



# CONFRONTING OUR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRISIS

## Enough is enough - funding our front line services

It's time to fix our broken safety net.

Australia is in the middle of a domestic violence crisis and our safety net is full of holes. We are failing victims and survivors of domestic violence, and we need to invest in the solutions. The Greens are putting forward a bold plan to increase investment in front line services by \$2.2 billion over 4 years.

Right now, Australia is in the middle of a national domestic violence crisis. The shocking numbers of women murdered by current or former partners compels us to action. We are failing victims and survivors of domestic violence, and we need to invest in the solutions.

Domestic and family violence touches people from every walk of life. The data indicates that one in four women in Australia have experienced one or more incidents of violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

Despite the ongoing crisis, resources to protect victims and hold perpetrators to account are inadequate, and thousands of women are being left behind, unable to access the support they need.

We must make sure no victim is turned away when they need our help. The Greens plan would radically boost funding by investing \$2.2 billion over four years, and provide 10-year funding certainty for front line services.

The Greens have consulted with experts and front line service providers and we are proposing a rapid and significant increase in funding for domestic violence services, and a broad program of reforms to keep victims and survivors safe, hold perpetrators to account and work for gender equality.

Increased media attention and awareness is vital, but as more victims seek help, demand on already overstretched services will keep climbing. For example, in Victoria police now respond to 70,000 DV incidents a year, which is a 70% increase over 5 years. In the same period, the support services for women have only received a small increase in funding. In Queensland, increasing demand has seen domestic violence-related legal casework in the community sector rise by 355%.

### > Key Points

The Greens' \$2.2 billion plan over the first 4 years will:

- **Create a new ten-year, \$5 billion National Partnership Agreement on Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women** to specialist services such as crisis phone services, women's shelters, training for service providers, counselling, perpetrator interventions, and other specialist domestic violence services.
- **Roll out perpetrator interventions** including men's behaviour change programs and early intervention "system design" programs worth \$128 million over 4 years within the new National Partnership Agreement.
- **Fund a national peak body** for specialist domestic violence services with \$8 million over 4 years.
- **Spend \$100 million over 2 years on capital works for crisis accommodation** to build more shelters, premises or other projects as required to make sure no-one is left without a place to stay.
- **Commit to increased funding for legal assistance**, by at least \$200 million per year, including \$144 million over 4 years and secure long term funding for Family Violence Prevention Legal Services, and increased funding for CLCs, Legal Aid and ATSILS. The Greens' full Access to Justice package will be announced in the coming weeks.
- Support State and Territory governments who chose to roll out **specialist domestic violence courts** with \$5 million over 2 years.
- **Make family law safe, with a \$60 million package** to implement the *Safety First in Family Law* plan from Women's Legal Services Australia.
- **Support young people** who are victims of violence.
- **Build long-term affordable housing to clear the bottleneck** in the system, as part of the Greens' National Housing Roadmap including immediate construction of 14,500 affordable dwellings funded by changes to negative gearing.
- **Make our workplaces safe** by providing 10 days of paid domestic violence leave as a right for every worker.
- **A comprehensive plan for primary prevention** of violence and gender equality to be announced in the coming weeks.

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## > Funding for specialist domestic violence services

The evidence from front line service providers is clear: we must fund the services which are already successfully helping victims and survivors of DV to escape and stay safe. Those services are overstretched, and demand is still climbing. Dedicated and secure funding along with funding increases for specialist domestic violence services, will allow them to deliver the holistic “wrap around” services needed by women and children fleeing violence.

Domestic violence is a complex, pervasive social problem, and it cannot be addressed as an “add on” to other funding programs. The Greens would create a **new ten-year, \$5 billion National Partnership Agreement on Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women** between the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. This new agreement would provide dedicated, secure, long term funding for specialist domestic violence services.

Funding would be **\$500 million per year for a total of \$5 billion over ten years**, commencing in July 2016. This funding would be **in addition to** the Greens’ proposed doubling of Federal funding to a total of **\$827 million per year** for homelessness programs under our [Homelessness Has No Place In Australia](#) initiative.

Dedicated funding which recognises the distinctive nature of domestic violence will allow specialist domestic violence services to **get on with their core business** including outreach, crisis response, crisis accommodation, safety planning, intensive case management, legal support, advocacy and post-crisis support. Most Federal funding for these services is delivered under housing or homelessness frameworks, and at present, some services they deliver are not accounted for.

