

## MEDIA RELEASE

### ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN MUST BE A TOP PRIORITY!

In the lead up to the next State election, a coalition of organisations is calling on the next Western Australian Government to commit to improving the systems that are meant to keep victims of family and domestic violence safe.

Members from the *Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA)*, the *Community Legal Centres Association*, the *Women's Community Health Network*, the *Domestic Violence Legal Workers Network* and *Unions WA* are calling on a bi-partisan agreement to provide strong leadership to ensure the prevention of violence against women and their children is at the top of the government's agenda. The Safe Systems Coalition seeks to ensure Government:

- Establishes high level, cross governmental leadership, in particular:
  - Appoint a designated Minister for the Prevention of Violence Against Women;
  - Establish the Office for the Prevention of Violence Against Women and their Children;
  - Establish a Committee of Cabinet on the Prevention of Violence against Women and their Children;
  - Establish a high level and adequately resourced advisory group, skilled in the area of domestic and family violence, to work meaningfully with the Government to effectively implement reforms and existing frameworks and strategies;
  - Create an Assistant Commissioner of Police with a designated portfolio on the Prevention of violence against women; and
  - Revise the *WA Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy*.

In order to ensure that women and children are kept safe and perpetrators are held accountable, the Safe System Coalition asks the next Western Australian Government to commit to:

- Utilising a collaborative, coordinated and adequately resourced approach to the prevention of violence against women and children; including strategies that respond to diverse communities affected by domestic and family violence.
- Significantly increasing funding to frontline services, in particular existing Women's Refuges, Domestic and Family Violence Services; legal support services; and to housing and health services for women and children affected by domestic and family violence.
- Consulting experts and consumers in relevant fields when undertaking strategic planning concerning violence against women and children.
- Ensuring the Justice system is safe, supportive, well-resourced and responsive to the needs of women and children escaping violence.
- Holding perpetrators accountable by adequately resourcing the WA Police and increasing the availability and attendance of Men's Behaviour Change Programs.
- Adequately investing in the training of staff working in the judicial system.
- Ensuring that Health, Education, Family and Community Services, Police, Attorney- General responses are consistent, better coordinated and share best practice to prevent and respond effectively to the prevalence of domestic and family violence in our communities.
- Ensuring adequate funding, training and support for culturally-safe, trauma-specialist, accessible services for all women experiencing family and domestic violence. This includes where women remain in a relationship with the perpetrator (noting the complex and varied reasons for doing so)

or are in the process of leaving a relationship, which can take many attempts over an extended period of time.

- Adequately funded and clearly articulated, transparent, independent and ongoing process and outcomes evaluation, as well as timely reporting; to be considered during policy and procedure development, and throughout implementation.
- Embedding evidence-based respectful relationship education that focuses on promoting gender equality and violence prevention.
- Developing and investing in a Western Australian specific program based on the principles of Victoria's Gender and Disability Workforce Development Program.

In order to sustain women's safety, all systems, government and non-government, we must work together more effectively and respond to the housing, economic, social and legal impacts of domestic and family violence. The Coalition calls on all political parties to develop strong domestic and family violence policy platforms in the lead up to the next state election.

**Media Contact/s:**        **Helen Creed** (Community Legal Centres WA)

(08) 9221 9322

**Angela Hartwig** (Women's Council for DFV Services, WA)

(08) 9420 7264