

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES AUSTRALIA WELCOMES FEDERAL FUNDING BOOST FOR NORTHERN TERRITORY'S DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE RESPONSE

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Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) warmly welcomes the announcement of targeted funding from the Federal Government to the Northern Territory's Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence (DFS) response. This funding is a vital step towards addressing the persistent and critical challenges faced by communities in the Territory.

Dr Jerry Nockles, CEO of CSSA, said: "We commend the Federal Government's commitment to invest \$17 million to strengthen frontline services, prevent violence, and save lives in the Northern Territory. This funding includes extending the Leaving Violence Program Regional Trial, supporting the 500 Workers Initiative, and funding early intervention programs for young people."

"We are inspired by the words of Pope Leo XIV in his recent encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*, where he calls us to 'get our hands dirty in the construction zone of our time.' This powerful message reminds us that real change demands active, hands-on engagement with the complex realities faced by vulnerable people."

"Our member CatholicCare NT's participation in the recent Roundtable discussions reflects the collaborative spirit essential to making meaningful progress. CSSA and our members like CatholicCare NT stand ready to work hand in hand with both Federal and Northern Territory Governments to ensure this funding translates into effective frontline services, prevention initiatives and ongoing support for victim-survivors."

CSSA notes the Federal and Territory Ministers' emphasis on prevention, early intervention, and culturally appropriate responses, which align closely with the sector's priorities. The focus on supporting First Nations families and recognising their unique needs is particularly welcome, as is the commitment to keeping children safe and supporting kinship carers. CSSA values our engagement with the Northern Territory Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, the Hon. Minister Cahill and looks forward to continuing this constructive dialogue.

A number of CSSA members operate in the Northern Territory, including Jesuit Social Services and MacKillop Family Services, contributing vital services and support to vulnerable individuals and families across the region.

CSSA Director of Policy and Advocacy, Carmel Sefian, said these services continue to face significant challenges in recruiting, training and retaining skilled practitioners, including a strong and sustainable family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV) frontline workforce.

"We welcome the Government's recognition of sustained investment in workforce capacity to ensure victim-survivors receive the timely, high-quality support they need. We are pleased workforce issues are a key pillar of the Second Action Plan consultations under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children" Ms Sefian added.

CatholicCare NT CEO, Jayne Lloyd welcomed the investment, which provides certainty that critical services can continue to support victim-survivors and their families across the Territory.

"For decades, CatholicCare NT has been delivering on-the-ground services across urban, regional and remote communities, and ongoing investment is essential to ensure that critical service provision continues into the future."

"At the same time, we know the Northern Territory continues to experience some of the highest rates of domestic, family and sexual violence in the country, and we urgently need sustained focus on early intervention and prevention initiatives. We will continue to call for appropriate, ongoing investment in prevention and early intervention, alongside secure, long-term funding for specialist family violence services funded by the Australian Government, so that communities can access the support they need now and into the future," said Ms Lloyd.

Dr Nockles added:

"While this funding announcement is a welcome and necessary step, there remains much work to be done. The DFSV sector has long called for adequate, needs-based investment that addresses both immediate crisis response and long-term prevention. CSSA and our members stand ready to contribute expertise, compassion, and partnership to this critical endeavour."

The funding package includes:

- \$3.54 million to extend the Leaving Violence Program Regional Trial in Darwin and surrounding regions for 12 months, providing financial support to help women safely leave violent intimate partner relationships.
- \$12.051 million to strengthen frontline services and continue the 500 Workers Initiative through to 2030, ensuring the workforce is equipped to support victim-survivors.
- \$1.333 million for the Early Interventions for Young People Program, delivering culturally safe support for First Nations young people aged 12 to 25 who use, or are at risk of using, violence in intimate relationships, while keeping victim-survivor safety front and centre.

These investments reinforce the Government's commitment to tackling family, domestic and sexual violence in the Northern Territory through prevention, early intervention, and frontline support.

CSSA reiterates its commitment to supporting the Northern Territory's DFSV response and calls on stakeholders to maintain momentum in this vital work to protect and empower vulnerable individuals and families.

ENDS

About CSSA

CSSA is the national peak body for Catholic social service providers. CSSA's network of forty-two member agencies runs across all Australian States and Territories with a combined total of over seven hundred sites, delivering essential services to vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians.

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