

For Immediate Release

Wednesday 23 September 2020

DVNSW Gives Evidence in Federal Inquiry into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence

DVNSW has given evidence to the recent Federal Inquiry into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence, conducted by the House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs.

“We call for improved coordination and transparency as we progress the work of this inquiry, particularly noting the multiple inquiries undertaken in Australia to date with hundreds of recommendations”, says Delia Donovan, Interim CEO of DVNSW. “We seek to work in collaboration with the government to ensure recommendations put forward are implemented and accountable”.

DVNSW’s submission to this inquiry highlights key needs across primary prevention, early intervention, crisis response, and housing for women and children experiencing or at risk of family and domestic with a focus on vulnerable and marginalised communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTIQ, CALD, and those with disability.

DVNSW is advocating for laws, policies and programs to prevent and respond to domestic violence that align with the Our Watch ‘Change the Story’ and ‘Changing the Picture’ primary prevention national frameworks. DVNSW recommends secure and ongoing funding and support for Our Watch and local communities to lead whole-of-community systemic and cultural change, in order to address the underlying gendered and intersecting drivers of violence against women, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, migrant and refugee women, women with disability, LGBTIQ people, children, young people and animals. It is essential that organisations with expertise in working with specific groups at risk are appropriately resourced to provide specialist, culturally safe and accessible support and prevention initiatives.

Increases in funding and length of contracts was highly recommended for all domestic and family violence services to ensure the sustainability of these organisations so that they could deliver quality outcomes for their clients, in the face of increased demand and complexities in service delivery.

“It is one of our key recommendations that funding is substantially increased to specialist support services to enable them to provide high quality, timely support and to improve access to the supports that victim-survivors need to be safe”, says Renata Field, Policy and Research Manager for DVNSW. “This will help the lives of women and children.”

DVNSW also included recommendations to fund Aboriginal owned and controlled organisations to make the decisions and provide the specialist family violence services to their own communities. Addressing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and in Aboriginal communities is of the utmost priority to DVNSW, and DVNSW is informed in its efforts towards these goals by the expertise of the members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Steering committee, made up of experts and practitioners from across NSW.

In addition, DVNSW advocated for increased support for women on temporary visas, LGBTIQ people, and women with animals as DVNSW surveys of the domestic violence sector have identified that these people face additional specific barriers to support, and consequently, are at risk of more severe violence.

Finally, DVNSW drew the committee's attention to the lack of safe and affordable housing options for women and children that have escaped family and domestic violence and recommended an increase in the provision of social and community housing.

---Ends---

Media Spokespeople

Delia Donovan, Interim CEO, Domestic Violence NSW: 0400 936 192

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