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House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Social Policy and Legal Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
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ALGA submission to the inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence

ALGA welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Committee's inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence.

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is the voice of Local Government in Australia, representing 537 councils across the nation. In structure, ALGA is a federation of State and Territory Local Government Associations. Comments made in this submission should be read in conjunction with any separate comments received from State and Territory Associations as well as individual councils.

General Comments

Domestic, family and sexual violence is an issue that affects all communities. The impacts are felt by families, workplaces, communities and the economy, and include a range of consequences on mortality rates, employment, housing, and physical and mental health of women and their children, and men (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 'Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia', 2018). Preventing domestic and family violence has benefits including reducing crime, reducing homelessness, improving well-being and providing a safer community for women and children.

The role of councils

While prevention of domestic, sexual and family violence is not a core responsibility of local government, the position of councils in the community means they are particularly aware of the effects of domestic violence on their communities and understand which approaches are likely to work in their communities.

As the closest level of government to the community, councils are uniquely placed to influence and drive social change to reduce domestic, family and sexual violence through existing partnerships, networks and structures. They also engage with people across their life span, from their early years to their senior years and councils interact with, and in some cases provide, children's and youth services, aged care and disability programs, libraries and community facilities, community groups and providers of support.

According to the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory, councils have the largest footprint across regional and remote Australia of any government or organization. This proximity to communities in sparsely populated remote regions means that councils interact with some of the most vulnerable and isolated families and in the Territory are pivotal in the protection and safety of vulnerable community members.

Only the Victorian Government places a legislative responsibility on local government in relation to domestic, family and sexual violence under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* and the *Gender Equality Act 2020*. In all other States and Territories there is no legislative requirement for local government to have a role in addressing or preventing domestic violence. The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) has had a funded position to assist councils with prevention of violence initiatives since 2011, and the Local Government Association of Queensland appointed a prevention of violence officer earlier this year. No other local government associations have a dedicated resource to assist councils.

Three state and territory local government associations have developed policy statements to provide some guidance for their councils on the issue – MAV, Local Government NSW and the Local Government Association of South Australia. All State and Territory Associations provide assistance to their councils in various ways.

Although only one jurisdiction has legislated a role for local government in domestic violence, councils across the nation are acutely aware of the effects of domestic, family and sexual violence and whilst not legislated to do so, are initiating a range of measures to respond to the issue. Some are far more advanced than others, reflecting the differing capacities of councils across the nation.

Councils are seeking assistance to first prevent violence wherever possible and then respond to violence if it has occurred. Councils directly strive to do this for both their staff, as an employer of significant numbers of people, and for the members of their communities. Councils also indirectly strive to prevent and respond to violence by supporting not-for-profit and specialist services in their communities often through grant funding, information dissemination and chairing inter-agency meetings.

The role of local government associations

Most State and Territory Local Government Associations have worked cooperatively with the state and territory governments to support state-wide initiatives. Councils are well placed to provide guidance and support for awareness raising and prevention activities at local level.

As mentioned above, until earlier this year, when the Local Government Association of Queensland appointed a domestic violence policy officer, the Municipal Association of Victoria was the only Association to have a dedicated policy officer to assist councils with prevention of domestic violence (position was first appointed in 2010 and has been renewed year by year). While other State and Territory Associations have been working with jurisdictions to implement

State Government initiatives and campaigns, this has largely been in a supportive and cooperative role without legislative requirement or funding.

In order for councils to maximise their capacity to contribute to the prevention of domestic violence, it is essential that councils receive dedicated domestic violence support. ALGA is recommending two (2) options for the Commonwealth to provide funding assistance to councils to enable them to have the financial and resource capacity to assist in countering domestic violence at the local level. The options are explored in more detail later in this submission.

ALGA supports increased Commonwealth funding for support services, safe housing and psychological support for people suffering domestic abuse, which needs to be boosted during natural disasters and pandemics. A consistent, coordinated approach across all sectors and governments is essential for achieving lasting change – Local government’s experience is that short term project-by-project approaches to primary prevention will not succeed.

ALGA strongly believes that it should be a member of the Women’s Safety Taskforce of the National Federation Reform Council, given that this issue of domestic violence is a national priority. The Taskforce should have representation from all levels of government.

ALGA provides comments on the following terms of reference.

