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For Immediate Release

When There is Nowhere Safe to Call Home

This week has seen SBS launch its third series of *Filthy Rich and Homeless* and the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, announce a new \$36 million ‘Together Home’ project, to reduce rough sleepers in NSW. However for women escaping domestic violence, homelessness is increasing.

Over the past year Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) accounted for over one third of homelessness in NSW with Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) helping over 25,284 women and children escaping violence.ⁱ

Jane is a name behind one of those numbers. After leaving an abusive husband, Jane and her children found themselves living in a car until they could find safe housing. “He had made promises to pay our rent formally to authorities yet we received an eviction notice just after he left the house. We couldn’t pay rent. There was little accommodation available and we had no funds” said Jane. “We need to think of the impact of unstable living conditions on children. My kids were traumatised by domestic violence and as a result of keeping them safe we were made homeless. Services for us were limited and we were on a waiting list despite the urgency.”

Although, thankfully, she is now safe and living in a rental property, the risk of homelessness is ever present for many survivors of violence. “Until recently, most days I would have to consider can I afford to live today? It has been a constant juggling of funds where no amount of financial planning can make up for the fact that you just don’t have enough money for the basics in life.”

“We must listen to the courageous lived experiences of victim survivors if we are to make the changes needed to provide co-ordinated safe therapeutic responses and appropriate housing options,” said Delia Donovan, Interim CEO, Domestic Violence NSW. The two major drivers of homelessness for women escaping Domestic and Family Violence in NSW is the shortage of social housing and a lack of affordable private rentals (less than 1% availability) for women on income support.ⁱⁱ

“DVNSW calls on the NSW Government to commit to the investment into social housing and SHS services, or we’ll continue to see women and children face homelessness in increasing numbers” said Donovan. “No one should ever be forced to suffer violence and abuse in their own home to keep a roof over their child’s head, yet every year thousands of women face this trauma daily.”

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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.

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

- **1800RESPECT** or 1800 732 732 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

ⁱ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/shs-annual-report-18-19/fact-sheets-by-state-and-territory>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.homelessnessnsw.org.au/sites/homelessnessnsw/files/2020-06/2020%20HNSW%20Pre%20budget%20submission.pdf>