make sure women aren't trapped with an abuser without support just because of their visa status, ensure victim-survivors can rely on civil protection orders at this time.”

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