

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

WACOSS welcomes the appointment of a Minister for the Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence and Women's Interest by the WA State Labor Government. The Council also commends the government for making clear the raft of system challenges that need to be addressed to both protect individuals and families from domestic and family violence and support those affected.

Despite these new initiatives, there is room for additional initiatives. WACOSS would like to see a timeline for the proposed amendments to reform the Tenancies Act, and further commitment to reforming the justice system in line with the government's policy statement for 'A responsive justice system'.

RESPONDING TO FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- \$8.3 million to establish two additional women's refuges, with work to commence in 2018.
- An extra \$7.4 million for Financial Counselling Services.
- Funding to establish a new counselling service in the Peel region.
- State Government funding for the RSPCA to support a Pets in Crisis program, which will help the victims of family and domestic violence look after their animals.
- \$1.69 million to expand existing culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse victims of family and domestic violence.

PERPETRATOR PROGRAMS

- \$200,000 funding to commence planning to establish an additional behavioural change service to support perpetrators of family and domestic violence.

RESPONSIVE JUSTICE

- No indication in budget papers of the intention to implement recommendations from 'Enhancing Family and Domestic Violence Laws: Final Report', prepared by the Law Reform Commission of WA.
- No time frame for report to be prepared for the proposed recommendations to amend the Residential Tenancies Act (#SafeSystems).
- No indication to commit resources to aligning state Domestic and Family Violence strategy with revised and aligned National Plan.
- No indication for the re-commissioning of the WA Police Specialist Domestic Violence investigation unit.
- No indication of implementation of the electronic monitoring trial of dangerous offenders.

RESPONDING TO ELDER AND ECONOMIC ABUSE

- Despite a pre-election commitment, there is no provision for a lead agency to assume overall responsibility for the coordination of the response to elder abuse.
- Similarly, there is no funding for a mechanism to expedite amendments to the law surrounding enduring powers of attorney and guardianship.
- Initiatives to address economic abuse is another missed opportunity in this budget.