

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet  
**Outcome/Program:** Outcome 1: Prime Minister and Cabinet  
**Topic:** 3rd World Conference of Women's Shelters

**Senator:** Moore, Claire

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**Question:**

Senator MOORE: Thank you. I was trying to think about that one in preparation for this particular meeting and I could find nothing—anywhere—that talked about it. It was such a significant event, I am just checking. It was not on the Office of Women website, it was not under the international processes to see what happened, and when I googled ministerial statements it did not come up.

Senator Cash: We will follow that up because, you are correct, it was a significant one. Our statement was exceptionally well received.

...

Senator Cash: You did, thank you. We will get you the statement.

**Answer:**

Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, Minister for Women represented the Australian Government at the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference of Women's Shelters 3 – 5 November 2015.

Minister Cash gave a keynote speech at the Plenary Session 2 - Sustainable Financing and Advocacy, a copy is at [Attachment A](#).

A copy of the 'Call for Action' (conference communique) is at [Attachment B](#).



**Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash**

MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

MINISTER ASSISTING THE PRIME MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE

SENATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**SPEECH**

**3rd World Shelter Conference**

**The Hague, Netherlands**

**Wednesday 4 November 2015**

**E&EO.....**

Good afternoon.

It's an honour to be here to talk with you about what the Australian Government is doing to counter domestic and family violence.

I would like to thank each and every one of you for being here today and for the work you do in supporting survivors of domestic violence.

You've already had a very personal insight from an Australian survivor—2015 Australian of the Year, Rosie Batty.

A news clip of Rosie speaking out after her son Luke's death was a reminder to us all of the pervasiveness of this crime: 'Family violence happens to everybody. No matter how nice your house is, how intelligent you are. It can happen to anyone, and everyone.'<sup>1</sup>

In the 20 months since Luke's death, Rosie's story has had an immeasurable impact on the way Australians view domestic violence.

It has generated a groundswell in public interest on a scale that we rarely see.

Domestic violence is being openly discussed around Australian dinner tables, it's a constant on the news in Australian lounge rooms—it's become impossible to ignore.

There is now a national understanding that living free from violence is everyone's right, and reducing violence is everyone's responsibility.

In my address today, I want to outline for you the domestic violence landscape in Australia from the perspective of policy-makers, and of successive governments in their push for reform against an intractable issue.

Media now report that almost two women a week<sup>2</sup> die in Australia because of their gender.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2015/s4168550.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Official statistics cite one a week but media reports that it is approaching two a week

One in four Australian women have experienced violence at the hands of a current or former partner.<sup>4</sup>

Among this group, the experience is diverse, and it cuts across all corners of Australian society, irrespective of background, socio-economic status or geography.

Historically, our policy response has been fragmented—often necessarily so—due to the split responsibilities of our state and federal governments.

In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments<sup>5</sup>—made up of the leaders of the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments —made a decisive intervention to say enough is enough.

#### National Plan

Political leaders across Australia entered into a nation-wide commitment to streamline our approaches to primary prevention, welfare and support services, and justice.<sup>6</sup>

This was the beginning of our National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, a 12-year strategy to fill what was a widening gap between policy intent and effective action.

The plan recognises that a one-size-fits-all solution isn't the answer—an Indigenous woman living in a remote community, experiencing violence is faced with a vastly different set of needs to a woman living with disability in metropolitan Sydney, who is also experiencing violence.

So, while states and territories still have the autonomy to pursue their own programme and policy solutions, they are now coordinated and regularly reviewed at a national level, and are supported by overarching national-scale initiatives.

It's about connecting with each other, sharing good ideas, and taking collective action to fill the gaps.<sup>7</sup>

We are now into the second of four three-year action plans, and we're making some significant gains.

Key areas of national reform are in primary prevention and better services.

One of the key initiatives of the plan was the establishment of 1800RESPECT, the first national phone and online counselling service for domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

The service is also supported through a mobile app, DAISY, which connects women across Australia with the support services in their state and local area, such as legal or emergency housing services.<sup>8</sup>

The app, launched this year, features private web browsing and a quick exit button. It has already had an extremely positive take-up.<sup>9</sup>

Another key area of reform is justice and information-sharing.

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<sup>3</sup> At the hands of a current or former partner. *ANROWS Report 2015*.

<sup>4</sup> [Domestic violence in Australia: a quick guide to the issues](#)

<sup>5</sup> COAG endorsed the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children in 2009. [Domestic violence in Australia: a quick guide to the issues](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Domestic violence in Australia: a quick guide to the issues](#)

<sup>7</sup> 'Connect and Act' is the theme of the conference

<sup>8</sup> *Second Action Plan 2014-15 Annual Progress Report*, pg. 12

<sup>9</sup> *Second Action Plan 2014-15 Annual Progress Report*, pg. 12

We all know that for women to be adequately protected under the law, the police, the courts, child protection and legal services must be on the same page.

