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### Call to save funding for family violence services

Women's Health West have signed an open letter calling on the Prime Minister to save key homelessness services from funding cuts.

Women's Health West is among 209 organisations that are seeking an urgent intervention to avert the human, economic and policy disaster that will occur if the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) is de-funded in 2017.

Cuts to the NPAH will have a considerable negative impact on women and children who are the victims of family violence.

Over a third of those seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services are victims of family violence; the majority women.

De-funding the NPAH would have an immediate adverse effect on women in the western metropolitan region of Melbourne, with four of Women's Health West's programs likely to be cut if the NPAH is not re-funded.

This includes an after-hours crisis response service for women and their children. Family violence most often occurs after 5pm and over the weekend when families are together, making the 24-hour response program a critical component of our service.

It also provides funding for our 'Safe at Home' program, which supports women and their children to stay in their home and have the perpetrator leave.

Dr Robyn Gregory, CEO of Women's Health West, said:

"The dislocation caused by the loss of a home can significantly increase the already traumatic impact of family violence. Where safety reasons force women and children to leave their home and seek refuge, homelessness is compounded by the loss of relationships and support networks that necessarily accompany this move.

Securing the future of NPAH funding is vital. Doing so will ensure Women's Health West is able to continue to provide a full range of support to women escaping family violence".

We have a moral obligation to secure women's and children's right to live free from violence and homelessness. Funding programs that prevent further violence and homelessness is a sound economic investment in Australia's future.

#### Notes:

- The open letter signed by 209 organisations can be viewed at: <http://chp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/NPAH-open-letter-to-PM-with-signatories-3.pdf>

- Further information on the campaign calling on the Federal Government to commit to re-funding NPAH is available at: <http://chp.org.au/campaign-to-get-federal-government-to-commit-to-npah-starts-today/#.WEeQerJ96Uk>

*For more information:*

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