The new National Partnership Agreement would include the following features:

- **Funding for front line services.** Examples of the types of organisations which would be funded under the new agreement are: **crisis phone services, women’s shelters, training for other service providers, counselling, perpetrator interventions, and other specialist domestic violence services.**
- **Services for all.** Dedicated funding for women and children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, women and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women and children with disabilities, young women, LGBTIQ people, older women and women and children in rural and regional areas.
- **Review of funding.** A review mechanism to assess whether funding is adequate to meet the demand, with the option to increase funding after two years.
- **Long term certainty.** The 10 year funding agreement will make it easier for specialist services to plan for the future instead of being stuck constantly in endless funding cycles, and make it easier to recruit and retain experienced staff.
- **Meaningful and measurable outcomes.** The new agreement would include meaningful and measurable outcomes

against which federal, state and territory governments can be held to account.

- **Building the workforce.** The Greens are also calling for nationally accredited training for front line service providers working to help women fleeing violence and ongoing funding to build workforce capacity. This would also involve better training for social service workers in other sectors, including housing, health, drug and alcohol, disability, culturally and linguistically diverse, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and mental health sectors.

## > Holding perpetrators to account

Working with men and other perpetrators of domestic violence is critical to preventing and minimising harm. Right now demand for men’s behaviour change programs is so high that men who are at a high risk of using violence have to wait up to six months or more. It is critical we have a continuum of interventions for men, including electronic tracking systems, case management, coordination of services – all based on the principle of accountability.

The Greens would commit to the following \$128 million plan over 4 years from within the new 10-year, \$5 billion National Partnership Agreement on Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women:

- **Intervene early with violent perpetrators** by coordinating responses from the justice system, child protection and social services to stop violence before it becomes entrenched - \$22.5 million over 3 years.
- **Expand men’s behaviour change programs** by providing \$25 million per year in Federal funding, matched 1:1 by State governments.
- **A national accreditation system for men’s behaviour change and other perpetrator intervention programs** funded at \$4.5 million over 3 years.
- **National perpetrator accountability summits** involving police, corrections, courts, child protection and health service providers to share best practice in how each of these sectors can work towards perpetrator accountability with funding of \$1 million over 2 years.

The Greens also support the recommendations of the final report of the COAG Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children in relation to perpetrator interventions.

## > National leadership

The Greens see stopping domestic violence and violence against women as a national crisis requiring national leadership. Historically, the federal government has not funded specialist domestic violence services, and responses to violence have not been well coordinated. It is vital that we seize the current momentum to address this crisis.

The Greens are committed to developing long-term national governance frameworks that keep domestic violence and

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violence against women at the centre of government decision-making, and which support service providers and victims. *The National Plan To Reduce Violence against Women and their Children* is a good start, but it is clear that this issue still ‘falls through the cracks’. For instance, responsibility for delivering the *National Plan* is spread across multiple government agencies with no-one clearly responsible for ensuring outcomes are achieved.

As a first step the Greens would commit to long-term secure funding for a **national peak body for specialist domestic violence services**, funded at \$2 million per year. The peak body would provide expert advice and monitor the implementation of the new National Partnership Agreement on Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women, as well as progress against the *National Plan* and help governments to better support victims, survivors and those on the front lines.

## > Crisis accommodation

As well as ongoing funding for specialist DV services, the Greens would also allocate **at least \$100 million over 2 years** for the construction of new homeless shelters, women’s shelters or other premises as required by specialist services. This funding would come from within the previously announced doubling of funding for homelessness services under the Greens’ [Homelessness Has No Place In Australia](#) initiative, and would more than reverse the Abbott/Turnbull government’s harsh cut of \$44 million from construction of new shelters.

It is important to recognise that women need access to a range of options including to communal refuge, ‘core and cluster’ housing, and secure long-term housing when they exit crisis accommodation. Women also need the option to stay safely at home. Every survivor should have a choice of response that meets their circumstances.

## > Legal assistance

For victims of DV trying to get free, going to court to get protection order, or keeping their children safe is a critical step. Community legal centres (CLCs) have to turn away over 150,000 of Australia’s most disadvantaged and vulnerable people in 2013-14. About 40% of the work of CLCs is related to domestic violence. Despite that, the Abbott/Turnbull government is planning to cut their funding starting in 2017.

