

# Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP  
Premier

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Minister for Women  
Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence



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## URGENT FAMILY VIOLENCE INVESTMENT WILL HELP KEEP WOMEN AND CHILDREN SAFE

More Victorians fleeing family violence will have a roof over their heads and the help they need to escape harm and rebuild their lives under new measures announced by the Andrews Labor Government.

This \$572 million statewide funding boost over two years in the *2016/17 Victorian Budget* responds to Royal Commission recommendations that must be done now – including more housing and crisis refuges, more counsellors, more prevention programs and more support for children who are victims of family violence.

This package begins to deliver 65 of the Royal Commission's most urgent recommendations and is the first step in the long-term process to fix our broken system and change attitudes towards women.

The Labor Government's family violence package, which puts victims at the heart of our reforms, includes:

- \$152.5 million to begin a housing blitz to shelter more victims so they don't have to choose between homelessness and returning to an abusive relationship. Work will commence on building and redeveloping family violence refuges, expanding crisis accommodation, and rapidly funding up to 130 new social housing homes. Victims will also be kept safe at home through innovative options such as help accessing the private rental market.
- \$122.0 million to keep children safe from harm and give them the best start in life. We are expanding a new program that gives intensive support for children in their own home. As well, we are increasing family services and counselling, and continuing our reform of the child protection system.
- \$103.9 million for specialist family violence services such as crisis support and counselling to cope with unprecedented demand.
- \$61.6 million in family violence prevention aimed at where Victorians live, work, play and learn. This includes expanding our Respectful Relationships program to protect the next generation, introducing Victoria's first Gender Equality Strategy, and helping local communities play their part in preventing violence.
- \$25.7 million to work with Aboriginal communities in addressing family violence, including prevention and early intervention programs, new approaches to dispute resolution, and expanding programs for Aboriginal women.
- \$23.9 million to begin reforming the justice system so it protects victims and holds perpetrators to account. This includes expanding legal services for victims, more men's behaviour change programs and developing ways to improve victims' experience at court.

The funding will be spread across metropolitan, regional and rural communities.

Victoria Police will also begin a trial of bodyworn cameras, and will be given the equipment they need to respond more quickly to family violence. The forthcoming State Budget will also contain further investments to give police the resources they need to combat this crime.

Our investments ensure groups such as women and children in Aboriginal and multicultural communities, the elderly, the disabled, and gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex victims are also supported in starting a new life without family violence.

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In addition, the Government will work closely with victims and survivors, and the people and organisations that help them, to develop a comprehensive 10-year *Victorian Family Violence Plan*, which will be delivered later this year.

The groundwork is now being laid with:

- \$32.5 million to develop a new system for safeguarding and sharing information between services so that victims are kept safe from family violence.
- \$19 million for a new type of family violence navigator to guide victims through every step of crisis and recovery, as recommended by the Luke Batty Coronial inquest.
- \$15.4 million to establish an independent monitor to hold the Government to account as we implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Funds will also be used to plan for a new coordination agency, and to support our Victim Survivors Advisory Council, Family Violence Steering Committee and consultation process as we overhaul the system.
- \$10.4 million to build the capacity of the family violence workforce and support other workers to best identify and respond to family violence. This also includes funding to further develop and embed the Family Violence Index.
- \$5 million to begin work on rolling out 17 safety and support hubs recommended by the Royal Commission.

#### **Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews**

*“The Royal Commission told us there were some things that can’t wait, so we are taking urgent action to help save lives.”*

*“This is just the beginning, we have lots more work to do to build a new system that prevents family violence, protects the vulnerable, and punishes the guilty.”*

#### **Quotes attributable to Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence Fiona Richardson**

*“Our job is to protect victims and help them build safer futures, hold perpetrators to account in a way that changes their behaviour and work to prevent family violence from happening in the first place.”*

*“We are putting victims at the heart of our reforms. We will work with survivors and the people who support them to overhaul a family violence system that has failed them for too long.”*