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Media release

Domestic and family violence number one cause of homelessness

On the eve of White Ribbon Day and the UN’s International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) is highlighting the chilling connection between domestic violence and homelessness.

“One in three women who access homelessness services in Victoria cite domestic and family violence as the main reason for seeking assistance – it is the number one reason that women are forced to leave their homes,’ said CHP CEO Jenny Smith.

‘The fight to end violence against women has a direct and lasting impact on efforts to end homelessness. The two are inextricably linked, and we fully support the White Ribbon campaign.’

‘Violence against women in any form is insidious and cannot be tolerated.

‘The trauma experienced by women who experience violence in the home is only compounded when they are forced to flee and rely on housing support, a pathway that can lead to a long term housing problems, instability in work and destabilisation of the family.’

CHP says that the Victorian Government’s Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women and Children includes world leading initiatives to ensuring safer homes for women and children, and calls for continued implementation and expansion of these efforts.

‘Expanding programs that maintain the housing stability of women who experience violence in the home is critical in preventing homelessness. These programs include removing perpetrators of violence and taking measures to ensure the home is safe, and women and children can afford to stay there.’

Women, domestic violence and homelessness facts:

- Domestic violence is the number one cause of women’s homelessness in Victoria, above financial stress, relationship breakdowns and substance abuse
- 23,000 people sought assistance from homelessness services in 2011-12 citing domestic violence as one of the reasons for leaving their homes. The vast majority of them were women and children
- 35% of people who access homelessness services in Victoria have domestic violence as the main or contributing factor to their homelessness

(continues...)
Domestic violence was the number one reason that Victorian women left their homes in 2011-12 with 29% of all clients accessing services indicating violence in the home as the reason for their homelessness.

**Note to editors:** Jenny Smith, CEO of CHP is available for interview.

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White Ribbon Day and the UN’s International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women are held annually on 25 November.