Yet in Australia, each state and territory has its own police force, its own court system and its own laws.

This has meant that a woman fleeing from violence across the border into a new state or territory is no longer protected by the Domestic Violence Order (or a DVO) that protected her before.

So the Council of Australian Governments is developing a National Domestic Violence Order Scheme to allow DVOs issued in one state to be recognised and enforceable across the whole of Australia.<sup>10</sup>

But perhaps the greatest outcome of the National Plan has been driving whole of community action to change the culture that makes violence occur in the first place—by raising awareness, and engaging the community—particularly young Australians—about what respectful relationships look like.

Our male-led national campaign to end violence against women, White Ribbon Australia, is now a household name.

Community understanding of domestic and family violence has improved—with research showing most Australians now appreciate that violence against women includes a wide range of behaviours designed to intimidate and control—not just physical assault.<sup>11</sup>

We are undergoing a culture shift

More than one hundred years ago, English writer and activist Frances Cobbe coined the phrase ‘Wife Torture’ as part of a campaign to enable abused women to take out restraining orders against their partners.<sup>12</sup>

Her argument at the time was that these assaults stemmed from the fact that a man’s wife is his property.

While of course we’ve come a long way since then, remnants of outdated ideas like this one remain—they’re part of an underlying culture of masculinity and ownership—an understanding that the man in the relationship is the one with the control; he is the guardian and the breadwinner.

These beliefs perpetuate the very same gender inequality that forms the basis for violence against women and children.

The Australian Government believes that until we view women and men equally across the whole of society—until we stop inadvertently perpetuating gender inequality in the home, at school, and at work, we won’t be able to bring an end to the violence.

Australian women, for example, get paid almost 18 per cent less than their male colleagues, and on average retire with almost half the retirement income.

A woman’s economic independence contributes significantly to her vulnerability to violence, her ability to leave a violent relationship to secure the safety of her children, and her capacity to rebuild after the fact.

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<sup>10</sup> *Second Action Plan 2014-15 Annual Progress Report*, pg. 12

<sup>11</sup> 2013 [VicHealth Australians’ attitudes to violence against women summary](#) , pg. 3

<sup>12</sup> Margi McCue, [Domestic Violence: A Reference Handbook](#), 2008, pg. 126

So the Australian Government has closely tied our efforts to boost women's economic security with our domestic violence agenda.

In taking up my new role as Minister for Employment alongside my role as Minister for Women, I'm in a unique position to further this work.

#### Conclusion

If there's one thing that Rosie Batty's story has taught us it's that there is no room for complacency.

Australia is a nation that is built upon the values of freedom and dignity of the individual, of a fair-go, of loyalty.

Yet domestic, family and sexual violence still remain the most prevalent forms of violence experienced by Australian women.<sup>13</sup>

We can't say that we're one thing when the statistics reveal the opposite.

Our own Prime Minister has implored the nation to redouble our efforts and renew our resolve, insisting that 'we must become a nation known for its respect for women.'<sup>14</sup>

I believe we can be.

Thank you.

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<sup>13</sup> *ABS Personal Safety Survey 2012*

<sup>14</sup> *Women's Safety Package Announcement*

## 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference of Women's Shelters – Call for Action, Connect and Act

Published: Nov 6 2015

### 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference of Women's Shelters

We, the participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference of Women's Shelters, held in The Hague, The Netherlands, from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2015, attended by over 1000 advocates and activists representing 115 countries, call upon Governments, UN Agencies, International Organizations, the Private Sector and Civil Society to take urgent and effective action to prevent and end violence against women and children.

Violence against women and girls is a human rights violation. One in every three women worldwide experience physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their lives, usually by an intimate partner. United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has proclaimed the elimination of violence against women as a top priority of the UN's work. Achieving "gender equality and empowering women and girls" is one of the Goals of *Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development*, adopted by the 193 member states of the UN during the annual General Assembly (25 September 2015). One of the important targets of the goal is the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls. We commit to contributing to the realization of this Goal, which will transform the lives of women and girls.

Violence has a profound impact on survivors, their families and communities. It comes with enormous social, economic and productivity costs for individuals, families, businesses, communities and societies. Over the last decades many countries have made considerable progress in introducing legislation and institutionalizing policy frameworks. However, implementation, monitoring and accountability are weak, slow or lacking. Former UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Rashida Manjoo has stated, "violence is endemic and the lack of accountability for violations experienced by women is the rule rather than the exception (2013)."