Measures to address and prevent violence against women and their children and improve gender equality

Domestic Violence Toolkit for Local Government

Under the Third Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022, launched in October 2016, one action {Action 1.2(a)} was for the Commonwealth to ‘co-design tools and resources with local governments to engage with business, sporting organisations and community groups to promote action against violence’. A Working Group was formed in 2017 to develop a Domestic Violence Toolkit for Local Government. The Working Group comprised the Commonwealth Department of Social Services (together with consultants engaged by the Department), ALGA and State and Territory Local government Associations. Local Government welcomed the opportunity to have input into the development and design of the Toolkit.

Local Government welcomed the process which was used to develop the Toolkit, namely involving ALGA and State and Territory Associations in the development and review of the Toolkit. This input helped to ensure the Toolkit would be relevant for all councils - big, small, metropolitan or remote. Associations were also involved in proposing potential trial site councils.

Five Local Government trial sites were identified to road test and inform the Toolkit. The trial sites were chosen to reflect the diversity of councils in Australia, and included metropolitan and regional councils, and councils which were at different stages of their development of domestic

violence initiatives. Each of the trial sites was provided with \$150,000 to design and implement domestic violence initiatives. Funding was also available to support the participation (travel etc.) of the State and Territory Associations.

The Toolkit was finalized in June 2019 and the intention was to launch and promote it in 2019 at ALGA's National General Assembly (NGA) of Local Government (held 16-19 June 2019).

Unfortunately, the Toolkit was not launched at the NGA and it took another 12 months for it to be soft-launched in July 2020. ALGA and State and Territory Associations consider the 12 month delay to launch the Toolkit a missed opportunity to enable local governments across the nation to use the Toolkit to start implementing measures to prevent domestic violence in their communities and to improve gender equality. Access to the Toolkit could have placed councils in a better position to put in place measures to identify and respond to the rise in domestic violence following the 2019-20 bushfires and the spike in domestic violence during the current COVID-19 pandemic. The link between an increase in domestic violence at times natural disaster is well known.

The Toolkit, if released, would have given councils guidance on how to begin raising awareness of the issue in their communities. ALGA and State and Territory Associations suggested an Executive Summary/Introductory Statement section, with the purpose of inspiring councils to start with small measures, which could make a big difference in their communities. These small measures could include low-cost or no-cost initiatives which even the smallest councils could adopt to start the journey of preventing domestic violence in their communities. Examples of such initiatives could include a Mayoral Column (or press release) in the local newspaper raising awareness of the council's commitment to reducing domestic violence; developing a gender equality policy within council (and role modelling this in the community); and updating the council website to include information on domestic violence and contact numbers/local services for those who need assistance.

In the Working Group, ALGA and State Associations pressed for dedicated funding to assist councils to implement the Toolkit. Trial site councils reported that once their funding ceased, they would not be able to retain the officer employed with the \$150,000 pilot site grant, or to continue domestic violence initiatives. The Fourth Action Plan of the national Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children was endorsed on 9 August 2019 but did not include recurrent funding to assist local government to implement the Toolkit.

Resourcing is necessary to assist Local Government to drive and embed change across services and programs, particularly those offered by a third party

The Toolkit is a good resource but ideally it could be accompanied by training sessions, promotional material and awareness raising.

Domestic Violence Leave

In February 2020, as a result of a resolution at the 2019 LGNSW Annual Conference and an application by the United Services Union, there was a special variation to the [Local Government](#)

[\(State\) Award 2017](#) which allowed all workers for councils in NSW (a total of over 45,000 staff) to be eligible for 10 days paid leave to deal with the effects of domestic and family violence. Casual staff will also be able to take time away from work for the same purposes, without consequence. Organisations and Governments across Australia should be encouraged to implement similar worker's rights.

The level and impact of coordination, accountability for, and access to services and policy responses across the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, local governments, non-government and community organisations and business.

Women's Safety Taskforce

Preventing domestic violence is to be a priority for the most senior intergovernmental structure – the National Federation Reform Council. The Women's Safety Taskforce is one of two taskforces under the National Federation Reform Council.

