10 March 2015

SUPPORT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS AND SERVICES

Shadow Minister for Women, Lynne Walker, today called on the Territory and Australian Governments to prioritise funding for domestic violence legal and support services.

“Domestic violence is at epidemic levels across our nation with 1 in 3 Australian women having experienced physical violence while Indigenous women are 45 times more likely to be a victim of domestic violence.

“This epidemic requires a national and coordinated response and I support the Federal Opposition Leader’s call for a National Crisis Summit, so we ensure front-line responders to domestic violence are at the table to participate in mapping a national framework.

“The Senate Inquiry will hear today from service providers about challenges they face in responding to domestic violence, particularly in regional and remote areas, the gaps in services and funding, and the coordination needed.

“Immediate challenges include the threat of reduced funding for legal aid and community legal services by the Australian Government, despite the clear evidence more support and continuity of funding is needed.

“Other services such Dawn House in Darwin that runs a shelter for women and children experiencing domestic violence have reported that they cannot assist all the families that need help, turning away 211 families in the past 6 months – more than were taken in.

“We need the Australian Government to provide certainty to the sector and to stop ripping out funding to these community services,” Ms Walker said.

“The former Territory Government toughened laws to tackle domestic violence, introduced mandatory reporting to influence community attitudes, and provided additional funding to increase crisis accommodation including providing safe houses in remote areas, but more needs to be done.
“While we welcome that the current Territory Government has continued a domestic violence strategy, we call on the Territory and Australian Governments to work together to further increase crisis accommodation options and support services, particularly to support indigenous women.”

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