

Launch of "Home Safe Home" Report

Parliament House, 30 November 2000



Funded by
Partnerships Against Domestic Violence

Speech by Julie Oberin Chair WESNET National Committee

WELCOME

I'd like to welcome everyone here today.

My name is Julie Oberin, and I'm the National Chairperson of WESNET (the Women's Services Network).



WESNET was contracted by the Commonwealth Government to undertake this research and I am very proud to be involved in its launch today.

The Women's Services Network (WESNET) is a national organisation of women's services across Australia dealing with violence against women, in particular domestic and family violence, and related issues. WESNET is recognised as the national sector peak advocacy body and has considerable expertise in the areas of policy development, research and the delivery of quality advice and information to government on issues impacting on women and children who have experienced domestic and/or family violence.

WESNET is one of three founding organisations of the Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations and is funded to consult with the field, develop policy and submissions on women's homelessness issues.

WESNET has a current membership of approximately 400 member organisations from across Australia. Member organisations are primarily involved in the direct provision of services for women and children and come from a broad range of areas. The types of women's services provided by WESNET member organisations include crisis services, women's refuges, domestic violence outreach services, referral services, sexual assault services, housing services, specialist children's responses including children's counselling services, Indigenous women's services, immigrant and non-English speaking background services, and young women's services.



WESNET is an organisation which has above all, a practical understanding of the fundamental issues relating to domestic and family violence. This is

because WESNET consists of such a diverse range of services which are involved in the day to day support of women and children who experience domestic and family violence.

WESNET links these services from around Australia allowing the development of a national perspective on domestic and family violence, women's homelessness and service delivery. The gendered nature of homelessness and domestic and family violence means that maintaining sound policy advice based on a gender analysis is essential to addressing these issues effectively.

WESNET is in the third year of a three year consultancy supporting the Partnerships Against Domestic Violence program. Part of our current responsibilities are to advise on the National Community Awareness Project and the development of the National Domestic Violence Competency Standards, and to more broadly support the meta-evaluation of the Partnerships Against Domestic Violence Program as a whole.

Over the last twelve months we have been involved in this major piece of research which is being launched today. Home Safe Home: The link between domestic and family violence and women's homelessness". This research, which was based on the concept of preventing women and children becoming homeless after experiences of domestic and family violence, is a challenging report. Penny Becker will highlight some of these challenges in a few minutes.

As Chair of WESNET and a member of the project management group, I can say that one of the most significant aspects of this research was the process of managing the project through a collaborative approach with members of WESNET, the Office of the Status of Women, and the Department of Family and Community Services. The joint work, I am convinced, made this research that much better.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge the work of the Project Management Group who saw this project to fruition. Penny Becker from the Central Eastern Domestic Violence Service in South Australia who chaired the project management group; Pauline Woodbridge from the North Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Centre; Kedy Kristal from the Pat Giles Centre in Western Australia; Vivienne Evans from the Office of the Status of Women; Vicki McGlashan, Cordelia Hull, Peter Stanfield and Eileen Baker from the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services; Dallas de-Brabander formerly from both WESNET and OSW; and Veronica Wensing formerly from WESNET. There are a number of others who have been important influences during the life of this project and I thank them for their input, in particular Dr Dianne Heriot, Keith Ogborn and Helen Skeat.

On behalf of the project management group I would like to thank the research team who undertook this research on our behalf, the Social Policy Research Group from the University of South Australia, Donna Chung, Rosemary Kennedy, Bev O'Brien and Sarah Wendt, with assistance from Sam Cody from Shelter South Australia. In my view, it is an excellent report. It provides us with new findings as well as consolidates knowledge we workers in the field already knew. It is good to have this information documented.

On behalf of WESNET and the Project Management group I would like to thank Penny Becker who Chairs WESNET's Partnerships Against Domestic Violence committee and Chaired the Project Management Group for this report. Penny Becker will now talk about the research and some of its findings.

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