ALGA has in the past provided updates to COAG on domestic violence initiatives at the local government level but is yet to be advised of whether it will be a member of the Women's Safety Taskforce. As the level of government at the coalface of communities across the nation, ALGA believes that local government should be represented on the Taskforce. This is important to ensure that the voice of Local Government and communities is reflected in policy development and initiatives. All levels of government need to be at the table. Together, the three tiers of government can develop collective solutions to these widespread problems and allow solutions to be tailored to the unique needs of different communities.

ALGA provided an update on the work of Local Government to the COAG 2016 National Summit on Reducing Violence Against Women and their Children, including the example of the work of the Municipal Association of Victoria in developing a Gender and Emergency Management Strategy after the rise in family violence following the Black Saturday bushfires. ALGA also participated in the 2018 Domestic Violence Roundtable.

Our Watch and other collaborations

With the NSW Government joining Our Watch in May 2019, the Commonwealth and all Australian states and territories are now members of the organization which works to lead change in the primary prevention of violence against women and children nation-wide. Our Watch and their 'Change the Story' national framework is an ideal collaboration to ensure policy responses from governments are aligned.

In NSW for example, some peak bodies, service organisations and councils have joined together to form the NSW Collaboration on the Primary Prevention of Gender-Based Violence. The Collaboration is a community-of-practice which meets together several times a year to share best-practice approaches and to encourage other organisations to adopt primary prevention. Other states may be encouraged to do the same.

Coordination and resourcing of councils

Councils stand ready to play a part in reducing domestic violence and improving gender equality. They are uniquely placed to take the pulse of community sentiment and to model best practice to their communities.

However, many councils need assistance to be able to implement the necessary change in their communities and to sustain that change. Many regional, rural and remote councils are already financially disadvantaged and rely heavily on funding grants from other levels of government. In order to plan for and implement domestic violence initiatives and to utilise the Local Government Domestic Violence Toolkit, these councils will need funding support.

ALGA and the State Associations strongly advocate for Commonwealth long-term funding for local government to assist councils to address domestic violence at local level.

Councils chosen as trial sites in the development of the Toolkit highlighted the need for financial assistance for councils. They all said that once the trial finished, they would not be able to continue the domestic violence initiatives without further funding – meaning that the progress made so far was unsustainable into the future. Without financial assistance, both the trial site councils and State and Territory Associations believed that many councils would not be in a financial position to implement the Toolkit.

Local Government has proven time and time again that it is a reliable, professional and cost-effective partner in rolling out Commonwealth programs and delivering national objectives. The ongoing Roads to Recovery Program (R2R), the \$1 Billion Regional and Local Government Community Infrastructure Program and the thousands of large and small infrastructure projects delivered as part of the National Stimulus Package in 2009 to counter the Global Financial Crisis as well as the current \$500 Million Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program demonstrate Local Government's ability to successfully partner with the Commonwealth.

Funding could be allocated through the next National Plan to reduce Violence against Women and their Children, but this would not be available until 2023. Given that the issue of domestic and family violence is a national priority and the fact that the recent bushfires and coronavirus epidemic has seen a sharp rise in the incidence and frequency of violence, ALGA recommends that funding for Local Government be provided in the coming Budget.

ALGA proposes two options for the Commonwealth to provide funding support to councils to provide them with financial and resource capacity to counter domestic violence at the local level:

Option 1: Direct funding to all councils through a proven funding model.

ALGA's preferred option is for direct funding to all councils on a non-competitive basis. Under this model the Attorney-General's Department (or possibly the Department of Social Services) would manage the grants program. Funding would be made available to all 537 councils on an

allocation based on council size/population. The Commonwealth would establish a set of guidelines covering the types of activities and initiatives which could be funded under the grant.

This direct funding would make it possible for councils to engage a consultant to prepare a council domestic violence plan, or to develop a domestic violence plan and supporting material in house, and to implement the Local Government Toolkit. A minimum grant amount per council would need to be established to ensure that small, rural councils are able to increase capacity to develop plans and programs.

Option 2: Funding of a dedicated Domestic Violence Policy Officer in every State and Territory Association.

This recommendation is based on the experience of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), which until a few months ago was the only Association to have a dedicated officer for domestic violence. The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) employed a domestic violence policy officer earlier this year for a 12 month period.

ALGA's recommendation is for national replication of the model currently in place in the MAV – a dedicated domestic violence policy officer to assist councils to fully utilize and implement the LG Toolkit. One dedicated officer in a State or Territory Association can assist all councils in the state/territory, and so is a cost-effective way of assisting all Australian councils to implement preventative domestic violence measures.

