

CWA of NSW puts Awareness Week spotlight on domestic violence 'national emergency'

Hi , The Country Women's Association (CWA) of NSW is preparing to launch its annual Awareness Week campaign on September 6, this year focussing on the issue of domestic violence. The 2020 campaign is highlighting the confronting statistics that underline the need for urgent action in the areas of support services, perpetrator rehabilitation and prevention programs, particularly in rural and regional NSW, where this kind of assistance can be limited and often hours away. The CWA of NSW is partnering with White Ribbon Australia and Domestic Violence NSW on this year's Awareness Week, supportive of each organisation's lobbying efforts and services offered to victims and their families. CWA of NSW State President Stephanie Stanhope said the organisation wanted to highlight the urgency around more action on the issue in an effort to turn around the confronting statistics. "The rates of violence we are seeing are not acceptable in our communities and we are calling for more initiatives, strategies and resources to go towards addressing the issue, particularly in rural and regional areas. We also want to encourage women who are living with violence to reach out for assistance, and the message from communities must be that victims are not alone and will not be judged, but rather listened to and supported," she said. The campaign runs from September 6 to 13 and for interview requests with CWA of NSW president Stephanie Stanhope or Awareness Week partners White Ribbon Australia and Domestic Violence NSW, please let me know. Branches across the state are participating in the campaign with their own awareness-raising events, subject to COVID-19 restrictions at this time, so get in touch with your local branch for find out what they have planned. A branch locator can be found at: <https://www.cwaofnsw.org.au/branchesgroups.html> Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of New South Wales, is the Patron of the CWA of NSW and has prepared a message in support of this year's Awareness Week campaign, which can be viewed here. Kind regards, Kylie Galbraith Seftons Tamworth NSW 2340 Ph. 0411 480 208

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CWA of NSW puts Awareness Week spotlight on domestic violence 'national emergency' A call for domestic violence to be recognised as a "national emergency" is at the heart of this year's Country Women's Association of NSW Awareness Week, beginning on Sunday, September 6. This year's Awareness Week is shining the spotlight on the confronting statistics that underline the need for urgent action in the areas of support services, perpetrator rehabilitation and prevention programs, particularly in rural and regional NSW, where this kind of assistance can be hours away. This comes as COVID-19 and associated restrictions have exacerbated the issue of domestic violence in 2020, with restrictions putting victims in closer proximity to their abusers, for often longer periods of time, making it harder for victims to reach out for help. Statistics show: One woman is killed every nine days and one man is killed every 29 days in a domestic violence-related situation. One in six women and one in 16 men in Australia have experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or previous cohabiting partner. Indigenous women are 32 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence than non-indigenous women. Domestic and family violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women and their children. Women in regional, rural and remote areas are more likely than women in urban areas to experience domestic and family violence, and those who do seek help can find difficulty in accessing services due to geographical isolation (services/emergency accommodation may be hundreds of kilometres away) and lack of transportation options. CWA of NSW State President Stephanie Stanhope said the organisation wanted to highlight the urgency around more action on the issue in an effort to turn around the confronting statistics. "Figures like these are not acceptable in our communities and we are calling for more initiatives, strategies and resources to go towards addressing the issue, particularly in rural and regional areas. We also want to encourage women who are living with violence to reach out for assistance, because there are services there to help and communities who will stand behind them. The message from communities must be that victims are not alone and will not be judged, but rather listened to and supported," she said. The CWA of NSW is partnering with White Ribbon Australia and Domestic Violence NSW on this year's campaign, supportive of each organisation's lobbying efforts and services offered to victims and their families. The organisation is supporting Domestic Violence NSW's calls for law and policy change aimed at helping prevent and address the issues around domestic and family violence, and the call for a forum to help better understand the needs of victims in non-metropolitan areas. "People in rural, regional and outer metropolitan experiencing domestic violence face unique challenges and have specific needs. We are calling on the NSW Government to hold a regional forum to meet with local domestic violence services so that everyone, wherever they live, can access the support they need to be safe," said Delia Donovan, Interim CEO of Domestic Violence NSW. White Ribbon Australia's call for more behavioural change and support programs for perpetrators, and for those who feel like they are a risk to their partner/families and need immediate support, is also being supported by the CWA of NSW. White Ribbon Australia Executive Director Brad Chilcott said Men's Behaviour Change (MBC) programs work with perpetrators to identify, understand and take responsibility for their violence, anger and abuse. "But demand far exceeds supply. Right now, there are hundreds of men across Australia, including regional NSW, who recognise their behaviour is unsafe and are reaching out for support, only to discover how little is available," Mr Chilcott said. "Recent data from No To Violence shows that men are waiting up to 40 weeks to access specialist MBC programs, leaving women and children vulnerable to ongoing abuse." In a recent postal vote on policy motions – which will form the basis of CWA of NSW's lobbying efforts for the next 12 months – members overwhelmingly

endorsed two motions around domestic violence: one urging governments to recognise the issue as a “national emergency”, and another calling for all governments to implement relevant recommendations and best practice relating to protecting survivors of domestic violence. This includes recommendations from the Australian Law Reform Commission’s family law review and the National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety. “Members are passionate about advocating for victims of domestic violence and for more support services in their local communities. White Ribbon Australia recognises individual communities are best placed to identify just what they need to help address the issue in their own neighbourhoods, so is urging communities to consider forming their own community action groups,” Stephanie said. “This Awareness Week we’re sending the message that we can all help make a difference if we stand together and make the safety of everyone in our community our top priority.” For those in need of assistance, 1800RESPECT is the national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service, which can be contacted on 1800 737 732. For more information on White Ribbon Australia go to <https://www.whiteribbon.org.au/>, and for Domestic Violence NSW visit <https://www.dvnsw.org.au/>

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