We must immediately **reverse the cruel cuts** to legal assistance made by the Abbott/Turnbull government. Legal services in Australia are chronically underfunded, and the [Productivity Commission has recommended](#) an *immediate injection of \$200 million per year* to meet **existing** unmet need. The Greens support the Productivity Commission’s recommendation. This would be funded 60:40 by the federal and state governments. Finally, we must increase funding to **expand services** on the basis of the real level of legal need in the community to make sure women and children are not left in danger.

The Greens’ commitments in relation to all of these elements of legal assistance funding will be announced in the coming weeks. *Family Violence Prevention Legal Services*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised from family violence and almost 11 times more likely to be killed as a result of violent assault than other Australian women.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must be at the forefront of our response to domestic violence, and solutions must be developed in collaboration with communities, not imposed from Canberra. Despite this, the Abbott/Turnbull government abolished dedicated, secure funding for the Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS).

The Greens will boost federal funding for **Family Violence Prevention Legal Services**, by **\$144 million over 4 years, for a total of \$259 million over 4 years** including extra federal funding, extra State contributions as well as existing federal funding. We will:

- **Restore secure funding for FVPLS with ten year funding agreements** for all fourteen Family Violence Prevention Legal Services, including CPI indexation to cover increasing costs.
- **Provide a federal funding boost** of \$36 million per year including
  - \$8.09 million per year under the Productivity Commission’s recommendations to meet unmet need, matched 60:40 by State governments, and
  - \$28 million per year in additional funding to increase capacity and meet growing needs.
- **Increase funding for the peak body**, the FVPLS National Secretariat, with a **\$4.5 million boost over 4 years** for capacity building.
- **Ensure there is national coverage of FVPLS services within 3 years**, as part of a broader legal needs assessment, including a mapping exercise, with a focus on meeting need in metropolitan areas as well as rural and remote areas.

**The Greens will make further specific commitments** on non-DV-specific legal assistance, including for CLCs, Legal Aid and ATSILS funding in the coming weeks.

## > Specialist domestic violence courts

Specialist domestic violence courts at a State and Territory level are a crucial part of the solution to help victims and survivors escape violence. Specialist courts bring together criminal and civil proceedings (such as applying for protection order) which allows for quicker and easier resolutions. These courts are staffed by highly trained judicial officers and offer extensive support for victims. The Royal Commission on Family Violence in Victoria and Queensland’s expert taskforce on both recommended rolling out or expanding specialist courts.

States and Territories are responsible for the civil and criminal court systems, but the federal government can play a role to

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support particular States which follow the lead of Queensland and Victoria by rolling out specialist courts. The Greens will invest **\$5 million over 2 years in a program of training, information sharing and extra resources** to assist State and Territory governments to set up specialist domestic violence courts.

## > Making our family law system safe

Our family law system is overburdened and under-funded. It is failing women, children and victims of domestic violence. Perpetrators all too often use the family law system as a means to terrorise their partners and gain custody of children. Parents are often not legally represented. Family courts do not have adequate resources and processes to deal with violent perpetrators. Direct cross-examination of victims by abusers is still permitted. The best interests of children and the key consideration of safety are all-too-frequently ignored. Women from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, women with a disability, and women from regional Australia face entrenched barriers to access.

The Greens support the 5-step [Safety First in Family Law](#) plan from Women's Legal Services Australia in its entirety. This plan is supported by over 90 domestic violence groups for reform to create a system that keeps women and children safe. Former Australian of the Year Rosie Batty has campaigned very strongly in support of the *Safety First* plan.

