



17 MAR, 2025

Invest to end this violence

Herald Sun, Melbourne

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Last year was a horror year for domestic and gendered violence in Australia, with at least 101 women killed.

Devastatingly, 2025 appears to be following a similar trajectory, with at least 14 women already dead. The prevalence of family violence remains alarmingly high, with an estimated 20 per cent of the population reporting having experienced physical and/or sexual domestic violence since the age of 15. This figure is even higher for emotional and economic abuse.

Family and gender-based violence is a national crisis – but what is currently on the table to address it is simply not enough.

As we move towards a federal election, we'll be hearing from all sides of politics on key issues such as housing affordability and the cost of living. These issues affect most Australians, from all walks of life – including people

experiencing family violence, for whom access to support and a safe place to call home are essential if they are to escape and recover from abuse.

We must keep victim survivors of family violence on the national agenda, and political leaders should prioritise this trio of initiatives in election platforms:

1. Increase investment in frontline specialist services to provide lifesaving support for victim survivors in crisis. We need all parties to commit to funding that matches demand, and for the federal government to work with their state and territory counterparts to ensure services build a skilled workforce to do this complex work. Everybody should be able to receive the support they need, when they need it – no matter their circumstances.

2. Increase investment in primary prevention and early intervention initiatives to stop

violence from escalating, recurring, or happening in the first place. This requires changing community attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that tolerate and condone abuse. Preventing violence is a long-term effort that requires sustainable planning and investment rather than piecemeal handouts.

3. Increase affordable, long-term housing options and crisis accommodation as a crucial step in escaping violence and rebuilding lives. Family violence remains the leading cause of homelessness for women and children in Australia.

Enough is enough. Let's make sure this year – this election – is the start of real and lasting change for women and children in Australia.

Tania Farha is chief executive of Safe and Equal, Victoria's peak body for response organisations