

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

19 September 2023

BUDGET BURDENS SURVIVORS WITH THE COST OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FOR ANOTHER YEAR

The 2023-24 NSW budget leaves victims of domestic and family violence carrying the costs for another year; with insufficient funding provided to frontline support services.

Domestic violence has already cost the lives of 35 Australian women this year. The total economic burden of this crisis in NSW is estimated to have reached \$5.1 billion per year¹. While today's budget focuses on cost-of-living relief, it fails to provide targeted relief to the people most in need.

"Our members are on the frontlines – and day after day we hear of the horrific realities women and children are facing. The cost-of-living crisis is impacting us all, but for victim-survivors it's costing lives and liberty and this is too high a price to pay," says CEO of Domestic Violence NSW Delia Donovan.

"Many women and children are trapped in abusive homes – they can't afford rent on their own, not even with rental subsidies or Centrelink income support. With insufficient investment in crisis accommodation and social housing, women are forced to return to the perpetrator or face homelessness. This is particularly true of older women who are the fastest growing cohort of Australians experiencing homelessness," Ms Donovan says.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience domestic and family violence at higher rates, with research showing First Nations women are 27 times more likely to be hospitalised from assault than non-indigenous women in Australia.² This increases to 51 times more likely in more remote areas. Migrant women experiencing violence also face additional barriers to accessing support, and those on temporary visas are ineligible for income support and health care.

"In simple terms – the cost-of-living crisis has meant a choice between abuse and, in the worst cases, murder, or the risk of homelessness," Ms Donovan says.

Domestic Violence NSW are, however, pleased to see the \$4.4 million over three years to establish a new specialist multicultural domestic and family violence centre in southwest Sydney and \$4.2 million increase for the NSW Sexual Violence Helpline. We also welcome the previously announced \$6.6 million for specialist children and young people workers in 20 refuges, \$6.1 million for victim-survivors to receive support at court hearings and \$1.4 million for co-location of specialist workers in police stations. However, there is only \$39.1 million new funding overall for domestic, family and sexual violence initiatives in the 2023-2024 budget, alongside a \$34.3 million increase for 20 women's health centres.

^{1,3} Aftershock: Addressing the economic and social costs of the pandemic and natural disasters. [Report two – Domestic and Family Violence](#). Impact Economics, 2022.

² [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework](#), 2023

This budget falls far short of what is needed. Comparatively the NSW government invested only \$262.7 million in 2022-2023, less than half of the \$613 million that the Victorian Government invested³.

"We didn't even ask for half of what is required to close the funding gaps between NSW and Victoria in terms of domestic violence spending per capita. We only asked for a \$176.35 million increase – which is a small price to pay for a woman and child's right to safety," Ms Donovan reflects on Domestic Violence NSW's budget submission, available [here](#).

Domestic Violence NSW note the NSW budget is forecast to return to surplus in 2024-2025.

"If this Government wants to achieve the goal of ending violence in a generation as per the National Plan, We need the NSW Government to fund all asks in the Domestic Violence NSW budget submission. We also need investment in the NSW Primary Prevention Plan due to be released later in 2023, the NSW Workforce Development Plan currently in development and more support for the implementation of the laws to criminalise coercive control.

We cannot wait another year before making a significant increase in responding to and preventing domestic and family. We cannot expect victim-survivors to continue to carry the cost," Ms Donovan says.

[VIDEO](#) AND [AUDIO](#) STATEMENTS FROM DELIA DONOVAN CAN BE FOUND HERE.

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Domestic Violence NSW is the peak body for specialist domestic and family violence services in NSW. DVNSW provides a representative and advocacy function for specialist services and the women, families and communities they support. Their mission is to eliminate domestic and family violence through leadership in policy, advocacy, partnerships and the promotion of best practice.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence help can be found via:

- **1800RESPECT** or 1800 737 732 which offers a national counselling helpline, information and support
- **NSW Domestic Violence Line** 1800 65 64 63 which offers a state-wide counselling helpline, information and support
- **Men's Referral Service** 1300 766 491 for men, or friends and family of men using violence
- **National Violence and Abuse Trauma Counselling and Recovery Service** on 1800 FULL STOP (1800 385 578) or [online](#) for 24/7, free, confidential counselling.