

Budget Policy Division
The Treasury
Langton Crescent
PARKES ACT 2600

**Australian Women Against Violence Alliance
Pre-Budget Submission
10 February 2016**

Thank-you for the opportunity to contribute a submission on the development of 2016–17 Budget.

About the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA)

AWAVA is one of the five National Women's Alliances funded by the Australian Government to bring together women's organisations and individuals across Australia to share information, identify issues and their solutions, to respond to and prevent violence against women and their children. AWAVA's role is to ensure that women's voices and particularly marginalised women's voices are heard by Government, amplifying the work of its member organisations and Friends and Supporters.

AWAVA works towards this by harnessing the expertise of its members, consisting of specialist women's services from the responding to violence against women sector, and working closely with government. Its members include organisations from every state and territory in Australia and represent organisations working on diverse issues including domestic and family violence, sexual assault, feminist pedagogy and women with disabilities.

Summary

The Australian Government has recognised the extent of violence against women as a problem in Australia and the fact that this violence is underpinned by gender inequality. The Government has begun to respond by implementing the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, establishing the COAG Advisory Panel and releasing the Women's Safety Package. The Government's policies have supported valuable work on the prevention of violence and have promoted a better understanding of the attitudes that enable violence and undermine safety.

Despite these positive steps, the services that deal directly with women living in situations of violence continue to struggle to meet rising demand. Funding for these services is the most critical gap in the Government's otherwise positive approach to preventing and responding to violence against women.

A major problem, as outlined by our member organisation, Domestic Violence Victoria, is that responses to domestic and family violence are currently mainly funded through homelessness funding programs.¹ This approach treats domestic and family violence as if it were an intermittent

¹ Fiona McCormack and Prue Cameron, 'Domestic violence package: A great start, but it will only get us so far', The Drum, 25 September 2015, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-09-25/mccormack-domestic-violence-package/6803846>

issue of individual crisis, rather than the entrenched, ongoing social problem that it is. It also neglects and fails to resource the full range of supports that domestic and family violence services provide to women and children facing violence.

Now that the Government is developing a more sophisticated and long-term approach to preventing and responding to violence against women, the funding of services can no longer be neglected. To do so risks the safety of countless women and children, and undermines the prospect for future reductions in the prevalence of violence.

Recommendations

AWAVA recommends that the Australian Government:

1. Allocate ongoing funding to the National Affordable Housing Agreement and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness
2. Provide additional funding for programs to prevent and respond to violence against women, including but not limited to additional funding to women-specific services providing crisis accommodation and support to women and children facing domestic and family violence
3. Acknowledging that there are different estimates of what appropriate additional funding is required, commit at least an extra \$38 million per year (ongoing) to the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness for women-specific services providing crisis accommodation and support to women and children facing domestic and family violence
4. Commit to establishing a separate funding stream for programs preventing and responding to domestic and family violence, acknowledging the inappropriateness of funding these through homelessness funding
5. Initiate a consultative process to determine full costing for the range of program and service needs, in order to introduce the new separate funding stream beginning in the 2017–18 budget year
6. Allocate adequate funding to enable a comprehensive response to the findings of the COAG Advisory Panel and the implementation of the Third Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children.

Thank-you once again for the opportunity to provide a submission. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the issues further. For further information or to discuss the content of this submission, please contact Merrindahl Andrew, AWAVA Program Manager, by phoning 0428 541 369.

Yours faithfully,

Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA)

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