The MAV position has been funded since 2011, originally for a 2 year period, but has continued year by year. Nevertheless, there is no certainty that funding will continue.

The MAV Prevention of Violence Against Women Project has had many benefits, highlighted by the number of Victorian councils now having a standalone Domestic Violence Strategy. In 2007 only one council had a domestic violence prevention strategy, 23 had a prevention strategy in 2015, rising to 30 in 2018 (out of 79 councils). Without the dedicated resource to assist councils on their journey, it is unlikely that prevention of violence and gender equality work would have progressed this far in Victoria. In 2013, the MAV, with funding from Vic Health, produced a document "Prevention of Violence Against Women", to guide change in the Victorian Local Government Sector, as well as producing 13 fact sheets on preventing violence against women.

Other benefits of a dedicated domestic violence resource are:

- direct assistance to councils in the preparation of plans and initiatives to address domestic violence;
- coordinating and sharing knowledge among councils and other agencies (so they can learn from each other and not duplicate efforts);
- connecting council officers working in domestic violence with other councils for peer support and to share learnings; and
- being a central point of knowledge and using past lessons to assist councils with strategies which are proven to work (making the journey more cost effective for councils) and being a sounding board for new ideas.

Announcing the appointment of a dedicated domestic violence officer at LGAQ, Queensland Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women Di Farmer spoke of the benefits for Queensland councils.

“Having a dedicated domestic and family violence prevention project officer embedded within the peak body for local government authorities will give councils the support they need to get started, and will make it easier to share good ideas and best practice with councils across Queensland.”

A dedicated domestic violence office in every State and Territory would have the additional benefit of providing a single point of contact for local government in every State and Territory and would improve coordination between levels of government, community organisations and business.

The LGAQ advises that a number of council staff have provided feedback that a lack of finance or staff resource restricts the amount of activity they are able to undertake to promote awareness and prevention of abuse in their communities.

State and Territory Associations may wish to call the position something other than “domestic violence” policy officer. For example, the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory suggests it may be more culturally appropriate to use positive language such as “Community safety Officer” or “Family Protection Officer”.

ALGA’s preferred option is for funding to be provided directly to councils. In summary, since domestic violence is a national priority, it makes sense that the Commonwealth provide funding, on a fixed term basis such as 5 years to assist councils to upscale their capacity to respond to domestic violence at local level and to implement the Local Government Toolkit. Depending on the quantum of funding potentially available from the Commonwealth, ALGA’s second option would represent a cost-effective model – a dedicated resource in each State and Territory Association. State and Territory Governments could supplement funding to meet specific jurisdictional objectives and priorities.

The way that health, housing, access to services, including legal services and women’s economic independence impact of the ability of women to escape domestic violence.

Shelters

Whilst local governments generally do not provide or operate safe shelters for women and children escaping domestic violence, they may help in their provision by advocating for funding, providing advice with finding a suitable property, maintaining confidentiality and possibly with the provision of land.

In smaller rural communities the practicalities of locating and maintaining a secure safe place can be problematic and safe shelters may have to be located in a larger nearby community. Local governments have knowledge of local circumstances and community needs which they

can provide to service providers and other levels of governments. The Local Government Association of Queensland has approached its member councils in Queensland on this issue and advises that several councils have expressed concern about the lack of refuges and crisis accommodation for women fleeing abusive relationships.

As not all councils can provide shelters and safe infrastructure, councils are looking for ways that they can protect their communities for low-cost. Some ideas include signage around town, running mother's groups or similar, promoting the 'Go Ask Angela' campaign which trains pub staff to respond to women needing help who 'ask for angela' at the bar. Another example in NSW is the pilot Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) which allowed people to check with police whether their partner had a record of violence.

The Local Government Association of the Northern Territory provided examples of where regional councils in the Northern Territory are pivotal in protection and keeping vulnerable community members safe. For example, West Arnhem Regional Council has a community safety team which provides safety initiatives to several communities, such as safe houses (Gunbalanya Women's Safe House) and night patrols (Gunbalanya, Minjilang and Warruwi Night Patrol services). Culturally relevant programs are essential in the delivery of such services. It is important to connect and maintain important relationships with community leaders and stakeholders to work together to enhance community safety.