We draw focused attention to the rights and needs of women and girls facing multiple forms of discrimination, including women of Aboriginal and/or Indigenous backgrounds, women with immigrant and/or refugee status, undocumented women, survivors of trafficking, women living in poverty, women with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ women, women of ethnic minorities and women enduring the trauma and violence of armed conflict and in post-disaster situations. In every case the inclusion of women's voices is imperative in efforts to prevent or mitigate such violence.

Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) urges for the implementation of special measures to protect women and girls from violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual violence, in armed conflict as well as in emergency and humanitarian crises. The recent UN global study "Preventing Conflict – Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace," a 15 year review of the implementation of Resolution 1325, states that "women's participation is key to sustainable peace." We call upon all states and conflicting parties to include women in all conflict resolution and peace processes, as well as in the planning and formulation of all post-disaster relief, recovery and reconstruction programs.

We express our concern about the growing use of the Internet as a tool to perpetrate violence against women and girls. The United Nations Broadband Commission Report 'Cyber Violence Against Women and Girls' (2015) reveals that almost three of every four women and girls online have been exposed to some form of cyber violence. In line with the suggestions of the report, we urge Governments and industries to protect the millions of women and girls who are the targets of online violence.

As members of the Global Network of Women's Shelters and participants of the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference of Women's Shelters, we bear witness to the imperative global work of shelters in mitigating and preventing violence. Women's shelters are critical partners not only in providing safety to women and children, but also in the overall prevention of violence against women and girls.

The 2015 Data Count of the Global Network of Women's Shelters, in which 2497 shelters and agencies in 46 countries took part, states that on one day, 53,230 women and 34,794 children sought and acquired shelter services. However, 7,337 women and 4,410 children were turned away due to limited resources and capacity. This validates the need for increased resources and capacity for existing shelters, as well as the need for more shelters.

Therefore, we call upon all key stakeholders to considerably strengthen efforts to prevent violence and to effectively protect women and girls. Particularly, we demand that states and all other relevant stakeholders:

Sign, ratify and effectively implement relevant conventions and agendas, including:

- The Convention on Ending all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and it's optional protocol;
- The Beijing Platform for Action;
- The International Convention on Population and Development (ICPD) and it's Program of Action;
- All other relevant documents and regional policies and instruments;
- Provide adequate funding for women's shelters, including by considerably increasing the capacity of women's shelters;
- Redirect military spending towards funding for social and economic development, including shelter spaces to save women and children fleeing violence, as outlined in Beijing Platform for Action strategic objective E.2.;
- Implement a standalone Convention on Violence Against Women which is internationally binding;
- Hold perpetrators to account and to provide services to assist perpetrators to transform their behaviour and become peer educators.

**The following are the main burning issues developed in the regional networks meeting at the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference of Women's Shelters in The Hague. We fully support these regional recommendations.**

### **Inter-America Region**

Provide sustainable funding for women's support services;

Work with women and girls during and after armed conflict;

Create special international measures for exceptional violence against women in organized crime territories;

Strengthen international cooperation;

### **Asia Region**

Ensure economic empowerment through well funded employment, housing and community programs that help women after they leave the shelter to become independent;

Give women equal property rights, rights to inheritance, affordable housing for survivors of domestic violence, and guarantee the property rights of widows;

Ensure sufficient funding for shelters;

### **Europe Region**

Ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention in all countries and implement the CEDAW;

Focus on CEDAW Article 6 on Trafficking and Prostitution, which reads "States shall take all measures to stop all forms of trafficking and the exploitation of prostitution of women;"

Increase the number of women's shelters and specialist women's services and implement sustainable funding for women's and children support services, with commitments from Governments to finance specific support services for victims;

### **Africa Region**

Enact and implement policies and legislation to establish and support shelters and safe spaces for women and girls in Africa;

Strengthen political will and invest/allocate funds for survivors of violence to guarantee service provision and access to safe space;

### **MENA Region**

Highlight the impact of violence on women as individuals, acknowledging their humanity and shedding light on them as well as the family and society;

Recognize female victims of harmful cultural practices, such as honor killings and Female Genital Mutilation;

Ensure that women's rights to privacy are not violated in the name of security measures;

Draw attention to the role of media, which portrays a stereotyped image of women and enhances violence;

### **Indigenous Network**

Call for an international strategy to prevent murdered and missing Indigenous women and children worldwide;

Demand that all states recognize and apply the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

Ensure sufficient support for the Indigenous Women's Shelters Network;

### **Oceania Region**

Ensure proper resourcing to redress violence against women that is exempt from political cycles, including increased ongoing resourcing for specialist women's domestic and family violence services for women and their children;

Provide consistent criminal justice responses that hold perpetrators to account and enable opportunities for change;

Make Governments accountable for transformative change which focuses on gender, social, political and economic inequalities and Indigenous rights, with a focus on gender and intersectionality, including women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ women, and honouring Indigenous rights.