



Women's Electoral Lobby | 8-10 Victoria Street, Newtown, NSW 2042

EMAIL: wel@welnsw.org.au

WEBSITE: www.wel.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

29 April 2016

**We'd love Christian Porter to be talking new money for women's refuges
but he isn't - just another reannouncement**

Women's Electoral Lobby Australia (WEL) welcomes the start of the "He just did it 'cause he likes you' campaign".

Attitudinal and behavioural change are crucial to eliminating violence against women.

But so are drastically underfunded women's refuges and other frontline domestic violence services.

When asked last week about greater funding for frontline domestic violence services, Christian Porter, Minister for Social Services, said the Coalition government has done more in the past nine months than has been ever done before. Minister Porter cited \$230 million for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH).

WEL is setting the record straight.

This is a reannouncement of the March 2015 announcement by Scott Morrison the then Federal Minister for Social Services. In March 2015, the Federal Government extended homelessness funding for another two years, providing \$230 million under the NPAH.

Mr Morrison said the Government would provide \$230 million to extend NPAH until 2017, with funding priority given to frontline services focusing on women and children experiencing domestic and family violence, and homeless youth under 18.¹

The Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) report issued in December 2015 has no homelessness funds for 2017-2018.²

Minister Porter should be well aware of this.

On 31 March 2016, Minister Porter attended a meeting of Housing Ministers in Brisbane. The communiqué released after the meeting stated, interalia

Homelessness Policy and Funding

Ministers noted the importance of ensuring funding certainty for continuity of homelessness services and the need for homelessness services to be advised as to the future of funding arrangements at least 6 months prior to expiry of the 2015-17 National Partnerships Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH).

Ministers further discussed the important national issue of domestic and family violence and the need for a multi-faceted approach to prevent and address homelessness caused by domestic and family violence. Ministers noted that any funding should not be at the expense of existing services.

Ministers agreed they would meet again by November 2016 and report further progress on housing and homelessness services and housing affordability later in 2016 through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) process.

WEL is calling on the Government to establish a Women and Children's Safety Program. A key element of this is a long term Commonwealth/State-funded program specifically for women's refuges, transitional housing and other related services, separate from the current homelessness program which does not meet the needs of women and children fleeing violence. This proposal is costed at \$2 billion over 5 years with the states contributing half.

WEL spokesperson Helen L'Orange said 'the Prime Minister should emulate Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews who has moved swiftly to commit half a billion dollars to implement the recommendations of Royal Commission into Family Violence.'

'We don't need another inquiry, another round of consultations or yet another conference to tell us that urgent and immediate funding is needed to ensure long term funding for women's refuges and other frontline domestic violence services.'

¹ <https://www.dss.gov.au/housing-support/programmes-services/national-partnership-agreement-on-homelessness>

² http://budget.gov.au/2015-16/content/myefo/html/08_attachment_d_annex_a-02.htm#A5

Available for comment:

Helen L'Orange AM

0425 244 935

helen.lorange@bigpond.com

Convenor WEL Violence Against Women Action Group

For further information on WEL's Women and Children's Safety Program:

Visit www.wel.org.au to download the Women and Children Safety Program Proposal and Women's Refuges and Housing Program Draft Bill