



135 organisations urge government to ensure all women receive crisis support when fleeing violence

27 April 2016

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) and 134 other organisations have written to the Prime Minister, urging the Government to ensure that migrant women on temporary visas are supported when escaping violent relationships, as a minimum, through access to crisis payments.

This call echoes the recommendation by the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence that women escaping violence must be entitled to crisis payments regardless of their visa status.

FECCA Chairperson Joe Caputo said, "Safety from domestic and family violence is a fundamental human right and must not be contingent on an individual's visa status."

As the peak, national body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, FECCA believes it is unacceptable that many migrant women on temporary visas miss out on adequate services and support when escaping violent relationships.

Domestic violence service providers report that the principal concern for migrant women on temporary visas is having no source of income, which leaves women with limited options. For this reason, many women on temporary visas return to their abusive partners or are reliant on charities to get by.

Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW), the peak body for domestic and family violence services in NSW, are also working with specialist services and stakeholders advocating for change on this issue.

CEO of DVNSW Moo Baulch said, "With no access to income, even when women on temporary visas are able to leave the violence, they may struggle to find appropriate support in an overstretched system".

Access to crisis payments will ensure that women on temporary visas are financially supported while they seek assistance following a violent relationship, this can include accessing legal and justice support and meeting the basic needs of their children.

"In addition to the impacts of domestic and family violence, migrant women on temporary visas may experience significant trauma when trying to access support due to language and cultural challenges, social isolation and systemic barriers. We are calling for real and urgent action from the Commonwealth government to ensure the safety of these highly vulnerable women and their families", said Ms Baulch.

"Specialist domestic and family violence support services have developed nuanced expertise working with women with no income but governments don't fund this work. This places enormous pressure on services that want to assist vulnerable women. It's not just about the challenge of finding a safe place for these women and their children to live safely, but about providing them with the financial, emotional and cultural support that they need to recover from abuse and to build their lives after violence."

"Eliminating violence against women is a national priority, and we want to see the Government addressing the need for equitable access to services and support so that this vulnerable group of women are not left behind", said Joe Caputo. "We urge the Government to address this critical issue and ensure all women, regardless of visa status, have access to crisis payments."

If you or someone you know is experiencing family violence, call 1800 RESPECT on 1800 737 732 for 24/7 support. If you're in immediate danger call 000.

Media Comments:

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