



Media Statement

15 December 2017

Domestic and Family Violence leading cause of homelessness in WA

The release of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) Specialist Homeless Services Annual Report 2016-2017, has shown that women are outnumbering men when it comes to seeking homelessness services.

The data indicates family and domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness in Western Australia, with 41.9 per cent of homelessness clients seeking assistance, citing domestic and family violence as a reason. Of those experiencing family and domestic violence, more than three quarters were women (77.85%).

“The face of homelessness is no longer the traditional older man sleeping rough, it is a young woman and her child escaping a situation of family and domestic violence,” said Louise Giolitto, Chief Executive Officer, Western Australian Council of Social Services.

“The evidence is clear that women and children continue to face intolerable situations due to the ongoing violence of a partner or ex-partner. It is unacceptable that negative consequences such as homelessness and poverty continues to be the reality for thousands of women and children,” said Angela Hartwig, Chief Executive Officer of the Women’s Council.

This information is not new to WACOSS, the Women’s Council, and the social services sector. Homelessness among women in WA has been a growing trend, and recommendations within the WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission in October 2017 called for the need to expand family violence outreach services, and the inclusion of family and domestic violence provisions in the State Government reform of the Residential Tenancies Act.

“Homelessness services are essential to supporting people who have become homeless, or are at risk of becoming homeless, but the situation will only worsen without significant government investment in affordable housing and family and domestic violence programs, said Louise Giolitto.

“The WA Government has an opportunity with the development of MetroNet to set targets for social housing and low-income affordable rentals around MetroNet hubs, to help prevent people from becoming homeless,” Louise said.

The report can be found on the AIHW website [here](#).

Read the WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission [here](#).