



Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash
Minister for Employment
Minister for Women
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service

Reference: MC16-082148

Mr Ross Vasta MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Vasta 

I refer to your letter of 10 October 2016 to the Minister for Justice, the Hon Michael Keenan MP, regarding the petition on strategies to stop violence against women. As the Minister for Women, the petition falls within my portfolio responsibilities.

I am pleased to advise that the Commonwealth is progressing a number of initiatives (including in partnership with the States and Territories) that address the issues raised in the petition.

Respectful relationships education builds the skills of young Australians to reject aggressive behaviour, sexualisation, discrimination and gender stereotyping, and develop equal and respectful relationships. At the December 2015 Council of Australian Governments meeting, First Ministers agreed to progress initiatives to ensure that respectful relationships education was provided from foundation to year 12. Furthermore, under the 2015 Women's Safety Package, \$5 million was allocated to expanding the Safer Schools website to include resources for teachers, parents, and students on respectful relationships.

Last November, the Australian Government released research that revealed people learn to condone or excuse disrespectful behaviour towards women from a young age. The research informed the development of a \$30 million national campaign (funded by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments) which my colleague, the Minister for Social Services, the Hon Christian Porter MP, and I launched on 20 April 2016.

The national campaign is a primary prevention initiative aimed at helping to generate long-term cultural change and break the cycle of violence. It targets the 'influencers' of young people aged between 10–17 years old - people like parents, friends, teachers, and sports coaches - to help them understand how their actions and attitudes can perpetuate or prevent violence against women. The campaign encourages adults to reflect on their attitudes about women, and to have conversations about respectful relationships and gender equality with young people. These conversations help set the standard for what is and what is not acceptable, right from the start.

Information about the national campaign, including campaign materials, can be found at: www.respect.gov.au/

State and Territory Governments have responsibility for delivering a range of services such as justice, policing and legal assistance for victims and perpetrators, including the provision of refuges. In relation to refuges, the Commonwealth Government is providing \$115 million each year through the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. On 9 December 2016, the Commonwealth confirmed that it would extend this funding until June 2018 to support front-line services while future arrangements to reduce the rise in homelessness are explored. The agreement prioritises funding to frontline homelessness services focusing on women and children experiencing domestic and family violence and homeless young people. Under the Women's Safety Package announced in 2015, \$16 million was also committed to help keep women safe in their homes or a home of their choice.

In addition to supporting women to live safely in their homes, the Government is providing funding for support and training frontline services to ensure women are able to access the support they need, including:

- \$14 million to expand the DV-alert training program to police, social workers, emergency department staff and community workers to better support women, and work with the College of General Practitioners to develop and deliver specialised training to GPs across the country.
- \$15 million to establish specialised domestic violence units to provide access to coordinated legal, social work and cultural liaison services for women in a single location, and allow legal services to work with local hospitals, including for women from CALD communities and women living in regional and remote areas.
- \$5 million for local case workers to coordinate support for women, including housing, safety and budgeting services.

On 28 October 2016, the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments launched the Third Action Plan of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*. The Third Action Plan is informed by the growing body of research and data, recommendations from relevant inquiries and consultation processes, including the Final Report of the COAG Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children. It centres on six national priorities: prevention and early intervention; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children; greater support and choice; sexual violence; responding to children living with violence; and keeping perpetrators accountable across all systems. The Third Action Plan also includes a priority to co-design and develop primary prevention activities with, and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men. This priority includes actions such as supporting perpetrators of violence to engage in behaviour change programs to address the drivers of their violence.

I trust that this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

MICHAELIA CASH

03 / 02 / 2017