

The Queensland Cabinet and Ministerial Directory

\$5.5m to boost domestic violence services during COVID-19 pandemic

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JOINT STATEMENT

Premier and Minister for Trade

The Honourable Anastacia Palaszczyk

Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services

The Honourable Mark Ryan

Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

The Honourable Di Farmer

The Palaszczyk Government is taking urgent action to support domestic and family violence victims with the immediate injection of almost \$5.5 million to help manage an anticipated increase in demand for services arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Premier Anastacia Palaszczyk said there were serious concerns for victims of domestic and family violence during the coronavirus crisis due to increased financial pressures and social isolation.

"I want people to know that they do have options, they don't have to stay in a violent household," the Premier said.

"We're boosting support for essential government-funded services, so people have someone to turn to and somewhere else to go if they need.

"Depending on a person's circumstances and needs, this could include shelters, hotels or residential properties.

"Service providers will work with victims to place them in the safest and most appropriate accommodation for their individual needs."

The \$5.5 million funding includes:

- \$1.5 million – to boost capacity of the 24/7 statewide crisis service DVConnect, including Womensline and Mensline and enabling online support.
- \$1.7 million to address crisis accommodation needs, including transiting women to alternative accommodation to free up capacity in shelters.
- \$1.8 million to enhance specialist domestic, family and sexual violence services to meet anticipated demand
- \$500,000 to support a new awareness campaign.

The Premier today confirmed the DV Summit which was scheduled to be held this month before the COVID-19 pandemic will be held virtually in May to coincide with Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month.

In another initiative, Police Minister Mark Ryan announced there is now a new domestic and family violence reporting tool now available via the Queensland Police website.

“The Police Commissioner has said that there are serious concerns with barriers to reporting caused by COVID-19 restrictions, so being able to use an online tool gives victims the ability to make a report discreetly,” Minister Ryan said.

“It’s important to note that the online tool is for non-urgent matters, people should always use Triple-0 for urgent matters and emergencies.”

Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence Di Farmer said the risk of domestic and family violence was growing as more families faced financial pressures caused by job losses.

“We also know that perpetrators in forced isolation with their victims could use the health crisis to exert greater control, fear and intimidation,” she said.

“I have been holding regular discussions with key stakeholders and have listened to their concerns.

“This funding package has been developed as an immediate response to address the most pressing areas of need.”

The package complements the \$24.7 million coronavirus housing and homelessness response package announced by Housing Minister Mick de Brenni last month.

It will also complement the Australian Government’s \$150 million funding package announced by the Prime Minister late last month.

The COAG Women’s Safety Council where Queensland is represented by Minister Farmer, has agreed that \$32.5 million will be provided as an initial response to states and territories to help meet urgent need, with a further \$97.5 million to be allocated over the next six months.

While negotiations continue, Queensland will direct its share of funding to meet the needs of those experiencing violence, particularly in the priority areas of:

- Safer housing and emergency accommodation
- counselling and outreach
- crisis support and helplines
- men’s behaviour change programs and other perpetrator interventions
- assisting frontline services to manage the demand and explore new technology-based service delivery methods and
- responding to the unique challenges in regional, rural and remote locations.

Media Contacts:

Premier’s office – Zoe Russell 0439 982 347

Minister Farmer’s office - Jim Devine 0427 475 089

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