

# FAIR AGENDA

## Media resource:

### Women's safety funding needed in the federal budget

Fair Agenda has developed this resource for journalists to print and take into federal budget lock-up - as a reference on the breadth, scale and specifics of federal funding needs that have been identified by experts in women's safety and addressing men's gender-based violence.

Experts have identified a clear pathway to a safer future, that requires:

- 1) **Prevention:** Implementation of long-term and systemic primary prevention initiatives to address the underlying drivers of gender-based violence,
- 2) **Resourcing of specialist services:** Proper resourcing of the specialist services that improve the safety of victim-survivors, including those that keep offenders in view in order to prevent future violence
- 3) **Legal reform:** Law reform and improved support within the legal system for those affected by gender-based violence, and
- 4) **Full action on workplace sexual harassment:** All of the Sex Discrimination Commissioner's 55 Respect@Work recommendations need to be fully implemented, including resourcing where required.

**The below resource outlines key federal funding asks in each of these four areas.**

It is designed as a resource to help journalists understand how budget commitments compare to what experts have been calling for; and as background on the breadth and scale of interventions that need to be funded in order to create a safer future.

Fair Agenda will also be available to provide comment and background; and can connect journalists with expert spokespeople in each area - on budget night and the days following.

Key:

- **Categories of funding need are indicated in bold.**
- **Key references on funding scale are highlighted in blue.**
- A table breaking down where to look in the budget papers is also included below.

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## 1) Prevention: by addressing the underlying drivers of gender-based violence

Primary prevention initiatives focus on challenging the cultures and attitudes of entitlement and disrespect that enable gender-based violence, in order to stop the violence before it starts, and to change the systems that create and perpetuate gender inequalities.

To prevent future violence we must address its underlying drivers. The Federal Government needs to resource nationwide and long-term primary prevention initiatives focused on addressing the underlying gendered drivers of sexual, domestic and family violence. These initiatives must be resourced across all communities and key institutions - from schools, to workplaces, residential care facilities, universities and sporting clubs.

Experts have outlined that federal funding must:

- **Resource OurWatch to expand evidence-based primary prevention work**  
Australia's national prevention organisation Our Watch needs increased resourcing to expand its evidence-based work across communities.
  - It's estimated **at least \$7 million (over 3 years)** is needed to develop frameworks for targeted initiatives in key contexts where culture change is needed. 7 key areas have already been identified as needing intervention, including: faith-based contexts, the arts, and legal contexts, each need \$1 million (over 3 years).
- **Build the capacity of communities to implement the national framework for preventing violence against women:** The federal government needs to fund communities around the country, including Aboriginal community controlled organisations, to implement the national frameworks for preventing violence against women (*Change the Story* and *Changing the Picture*). This must include investing in expert-led training for leaders across every community to ensure they are able to effectively deliver and manage prevention initiatives - including challenging toxic attitudes and behaviours, and changing systems that maintain gender inequality, including in institutions such as universities and TAFES, workplaces, and sports clubs.
- **Provide expert-led upskilling for educators in schools**  
To effectively challenge the drivers of gender-based violence in schools, the federal government needs to invest in training and upskilling the educators who are expected to deliver respectful relationships content in schools around the country. That includes expert-led training on how to challenge harmful attitudes, role model positive behaviours and to appropriately respond to disclosures from survivors who might be in the room during respectful relationships education. Modelling based on Victoria's roll out indicates **at least \$150 million (over four years)** is needed to begin national roll out, plus funds to enable efforts to reach regional and remote schools.

**Deliver a gender-responsive budget:** policy analysis that assessed the budget for its gendered reach and impact is also critical to preventing gender-based violence, because it's the only way to identify whether budget measures across every government portfolio are addressing, or reinforcing, inequality between men and women.

## 2) Specialist services to improve the safety of those affected by men's gender-based violence

The federal government needs to properly resource the specialist services that victim-survivors of gendered violence rely on to report, be safe and recover; as well as mechanisms to hold perpetrators to account; and to improve service responses within the federally funded services that victim-survivors interact with when trying to build safer futures for themselves and their children.

The sexual, family and domestic violence sector have indicated **\$1 billion of annual resourcing** from the federal government is needed to properly implement any National Plan to improve women and children's safety - and ensure that all victim-survivors of gender-based violence have the support they need to build safer futures.

