

For Immediate Release

15 July 2020

Domestic Violence NSW Calls for More Social and Affordable Housing

As part of the launch of its 2020 Housing Policy, Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW) is asking the NSW state government to invest in the construction of 5,000 social housing properties every year for the next ten years, to: *put jobs into the economy and women and children escaping domestic violence into homes.*

It is estimated that 85,000 construction jobs and 97,000 small or medium sized businesses are at risk due to the economic impacts of COVID-19¹. By taking this approach, the NSW Treasury can stimulate the economy whilst providing critical long-term affordable housing to women and children who have suffered domestic and family violence.

“Secure, affordable and sustainable housing is critical to promote the safety, wellbeing and best possible long-term outcomes of women and children escaping family and domestic violence.” said Delia Donovan, Interim CEO DVNSW.

Recent funding provided as part of the Governments response to COVID-19 was welcomed by domestic violence specialist homelessness services, who are struggling to meet demand. However, the funding was largely aimed at crisis response and temporary accommodation which are important but cannot deliver longer-term outcomes. Longer term outcomes can only be achieved through the provision of sustainable housing options such as public and affordable housing. This is essential to reduce the poverty line and increase the safety and well-being of women and their children.

“Without additional social housing vulnerable women and children will remain in crisis and transitional housing for much longer than is appropriate and often with nowhere to go afterwards. This creates additional stress and anxiety for women and children who have escaped abuse only to be in constant fear of the risk of homelessness or actually finding themselves faced with a dire choice of either homelessness or in some cases being forced to return to the perpetrator. This is unjust and unacceptable.” said Donovan.

To support the increased number of women and children requiring support through the process of leaving violence and establishing a new, safe and sustainable home, DVNSW is asking that Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) receive a 20% lift in funding.

“For many women forced to leave their homes and who experience housing instability, a relationship with a skilled and well-connected support worker is crucial, both therapeutically and for sustaining their housing. SHS services are already operating in an increasingly difficult environment with increased demand and limited resources. A 20% increase in funding, coupled with a minimum 5 year contract, would enable services to operate more effectively, long term and provide a critical continuum of support to survivors of family and domestic violence.” said Donovan.

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Media Spokespeople

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Domestic Violence NSW is the peak body for specialist domestic and family violence services in NSW. DVNSW provides a representative and advocacy function for specialist services and the women, families and communities they support. Their mission is to eliminate domestic and family violence through leadership in policy, advocacy, partnerships and the promotion of best practice.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence help can be found via:

- **1800RESPECT** or 1800 737 732 which offers a national counselling helpline, information and support
- **NSW Domestic Violence Line** 1800 65 64 63 which offers a state-wide counselling helpline, information and support
- **Men’s Referral Service** 1300 766 491 for men, or friends and family of men using violence

¹ Equity Economics, Supporting Economic Recovery in NSW: investment in Social and Affordable Housing is Critical to Supporting Jobs Today and Families into the Future 2020