



# Trish Doyle MP

## Member for Blue Mountains



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### New South Wales Parliament Legislative Assembly

#### DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE REDUCTION

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In the past eight years the Government has failed to make significant inroads in reducing domestic and family violence. That is a fact. Following a review of one of the Government's signature domestic violence programs, the Premier abandoned one of her key Premier's Priorities to lower domestic violence reoffending rates by 25 per cent, instead pushing that target back another two years.

We cannot allow another 12 or 18 months to pass and allow this Government to keep revising its target dates off into the never-never. Those who work at the coalface in this State are telling us what we need to do to address this important issue. The Women's Safety NSW chief executive Hayley Foster has said that more funding is needed for case management for women once they have left a violent situation.

She rightly states:

*How can we reduce rates of reoffending if women and children remain trapped in violent and abusive situations?*

I say to the Government and the Minister to listen to Hayley Foster and her recommendations. She knows what she is talking about. The retiring Domestic Violence NSW chief executive Moo Baulch says the emphasis on reoffending should not displace the focus on services that help victims and tackle prevention. Any prevention measure, she says, "ultimately ... has to be about funding services".

Whilst of course we have to hold perpetrators accountable, we need to make sure that we do not lose focus on victims, particularly women and children. I draw the attention of the House to some very useful suggestions made by the former executive director of the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research Don Weatherburn.

Again I ask that the Government take note of these important suggestions.

Don Weatherburn states:

*If the Government really wants to know whether its programs to change the behaviour of convicted domestic violence offenders are working, it should properly evaluate them and see if the percentage reoffending has fallen.*

...

*What we need is an annual crime victim survey that measures the prevalence and frequency of domestic violence amongst the general population. That way we could capture the experience of domestic violence victims who report the violence as well as those who can't or won't contact police.*

A survey would provide some insight. Again I recommend that the Government looks at those suggestions. In terms of addressing this issue, it is the frontline services we need to focus on. One of the most fantastic services I have seen in a while, the Illawarra domestic and family violence trauma recovery centre, has put a lot of work into a funding proposal. I strongly recommend the Government has a look at that proposal.

Jenny's Place domestic violence and resource centre is a frontline service in the Newcastle community that helps women and children who are victims. It will run out of money this week and the Government has not responded.

Respectful Relationships in both Victoria and Queensland operates an education program that could be replicated here.

I thank my colleague the member for Maitland for bringing this important motion to the House.