Diverse service delivery

Councils with diverse demographics such as multi-cultural communities, LGBTIQ+ communities, and large populations of young adults advise that targeted domestic violence support is needed for those communities, as they can have difficulties when accessing services for women.

Services for children and pets are crucial in supporting victims of domestic violence. When victims know that there are safe options for their dependents, they are more likely to seek help. Domestic Violence NSW is currently conducting a survey of providers to gauge the gaps in service delivery in catering to pets. Councils and organisations across Australia are also working to implement the 10 child-safe principles and these have a focus on creating cultures where children are protected from abuse and can disclose abuse with certainty that action will be taken. For this reason, there is a shift in the sector to refer to Domestic and Family Violence, or Gender Based Violence to broaden the perception of who is a victim.

Primary prevention

Increasingly, councils are putting greater efforts into the primary prevention of gender-based violence rather than just into crisis intervention. The Change the Story framework has valuable information on how organisations can work towards primary prevention which at its heart is focused on changing gender-norms and ideas of healthy relationships. These principles can be reflected throughout council planning, from the way female councilors and staff are treated, to how public spaces are designed for women's safety, how books in council libraries promote positive images of women, and to how women and men can participate in social groups outside

the home. Local Government NSW, and Domestic Violence NSW are working to create local government specific training on primary prevention.

The impact of natural disasters and other significant events such as COVID-19, including health requirements such as staying at home, on the prevalence of domestic violence and provision of support services

Responding to violence during and post disasters

Research shows that violence against women increases at times of disaster. This can include an increase in severity for women already experiencing domestic or family violence, or first-time occurrences. While natural disasters do not cause domestic violence, they exacerbate underlying factors.

In Australia, research conducted after Black Saturday in 2009 found there had been a reported increase in domestic abuse in bushfire-affected communities, with some women disclosing the crisis had triggered violence including in male partners who'd never before been abusive.

The 2019-20 Black Summer fires followed by the coronavirus epidemic in 2020 have led to a spike in domestic violence reports. It would have been incredibly useful for councils to have had access to the Toolkit in mid-2019 and to commence their journey in the prevention of domestic violence and gender inequality.

Local Government plays an important role in emergency management – encouraging their communities to plan and prepare for natural disasters; and facilitating immediate relief for, and long-term recovery of, impacted communities. The Municipal Association of Victoria developed a Gender and Emergency Management Strategy after the rise in family violence following the Black Saturday bushfires. Councils also draw on a resource called the Gender and Disaster Pod (GAD pod). The GAD Pod, an initiative of Women's Health Goulburn North East; Women's Health in the North; and Monash University Disaster Resilience Initiative, has developed National Gender and Emergency Management Guidelines and a checklist – these tools provide advice on how to apply a gender lens in practice as well training packages and a range of other resources. The resources assist in raising awareness of the early signs of domestic violence and quickly refer issues to support services. The MAV and Victorian councils highly value this resource.

Research reports into domestic violence after Australia's bushfires and now the coronavirus pandemic provide concrete evidence of the increase in domestic violence following natural disasters and identify some of the reasons and suggest possible solutions.

Debra Parkinson, a research fellow with the Monash University Disaster Resilience Initiative who studied the reported increase in domestic violence after the Black Saturday bushfires, said bushfires can shut down support services and other crucial infrastructure in communities, putting huge pressure on families. Women already living in an abusive relationship may experience greater severity post-disaster, because they may be separated from support systems

such as family and friends that offered some protection. These women may be forced to rely on the perpetrator for survival, or access to services.

The lack of family violence data is itself a key finding of her research into the Black Saturday bushfires. In the months after the fires, with ongoing grief and bereavement, homelessness, impassable roads and lost infrastructure, family violence was not prioritised at a systems level. In the urgency of disaster recovery, where needs are fundamental, attention to family violence became secondary. Support services are over-burdened with primary and fire-related needs in the aftermath of a disaster and this serves to exacerbate a willingness to overlook violence against women.

The stressors which increase family violence post-disaster are echoed now with the COVID-19 shut-down, as families are locked in. Women and children are locked in with perpetrators of family violence, and men who now become perpetrators of family violence, triggered by stresses such as overcrowding, unemployment, loss of income, lost businesses, etc. In lockdown, women do not have the usual supports like family and other social interaction such as childcare, schools and friends.

