

**JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

*Monday, 30 January 2023*

**SOCIAL SERVICES AND FAMILY VIOLENCE LEADERS CALL FOR FOCUS ON HOUSING WOMEN  
IN CRISIS**

Frontline family violence support organisations are urging the NSW Government and Opposition to commit to building much-needed social housing for women fleeing family violence situations.

Nepean-Blue Mountains Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service is on the frontline of the family violence crisis in NSW and says more needs to be done to put a safe roof over the heads of women and children at risk of violence.

"We are seeing too many women, often with children, trying to escape violent relationships but with nowhere permanent to go," Manager of the service, Kessel Ryes-Corral said.

"We provide them with a temporary safe haven and help them to overcome the trauma they have experienced. But ultimately, they and their children need a permanent home and the opportunity to get their lives back on track.

"It is a state tragedy that we cannot provide safe, secure and long-term homes for these women in desperate need.

"Domestic and family violence incidents in Western Sydney have been on the rise in recent years, with reports of physical, emotional, and financial abuse becoming more frequent.

"However, it doesn't have to be that way, our political leaders can fix this situation by committing to build more social housing and prioritising those in most need."

NCOSS CEO Joanna Quilty agreed, saying the housing crisis in NSW was disproportionately hurting vulnerable people, but the government can act.

"The severe housing shortage that's plaguing Sydney means that rents in the Penrith area and other parts of Sydney have continued to rise over 2022, with vacancy rates at record lows," Ms Quilty said.

"Single mothers who leave violence already face reduced incomes and the prospect of living in poverty. The lack of affordable housing reduces their options even further."

Modelling commissioned by NCOSS highlights that in 2021, an estimated 2,402 women across NSW returned to live with a violent partner because of lack of an affordable alternative, and a further 2,410 became homeless because they couldn't find a safe secure home after leaving violence.

"As our housing situation continues to deteriorate, it's not hard to imagine that these numbers have also worsened."

The calls come in the lead up to the March election, and as more than 50,000 people languish on the NSW social housing waiting list.

Recent data from Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) highlights that for 2021-22, 68,500 clients were assisted by Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) in NSW, with domestic and family violence in the top three reasons for clients seeking support.

According to the data, of clients who were homeless when they commenced receiving SHS support, only 37% were able to be provided with housing.

In response, NCOSS and Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW) are urging NSW political leaders to commit to construct social housing for women in family violence situations.

“It’s positive that the NSW Government has recognised that more needs to be done to support women to leave violence and is investing significantly in women’s refuges through its core and cluster program,” DVNSW CEO Delia Donovan said.

“However, more needs to be done to establish long-term solutions. Victim-Survivors of domestic and family violence need to exit into stable long-term housing so they can rebuild their lives.”

As an initial step, the peak bodies are calling for the construction of 5,000 dwellings for those who face homelessness or returning to a violent relationship.

“As a first step, the incoming NSW Government should focus on problems we can and must solve now like providing homes for the 4,812 women and their children experiencing violence,” Ms Quilty said.

For more information, visit NCOSS’ [Policy Platform](#).

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