



**National Women's  
Safety Alliance**

# **POLICY POSITION: INCREASE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS**

Proudly led by YWCA Canberra, the Working with Women Alliance (WwWA) is one of the five National Women's Alliances that play a key role in ensuring women's voices are central in the policy development process by providing evidence-based, intersectional gender equality advice and civil society expertise to government on areas of most impact and influence to Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality.

The National Women's Safety Alliance is a portfolio under the WwWA that brings together a diversity of voices, expertise and experience to inform and guide national policy on women's safety.

# POLICY STATEMENT: INCREASE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS

## Executive Summary

The acceleration of gender-based violence has increased pressure on Australia's housing crisis and frontline services. Demand for support in the face of violence vastly outweighs the available supply and leaves women and children at great risk of homelessness or further violence.

Experiences of gender inequality increase the risk of poverty, limit opportunities to escape and recover from violence, contribute to housing insecurity and homelessness and result in lower superannuation balances and reduced financial stability in retirement.

This policy position statement highlights the urgent need for policies that prioritise women's access to safe, affordable housing, comprehensive income support, and sustainable frontline services as a response to extreme rates of gender-based violence. In addition, it calls for pro-active policies that eliminate instances of violence in the first place.

## Key Recommendations

Increase financial support for survivors:

1. Increase the Leaving Violence Payment to \$7,000, aligning with cost-of-living needs to provide adequate financial security for survivors. This would involve an increase of \$370 million taking the total cost of the program to \$1.3 billion.



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# Evidence-based payments for leaving violence urgently needed

The Australian Government's Leaving Violence Program (LVP) currently provides up to \$5,000 in financial assistance to support victim-survivors of intimate partner violence in escaping unsafe situations. Given the rising cost of living and increasing financial barriers to leaving violent relationships, there is strong justification for increasing the payment to \$7,000.

The new LVP initiative, announced in May 2024, has committed \$925 million over five years. Raising the payment to \$7,000 represents a 40% increase per recipient. Assuming similar demand levels, the cost of maintaining the program at the higher payment rate would require an additional \$370 million over five years, bringing the total program cost to approximately \$1.3 billion. If demand increases due to greater accessibility and awareness, further investment may be required. Increasing the payment would align with the actual costs of establishing a new, safe household, which include rent, bond payments, furniture, utilities, and essential items. The 2023 LVP evaluation found that 92% of recipients reported reduced financial stress due to the payment, and 51% indicated they could not have left their relationship without it.[i]

Increasing the payment would:

- Improve financial security for survivors, reducing the likelihood of return to abusive situations.
- Enhance long-term stability by covering essential costs associated with transitioning to independent living.
- Decrease reliance on emergency services and crisis housing, leading to long-term savings for government support services.

## Increase the Leaving Violence Payment to \$7,000 with targeted eligibility criteria.

Raising the payment amount will better reflect the actual financial costs associated with escaping violent relationships. However, to ensure financial sustainability and impact, eligibility criteria should be refined to prioritise those facing the most severe financial hardship. This targeted approach will help maximise the program's effectiveness while managing increased demand.



# References

[i] Department of Social Services, 2023, Evaluation of the Escaping Violence Payment (EVP) trial. Australian Government.



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