
Family and domestic violence funding abandoned, despite dire need within the community

The Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS) is urging the Federal Government to reinstate the funding of the essential Women's Safety Package for specialist family and domestic violence programs in Western Australia.

More than \$2.4 million was provided in 2016 for a range of programs aimed at reducing family and domestic violence, and keeping women and children safe in their homes. The Federal Government are refusing to continue vital funding, citing the funding was a short-term solution.

In 2017 the Keeping Women Safe in their Home program run by service providers in WA supported the safety of 700 women in Western Australia. The program helped women change locks on their homes, undertake a safety and security assessment on their home, and install security cameras and panic buttons where a situation was at an extenuating level.

"One woman is killed every week in Australia by a current or former partner. This is a national emergency. The Federal Government should be doing all within its power to stop this tragic loss of life and long-term damage caused to families, friends, and communities. The issue must be a priority for the Federal Government," said Louise Giolitto, Chief Executive Officer, WACOSS.

Western Australia has the second highest level of family and domestic violence, and in Australia, 1 in every 6 women has experienced physical or sexual abuse and 1 in every 4 women has experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner. Women are 4 times more likely to be hospitalised after being assaulted by their spouse or partner.

"The community services sector is deeply concerned the impact funding cuts will have on those seeking help. The value of Keeping Women Safe is immeasurable – it literally saves lives – and now services are forced to close their doors. This decision places many women in at risk of harm.

"Family and domestic violence is the responsibility of everyone in the community, but especially the State and Federal Governments. These programs helped women separated from abusive partners, supported women and children to stay in their homes in a safe and appropriate way, and deterred perpetrators from re-offending," Louise said.

Ends.