



Women's Domestic Violence
Court Advocacy Service NSW Inc

Media Statement

3 April 2019

for Immediate Release

Media Release – Budget Fails to Prioritise Women's Safety

This budget was supposed to elevate the issue of domestic violence and women's safety as a primary consideration of the Federal Government. Indeed, the Prime Minister had said that [domestic violence was arguably the most important national security issue facing the Country](#).

However, despite the rhetoric, last night's budget delivered very little new funding for the services women and children actually need to achieve safety, such as specialist legal services, case management, accommodation options and crisis funds.

True, ongoing investments were made in a range of important programs and initiatives aimed at addressing domestic, family and sexual violence, and this included a welcome increase in funding to the 1800RESPECT counselling service and the nation's primary prevention body, Our Watch, to develop resources to support violence prevention and cultural change.

However, for the hundreds of thousands of women and children impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence right now, this is very little consolation.

WDVCAS NSW Director, Hayley Foster, highlights the dire need for increased investment in services for families. *"We have women and children in fear and trauma having to navigate multiple legal, court and service systems by themselves in an attempt to achieve safety, justice and wellbeing",* says Foster. *"In many cases, particularly in regional, rural or remote areas, the services are just non-existent. Women are forced to negotiate long-term parenting arrangements for themselves and their children without any legal advice whatsoever, often being pressured into unsafe arrangements for themselves and their children."*

Access to crisis funds to secure safety is usually extremely limited - less than \$500 - and certainly not immediate. Accommodation options are few and far between. For men who want to address their behaviour, appropriately qualified services are scarce.

Foster draws particular attention to the experiences of women and children subject to multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage. *"If you think this picture is bleak for women and children in general, I'd then like you to consider the complexities which come with being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander woman or child subject to domestic, family or sexual violence who is trying to access the adequate services and supports, or a woman on a temporary visa who is barred access to Centrelink and supported accommodation, or a woman with disability subject to physical, psychological or sexual violence in an institutional setting upon which she depends."*

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Foster says it's high time the Government got serious about domestic violence and women's safety, and calls for two key measures: *"We need to see the incoming Government actually consult with [sector experts](#) as to how to design the service system. And we need to see a real commitment to investing in the services women, children and families need to achieve safety, justice and wellbeing."*

"Without this", says Foster, "stemming the tide will be an impossible task."

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