



MEDIA RELEASE

The Invisible Face of Homelessness

Domestic and Family Violence is the main reason women and children are forced to leave their homes and become homeless

The Women's Council is the peak body representing over 60 Domestic and Family Violence Services with the majority being short term crisis accommodation services providing Refuge for women and children who are often forced to flee their homes.

The Women's Council is deeply concerned that women and children escaping a violent partner and often become homeless, largely remain invisible in the community with most people not recognizing that women and children in temporary accommodation or living with friends or family are experiencing homelessness. The definition of a home includes a sense of **security, stability, privacy, safety, and the ability to control living space.**

Western Australia has 42 Refuges accommodating single women and women with children to 18 years. On average, **184 women and 253 children** are provided with crisis accommodation every night. However, we know that many women and children seek accommodation and are often unable to access a bed due to Refuges being FULL.

Furthermore, many women never reach out for assistance instead moving in with family or friends, **all these women and children are homeless and will remain homeless for many months or years.**

During this year's Homelessness Week 6-12th August, the Women's Council urges the community to stop and think about all those families who are seeking to make a fresh start free from violence. Most having little more than the clothes they stand in and are then faced with starting over from scratch to make a house into a home.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Contact Women's Council to find your local Refuge to donate to;

Ph: 9420 7264 or email-info@womenscouncil.com.au

Individuals:

1. Donate non-perishable food to your local Refuge. Ring and ask what items would be most useful.
2. Donate **new** household items, these can be small a broom, washing basket or kettle, and toaster.

Organizations:

1. Commit to sponsoring a family at your local Refuge each year.
2. Fundraise to assist the family's new start in a home.
3. Run a collection at work for NEW household items to donate.
4. Pay for a local contractor to do the monthly garden maintenance at a family's house.
5. Fundraise for a specific cost: ie School book list at the start of each year, swimming lessons for children, driving lessons for mum or teenager.

END

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