Dear Minister

**Invitation for a briefing on the report**

**‘*Path to Nowhere: Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Violence and their Children’***

We are a national group of over forty national and state peak bodies, service providers and other organisations working to end violence against women. Today, on Human Rights Day, we released our joint report highlighting the issues facing women on temporary visas experiencing violence and their children across Australia.

Women on temporary visas and their children face specific barriers to seeking support, particularly the fear of deportation and the loss of custody of their children. Perpetrators of violence use these barriers to maintain power and control over these women. We urge you to read the real stories of Tami, Anna and Alia in the report. Tami has an Australian child with an Australian man who uses violence against her. Due to Tami’s inability to access income, stable housing and fear of leaving her Australian son, she felt she had no other option than to return to the violent man after she tried to leave. She has been raped and strangled since her return, which is a very high risk indicator for future homicide.

We are deeply concerned for the safety of women on temporary visas and their children, like Tami and her child. Every woman and child has the right to live free from violence.

According to a national survey we conducted in August 2018, it appears at least 387 women on temporary visas experiencing violence sought or received assistance that month. As a group, they have more than 351 children or dependants. Crisis and long-term housing was the service most needed by clients that organisations were unable to provide, followed by financial assistance. As we collected survey data through our networks only, the actual number of women on temporary visas and their children who are experiencing violence in Australia is likely to be much higher.

*Path to Nowhere* calls on the Australian and State and Territory Governments to commit to implement Action 3.8of the *Third Action Plan 2016-2019* of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children* to: ‘Ensure migration rules and eligibility requirements for support services do not disempower victims of violence or discourage them from leaving violent relationships.’ *Path to Nowhere* outlines detailed recommendations for law and policy change aligned to Action 3.8.

We ask that you take urgent action to ensure that these recommendations are implemented to ensure that women on temporary visas and their children can live free from violence.

**Please let us know if you would like to request a briefing with a member of the National Advocacy Group to discuss the report by contacting XXX at XXX.**

Yours sincerely,

National Advocacy Group for Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Violence and Their Children

**National**

* Anti-Slavery Australia
* Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA)
* Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Council of Australia (FECCA)
* Harmony Alliance: Migrant and Refugee Women for Change
* Jesuit Refugee Service Australia
* Project Respect
* Settlement Services International (SSI)
* WESNET - The Women’s Services Network
* Women’s Legal Services Australia

**Australian Capital Territory**

* Domestic Violence Crisis Service
* Women’s Centre for Health Matters
* Women’s Legal Centre ACT

**New South Wales**

* Domestic Violence NSW
* Homelessness NSW
* Immigrant Women’s SpeakOut Association
* Northern Settlement Services
* Women’s and Girls’ Emergency Centre
* Women’s Community Shelters
* Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service NSW
* Women’s Legal Service NSW

**Northern Territory**

* Central Australian Family Violence and Sexual Assault Network
* Central Australian Women’s Legal Service
* Refugee and Migrant Settlement Service Anglicare
* Top End Women’s Legal Service
* Katherine Women’s Information and Legal Service
* Northern Territory Council of Social Services

**Queensland**

* Sera’s Women’s Shelter
* Women’s Legal Service Queensland

**South Australia**

* Bramwell House Salvation Army
* Migrant Women’s Support Program of Women’s Safety Services
* Women’s Legal Service South Australia

**Tasmania**

* CatholicCare Hobart
* Engender Equality
* Warrawee Women’s Shelter
* Migrant Resource Centre Northern Tasmania

**Victoria**

* Annie North
* Australiasian Centre for Human Rights and Health
* Domestic Violence Victoria
* inTouch Multicultural Centre against Family Violence
* Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health
* safe steps
* WEstjustice
* Women’s Legal Service Victoria

**Western Australia**

* Women’s Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services