



PRIME MINISTER ATTORNEY GENERAL MINISTER FOR THE STATUS OF WOMEN

TIME FOR ACTION TO REDUCE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The Australian Government today released *Time for Action*, the major report of the *National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children*.

The report makes recommendations designed to tackle the unacceptable levels of sexual assault and domestic and family violence in Australia, and gives all governments and the community clear directions about helping Australian women live free of violence, within respectful relationships and in safe communities.

Nearly one in three Australian women experience physical violence and almost one in five women experience sexual violence over their lifetime.

New research from KPMG commissioned by the National Council finds that violence against women will cost the Australian economy around \$13.6 billion this year, rising to \$15.6 billion in 2021/22 if appropriate action isn't taken.

The Government's position on violence against women is zero tolerance.

Laws must be strong enough to hold perpetrators to account and offer justice and safety for victims and their families.

We must also educate young people to prevent violence in future generations.

The Government has welcomed the *Time for Action* report and has agreed to immediately progress 18 of the 20 priority recommendations. The Government will further consider the other two within the context of developing the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women*.

The Australian Government will immediately:

- Invest \$12.5 million for a new national telephone and online crisis service. The new service will be run by professional staff and make active referrals to follow-up services. The new service will operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;
- Invest \$26 million for primary prevention activities including:
 - \$9 million to improve the quality and uptake of respectful relationships programs for school age young people;
 - \$17 million for a public information campaign focused on changing attitudes and behaviours that contribute to violence; and
- Invest \$3 million to support research on perpetrator treatment and nationally consistent laws;
- Ask the Australian Law Reform Commission to work with State and Territory law reform commissions to examine the inter-relationship of laws that relate to the safety of women and their children.
- Establish the *Violence Against Women Advisory Group* to advise on the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women.

Domestic violence is the single biggest cause of homelessness in Australia for women and the Government's White Paper on Homelessness, released in December last year, provides an additional \$1.2 billion over four years.

This is a 55 per cent increase in investment in homelessness, including a commitment of \$800 million over the next four years for new support services and \$400 million over the next two financial years for social housing.

The Government also announced a \$6.4 billion investment to build at least 20,000 new social housing dwellings as part of the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan.

The Australian Government will also work with the States and Territories to:

- Enforce domestic and family violence orders across State borders through national registration;
- Improve the uptake of domestic violence coronial recommendations; and
- Identify the best methods to investigate and prosecute sexual assault cases.

The Government will refer the *Time for Action* report to COAG to consider issues relevant to States and Territories.

We want all governments to come on board and, by early 2010, achieve an endorsed, national approach to reducing the incidence and impact of violence against women and their children.

We also see an ongoing role for an expert advisory body drawn from the community.

The Government would like to congratulate Libby Lloyd, Heather Nancarrow, and the nine other National Council members have done an outstanding job in bringing together such a comprehensive plan to guide us in taking action on one of our most pervasive social problems.

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