



## Minister for Mental Health; Disability Services; Child Protection

Our ref: 43-15594  
Your ref: Petition No. 72



Hon Simon O'Brien MLC  
Chairman  
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs  
Parliament House  
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your further correspondence dated 20 May 2015 regarding funding for domestic violence.

Currently the Department for Child Protection and Family Support (the Department) provides significant resources of approximately \$21.6 million per annum to fund a total of 38 accommodation and support services state-wide for women and children escaping family and domestic violence.

Additionally, in 2014-15 the Department has provided State Government funding of approximately \$4.9 million for 22 family and domestic violence counselling, advocacy and support services and approximately \$2 million for 17 family and domestic violence co-location response services throughout the State. The co-location response model consists of the family and domestic violence coordinated response service, Western Australia Police and the Department. The partnership involves a cooperative triage of the domestic violence incidence reports and provides risk assessment and appropriate responses for families and individuals in incidences of family and domestic violence.

In February 2014, a new refuge was opened in Busselton, currently known as Tuart House. Whilst the refuge was developed for women and children escaping domestic violence in the south-west, referrals are accepted from other regions and the metropolitan area. The service model provides a response to the identified gaps in the Perth metropolitan specialist family and domestic violence accommodation and support service system, including accommodation for older boys and larger families.

In the 2013 Western Australian State Election the government made a number of election commitments to manage the impact and address the prevalence of family and domestic violence. This included additional crisis accommodation for women and children fleeing violence, including \$4 million for the construction of two new refuges and operational funding of \$2 million per annum.

At this stage approval has been granted for one of the proposed refuges. \$2 million has been provided for the construction of a new family refuge in the metropolitan area, with a further \$3.5 million over four years allocated to support and outreach services. Construction of the new refuge in the Ellenbrook region is expected to be completed in early 2016. Additionally, Wooree Miya Refuge in the south-east metropolitan area is being re-developed. Wooree Miya Refuge will double in capacity and will be able to accommodate ten families, or ten women and up to 30 children. This equates to an additional family and domestic violence refuge in the metropolitan area.

Information regarding the number of families turned away from women's refuge on a weekly basis is not collected by the specialist homelessness data collection. Consideration as to the needs of women and children experiencing family and domestic violence in Western Australia is however ongoing.

The Western Australian domestic violence service system project has been undertaken with the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA) Inc in partnership with the Department. The Project report makes recommendations for a more flexible mix of service models, including outreach focused models, to create a more integrated and responsive system. In addition three lead 24/7 emergency response services in the metropolitan area will be the key contacts for Western Australia Police, Crisis Care and Entrypoint for women who are in immediate danger and need urgent accommodation.

In relation to the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH), the State Government welcomes the Commonwealth Government's two year commitment to the future of NPAH homelessness services, which includes Safe at Home and Domestic Violence Outreach services.

In the recent State Budget the State Government renewed its commitment to addressing homelessness in the Western Australian community through allocation of funds to match the \$14.97 million per year for the next two years offered by the Commonwealth Government. This includes:

- \$9.5 million over the next two years to support the sustainability of specialist homelessness services through the continuation of commensurate Component I funding;
- \$1.4 million over two years to continue the Mobile Clinical Outreach Team; and
- \$1.3 million over two years to continue domestic violence and outreach services in the Murchison, Goldfields, Peel and Pilbara regions.

The State Government acknowledges how the recent uncertainty of homelessness funding arrangements has impacted on the not-for-profit community service sector and are

progressing negotiations with the Commonwealth Government. It is anticipated a new NPAH Agreement will be finalised in the very near future.

The State Government remains committed to addressing homelessness and family and domestic violence services with a continued focus on early intervention and proactive services.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Helen Morton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Helen Morton MLC  
**MINISTER FOR CHILD PROTECTION**

17 JUN 2015