

May 20, 2021

## CNV welcomes State Budget, but says there is work to do

Central Victoria's leading specialist family violence response agency today welcomes further acknowledgement from the Victorian State Government of the need to continue funding programs and services that address Australia's crisis of violence against women and children.

The 2021-22 State Budget includes funding commitments that will ensure Centre for Non-Violence can maintain its current service level.

Centre for Non-Violence chief executive officer Margaret Augerinos says while we are yet to learn full detail of the budget, there are welcome signs Covid-19 and other short-term funding boosts in recent years, will continue.

"This means we can continue with our current levels of service," she said.

CNV also welcomes the establishment of the Gender Response Budgeting Unit within Treasury.

"Unless we can understand the impact gender has on social systems and structures and how they are built and funded, it becomes very difficult to address inequality," Ms Augerinos said.

"This helps to shine a lens on what equality starts to look like, and to prioritise investment in areas that need to be prioritised."

CNV also welcomes funding for: information sharing and family violence risk assessment and management reform; early interventions to prevent family violence; perpetrator accountability; pets in refuge and crisis accommodation; the state-wide expansion of services to adolescents who use violence in the home or display sexually abusive behaviours; legal services in The Orange Door; counselling and support for women in prison; programs that support Aboriginal women, and our culturally and linguistically diverse and LBGTOI+ communities; investment in housing and homelessness services and significant investment in mental health.

However, the budget does not appear to add significant capacity to frontline services, and there appears to be little investment in prevention or therapeutic programs.

"Even with all of the investment we have seen as a result of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, specialist services pre the Royal Commission were so underfunded that even with this huge investment and the establishment of Orange Doors, most are still struggling to meet demand," Ms Augerinos said.

"It's great the increased investment is being recommitted to, and it's positive the government is seeing the need still exists – but more needs to be done to boost capacity of refuges, specialist family violence response services, crisis and ongoing case management and therapeutic services.

"As providers, none of us want to be in situation where we turn people away."

While we also welcome a significant funding boost to programs working with perpetrators of violence, we are concerned that this drops off significantly after one year. As this is specialised work, it is important when recruiting into such roles that we can provide certainty beyond 12 months.