Family violence workers are reporting new forms of violence, specific to COVID-19, including perpetrators demanding that women wash their hands and body excessively, to the point that they bled, and spreading rumours that victims had COVID-19 so no one would come near them. Many women, at home with an abuser, will find it even more difficult to make the call for help.

An Australian study released in June 2020 by Monash University measured the early impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on domestic violence. The study surveyed 166 family violence victim support practitioners across Victoria during a four-week period from the end of April into May. The report *Responding to the 'shadow pandemic'* finds the pandemic had increased the frequency of violence against women, the severity of violence and the number of first-time family violence reports.

The report calls on the federal and state governments to commit additional resources to ensure the safety of victim survivors, including children, during this time. Specifically:

- provide additional secure housing options for women and children experiencing family violence;
- resource the specialist family violence sector, including men's and mental health services, to adapt their delivery models to be remotely accessible and to meet a likely heightened demand;
- resource police services to be adequately equipped to maintain visibility of high-risk perpetrators and families during periods of isolation;
- increase funding of 1800 Respect, the national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling, information and referrals telephone service to meet increased demand; and
- increase funding of community legal services to meet the demand of shared-care related inquiries to minimise the risk of children being isolated with an abusive parent.

Whilst local government is not generally involved in providing support services, it works in partnership with other organisations who do provide services. It is keenly aware of the need for additional safe housing options, the need for women to have safe avenues to report abuse, the need for a better understanding/awareness by police and support services of the very real escalation of domestic violence following natural disaster/pandemic events and the need to give domestic violence calls adequate priority during times of disaster.

The LG Domestic Violence Toolkit will assist local governments to better prepare their councils for prevention activities. Additional training and awareness raising of the Toolkit are also important in ensuring uptake by local government.

Summary

Councils stand ready to play their part in preventing domestic violence in their communities and to improve gender equality. The Local Government Toolkit will be a valuable resource in enabling councils to start their journey or to increase their preventative activities. Councils have the potential to have a significant impact at community level.

For councils to be able to contribute significantly to this important national priority, further funding assistance is critical. Local Government, as the level of government closest to the community, understands the need to increase efforts to prevent domestic violence and the benefits this has for communities.

It is important to note that Councils operate under increasingly constrained financial environments including rate capping (in some states), cost shifting from the State/Territory Governments and increasing costs of delivering services to communities. Federal Government funding is important in enabling councils to commence domestic violence prevention activities or upscale their existing activities.

The importance of prevention initiatives is recognised in recent ALGA pre-Budget Submissions. In these submissions, ALGA has sought funding to acknowledge and expand the important role Local Government plays in undertaking the preventative health initiatives.

Recommendations

1. ALGA recommends that local government be represented on the Women's Safety Taskforce. The voice of local government and communities should be reflected in the development of policy and initiatives. It is important that all levels of government sit at the table to develop collective solutions to the problem.
2. Councils will make limited progress in implementing the Toolkit without dedicated funding. As domestic and family violence is a national priority (under the National Federation Reform Council), ALGA recommends dedicated funding from the Commonwealth to local government, to enable councils to implement the Local

Government Toolkit and develop council plans to address domestic violence in their communities.

ALGA proposes 2 options for funding to local government (in the following order of priority):

Option 1: Funding directly to councils, based on a proven funding model

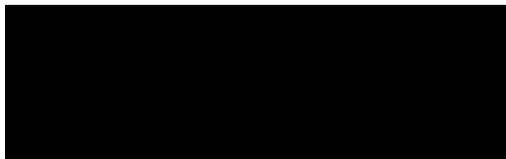
Option 2: Funding for a dedicated domestic violence policy officer in each State and Territory Association

This funding should be provided over a fixed-term 5 year period.

3. Training material, support packages and awareness raising will also be important in maximizing uptake of the Toolkit by councils and for the sustainability of domestic violence activities at the local government level. ALGA recommends Commonwealth funding for the development of these resources for all councils.
4. ALGA supports calls for increased Commonwealth funding for support services, safe housing and psychological support for people suffering domestic abuse, which needs to be reassessed and boosted during natural disasters and pandemics.

Please contact [REDACTED], Senior Policy Adviser on [REDACTED] if you require further information on this issue.

Yours sincerely



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