Experts have outlined that federal funding must include:

- **Renew COVID response funds:** The **\$150 million** COVID Domestic Violence Support Package needs to be renewed to ensure specialist domestic and family violence services can continue to provide safety support to the historic number of victim-survivors reaching out for support.
- **Scale Safe at Home programs - \$162 million extra** is needed to keep up with demand for these programs that assist survivors with their safety. To ensure women aren't left to make the impossible choice between fleeing and hoping they can access homelessness services, or staying trapped at home with their abuser. In NSW alone, 9 out of 10 women experiencing violence who want to be supported to stay safe at home are not able to access such services.
- **Adequately resource specialist domestic and family violence services** to ensure victim-survivors have universal access to crisis support, supported accommodation, risk assessment, counselling and case management when trying to escape an abuser and build a safer future. Across Australia, last year 1 in 3 women and girls seeking accommodation to escape violence are unable to be housed.
  - **\$56.7 million a year needed to even continue existing service levels** - given the mandated increase to award wages for specialist workers, increasing the costs of delivering existing government-funded services within the specialist homelessness services.

- **Increase investment in legal assistance services**

The Law Council has recommended that the federal government commit an additional **\$370-390 million** per annum for Legal Aid Commissions, Community Legal Centres, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and Family Violence Prevention Legal Services to address critical civil and criminal legal assistance service gaps, including for survivors of gender-based violence.

Specific legal assistance funding needs include:

- **Renew the COVID-19 legal assistance funding until June 2025.**  
Women's Legal Services confirm that 40% of the COVID-19 legal assistance response funding is being used for matters involving domestic violence. They're calling for the **\$49.8 million per annum** COVID-19 legal assistance package to be renewed until June 2025, to enable services to keep meeting ongoing increasing demand.
- **Expand and increase funding of Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services:** There are 14 Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service (FVPLS) member organisations across Australia that provide holistic, culturally safe, specialist legal and non-legal services including legal assistance, casework, counselling and court support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing or at risk of family violence. Year after year, these FVPLSs struggle to meet increasing demands. FVPLSs need an additional **\$28 million annually** to meet national demand for their services. **Funding of the National FVPLS Forum must also be urgently reinstated with an increased investment** to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's experiences of family violence are heard and inform the national agenda.
- **Increase resourcing to Women's Legal Services to provide legal assistance:** Women's Legal Services provide specialist gender based legal responses and other support to victims of domestic, family and sexual violence. They need an extra **\$25 million per annum** even just to meet the need of women who've already reached out to their services, and extra to reach all those who could benefit from it.
- **Scale successful pilot of domestic violence units:** these units were piloted within legal aid, to ensure victim-survivors can access legal advice across a broad range of issues related to domestic violence (including when these related to family law, social security, and migration matters). The federally funded pilot was successfully evaluated. Additional investment is now needed to scale the program.

- **Scale Family Advocacy Support Services:** **\$40 million additional** funding p/a is needed for national FASS coverage. These services were piloted by the federal government to provide legal and social support for all parties to family law court proceedings involving family violence. An independent evaluation in 2018 recommended they be expanded nationally, and extended from the pilot courts.

- **Scale Coordinated Family Dispute Resolution Services:** These services afford a safe and supported avenue to resolve disputes in family law matters involving family violence without judicial determination. Investment is needed to scale services after a successfully evaluated federally funded pilot.
- **Extend Health Justice Partnerships to all hospitals:** so women who have been subjected to domestic violence can get free and confidential legal assistance from a specialized women's legal service or domestic violence legal expert in a safe location at a time of often urgent need.
- **Continue Safe Connections:** WESNET need to be funded to continue delivering this program that distributes smartphones to hundreds of victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence each month.
- **Increase investment in perpetrator interventions**
  - **Fund specialist interventions:** An estimated **\$110 million p/a** is needed for men's behaviour change programs, case management, fathering programs and other specialist interventions to ensure men using violence are kept in view and supported to break the cycle of violence.
  - **Extend Men's Referral Service national services:** ongoing resourcing is needed to continue providing national telephone and online counselling beyond the pandemic response period, to ensure a nationally coordinated service, and provide an important corresponding service to 1800RESPECT.
  - **Fund short and medium term accomodation for men on exclusion orders** through the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement, to shift the disproportionate burden of homelessness from victim survivors to the men perpetrating violence, and to enable ongoing risk assessment and response.
  - **Fund programs to meet local standards and accreditation infrastructure** to ensure programs funded through the Family and Relationships Service meet minimum standards and best practice when working with perpetrators of family, domestic and sexual violence.
  - **Invest in program efficacy:** Allocate funding to ANROWS and other research organisations to develop, trial and evaluate programs to improve the efficacy of programs working with all men who use family violence.
- **Extend and improve safety infrastructure, service access and provision**
  - **Continue resourcing key agencies** established under the National Plan to help improve women and children's safety - including: ANROWS, Our Watch, DVAlert, 1800RESPECT, and eSafety for Women.

