

## MEDIA RELEASE

THE CENTRE FOR WOMEN & CO. DISCUSS SEVERITY OF DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE AND WHAT IS NEEDED MOVING FORWARD.

*Underwood, Logan, February 24 2021: Stacey Ross and Amy Wormwell - CEO and Clinical Services Manager of The Centre for Women & Co. call for shift in accountability from victim to perpetrator, community education and continued funding.*

"There is rarely any onus on perpetrators to be accountable. We know first-hand that women do everything they can to be safe, but the perpetrator accountability is not working and we have systems that are broken. From what we understand, Doreen accessed services and did everything she could, we know Hannah and her family did everything they could, so when is it going to be about perpetrators doing everything they can to not hurt people?" queried Stacey. "We exhaust ourselves on the front line to ensure women, young people, and children are safe. Holding perpetrators accountable is the area that needs review."

Stacey highlighted the seriousness of coercive control, "The definition of DFV in legislation should ultimately include coercive control as it is a pattern of power, control and fear." Amy emphasised that more than just legislative change is needed, "If extensive education around domestic and family violence (including coercive control) doesn't occur alongside legislative change reform, then the challenge will remain the same." Stacey continued, "We know that education is key. Educating children, young people and our communities about what constitutes a healthy relationship and teaching people that they deserve to be safe in their lives and where to go to seek support is one of our top priorities. Further education and early intervention supports and resources are needed. We hear all the time that it's a funding black hole, but if we don't educate and build the capacity of our community as a whole then we will be forever fighting this battle and be on the back foot as we are now."

Amy acknowledged the importance of ongoing funding, "We throw everything we have at supporting anyone who accesses our service, including high risk cases. Breaking these cycles requires an incredible amount of resources. At present we are equipped to only provide service after the violence has occurred rather than look at prevention and intervention holistically." Stacey added, "We were at capacity prior to COVID-19 hitting, so we know what it's like to work under pressure 24/7. The COVID-19 funding boost was a welcome relief to our services and others across the country, but when it ends in June with no promise of further support, our services, along with many more will be in crisis. The outcome of that will be catastrophic."

"Finally, I would like to say that from everyone at The Centre for Women & Co, we are thinking of Doreen and her family and friends at this time. Our deepest sympathies are with them during this extremely difficult time. She was a mother, friend, daughter and woman, who deserved to live her life."

National numbers where you can reach out for support:

DVConnect's Women's Line - 1800 811 811  
1800 RESPECT – 1800 737 732

In case of a life-threatening emergency, please call 000.

The Centre for Women & Co. (for women living in Logan and the Redlands) - 3050 3060