



PRESS RELEASE

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INTOUCH MULTICULTURAL CENTRE AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE SAYS FEDERAL BUDGET FAILS TO ADDRESS THE FAMILY VIOLENCE CRISIS

Despite the Albanese Government's promise of a renewed focus on women's safety and equality, last night's Federal Budget falls notably short and neglects urgent calls from the community, the specialist family violence sector and legal services for increased investment in response to a concerning rise in fatalities from gender-based violence.

The Women's Budget Statement highlights the commendable \$2.3 billion investment in 85 Commonwealth initiatives outlined in the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children, funding allocated in the Albanese Government's first two budgets. inTouch welcomes the nearly \$1 billion to make the Leaving Violence Program permanent, an important payment available to women who are at crisis point when leaving an abusive relationship.

However, inTouch is concerned about the budget's overall impact, stressing that much-needed resources are still lacking in critical areas.

Ajsela Siskovic, Acting CEO of inTouch said, "The absence of substantial investment in family violence legal services, prevention activities, perpetrator intervention, and community outreach, is concerning. Family violence is a multifaceted, complex issue, and this budget only scrapes the surface."

Ms. Siskovic highlighted the pressing need for dedicated funding to support migrant and refugee women experiencing family violence. "The key to supporting migrant and refugee women is investment in wrap-around services. Women need accessible support across the family violence continuum, which means dedicated funding of specialised case management, legal and migration support, and recovery programs that enable financial independence and community and social connections."

Despite the Government's injection of an additional \$9.3 million into Community Legal Centres this fiscal year, uncertainty looms in the forward estimates concerning the subsequent phase of the National Legal Assistance Partnership. This allocation falls notably short of the community legal sector's urgent need for \$125 million to provide sufficient and sustainable services. Consequently, organisations like inTouch Women's Legal Centre face challenges in determining service eligibility and meeting the overwhelming demand for legal assistance.



In response to these gaps, inTouch requests that the Albanese Government works carefully with the family violence sector over to ensure the announced funding provides appropriate and adequate support for migrant and refugee women experiencing family violence:

- **Direct funding to specialist family violence services who understand the complexity and intersectionality of the most vulnerable women and children experiencing family violence.** More targeted investment is desperately needed to provide frontline case management services for migrant and refugee women, to assist with navigating the family violence support system and directly link women with services.
- **Investment in targeted prevention programs –** Community engagement to support ethno-specific leaders to work with their communities is critical as well as additional funding for programs like inTouch’s Motivation for Change (MfC) Men’s Behaviour Change Program, which achieves a 90% completion rate, works with men using violence and is delivered *inLanguage, inCulture*.
- **Legal services are an essential part of family violence response and recovery and must be funded sustainably.** Sustainable funding is required for specialist organisations like inTouch to maintain capacity to deliver integrated and effective legal and migration services.
- **Supporting pathways to recovery is prevention. We must integrate recovery and women’s empowerment into our family violence response.** Further investment is required to support the recovery and healing of migrant and refugee women and children to rebuild their lives and thrive after experiencing family violence. This includes specific programs that foster economic independence and social and community connection.

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