

Fair Agenda MEDIA RELEASE

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Orgs back joint statement demanding Morrison Government act now on gendered violence

Tens of thousands of Australians will take to the streets at more than 40 marches for women's justice around the country.

As grassroots pressure builds for action - organisations around the country, including experts in violence prevention, are signing onto a joint statement demanding governments take decisive action in key areas.

“Women and girls around in Australia are completely grief-stricken by the Federal Government's failure to respond to this crisis, and intervene in the systems that enable gendered violence across our communities. This is a national reckoning. Enough is enough.” Renee Carr, Executive Director of Fair Agenda.

“When violence against women is seen as less important than the political interests of those with the power to change laws and systems - we are all at risk.”

“We need to see investment in prevention, including whole-of-school education, proper resourcing of services for survivors; law reform; and action on workplace sexual harassment.”

“Experts have laid out what's required to achieve change. There is a clear pathway to a safer future for all of us. What's lacking is someone who cares enough to deliver it. We demand the Prime Minister act now.”

“This is a clear message to the Morrison Government. Women are sick of living in fear and we demand better. This isn't just about the response to serious allegations in our parliament. It's about a culture that enables men's violence across our communities, and systems that don't hold perpetrators to account.”

“We need solutions that recognise the role of discrimination and power imbalances have on whose reports are taken seriously, whose stories gain public attention, and who actually faces accountability. There are many people striving for safety whose experiences don't make the headlines, and for whom intersecting discrimination means justice is even more difficult to access. The government must deliver systemic change that promotes safety and justice for everyone,” said Renee Carr.

We need to recognise the intersectional impacts of this violence on First Nations women in society and public and political life. Safety and justice are even harder to achieve when you also have to fight against racism and the ongoing impacts of colonialism and institutions. That's why proper resourcing of First Nations led responses is so important and must be considered in all aspects." added Michelle Deshong, Indigenous gender advocate.

"Rape culture is a national shame -- and our federal government's failure to intervene has consequences at all levels - including for the safety of students at our universities. Survivors deserve justice, and mechanisms for accountability - including the Taskforce on campus sexual assault that's needed to actually hold universities to account." added Sharna Bremner, Director of End Rape on Campus.

"Inadequate responses to allegations of sexual violence and harassment extend far beyond our parliament. Women are at risk of sexual harassment in every workplace. It's time we change the system that places the burden on victims to take action when harassed - to provide better protections and to ensure that making workplaces safer for women is a shared responsibility." - Kamna Muddagouni, Fair Agenda.

Joint statement excerpt:

There are clear pathways to a safer future. We demand the action from leaders needed to make it happen. This must also include:

Prevention: *Implement the full spectrum of long-term systemic prevention initiatives that can address the underlying causes of gendered violence, including sexism and intersecting forms of discrimination. Starting with comprehensive whole-of-school education programs.*

Resourcing services and accountability mechanisms: *Properly resource the specialist services that victim-survivors of gendered violence rely on to report, be safe and recover. Resource the mechanisms needed to hold perpetrators to account.*

Law reform: *Improve access to justice for victim-survivors of sexual assault through substantive and procedural law reform, and educate the workforce so responses are appropriate and trauma-informed.*

Addressing workplace sexual harassment: *Action all recommendations of last year's Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report.*

Anything else falls short, and is a decision to leave women in danger.

We must believe, support and listen to survivors, hold perpetrators accountable, and properly resource solutions to prevent gendered violence from occurring in the first place.

[Link to full joint statement and list of growing signatories: www.fairagenda.org/jointstatement](http://www.fairagenda.org/jointstatement)

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Available for comment:

Renee Carr, Executive Director of Fair Agenda (on the joint statement)

Michelle Deshong, Indigenous gender advocate, (on prevention and changes in parliament)

Heidi La Paglia, Women with Disabilities Australia (on prevention)

Dr Rachael Burgin, Rape and Sexual Assault Research & Advocacy (on law reform and affirmative consent)

Hayley Foster, CEO of Women's Safety NSW (on law reform and proper funding of services)

Pip Davis, Principal Solicitor Women's Legal Service NSW (on law reform)

Kamna Muddagouni, discrimination, sexual harassment and employment lawyer and advocate, Fair Agenda Board member (on workplace harassment reform)

Yumi Lee, Older Women's Network NSW (on prevention)

Bobbie Trower, YWCA (on young women's perspectives and believing survivors)

Bonney Corbin, Chair of Australian Women's Health Network (on prevention)

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