

# **STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR LONG TERM FUNDING FOR WOMEN'S REFUGES THROUGH WOMEN'S REFUGES AND HOUSING PROGRAM (WRAHP)**

Australian Federation of Graduate Women Inc supports, in principle, a purpose designed and adequately funded Commonwealth/State national program to provide 24 hour accessible front line, integrated support services, including crisis and transitional supported accommodation in order to help women and accompanying children who are in crisis including at risk of further injury or death as a result of domestic violence to achieve maximum safety, self-reliance and independence and safe housing pathways and solutions. This would include support and interventions that enable women to stay in or return to their homes.

Fatal and damaging domestic and family violence demands an immediate service response pending attitudinal and behavioural change from prevention and other measures in the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022.

In recent years women's refuges have been subsumed into the homelessness agenda and have not been recognised or adequately supported for the complex homicide prevention work they are required to provide. Escaping domestic violence is vastly different in character to homelessness and requires a specialised program. It is a crisis situation, which may eventually see the woman and her children returning to their home and community.

The cost estimate for the Women's Housing and Refuges Program is \$1.982 billion over 5 years, funded 50/50 by Commonwealth/State funds. This amount is a combination of 30% of the Specialist Homelessness Services allocation under the National Affordable Housing Agreement and 30% of National Partnership on Homelessness funding, together with \$68m added to first full year of funding to increase services.