**The Greens will put safety first in family law** with a \$60 million package involving the following reforms:

- **Create a special process in family courts for domestic violence cases**, supported by specialist workers placed in court registries along with specialist services based in courts to receive referrals. These workers and services would focus on early intervention and risk assessment - \$5 million per year or \$20 million over four years.
- **Reform the Family Law Act** with a focus on safety and child protection. This would include removing the language of "equal shared time" and "equal shared responsibility" to focus on safety and risk to children. It would also include legal protections, combined with the Greens' plan for extra funding for legal representation, to stop a victim being directly cross-examined by their abuser.
- **Make family law safe for everyone** by implementing the Family Law Council's 2012 recommendations on improving the system for clients from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds, and by undertaking a comprehensive audit of barriers facing women with disabilities and women from regional communities and women in prison.
- **Provide legally assisted and supported family dispute resolution** in domestic violence cases based on the highly effective 2012 Co-ordinated Family Dispute Resolution pilot. The Greens would commit \$10 million per year or \$40 million over 4 years to roll out this model at 10 sites around Australia, aiming for a national rollout as soon as possible.

- **Support women to financially recover from violence** by streamlining small property settlements and simplifying family court processes.
- **Establish robust national accreditation and monitoring for family report writers** with mandatory training on domestic violence, cultural competency and working with victims of trauma for all practitioners who prepare family reports.
- **Implement mandatory video recording of interviews** with family report writers to bring the Family Court into line with standard practice in other jurisdictions such as workers compensation and investigations of child sexual abuse. This measure is additional to the *Safety First in Family Law* plan.
- **Deliver a comprehensive professional development package** for family law judicial officers, and family law legal professionals, working with the Judicial College of Australia, the Australian Institute of Family Studies, State and Territory law institutes and bar associations
- **Provide more legal help** by boosting funding for Legal Aid, community legal centres, Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services. The Greens' Access to Justice package to be announced in the coming weeks would boost funding for these services by at least \$200 million per year.

## > Young people

Young people and children are too often an afterthought or an 'add on' in domestic violence policy. There is an urgent need for appropriately trained workers in domestic violence services, and for dedicated support services for children experiencing violence. The new \$5 billion, 10 year National Partnership Agreement will provide for dedicated services for children and young people.

## > Clearing the bottleneck: Long term affordable housing

Front line services have told the Senate inquiry on domestic violence that there is a bottleneck in crisis accommodation because more and more women are unable to find safe, affordable and secure housing. Women forced to stay in motels, away from professional support, sometimes for weeks at a time. Women must have a choice of housing options during the crisis stage, including remaining safely at home with access to the appropriate supports, services and security measures.

The waiting list for social housing in Australia is almost 200,000 households, or over 400,000 people, and there are 65,000 Australians of "greatest need" on the priority waiting list. Victims of domestic violence who are on this list often wait for over a year. The Greens have a plan to provide a home for everyone who needs it - the Greens' [Affordable Housing Plan](#) - includes:

- **Building 14,500 new homes** each year, funded by changes to negative gearing under our *Reforming Negative Gearing* plan. This would be enough to house every person currently sleeping rough or without adequate shelter, and take 15,000 people off the social housing waiting list.

- [Funding Homelessness Services](#) - we are committed to doubling federal funding for homelessness services at a cost of \$507 million a year, and to signing a new ten year National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (at a cost of \$320 million a year), to provide ongoing security for this vital sector.
- [Reforming negative gearing](#) – our proposal is that negative gearing for future investments would end, with existing investments grandfathered. This would stop billions of dollars each year being used to unfairly subsidise property investors at the expense of housing affordability. Our plan to phase out Negative gearing would increase the revenue available to address the housing needs of all Australians, by as much as \$42 billion over ten years.
- [Capital Gains Discount Reform](#) - the current 50% discount on income earned from investments benefits the wealthiest Australians and should be removed to stop the structural unfairness in the tax system. It would generate as much as \$74 billion over the next decade, or \$119.5 billion when combined with negative gearing reform to be spent on services like homelessness support and housing affordability.
- Additional elements of the Greens' Affordable Housing plan will be announced in coming weeks.

## > Workplace reform

All too often, violence affects victims' ability to work, but maintaining employment is also very important for helping victims move on with their lives. The Greens will:

- **Provide 10 days of paid domestic violence leave** as a right for every worker under the National Employment Standards. More than 1.6 million workers already have access to paid domestic violence leave via workplace agreements or awards, but this should be a universal right. The leave can be used to attend legal or medical appointments, counselling or moving house, or to support a family member in doing so.
- **Extend protection against discrimination at work** to cover discrimination on the basis of domestic violence. In 2013, the Greens' amendment to the *Fair Work Amendment Bill 2013* sought to insert domestic violence as a distinct and separate form of discrimination at work. Both Labor and the Coalition opposed these protections.