- Invest in **training and professional development programs for staff of federal services and systems** that engage with victim-survivors of sexual and domestic and family violence to assist in the identification of perpetrators and effective support of victim-survivors, including family relationships services, migration and social services.
- **Adequately resource the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission** so that it can address reports of violence and abuse in disability service provision.
- **Expand access to free translation and interpreting services:** In order to ensure equitable and responsive access to safety support services for migrant and refugee women, all sexual, domestic and family support services need to be equipped to provide free-to-client translating and interpreting services, delivered by NAATI credentialed practitioners. Including, the Australian Government's Free Interpreting Service must be expanded to cover allied health practitioners delivering services to migrants and refugees, including those experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence.
- **Resource the establishment of a National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People**, as recommended by SNAICC and Family Matters.
- **Expand service access for women on temporary visas escaping domestic, family and sexual violence:** Every woman should be able to access the vital healthcare, housing and social security support she needs to escape a violent partner and achieve safety, regardless of her visa status. Expert advocates are calling for the creation of a new special category of temporary visa to enable victim-survivors to access these vital services while escaping violence, so they can build safer futures.
- **Fund a dedicated National Summit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Safety** to design the key elements of a National Plan on advancing the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls (as recommended in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner June Oscar's Wiyi Yani U Thangani Report).

### 3) Improving legal responses to sexual, domestic and family violence

We need to improve access to justice for victim-survivors by educating those who are tasked with supporting them, to ensure they receive appropriate and trauma-informed support.

To improve responses to domestic and family violence, experts are calling for training to ensure that workers in the federal legal system who engage with victim-survivors are able to identify: if someone's safety is at immediate risk; or if someone is displaying signs of abusive and violent behaviour, respond appropriately, and refer to appropriate expert services that can intervene and assist with safety in such situations.

For victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual assault, it's vital everyone around the country who works within the criminal legal system or any role in supporting victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual assault is trained and receives professional development in trauma-informed practice, and providing appropriate and culturally competent support.

Experts have outlined that key federal funding needs include:

- **Investment in training and professional development programs** for staff in federal services and systems that engage with victim-survivors of sexual and domestic and family violence, including: family courts, federal courts, family law services, migration services and home affairs.
- **Extension of the Disability Royal Commission** into violence, abuse and neglect and exploitation of people with disability, as requested by the Commissioner.
- **Extension and expansion of the Urgent Online Family Law List** (currently COVID List)
- **Expansion and extension of the Lighthouse Pilot and Evatt Family Violence List** - Women's Safety NSW estimate an additional **\$9 million** per annum is needed to expand this vital screening, triage and case management service.

### 4) Addressing workplace Sexual Harassment

Last year the Sex Discrimination Commissioner released a landmark report into workplace sexual harassment, with 55 recommendations to improve safety at work. More than a dozen of those recommendations require federal funding to be realised. In its response to the report, the Morrison Government declared that they had agreed to (in full, in principle, or in-part) all recommendations.

