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NSW Government must act now to provide a safety net for women on temporary visas and their children

“Far too many women on temporary visas risk being injured and killed by a violent partner because their only other option is poverty and homelessness,” says Renata Field, spokesperson from Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW). “DVNSW is calling on the NSW government to immediately provide income, housing and healthcare supports for women and children on temporary visas experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV).”

“We are really concerned about women on temporary visas experiencing violence and their children who are struggling to access food and essentials,” says Jane Brock, Executive Officer of Immigrant Women’s Speakout Association.

NSW lag behind other states in supporting this small but vulnerable group of women and children. Last week, the Tasmanian Government announced that people on temporary visas experiencing hardship would receive financial support. In Victoria, all people escaping domestic violence can access a Flexible Support Package to cover rent and essentials to help them to be safe and recover. In South Australia, people can apply for public housing if they have no income, regardless of their visa status.

A recent survey from Women’s Safety NSW showed at least 100 women and children were accessing domestic and family services in NSW each month.

Mariam* is an example of one such woman. Mariam* fled her violent partner while pregnant with Tamba*. They have been living in a refuge ever since because they can’t access any housing. They have no income and rely on food vouchers, making it even harder to access essentials during this crisis as food prices have risen. Mariam* has a health condition and has previously been refused healthcare. Her local hospital has told her that she would be billed thousands of dollars for treatment, money that she simply does not have.

“In the midst of a pandemic, a woman should not have to worry about her safety, how she’s going to feed her child and keep healthy and safe,” says Ms Field.

**Names have been changed for safety.*

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Contact:

Renata Field – Media spokesperson, Domestic Violence NSW – 0457 167 339

Jane Brock – Executive Officer, Immigrant Women’s Speakout – 0499 325 819

About:

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.

Immigrant Women's Speakout Association is the peak advocacy, information/referral and research body representing the ideas and issues of immigrant and refugee women in NSW. The Association also undertakes community development projects and provides direct services including in the areas of homelessness, domestic violence and employment, education and training.