

PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

20 November 2024

CALL FOR URGENT ACTION FOLLOWING SPIKE IN FAMILY VIOLENCE HOMICIDES

Victorian family violence peak body Safe and Equal is calling on state and federal governments to take urgent action following several recent family and gender-based violence deaths.

[Melbourne] — At least 14 women have been killed across Australia in a 3-week period, a disturbing spike that comes on top of an increase this year in reports of women losing their lives to family and gender-based violence.

Despite an increase in public and government attention – including an urgent meeting of National Cabinet on gender-based violence earlier this year – family violence deaths remain on the rise, with a horrific average of one woman being murdered every four days.

Most recently, police located the remains of 19-year-old Brunswick woman Isla Bell, missing since 4 October. A 53-year-old man has been charged with her murder.

“Yet again, another woman has lost her life, in what is an entirely preventable act of gender-based violence,” said Tania Farha, CEO of Safe and Equal.

“We know young women are much more likely to experience family and sexual violence,” said Farha. “Not only that, but support services have been telling us they are seeing more and more young people experiencing abuse and needing help.”

PRESS RELEASE



“We are sad, frustrated and angry. Isla’s death – along with all family and gender-based violence deaths – should never have happened. This is a national crisis, and we need to act, now.”

While recent investment and action from state and federal leaders is welcomed, it is simply not enough. Safe and Equal is urgently calling on all governments to work together to prioritise an ongoing, sustainable response to this crisis. Specifically, we are calling for:

- Increased investment in early intervention and primary prevention initiatives to stop violence before it starts or escalates, which includes addressing the attitudes, cultures, systems and structures that enable it.
- Adequate and long-term investment in specialist family violence services that provide life-saving support for victim survivors in crisis and are struggling under immense demand.
- Immediate action to address the ongoing housing crisis, so that victim survivors can access both crisis accommodation and affordable, long-term housing options – a crucial step in escaping violence and rebuilding lives.
- Investment in tailored supports for adults, young people and children experiencing violence, so they can receive the support they need, in the way they need, when they need it – no matter where they live, who they are, or their circumstances.

“This isn’t just a one-and-done exercise – change takes time and requires everybody to be on board. Not just government, but individuals, businesses, and the broader community,” said Farha. “We all have a role to play here.”

“We must not accept these deaths as inevitable. We have to remember – family and gender-based violence *is* preventable. But if we don’t take increased action now – if we

PRESS RELEASE



don't get this right – we'll never truly address this crisis, and more women and children will die.”

END

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Melanie Scammell, Media and Communications Advisor, Safe and Equal

Email: media@safeandequal.org.au

Phone: 0425 832 511

www.safeandequal.org.au

About Safe and Equal

Safe and Equal is the peak body for Victorian organisations that specialise in family and gender-based violence across the continuum, including primary prevention, early intervention, response and recovery.

As a peak, we work with and for our members to prevent and respond to violence, building a better future for adults, children and young people experiencing, at risk of, or recovering from family and gender-based violence.

We are an independent, non-government organisation that leads, organises, advocates for, and acts on behalf of our members to drive the continued development of an innovative and leading sector.

There is no complete and official list of every woman and child murdered in Australia. Two reputable sources are [Destroy the Joint](#) and [Australian Femicide Watch](#).

PRESS RELEASE

SAFE+EQUAL

While the numbers reported are shocking, they are only the ones we know about. Many deaths go unreported and unrecognised as family violence, meaning the true number of women and children killed is likely far greater.