**But at least a dozen recommendations still have not been seen funding committed to enable them to be realised.**

The recommendations that remain unfulfilled, without appropriate federal funding commitments, include:

- **Recommendation 4: Resourcing for Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS)** to lead research relating to workplace sexual harassment.
- **Recommendation 10: Additional resourcing to ensure all young people receive school based respectful relationships education.** The government’s recently released ‘Good Society’ resources are not evidence-based, and have been identified as actively harmful. To ensure students receive respectful relationships education that is actually effective at preventing harassment and violence, the Morrison Government will need to invest in the delivery of evidence-based respectful relationships and comprehensive sexuality education, and also in professional development for the educators expected to deliver it, estimated at more than **\$150m** (over 4 years, as detailed above in section 1: prevention)
- **Recommendations 11 & 12:** To address sexual harassment at universities, investment in providers to deliver training that addresses the drivers of gender-based violence, for example through **TEQSA and ASQA**
- **Recommendation 14: Ongoing funding for the Workplace Sexual Harassment Council** to improve coordination, consistency and clarity across the key legal and regulatory frameworks, to improve prevention and response to sexual harassment While funding to establish the Council was provided in the 2020 WESS, the Morrison Government have made no clear commitment to ongoing funding, or resourcing to expand its function.
- **Recommendation 27: Funding for the Commission** to facilitate disclosure of historic workplace sexual harassment.
- **Recommendation 40: Training for courts and staff** on gendered drivers of violence and sexual harassment in order to positively support survivors. While some training has been delivered in the family law space, more is needed in federal courts dealing with fair work, immigration, social services, online harassment and other areas.
- **Recommendation 43: Increased funding for the Workplace Gender Equality Agency** so it is appropriately resourced to manage increased reporting obligations associated with the expansion of their work to include public sector organisations.
- **Recommendation 46: Additional resourcing to enable the Australian Human Rights Commission** to do the new work of developing good practice indicators and methods for measuring and monitoring sexual harassment, prevalence, prevention and response.
- **Recommendation 49: Increased and recurrent funding to Working Women’s Centres** - An estimated **\$20 million per year** is needed to enable national coverage of Working Women’s Centres (to extend current services and to re-establish Centres in the jurisdictions they do not currently exist) - so they can provide appropriate information, service and assistance to workers experiencing sexual harassment.

- **Recommendation 51: Resourcing for the Council** to develop guidance materials for hotlines and services to provide information and referral services in relation to workplace sexual harassment.
- **Recommendation 53: Both increased and recurrent funding to legal assistance services** to provide advice and assistance to vulnerable workers who experience sexual harassment - including women's legal services, community legal centres, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and legal aid commissioners.
- **Recommendation 54: Increased funding of 1800 RESPECT** to expand their service to provide support and referral to those affected by workplace sexual harassment.
- **Recommendation 55: Funding to ensure capacity and accessibility of psychosocial support services for those affected by workplace sexual harassment** - including specialist sexual assault support services, mental health helplines, and healthcare providers with relevant expertise.

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Fair Agenda will also be available to provide comment and background; and can connect journalists with expert spokespeople in each area - on budget night and the days following.

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Solution area	Budget Paper location
<b>Prevention</b>	
Expanding Our Watch’s work	Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Department of Social Services
Building community capacity	Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Department of Social Services
Upskilling educators in schools	Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Department of Social Services
<b>Specialist services</b>	
Renew COVID response funds	Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Department of Social Services
Scale Safe at Home programs	Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Department of Social Services
Specialist domestic and family violence services	Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Department of Social Services
Increase legal assistance	<p>Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Department of Attorney-General &gt; Legal Assistance Funding and National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services</p> <p>Budget Paper No. 3: Federal Financial Relations &gt; National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services</p> <p>Portfolio Budget Statements, Attorney-General’s Portfolio, Programme 1.4 Justice Services</p>
Scale Family Advocacy Support Services	Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Department of Social Services
Scale Family Dispute Resolution Services	Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Department of Social Services
Extend Health Justice partnerships	Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Department of Social Services
Continue Safe Connections	Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Department of Social Services
Increase investment in perpetrator	Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures:

interventions	Department of Social Services
Extend and improve safety infrastructure, service access and provision	Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet  Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Department of Social Services  Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Department of Health / Home Affairs
<b><i>Legal reform</i></b>	
Improving legal responses to violence	Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Attorney General's Department  Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Department of Social Services
<b><i>Full action on workplace sexual harassment</i></b>	
Response to the 55 Respect@Work Recommendations	Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Department of Social Services  Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Attorney General's Department  Budget Paper No. 2: Payment Measures: Department of Education, Skills and Employment