

Response to National Cabinet Meeting

Safe and Equal is pleased to see family and gender-based violence being prioritised at the highest level of government and new commitments of \$4.7 billion following National Cabinet today. We welcome the announcement of additional funding to legal services, and we are pleased to see that a new National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses will be negotiated between state and federal governments, with additional funding of \$700 million to be allocated from 2025.

Earlier this year, Safe and Equal joined with the National Alliance of DFV Specialist Services, representing over 200 specialist service providers and thousands of practitioners, to call for a long-term National Partnership Agreement. We are pleased that all levels of government have listened and are now looking towards how this will flow through to frontline family, domestic and sexual violence services.

We commend this discussion around targeted efforts to address gaps and further work needed to prevent the deaths of women and children, and the significant harms of gender-based violence. We also welcome funding on a larger scale that is supported across all levels of government. This is the collaborative effort we need to ensure a consistent and comprehensive approach.

Frontline family violence services must be included in the discussion as funding is finalised, as we know that additional funding for our services is both vital and urgent.

Safe and Equal CEO, Tania Farha, says:

“Frontline services play a critical role in responding to and preventing family violence, saving the lives of victim survivors and helping them and their families to move on and thrive – but at the moment these services are working at maximum capacity, and beyond. To keep doing this work, specialist family violence workers need job security, support and recognition. This means funding services at the levels they need to meet demand. While we welcome this announcement, we know it is not enough. Over time, we hope that we can build on the investment announced today to ensure we have National Partnership Agreement that funds frontline response services to meet the needs of all victim survivors.”

Safe and Equal is acutely aware of the increase in the reported murders of women this year. As public discussion around this grows, so will demand for services. Simultaneously, our sector is grappling with significant challenges in preventing family and gender-based violence - rapid changes in technology, economic and social contexts that will raise risk. Investing in specialist family violence services will help us all to respond better to this change.

Another area of critical need is housing. We must see an immediate uplift to specialist family violence emergency accommodation capacity, new social housing properties and investment in to initiatives that will enable and support victim survivors to remain safe in their own homes.

Violence against women is a national crisis. We will keep saying this and we will keep advocating until we see a sustainable specialist family violence service sector, with clear pathways into and out of specialist services for all victim survivors who need it, when they need it.