

SAFER FAMILIES STATEMENT

Family violence in any form is not, and never will be, acceptable in the Canberra community.

Family violence has negative consequences for all of us. It violates the human rights of those affected, reduces access to housing and employment, impairs children's health and development and is costly to our economy and our community.

Worryingly, one third of Australian women have experienced violence by someone who is known to them. The top health risk factor to Australian women aged between 18 and 44 is intimate partner violence.

The ACT Government, working hand in hand with the community, is committed to continuing this important work towards eliminating family violence in our community because all Canberrans have a right to feel safe and to be safe.

LANDMARK INVESTMENT FOR REAL CHANGE

The Safer Families package announced in the 2016-17 ACT Budget is the largest action to address family violence across government and community organisations in Canberra's history.

The **\$21.42 million** package is delivering more services in new ways, bringing family violence out of the shadows and ensuring those experiencing it get the help and support they need. By funding the package through a Territory-wide Safer Families Levy, the Government is signalling that all Canberrans have a role to play in ending family violence.

The ACT Government's investment is already making a real difference in the lives of Canberrans experiencing domestic and family violence. This year, the ACT Government:

- > Passed new laws from 1 May 2017 to recognise a broader definition of family violence including the full range of coercive, controlling and abusive behaviours.

- > Invested in more **Legal Aid ACT** support for victims of domestic and family violence, with an additional 100 Canberrans supported in the first three quarters of 2016-17 compared to the same period the year before. (**\$313,000**)
- > Passed new legislation to establish an improved **Reportable Conduct Scheme** in Canberra to apply a new level of scrutiny on organisations that are investigating the conduct of employees in relation to allegations of child abuse (**\$473,000**).
- > Invested in the **Domestic Violence Crisis Service** to enhance its 24/7 telephone and outreach support service providing information, counselling, advocacy and practical safety to the community (**\$200,000**).
- > Delivered greater support to the **Canberra Rape Crisis Centre** to meet increased demand from victims of sexual assault in the ACT (**\$100,000**).
- > Supported Canberrans from non-English speaking backgrounds experiencing family violence by providing increased access to translating and interpreting services through the ACT courts and eligible service providers (**\$39,000**).
- > Assisted Canberrans to apply for and obtain a Family Violence Order by funding two new Family Violence Order Liaison Officers at ACT Policing (**\$281,000**).
- > Assisted the **Tara Costigan Foundation** to establish a free caseworker service to support those who have experienced family violence as they rebuild their lives and break the cycle of violence (**\$40,000**).
- > Assisted Canberrans with immediate expenses to escape family violence by delivering a brokerage and bond fund (**\$30,000**).
- > Established a new therapeutic residential behaviour change program for perpetrators, **Room4Change**, that also supports women and children to stay safely in their home (**\$228,000** in program funds and **\$1.8 million** reallocated from specialist homelessness services).
- > Delivered the **Justice Reinvestment Trial** in partnership with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service to deliver a family-focused approach to reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the justice system (**\$443,000**).
- > Established the Case Analysis Team within **Child and Youth Protection Services** to undertake case analysis and provide independent advice on individual cases at key decision making points. Additionally this advice will inform training priorities and development of new policies and procedures (**\$863,000**).

CONNECTED SUPPORT FOR CANBERRANS

Canberra's first full-time Coordinator-General for Family Safety is leading a dedicated Safer Families team to drive whole of government, community-backed responses to family violence.

The 2017-18 Budget will build on the Government's prior investment by establishing a **Family Safety Hub**. The Hub will link existing support services in the ACT to ensure Canberrans receive seamless, integrated and holistic support when it matters most.

Along with workers in the system, Canberrans accessing family violence services will be part of in-depth discussions about the design of the Hub. This early engagement will provide for a deeper understanding of the experience of people who face additional barriers when seeking assistance and how they can best feel safe. The priority groups identified for this early engagement include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women with a disability, the LGBTIQ community, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and young men.

BUILDING BETTER CAPACITY

The ACT Government will provide best-practice training for frontline workers in government to support the identification of family violence to deliver early intervention.

The ACT Government has also developed a **Family Violence Toolkit** for ACT Government employees to provide awareness and support for employees with a personal experience of family violence.

For the alcohol and other drug sector, a pilot project is underway to build capacity to integrate best practice in family violence prevention. This project recognises the complex relationship between family violence and alcohol and other drug use, and seeks to enhance opportunities for early intervention with victims and perpetrators of family violence.

We will continue to drive a whole of government and community-wide effort to tackling this complex issue. Collaboration and coordination are key as we put the needs of victims and survivors at the centre of everything we do.



IF YOU, A CHILD, OR ANOTHER PERSON IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER CALL 000.

Or you can contact:

Domestic Violence Crisis Service 24 hours crisis line on (02) 6280 0900
Canberra Rape Crisis Centre on (02) 6247 2525
National counselling helpline, information and support on 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732)