

ISSUES PAPER

DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



LOCAL SNAPSHOT

Domestic Assault rate
by LGA (2017):

Area	Rate by LGA
Kiama	154 per 100,000
Shellharbour	337 per 100,000
Shoalhaven	332 per 100,000
Wollongong	310 per 100,000

NSW average 367 per 100,000
(Source: NSW Justice)

One in three women experience violence in their lifetime.

Income Inequality and Homelessness

Income inequality is a strong contributory factor to the prevalence of relationship violence, as women often have to stay in destructive relationships simply because they cannot afford to live on their own income.

The National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) found that being a woman is the major contributing factor to the pay gap in Australia. If the effects of being a woman were removed, the average wage of an Australian woman would increase by \$1.87 per hour, equating to an additional \$65 per week or \$3,394 annually, based on a 35 hour week.

Domestic and family violence is often the most significant driver of homelessness. Women are the fastest growing group experiencing homelessness in NSW.

Perpetrators of domestic and family violence are at a high risk of reoffending. Even when victims leave, perpetrators often reoffend after forming relationships with new partners.

Women with Disability

Women with disability, especially those with intellectual disability, are at increased risk of violence in their relationships. These women are already vulnerable and the perception that they are helpless and powerless can mean that they are easily manipulated and subjected to violence and abuse.

Children

Children are being exposed to domestic and family violence, both as victims and witnesses. This exposure can impact on children's health, wellbeing, education and relationships; and can have significant impacts on employment, relationships and housing outcomes in the future.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Invest in programs which combat the impact of pornography and promote the development of healthy, respectful relationships.
- Invest in perpetrator programs which are aimed at long term, sustained behaviour change.
- Greater support for programs like *Staying Home, Leaving Violence* so that women and children can stay safe in their own home.
- Increase investment in crisis accommodation and support services for women and families escaping violence, when staying home is not an option.
- Invest in specialist, trauma-informed and trauma specialist responses to sexual assault and domestic and family violence including specialist community legal assistance.
- Implement the use of restorative justice measures in cases of domestic violence.
- Ensure availability of culturally sensitive and appropriate services and programs to support the diverse needs of our community.
- Promote domestic violence initiatives e.g. Domestic Violence Leave, Family Court Judges and the 1800 RESPECT telephone line.