



FEDERAL FUNDING FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NEEDS TO FLOW

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A federal government commitment made to boost funding for domestic violence more than four months ago is still yet to make its way to service providers.

The funding, announced in May this year as part of the 2020 Covid response, is earmarked to meet the growing demand for domestic and family violence services during the pandemic.

But many services, including several Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA members), say they are still waiting to hear when the extra money will become available.

In March 2020, the federal government announced a \$150m domestic violence package as part of its Covid response, in addition to previously committed funding.

In the May 2021 budget, the government announced “a landmark package” which included \$1.1bn for women’s safety in response to what experts have called a national crisis in domestic and family violence.

The Guardian Australia recently reported that a spokesperson for the women’s safety minister, Anne Ruston, said negotiations on the draft partnership between the state and federal governments were progressing, and the government “looked forward to finalising the agreement as soon as possible”.

Ms Monique Earsman, Executive Director of CSSA, said today that the delay in funding made it difficult for services to plan for the future.

“Across the board, organisations focused on providing domestic and family violence services are coming under increased pressure,” she said.

“Any delay in funding places greater pressure on the services and their clients who rely on knowing that their safety and housing issues can be addressed,” Ms Earsman said.

On average, ten women are hospitalised with injuries each day, and one woman is killed each week, by a current or former partner. The last budget estimated violence against women costs Australia \$26bn a year.

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