



## **Senator the Hon Anne Ruston**

Minister for Families and Social Services

Minister for Women's Safety

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

17 October 2021

#### **New payment to help women escape violent relationships**

From Tuesday the Morrison Government will provide women leaving a violent relationship access to a one-off payment of up to \$5,000 to help them establish a life free of violence.

Under the two-year Escaping Violence Payment trial women will receive financial assistance of up to \$1,500 in cash with the remainder available for goods and services or direct payments of bonds, school fees or other support to help establish a safe home.

The UnitingCare Australia Consortium has been selected as the service provider to deliver the payments and will also support women to engage with other relevant services that support women and their children. This includes other Commonwealth or state and territory government funded community services.

Minister for Women's Safety Anne Ruston said the payments would help address the financial barriers that may stop women leaving violent relationships.

"We know that financial hardship as well as economic abuse, which may involve interfering with work or controlling or withholding money, reduces women's ability to acquire and use money and makes it difficult to leave violent relationships," Minister Ruston said.

"The new Escaping Violence Payment aims to help address those issues so women have more security when making that brave decision to leave any form of intimate partner violence – including physical violence, coercive control and financial abuse.

"The payments will assist people who need financial support to leave. We know the size of the house a woman is fleeing doesn't matter – often she bundles the kids into the car, maybe the dog too and they leave with nothing more than the clothes on their backs.

"The Morrison Government is absolutely committed to ending domestic, family and sexual violence and this new program offers another tool in the toolkit under our record \$1.1 billion investment in women's safety."

UnitingCare Australia National Director Claerwen Little said the Escaping Violence Payment would help women to access some of the essentials needed to create a safe home and life for themselves and their children.

"The UnitingCare Network has extensive experience supporting victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence and staff would leverage that knowledge to provide a wrap-around service for women and their children," Ms Little said.

“We believe that all people, especially women and their children, have the right to live freely and without fear, and this payment is an important step forward to ending violence against women and their children.

“As part of the individualised support packages, UnitingCare Network agencies will provide tailored assistance and engage with other relevant agencies that support women and their children including other Commonwealth or state and territory government funded community services.”

The Escaping Violence Payment is not considered taxable or reportable income and will not impact on any other social security payments a recipient may be receiving. Eligibility includes financial stress and evidence of domestic violence including, but not limited to, a referral from a family and domestic violence service provider with a risk assessment and safety plan, an AVO, court order or a police report.

Women can apply for the payment through UnitingCare Network from 19 October 2021. More information will be available at [unitingvictas.org.au/escaping-violence-payment](https://unitingvictas.org.au/escaping-violence-payment)

The Escaping Violence Payment will build on and complement existing programs offered by state and territories, as well as Australian Government support offered to women experiencing violence, including:

- Services Australia’s [Crisis Payment for Extreme Circumstances of Family and Domestic Violence](#)
- [No Interest Loan Scheme for Women Experiencing Domestic Violence](#)
- [Emergency Relief](#)
- [Keeping Women Safe in Their Homes](#).

The two-year trial will be independently evaluated to assess the benefit of the payment, including demand, eligibility criteria, needs of specific cohorts, and how it works with related services.

The \$144.8 million Escaping Violence Payment trial is part of the landmark \$1.1 billion women’s safety package contained in the 2021-22 Women’s Budget Statement.

*If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit [www.1800RESPECT.org.au](https://www.1800RESPECT.org.au)*

**ENDS**