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“We needed 5,000 homes, but we only got 800.” NSW State Budget fails to deliver on housing for domestic violence victims

“Domestic Violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women and their children,” says CEO of Domestic Violence NSW, Delia Donovan. “DVNSW is calling for 5,000 new homes to be built each year for the next 10 years to address the serious lack of housing supply.”

“We needed 5,000 homes, but we only got 800.”

Today’s state budget saw no new funding announced for social housing despite advocates, victim-survivors and economists all calling for the urgent need for this investment. DVNSW’s has called for initiatives to remove housing barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and women on temporary visas yet there have been no additional funding announcements for these cohorts.

“NSW urgently needs to invest in social housing to support women and their children who have been made homeless due to domestic and family violence,” says Renata Field, Policy and Research Manager at DVNSW. “Without proper investment in safe and affordable housing, women and children escaping violence will remain in crisis and transitional housing for much longer than they should, without any further options.

“The last thing we want is women having to return to a perpetrator because they don’t have anywhere else to go.” says Ms Field.

This lack of investment by the NSW Government in social housing comes despite a record Stamp Duty windfall and high returns that the state government receives on its’ investment in social housing.

Over 40,000 people report experiencing homelessness annually in NSW, and it is estimated by Equity Economics that an additional 9000 people will be homeless in NSW by July 2021.

Thousands of vulnerable women with dependent children are experiencing homelessness every as a result of domestic and family violence, and while Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) are able to move women seeking assistance into temporary housing, very few move into stable, long-term, appropriate accommodation.

In addition to immediate crisis support, there is also a call to invest in longer-term housing research and reform - such as investing in state-wide data to map housing need to housing supply, and a commitment to reviewing the policies and practices that create barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and women on temporary visas accessing safe and appropriate housing.

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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