



**SENATOR THE HON MARISE PAYNE**  
**Minister for Foreign Affairs**  
**Minister for Women**

**SENATOR THE HON ANNE RUSTON**  
**Minister for Families and Social Services**  
**Manager of Government Business in the Senate**

## **STATEMENT**

31 May 2020

### **Parliamentary inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence**

Minister for Women Senator the Hon Marise Payne and Minister for Families and Social Services Senator the Hon Anne Ruston have proposed draft Terms of Reference for an inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence.

In TOR presented to the Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, the Ministers have asked the inquiry to report on:

- Immediate and long-term measures to prevent violence against women and their children, and improve gender equality
- Best practice and lessons learnt from international experience, ranging from prevention to early intervention, which could be considered in an Australian context
- The level and impact of coordination and accountability for services and policy responses across the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, local governments, non-government and community organisations, and business
- The way that health, housing, and women's economic independence affect the ability of women to escape domestic violence
- All forms of violence against women, including, but not limited to, coercive control and technology-facilitated abuse
- The adequacy of the evidence base around the prevalence of domestic and family violence and how to overcome limitations in the collection of nationally consistent and timely data including, but not limited to, court, police, hospitalisation and housing
- The efficacy of perpetrator intervention programs and support services for men to help them change their behaviour

- The experiences of all women, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, rural women, culturally and linguistically diverse women, LGBTQI women, women with a disability, and women on temporary visas
- The impact of COVID-19, including health requirements such as staying at home, on the prevalence of domestic violence and provision of support services
- The views and experiences of frontline services, advocacy groups and others throughout this unprecedented time

Minister Payne said the challenging start to 2020 with the pandemic and associated restrictions required renewed consideration of how we reduce family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia.

“We must listen to the experiences of the sector during this unprecedented time and learn how governments, services and the community can better support women and their children, particularly when home is not a safe place to be. It is my expectation that the findings of this Committee will inform the work of the Women’s Safety Council that I co-convene with Minister Ruston,” Minister Payne said.

Minister Ruston said the level of family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia remains unacceptably high.

“It is truly devastating that women and children continue to be killed by the people who are supposed to care for and protect them. The more light we can shine on this scourge, the better,” Minister Ruston said.

In March, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced a \$150 million domestic violence support package to help services meet demand during the COVID-19 crisis.

As part of the package, the Government has launched a new awareness campaign, *Help is Here*, to promote the two national helplines, bolstered resources to the helplines and other Commonwealth funded programs, and transferred \$27.8 million to states and territories to support local services.

Further information is available at [www.australia.gov.au/dvsupport](http://www.australia.gov.au/dvsupport)

If you or someone you know is experiencing or at risk of domestic, family or sexual violence contact 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732) [1800respect.org.au](http://1800respect.org.au) or MensLine Australia (1300 789 978) [mensline.org.au](http://mensline.org.au)

**ENDS**

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