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Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

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Federal Minister for Families and Social Services

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Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women

MEDIA RELEASE

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COVID-19: FUNDING BOOST TO HELP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS AS PANDEMIC CONTINUES

NSW domestic and family violence services experiencing increased demand as a result of COVID-19 can now apply for a share of \$9 million in Federal Government funding.

Attorney General and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence Mark Speakman said the *COVID-19 Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence Grant* program aimed to ensure more victim-survivors can access the support and services they need at this crucial time.

“Many of our dedicated services have moved quickly to innovate and adapt their supports during the pandemic – when women and children may have struggled to access help,” Mr Speakman said.

“I strongly encourage organisations to apply for this funding, whether it be to launch a new program or expand or adapt an existing one to ensure victim-survivors can access support.”

The program offers one-off grants between \$20,000 and \$150,000 to eligible services.

Mr Speakman said a [Australian Institute of Criminology report](#) released last month revealed an increase in domestic violence during the pandemic, with many victims reporting it was the first time their partner had been violent towards them.

“Victim-survivors often contact frontline services before they make the decision to go to the police, which is why it’s so important these organisations have the necessary capacity to deliver appropriate supports to those most in need,” Mr Speakman said.

Federal Minister for Families and Social Services Anne Ruston said the additional support secured with this funding will help ensure people can live their life free from violence and abuse.

“The funding is part of the Federal Government’s \$150 million investment to boost domestic violence supports and services during COVID-19 – from counselling and helpline provisions to behaviour change programs and emergency accommodation,” Ms Ruston said.

“We’ve been working closely with the States and Territories to deliver this funding to dedicated services on the frontline who work tirelessly to support vulnerable victim-survivors across the country.”

Minister for Women Bronnie Taylor said the investment was a timely response, which would ensure more women and children will be able to access vital supports.

“A safe home is something many of us take for granted. Boosting domestic violence support is crucial for protecting women and children across the state when they need it most,” Mrs Taylor said.

Interim Domestic Violence NSW CEO Delia Donovan said the funding boost was welcomed by the organisation – NSW’s peak body for specialist domestic violence services.

“Never has the need been greater, than in this current pandemic, to ensure women and their children experiencing domestic and family violence can access critical support and services,” Ms Donovan said.

“Over the past few months, services have reported an escalation in the numbers of women seeking help and a significant increase in the complexity of cases, all whilst having to quickly adapt service delivery to COVID-19 conditions.

“This funding will provide a range of specialist services with the flexibility to respond to the particular and nuanced needs of their communities with localised place-based solutions.”

Today’s announcement follows the [\\$21 million investment](#) in frontline domestic violence support services delivered by the Federal and NSW Governments in May.

Grant applications will open today and close at 5pm (AEST) on Wednesday, 23 September 2020. To apply, complete the online application form via the [SmartyGrants portal](#), at <https://www.women.nsw.gov.au/commissioning/DFVCovid19Funding>.

*For confidential advice, support and referrals related to domestic and family violence, contact: **1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732), The NSW Domestic Violence Line (1800 65 64 63) or Men's Referral Service (1300 766 491).***