

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Ending Family Violence in Australia requires a new, combined approach

Relationships Australia has been appalled by the growing crisis of domestic and family violence across Australian society.

Only coordinated and multifaceted approaches will support everyone in our communities to enjoy safe and respectful relationships, to manage pressures affecting those relationships, and to navigate changes in their relationships.

Data published by Relationships Australia in November 2022 as part of our Relationship Indicators research revealed that almost 9% of our community (or 1.7 million people) felt unsafe disagreeing with the people they considered to be most important in their lives. Research released today by the Australian Institute of Criminology puts this into critical focus, revealing an alarming 28% increase in the number of female intimate partner homicides (AIC, 2024).

Couples, children and families experiencing domestic and family violence are core clients of Relationships Australia. Practice experience, confirmed by research, shows that:

- people experiencing physical violence in relationships use at least four wellbeing or family law services before or during separation (Kaspiew et al, 2015); and
- people reporting physical harm before or after separation are twice as likely to use a counselling, relationship or dispute resolution service than a domestic violence service, (Kaspiew et al, 2015).

A 2018 report on children and young people in separated families note that parents had accessed an average of eight different services when finalising parenting disputes under the Family Law Act. (Carson et al).

Service integration, therefore, is vital.

Ending violence against women and children within a generation, however, demands a far broader transformation in how we deliver services across the four domains of the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children: prevention, early intervention, response and recovery.

Accordingly, Relationships Australia remains committed to a holistic, integrated Family Wellbeing System, serving Australians through multi-disciplinary Family Wellbeing Hubs, tailored to the needs of the communities they serve.

“Domestic and family violence is rarely present in isolation from other issues, such as misuse of alcohol and other drugs, harmful gambling, poor mental health, poverty and housing precarity,” said Mr Nick Tebbey, National Executive Officer of Relationships Australia.

Relationships Australia welcomes the Commonwealth Government’s commitment to funding a national perpetrator risk assessment framework and believes this will provide critical

understanding of the complex co-morbidities currently driving this crisis and enable tailored and targeted responses.

Relationships Australia offers perpetrator interventions across the country, with internal research revealing that such programs can be critical for achieving enduring change in behaviours and attitudes. While this is just one element to a comprehensive, systemic approach, we urge governments to ensure that suitable perpetrator intervention programs are made available nationally and are properly funded and resourced.

“It is critical that government, service providers and the broader family law sector continue to evolve integrated, multi-disciplinary and collaborative service provision,” said Mr Tebbey.

“In the face of the domestic and family violence crisis in our country, it is clear that we will only achieve change if we work quickly and together.”

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*Relationships Australia is a leading provider of relationship support services for individuals, families, and communities. We aim to support all people in Australia to achieve positive and respectful relationships. We are a community-based, not-for-profit Australian organisation with no religious affiliations.*