The Greens' amendment to the *Fair Work Amendment (Better Work/Life Balance) Bill 2012* **extended the right to request flexible working arrangements** to those affected by domestic violence.

## > Primary Prevention and Gender Equality

The best way to stop violence is before it occurs. Primary prevention involves challenging the deeply ingrained attitudes, social norms and gender inequalities that give rise to men's violence against women. The Greens support the [Change the Story](#) framework for primary prevention developed by Our Watch. We see the federal government has playing a key role in providing national leadership of a broad program for gender equality to address the root causes of violence against women.

The Greens will be making further commitments in relation to primary prevention in the coming weeks.

## > The Greens' track record

The Greens have been at the forefront of calls for adequate funding and support for domestic violence services, especially specialist women's services, and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In 2014, in response to calls for political leadership from service providers, the Greens established the Senate inquiry into Domestic Violence which exposed shocking under-funding of our crucial front line services, and contributed to the growing national conversation about DV.

In 2015, the Greens stood with service providers in the successful campaign to stop further funding cuts to homelessness services and legal services for vulnerable Australians, including thousands of victims and survivors of domestic violence. In March 2015, the Abbott Government abandoned \$25 million in cuts to legal services and \$115 million in cuts to homelessness services.

In 2016, the Greens successfully established a Senate inquiry to investigate the links between gender inequality in all spheres of life and domestic violence.

## > Where do the other parties stand?

**The Coalition** have slashed services for domestic violence, including \$44 million cut from construction of new emergency accommodation, \$34 million in cuts to community legal services in the next four years, and more \$240 million cut from social services. The Women's Safety Package announced in September 2015 and the small amount of funding in the 2016 Budget was welcome, but it was largely limited to "pilot" programs and does not restore anywhere near the funding already cut by Tony Abbott and Malcolm Turnbull.

**Labor** has announced around \$135 million in funding over 4 years for domestic violence which reverses some Liberal cuts, but the scale of our national crisis demands that we go much further.

## > Budget Implications

In total the spending announced in this initiative will cost **\$2.2 billion over the next four years**. A detailed cost summary is below.

Measure (\$m)	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	Measure total
Proposed measures (sub totals, State funding and previously announced amounts in <i>italics</i> )					
<u>Specialist DV Services</u>					
New NPA on Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women	500	500	500	500	<b>2000</b>
<u>National peak body for specialist DV services</u>	2	2	2	2	<b>8</b>
<u>Holding perpetrators to account (within funding for new NPA)</u>					
<i>Early intervention with violent perpetrators</i>	7.5	7.5	7.5	0	<b>22.5</b>
<i>Expand men's behaviour change (MBC) progs</i>	25	25	25	25	<b>100</b>
<i>National accreditation for MBC progs</i>	1.5	1.5	1.5	0	<b>4.5</b>
<i>Perpetrator accountability summits</i>	0.5	0.5	0	0	<b>1</b>
<u>New shelter/premises construction (within the Greens' Homelessness Services package)</u>	50	50			<b>100</b>
<u>Specialist DV courts - facilitating wider roll out</u>	2.5	2.5	0	0	<b>5</b>
<u>Making family law safe</u>					
Special process in FC for DV cases	5	5	5	5	<b>20</b>
Legally assisted dispute resolution	10	10	10	10	<b>40</b>
<u>Legal Assistance</u>					
FVPLS National Secretariat funding boost	1.125	1.125	1.125	1.125	<b>4.5</b>
Federal funding boost for FVPLS	36.09	36.09	36.09	36.09	<b>144.36</b>
<i>Implementing the Productivity Commission recommendations</i>	8.09	8.09	8.09	8.09	<b>32.36</b>
<i>Further funding boost</i>	28	28	28	28	<b>112</b>
<i>State and Territory funding boost to FVPLS implementing the Productivity Commission recommendations</i>	5.39	5.39	5.39	5.39	<b>21.57</b>
<i>Projected total funding for FVPLS including existing and federal and state funding boosts</i>	64.68	64.68	64.68	64.68	<b>258.73</b>
<b>Total new federal spending</b>	<b>\$557</b>	<b>\$557</b>	<b>\$554</b>	<b>\$554</b>	<b>\$2,222</b>