

For Immediate Release

12 May 2021

Significant Housing Gap Evident in Federal Budget

While last night's Federal Budget announcement placed heavy emphasis on women, there was a significant shortfall in funding low-cost, safe and affordable housing.

While the reinstatement of the Equal Remuneration Order supplementation (funding that assists homelessness services keep up with rising wage costs) was welcomed by the sector, the Government's announcement to invest in measures to help support people into home ownership does not address the alarming shortage of low-cost, affordable social housing in Australia, nor the underlying causes of homelessness.

The ERO funding means \$124.7 million will be allocated to the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement, which funnels money from the federal government to the states and territories to improve housing access.

"Domestic and family violence is one of the most significant drivers of homelessness in Australia," says CEO of Domestic Violence NSW Delia Donovan. "Every women and child escaping violence deserves a safe place to go, and more options of affordable, permanent housing so they can rebuild their lives."

"This is a matter of urgency, and the government needs to act now."

Domestic Violence NSW's pre-budget submission highlighted the need to effectively invest in social housing and homelessness services, including the construction of new social and affordable housing, at the equivalent of 5,000 social housing properties every year for the next 10 years, and a 20% increase of funding for the Specialist Homelessness Services Program.

"In 2019/2020, approximately 41% of people seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services were experiencing domestic and family violence", says Ms Donovan. "And many women reported the housing options available to them are generally poorly maintained, or in an unsafe area. This means that women often decide to return to a violent partner because it's considered a safer option than the alternatives."

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, 39% of service providers reported an increase in demand and increasing rates of domestic violence. To date, no funds have been allocated to providing supportive long term housing options for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence.

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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