

FAIR AGENDA

Federal Budget only offers “scraps” towards women’s safety

Comments to be attributed to Renee Carr, Executive Director, Fair Agenda:

“Men’s use of gender-based violence is a crisis across the country. Every day women around the country are doing everything they can to try and manage risks to their safety. Last night’s Budget shows Prime Minister Morrison either still isn’t paying attention, or just doesn’t care.”

“Last night the Morrison Government announced \$348.8 million for its ‘Women’s Safety’ initiatives in 2021-22, but the reality is that less than \$157 million of those funds will go toward any kind of real improvements for women’s safety.”

“These allocations are scraps in the context of a federal budget. Prime Minister Scott Morrison has shown again that women and addressing gender-based violence are not priorities for his Government.”

“Every single day thousands of women in danger can’t access specialist services like refuges, safe at home programs, case management or trauma counselling - because governments fail to prioritise funding them.”

“Every year more than 18,000 women seeking refuge from domestic violence have to be turned away when seeking crisis accommodation. The Morrison Government has decided to allocate less than \$1 per woman per day to address that unmet need.”

“Just months ago a hundred thousand people marched to demand justice and safety from gender-based violence. People across the country are crying out for leadership on this issue. Women are being murdered, raped and denied support and justice. And that cry for leadership has gone unanswered.”

“The specialist crisis response services that are forced to turn away thousands of women a year received less new funding than brewers and distillers who got \$225 million last night.”

“The government has also failed to resource the prevention and systems change programs needed to prevent future violence. Students and survivors are crying out for proper relationships and sex education, but the budget doesn’t provide what they need.”

“Those at risk right now don’t need a down payment on a new National Plan. They need to be safe now and access to services now.”

“It is positive to see a funding boost to specialist legal assistance services like Women’s Legal Services, Family Violence Prevention Legal Services, Family Advocacy Support Services, and the continuation of the COVID-19 boost to specialist services and the Men’s Referral Service. But this budget does not deliver the funding needed to ensure everyone can get safety help where they need it, when they need it.”

“Survivors and advocates have been crying out for proper funding of prevention and safety services since Scott Morrison was Social Services Minister 2014 but he didn’t listen to us then, and this budget shows he’s still not listening to us now. ”

“To take real action for our safety and justice the Morrison Government must properly resource all specialist services victim-survivors rely on, resource reforms to improve responses to victim-survivors across legal and service systems, fully implement the Sex Discrimination Commissioner’s Respect@Work recommendations and invest in expert-led prevention efforts to stop future violence.”

“This budget is a long way from being a budget for women. These funding scraps are unacceptable, and we urge the Senate to join us in demanding proper resourcing of specialist services and safety measures.”

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Key fast facts:

- The government have committed \$348.8 million for initiatives to reduce and support victims of family, domestic and sexual violence against women and their children in 2021-22 (p 83, Budget paper 2. Part 2: Payment Measures)
 - This includes \$130.7 million p/a (\$261.4 million over 2 years) towards frontline supports, which is an extension of the \$130 m COVID response package -- and is expected to just maintain existing service levels)
 - \$61.4 million this year (\$124.7 over two years) has been added to the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement - the amount needed to meet existing wage commitments in the sector (under an equal remuneration on the award).
 - **Just \$156.7 million remains in the Morrison Government’s dedicated “Women’s Safety” initiatives** - encompassing both new and existing commitments across a massive range of vital areas, from crisis response, refuges, safety management to foundational services like 1800 RESPECT, ANROWS and Our Watch.
- 18,655 of the women who are experiencing family and domestic violence come to homelessness services each year aren’t able to be provided with any accommodation. This year’s budget includes just \$25.9m /4 years (\$6.4 million p/a) new funding for this area.

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