

Domestic Violence

Prevention Is Key to Ending Domestic and Family Violence

The Greens NSW Plan to End Domestic and Family Violence

The Greens NSW have today launched their comprehensive plan to end Domestic and Family Violence, one of the most serious social and justice issues of our time. The plan focusses on an integrated, coordinated and collaborative approach to tackle the cycle of violence and eliminate the root causes. This plan will be funded by \$100 million in new funding per year.



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The Greens NSW plan to end Domestic and Family Violence recognises the critical importance of investment in primary prevention – such as whole of community education and awareness; and specialist support services that respond to the needs of women and children experiencing violence – especially crisis counselling and accommodation.

Greens MP for Balmain, Jamie Parker and Greens candidate for Newtown, Jenny Leong, joined NSW MP and Spokeswoman for the Status of Women, Dr Mehreen Faruqi, to announce their package of initiatives:

- Appointing a **Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence** tasked with ensuring integration and coordination across government agencies, the community sector and the justice system.
- Investing in **violence prevention initiatives** across all parts of society – communities, schools, workplaces, businesses, sport and recreation settings, and the media.
- Funding targeted **education programs** in schools from early childhood to high

school to build awareness of gender stereotyping, inequality and attitudes that encourage violence.

- Funding **community and workplace** based initiatives to prevent violence and foster respectful and equal relationships between men and women.
- Funding specialised services to **support men and boys who are at risk** or have a history of violent behaviour in domestic and family situations to acknowledge and change behaviour.
- Restoring funding and increasing to **women-only specialist services, refuges and shelters**, and increasing funding to these services in **rural/regional areas**.
- Investing in programs and services that meet the specific needs of at risk groups, such as **Aboriginal, immigrant**.
- Investing in **trauma informed support services** for women and children that support and enable healing, including accommodation and post-crisis services.
- Investing in **skills development for community workers** at the front line of supporting victims of domestic and family violence.
- **A safe and supportive justice system**. Improving the justice system by providing access to specialist family violence support workers, court staff and magistrates who understand the dynamics of family violence, and **increase funding for free legal advice for women**.

Media comments

Greens NSW MP, Spokeswoman for the Status of Women and Legislative Council candidate, Dr Mehreen Faruqi said:

"The Greens NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan will invest \$100 million per year in new funding to support initiatives prioritising prevention strategies and programs to help break the cycle of systemic domestic and family violence as well as more support to frontline services.

"Domestic violence is a state emergency. In 2012, there were 135,000 reported cases of domestic violence in NSW.

"The stark and shocking statistics of domestic and family violence are unacceptable, yet for too long meaningful and systemic actions to tackle this serious issue have been sadly lacking.

"The Greens are calling for a dedicated Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence to coordinate an integrated approach across agencies to eliminate domestic violence.

"We owe it to the next generation to stop this cycle of violence and this means a focus on prevention. It is not enough to step in once the damage is done

"From the schoolyard to the boardroom, the root causes of domestic and family violence need to be acknowledged and dealt with. Gender inequality, power imbalance, sexist attitudes, social isolation and alcohol abuse must be addressed if

governments, the community and businesses are to make any headway on this issue.

"The Coalition government's chaotic 'Going Home Staying Home' program is irresponsible, shows a real ignorance for the needs of women facing domestic violence and a disregard for their safety.

"Funding to women-only services must be restored and increased so they can provide crisis and long-term counselling and support services, and significant additional funding allocated to respond to the specific needs of higher-risk women including those living in rural/regional NSW, Aboriginal and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) and those with a disability.

"Rosie Batty, 2015 Australian of the Year, recently said to women and children who are victims of violence '...you do not deserve to live a life that is dictated by violence'. We must do everything possible to stop the cycle of violence.

Greens MP for Balmain and White Ribbon Ambassador, Jamie Parker said:

"Domestic and family violence is a whole of community issue and men need to stand up and play their part to break the cycle and encourage positive behaviour change.

"To be successful violence prevention initiatives must permeate all parts of society – schools, workplaces, businesses, sport and recreation organisations, media – and be supported by a coordinated, integrated approach between governments and communities.

"The Balmain electorate experienced firsthand the chaotic bungling of the Coalition Government's Going Home Staying Home program with the defunding and subsequent restoration of funding to two vital support services in our community, Stepping Out and Young People's Refuge. The sector needs certainty and stability not this yo-yo approach the government is taking to deal with domestic and family violence."

Greens candidate for Newtown and human rights campaigner, Jenny Leong said:

"If we are going to address the serious issue of domestic violence in our community we need a whole of government approach focused on prevention while at the same time recognising the important need for justice and ongoing support for survivors.

"As a former campaigner with Amnesty International I am acutely aware that violence against women is a global human rights violation that is felt very locally – with many people having direct experience of the impact it can have on their families and communities.

"This is an urgent problem that we need to address. Every cut made to support services has an impact on people's lives. Each day we delay addressing the issue of domestic violence the more lives are at risk."

More Information

In NSW, three-quarters of all women killed die at the hands of someone they were in a relationship with, about two in five of all assaults are domestic violence related, about 370 instances of domestic and family violence a day are dealt with by police but only half are reported.

These stark and shocking statistics highlight the unacceptability and injustice of domestic and family violence, meaning we need a fresh approach based on not just mitigating its effects but stopping it in the first place.

According to a 2010 NSW Auditor-General's Report 'Responding to Domestic and Family Violence', domestic and family violence is estimated to cost the NSW economy more than \$4.5 billion each year.

In NSW, most of the expenditure targeting domestic violence is for agencies dealing with the downstream costs that result from domestic violence.

We must move up the cycle of violence and invest significantly in preventative strategies and programs to identify and support those at risk. Meaningful and systemic actions need to focus on prevention of violence as well as providing specialist support, counselling and accommodation. Root causes such as gender inequality, power imbalance, sexist attitudes, social isolation and alcohol abuse must be addressed.

Addressing domestic violence involves the participation of many agencies, departments, non-government organisations and the community. It is crucial to make arrangements for a coordinated and integrated approach which is led by a focus on prevention.

The Coalition Government's fractured response to the complex issue of domestic and family violence has forced uncertainty, competition and closure upon a sector whose core aim is to provide stability and support to those escaping domestic and family violence situations. The rollout of the Government's Going Home Staying Home program has seen the decimation of autonomous women's refuges with scores of services forced to either close or hand their operation over to a larger generalist service, many with funding, staff and 24 hour access cuts

We are particularly failing regional women with 19 of the top 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs) with the highest rate of domestic assaults being regional, areas already suffering from a lack of services.

We must ensure that women who face a higher risk including Aboriginal women, CALD women and women with a disability receive tailored support and services

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