

MEDIA RELEASE

New Foundation to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children

The Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA) commends the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments for the establishment of the new National Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children. As the Commonwealth funded, issue based alliance on violence against women, AWAVA believes that the \$6.5 million invested in the new Foundation is evidence of bipartisan government support for and a strong commitment to the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children*. We extend our congratulations to Natasha Stott Despoja inaugural Chair of the Foundation and the other members of the Board on their appointments.

AWAVA is pleased that in her speech at the launch, Minister Collins acknowledged the important work of the women's refuge and rape crisis movements in Australia over the last 30 years, which laid the foundations for this new initiative. Margaret Augerinos, Acting Chair of AWAVA and Women's Services Network (WESNET) representative says *"We look forward to working with the Foundation on engaging and raising awareness in the community of all forms of violence against women. The new Foundation will no doubt support and enhance the innovative practices that are already present across the nation at the grass root level within the domestic and family violence and sexual assault sectors"*.

Chrystina Stanford, AWAVA Advisory Group member and The National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence (NASASV) ACT Representative on AWAVA says *"we welcome the Foundation as an important part of a broader strategy to prevent violence against women and girls. We need to focus on the complexity of all forms of violence including sexual violence. At the launch of the foundation, Minister Collins pointed out that 34% of Australians continue to believe that rape is caused by men's poor impulse control. These are the attitudes we need to change"*.

Samantha Bowden, AWAVA Advisory Group member and NASASV NT Representative, applauds the establishment of the Foundation and adds *"we need to challenge the patriarchal structures that construct and reinforce an inequitable distribution of power between women and men under which sexual violence occurs. We must break the cycles of shame and secrecy that surround sexual violence across Australia"*.

AWAVA welcomes the establishment of the new Foundation and looks forward to providing advice, supporting, and working with the Foundation. Margaret Augerinos stressed: *"AWAVA is keen to participate in the development of the Foundation. The National Plan requires continued and coordinated partnerships and it is key that the new foundation develops on work already being progressed within the women's sector."*

For Further Information

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