

Advocates call for PM to match tears with actual action

Gender equity advocates Fair Agenda have slammed the Prime Minister's remarks at today's press conference - calling for Scott Morrison to match his tears and claims that he believes in women with concrete action to actually change systems that enable gendered violence, and fail to hold perpetrators to account.

"Experts have laid out actions that are required in this moment. 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 to lead meaningful, systemic change now." said Renee Carr, Executive Director, Fair Agenda.

More than 50 organisations, including Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia, Equality Rights Alliance, End Rape on Campus Australia, YWCA Australia have backed a joint statement calling for key systemic actions to improve safety in parliament and beyond.

"Scott Morrison should be leading on improving the safety of everyone in parliament, and across our communities. Instead this morning he tried to deflect responsibility, shift focus to the states, and even throw accusations back at media outlets - rather than answer questions about his failures in this area. What he should be doing is: addressing the culture of entitlement, disrespect and inequality in parliament; investing in prevention across the country; properly resourcing services for survivors; law reform; and action on workplace sexual harassment."

"It is the responsibility of governments to intervene in the systems that enable violence. If the Prime Minister cared as much as he claimed in his teary display this morning, he would have acted long ago. Instead, not only has the PM failed to order an independent investigation into the serious accusations against the Attorney-General; his government has:

- ignored calls from survivors and students to use their powers to hold universities to account for unsafe learning environments;
- failed to implement recommendations to address workplace sexual harassment;
- decided in multiple budgets to ignore the funding needs of the specialist services survivors rely on to escape and recover from domestic and family abuse; and
- taken the extraordinary step of abolishing the Family Court."

"We need the Prime Minister to implement solutions that recognise the role that discrimination and power imbalances impact 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," added 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.

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 growing list of signatories:

www.fairagenda.org/jointstatement

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

A range of spokespeople are available for comment on each of the four areas for action.