

**Joint statement:  
Thousands of women remain in danger**

Dear Prime Minister,

Last year you declared that domestic violence was a national priority, affirming the right of women and children to feel safe and live without fear of violence.

We welcome your commitment, and last September's Women's Safety Package. However, we are extremely worried that women's safety is at risk because of inadequate government funding of the services that respond to and prevent domestic and family violence.

We express our utmost concern that thousands of women are being left in dangerous situations, because the specialist services they rely on to achieve safety are not being adequately resourced. These include:

- Specialist family and domestic violence services - which aren't resourced to respond to more than a fraction of police referrals they receive, or to provide the breadth of outreach and case support the women affected by abuse need;
- Specialist crisis and transitional accommodation services - which aren't able to provide refuge to all the women who can't safely stay at home;
- Family Violence Prevention Legal Services - which are a vital specialist service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, but aren't resourced to meet the significant demand for their service, particularly in metropolitan and urban areas;
- Community legal centres including women's legal services - which are being forced to turn away thousands of women affected by violence; leaving them without the legal information and advice that can be critical to escaping abuse; and
- Men's behaviour change programs - which are in such high demand that men who have used violence are having to wait up to 6 months to even be assessed as eligible for programs. That's a waiting list to even go on the real waiting list.

Finding a way to escape an abuser is difficult and often dangerous. For most women it's impossible to do without support. But right now, inadequate funding is effectively closing the escape route of thousands of women.

Prime Minister Turnbull, you've declared that domestic violence is a national priority. National priorities must also be budget priorities.

We, the undersigned, urge the Commonwealth Government to immediately commit the dedicated, secure and ongoing federal funding needed to:

- Ensure every woman reaching out for help to live free from violence can access it. That means adequately resourcing: specialist family and domestic violence services; related sexual assault services; crisis and transitional accommodation services; legal assistance services - particularly women's legal services and other community legal centres; Family Violence Prevention Legal Services; family and relationship services; and related

specialist services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, women with disabilities, and others who face barriers to service access.

- Expand the capacity of, and access to, evidence-based perpetrator interventions like Men's Behaviour Change programs; and
- Guarantee long-term support for the expanded primary prevention programs needed to address the underlying drivers of violence.

Yours in anticipation,

Fair Agenda

Domestic Violence Victoria

Domestic Violence New South Wales

Family Violence Prevention Legal Services

No To Violence

National Association of Australian Community Legal Centres

Australian Women Against Violence Alliance

WESNET

[Other organisations]