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## Peak body for homelessness welcomes 10-year plan for ending family violence

The Council to Homelessness Persons (CHP) has welcomed today's release of the 10-year plan for ending family violence, a key component of which is additional resources to improve access to housing to prevent homelessness in women and children fleeing family violence.

"Family violence is the number one driver of homelessness because there are so few safe, affordable accommodation options for women who flee their home," said Jenny Smith, CEO, Council to Homeless Persons.

"It is gratifying to see housing given prominence in the Government's plan to tackle family violence because we all want to see a future where Victorians are safe, thriving and live free from family violence," she said.

Last year, one-in-three people presenting at homelessness services cited family violence as the main reason for their homelessness.

With 33,000 Victorians waiting for public housing, and just 2% of all two-bedroom rentals affordable to a single mother on parenting payments, a lack of affordable housing often prevents women from leaving violence.

"We were very pleased to see that the 10-year family violence plan includes \$185 million to redevelop ageing public housing estates, and generate an increase of 10% in social housing stock on those estates" said Jenny Smith.

This adds to funding previously announced in 2016 to improve access to housing, including \$152 million for a Housing Blitz package, \$109 million for a range of programs including rapid rehousing and increased crisis accommodation, \$120 million dedicated to creating a social housing pipeline and \$5.5 million for 20 new affordable housing properties in Newport.

An additional \$33 million of new funding was also announced today to extend private rental brokerage programs providing rapid rehousing for women and children fleeing family violence.

"With better access to housing that is safe and affordable, we hope that one day no-one will have to choose between staying in violence and becoming homeless," said Ms Smith.

CHP pointed out that the impact of new State funding to tackle family violence will be greatly reduced if the Federal Government fails to extend Federal homelessness funding beyond 30 June 2017 under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH).

The NPAH provides \$115 million p.a. of funding to homelessness services that support women and children leaving family violence and funds a range of dedicated family violence programs.

Together with state matching funding, the \$115 million NPAH represents a third of all homelessness funding. In Victoria, \$23 million of funding will be lost if NPAH is not extended.

"If this critical Federal funding is not extended, new State funding for homelessness and housing will be in vain, as our sector will lose nearly \$100 million over the next four years," said Ms Smith.

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**Media enquiries:** contact Kate Colvin 0418 103 292 or [kate@chp.org.au](mailto:kate@chp.org.au)  
Jenny Smith, CEO, Council to Homeless Persons is available for interview