



## Council warns about impact of Homelessness on Family Domestic Violence victims

The Ethnic Communities Council of WA, Vice – President women’s issues, Ms Mamta Kochhar today called on the State Government to take immediate action to assist Victims escaping Family and Domestic Violence.

“The Minister for the Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence, Hon Simone McGurk needs to take swift action to ensure that women who have suffered significant trauma are not treated as homeless persons and accommodated in homeless shelters because they are unable to access Women’s refuges due to the backlog being caused by WA’s homelessness dilemma”.

“Minister McGurk needs to ensure that these victims are housed appropriately in motels or hotels till they have access to a women’s refuge. We understand that the current policy of Crisis Care is to only pay for 3 nights in a motel and then if a woman is unable to access a refuge she is left to her own devices.” Outreach services who may be assisting the women are then left to either try and get communities to find housing for the women (particularly the case with women from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background) or to see if they can obtain Emergency relief monies to pay for hotel or motel accommodation till suitable housing or refuges are found.”

Ms Kochhar added: Some examples of what we have seen recently are as follows:

- Women being housed in motels by CaLD outreach services through Emergency Relief funding because they cannot access a women’s refuge due to blockages then having to be housed by other community members. These women become couch surfers (moving from house to house) until permanent housing can be found.
- Women having to ask Family whether they can reside with them as they have nowhere else to go. This then increases the risk to the extended family.
- A Muslim woman who has been abused by her partner and pushed out of her home and kept away from her children being asked to reside in a Homeless Shelter.

“These incidents should not be happening to anyone and we believe this would also be the case faced by women from a mainstream background. If we wish to continue to highlight that Family and Domestic Violence is against the law and seek to encourage victims to come forward then surely the Government has a responsibility to ensure that they are housed in a safe alternative environment when a Woman’s Refuge is unavailable.”

ECCWA calls on the Minister and Premier to act immediately as a matter of urgency.

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