



MEDIA RELEASE

Powerful Safety Levers

The Government has powerful safety levers; we wanted them pulled with all their might. Stamping a new culture, setting the scene, and elevating women's safety is the right choice, but they weren't activated. We cannot afford to let women and children suffer any longer.

Australia is facing a major men's violence crisis, and it is women, children and communities paying a high and sad price. Too many men choose to use violence with devastating consequences. Families and communities are torn apart.

Single Mother Families Australia has been campaigning for years to raise awareness for action. Leaving remains too hard and unsafe. Women know what the ultimate price is for leaving.

It's our shame that women either live in poverty or return to their abusers because of a lack of economic security. This crisis is real, and it is happening right now.

We cannot ignore the fact that the Government has powerful safety levers and they are in control of how and when they are used.

Safety Hurdles

- Inadequate income support – Parenting Payment Single needs to be restored to pension levels; JobSeeker for women with older children or without children, is woefully inadequate.
- Financial abuse is enabled through child support systems and the Budget should have moved to tackle this.
- The burden of mutual obligations and payment suspensions from Workforce Australia remain whilst women need to provide intensive parenting and recovery from violence.
- Nowhere to live.
- Women face other unsafe options when turned away from shelters.
- Women are 'priced out' of the increasing rental market, while we welcome an increase in rent assistance, it equates to \$11 a week for single Mums with 1 or 2 children in their care.
- Legal support is not available at the levels required - this Budget offers a commitment for only one year of funding for community legal centres including women and domestic violence specialist services.
- Delays in courts and ligations abuse (abusers keep women attending to reduce all their resources and exert their control.)



**Championing
Single Mothers
& their Children
since 1973**



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- Women cannot relocate, to leave their area of abuse if they have a parenting plan. The abuser just needs to say ‘No’ and it does not matter how many, or how serious, his violence orders are.
- Violence Orders are losing their protective powers as they are not policed.
- Restrictions to childcare should be lifted – abolishing the activity test would have been a positive step forward.

There is much work to be done – we remain stubbornly determined that the Government can and must refocus and respond. Our hand is up for any additional work.

Single Mother Families Australia hopes that everyone in Australia who does not need the \$300 energy rebate will donate to our organisation so that we can immediately put the money into the hands of a woman in dire straits. This is where the money needs to flow.

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