

Priority Issue: Violence against Women

ACT Context

As many as one in three Australian women will be subjected to violence in their lifetime.¹ Preventing and ending violence against women remains a key challenge facing governments and the whole community.

In recent years, Australia has made significant progress in this area, including the development and release of the *National Action Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children* in 2009. The *National Action Plan* is a fifteen year strategy which has been agreed to by all governments and has additional funding attached to support its implementation. In 2011, *Our Responsibility: Ending Violence against Women and Children: The ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Strategy 2011-2017*, was released, which forms the ACT component of the National Plan.

The YWCA of Canberra and WEL ACT's Perspective

Whilst Australian governments have begun to recognise violence against women as a priority issue, continuing work needs to be done to move this from a 'women's issue' to an issue of urgency for the whole community. Whilst we recognise the development of strategies and plans as an important first step, there needs to be significant resources invested over the life of these plans to ensure real gains are made in reducing and preventing violence against women in the ACT and nationally.

To this end, the YWCA of Canberra and WEL ACT support the development and delivery of evidenced based policy and programs and believe a long term commitment will see this issue being addressed. We support the emphasis on prevention reflected in both the ACT and National Action Plans, however additional resourcing of this issue is important. Additional resourcing for services that provide support to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence is also important to responding to violence against women in our community.

There is also a particular need to ensure that the success of community and governments' efforts to address violence against women, and evaluation and monitoring is important. As well as measuring progress of activities identified in implementation plans, there is a need to ensure that the impact of these programs is measured. This is particularly challenging given the difficulty in getting gender disaggregated data on many key issues.

Key Recommendations for Political Parties

The YWCA of Canberra and WEL ACT call on political parties to:

1. Invest additional resources to support the implementation of the *ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Strategy 2011-2017*. In particular, we urge investment into prevention activities as identified under the Plan as well as increased investment in services which respond to and support victims of violence.
2. Commit to urgently address the lack of gender disaggregated data in the area of violence, and beyond.



Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006), Personal Safety Survey

