



### **COMMONWEALTH BUDGET FUNDING FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE V FUNDING FOR TERRORISM**

#### **THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Around 1.6 million Australian women have experienced domestic violence, accounting for an estimated 40 percent of police time. From 2003-2012, between 700 and 1,000 women and children were killed by their partners or parents in domestic homicides.<sup>1</sup> This is an average of around 80 per year.

The cost to the Australian economy was estimated to be \$8.1 billion in 2002-03. This is estimated to rise to \$9.9 billion in the year 2021-22, if appropriate action is not taken.<sup>2</sup>

In 2014, an average of 423 people, many of whom were escaping violence, were turned away from homelessness agencies every night. In the same year, 150,000 were turned away from community legal centres.<sup>3</sup>

#### **THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM: TERRORISM**

Since the 1978 Hilton bombing in Sydney, 113 Australians have been victims of terrorism, including Australians killed overseas in terrorist attacks. This is an average of three per year over the past 37 years.

#### **COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT FUNDING: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

A partially funded awareness campaign was the only measure announced in the recent federal budget. Not one of the nine crucial funding areas identified by family violence experts was filled,<sup>4</sup> including crisis and counselling hotlines, men's behaviour programs, community legal centres, primary prevention initiatives and services for indigenous or culturally diverse communities. This has confused service providers, since the effectiveness of an awareness campaign is questionable if services are not available.

#### **COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT FUNDING: TERRORISM**

Terrorism, particularly 'home-grown terrorism' is clearly an area of concern for the Commonwealth Government, which set aside \$450 million to address the problem.

The Commonwealth Government will also give \$131 million to the telecommunications industry to facilitate compliance with new metadata collections laws, and \$22 million for social-media monitoring.

#### **STATE GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE RESPONSE**

The State Government has also been slow to respond to domestic and family violence deaths through legislation, particularly when compared to its response to public violence.

The State Government last month revealed an intention to establish a domestic violence register. The establishment of the register (already in operation in the UK) will follow extensive community consultation on the issue. The State Government is also considering allowing victims to give evidence by video.

This can be compared to the rapid legislative response that was called the 'one-punch laws' in 2014. After a spate of public attacks on innocent victims, politicians cancelled holidays for a special sitting of Parliament after the media published some of the 'one-punch' incidents. The then-Premier O'Farrell told Parliament during debate "*action is needed because the courts have not been prepared to hand out the sentences people expect*" when announcing what he called "*pioneering legislation...to address an issue that, if the status quo was to remain, would continue to see too many innocent victims either killed or seriously injured*".

The rapid legislative response to the problem did not stop with penalties for perpetrators of anti-social behaviour. O'Farrell was also quick to announce early closures at licensed premises across an expanded Sydney CBD and an end to drinks at 3am.

"One-punch" assaults cost around 90 Australian lives from 2000-2014, an average of around 6.5 deaths per year, compared to around 80 reported deaths per year, on average, from family violence.

#### **ANNUAL PSA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE 2015**

Registrations are now open for PSA Women's Conference. All women members of the PSA are eligible to register.

The 2015 theme, chosen by PSA Women's Council Committee is: '**Standing against domestic violence**'.

You can see a draft program [HERE](#).

(<http://psa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/2015-Womens-Conference-agenda-DRAFT-web-version.pdf>)

You can register for the conference [HERE](#).

(<http://psa.asn.au/women/application-form-to-attend-the-2015-psa-annual-womens-conference/>)

This year's conference will be held on Tuesday, and Wednesday, 15-16 September 2015 at PSA House, 160 Clarence Street, Sydney.

All women who are financial members of the PSA are encouraged to nominate to attend.

## Registrations close 17 August 2015

### THE GOVERNMENT SECTOR EMPLOYMENT (GSE) ACT AND WORKPLACE DIVERSITY

The GSE Act changes the NSW public sector's approach to workforce diversity.

Women make up around 62 percent of the NSW public sector workforce.<sup>5</sup> However, women only hold around 32 percent of senior/executive roles — meaning women are largely 'stuck' in lower grade jobs.<sup>6</sup> Women are also disproportionately concentrated in the traditional areas of health, education and community services.

Women also make up nearly 73 percent of carers. Many carers struggle to find secure work with sufficient flexibility to enable them to work a secure job and meet caring responsibilities. The NSW public sector is not immune. Despite published policies around the availability of flexible work, the PSA deals with many complaints from women members who experience difficulty accessing flexible working arrangements.

The gender pay gap now stands at just under 19 percent nationally — the largest it has been for

decades and above the OECD average.

Professor Rae Cooper from the University of Sydney, has described this as the 'architecture of disadvantage', exemplified by 'glass ceilings' (barriers to progression); 'glass walls' (occupational and industry segregation); and 'sticky floors' (being stuck at low grade and often insecure positions). Australia has one of the most gender segregated workforces in the OECD, with women largely concentrated in the 'pink industries and occupations' (health, education and clerical).

The GSE Act repealed Part 9A of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977, and replaced it with a 'broader' concept of workforce diversity, including but not limited to gender, cultural and linguistic background, Aboriginality and disability.<sup>7</sup> This broad policy approach has been met with criticism by researchers when implemented in other areas, on the grounds that taking a broad brush approach to diversity fails to deal with the critical issues of why women (and other groups) are disadvantaged, and ignores sex discrimination (including unconscious bias).<sup>8</sup>

The GSE Act makes the head of each agency responsible for workforce diversity within their organisation.<sup>9</sup>

The GSE Rules define three groups of 'eligible person'(s) (that is, groups of people who may be disadvantaged in employment).<sup>10</sup> The groups do not include women. There is a fourth 'category', "a person who belongs to a group of persons designated by the Commissioner as being disadvantaged in employment", conferring on the Commissioner a discretionary power (that is, the Commissioner may exercise this power, but cannot be made to do so).

The outcomes of this new approach to addressing workforce diversity remain to be seen.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 3303.0

<sup>2</sup> The Financial Cost of Domestic and Family Violence, Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse, [www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au](http://www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au)

<sup>3</sup> Funding Action on Family Violence: What Will it Take? 6 May 2015 [www.fairagenda.org](http://www.fairagenda.org)

<sup>4</sup> The Financial Cost of Domestic and Family Violence, Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse, [www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au](http://www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au)

<sup>5</sup> Baird M, Evesson J and Oxenbridge S 2014 'Advancing Women: Increasing the participation of women in senior roles in the NSW public sector', Prepared for the NSW Public Service Commission

<sup>6</sup> Ibid 5

<sup>7</sup> Government Sector Employment Act 2013 No 40 s63

<sup>8</sup> Rhonda Sharp, Suzanne Franzway, Julie Mills and Judith Gill (2012) 'Flawed policy, failed politics? Challenging the sexual politics of managing diversity in engineering organisations', *Gender, Work & Organization*, 19(6): 555–572

<sup>9</sup> Government Sector Employment Act 2013 No 40 s63(2)

<sup>10</sup> Government Sector Employment Rules 2014 [NSW], Part 5 Workforce diversity

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