

## National Families Week 2019: The AASW renews its call for urgent action to address family violence

During National Families Week 2019 (15-21 May), the AASW celebrates families as the central building block of our society. This year's theme, Stronger Families, Stronger Communities, highlights their protective and nurturing capacity, while also recognising the threats to families from gender-based violence. AASW National President Christine Craik said, "As social workers, we see the pivotal role that families play in building healthy and supportive communities. In working together to improve wellbeing, we see the great diversity and resilience of families in the face of significant challenges. "However, we also see far too often that the very place that women and children should feel safe, within a family unit, is the very place where they are most at risk." Family violence is still far too prevalent in Australia, with those who perpetrate family violence destroying the safety and caring that the family unit should provide to all its members. Data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows that family violence is a leading cause of homelessness in children under 10. The high rate of child protection notifications correlate with the family violence that is perpetrated against women and children. At least one woman per week is killed by a current or former partner in Australia. Ms Craik said, "These devastating instances of family violence need to stop. It begins with cultural change and government policies, including funding of early intervention as well as support at the crisis and recovery level, especially housing and income support for those escaping violence. "We are now in the last throes of a Federal election campaign. In our Election Platform 2019, we have asked for the next government to commit to using the recommendations of the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence as a blueprint for national systemic reforms. "If Australia is to build Stronger Families and Stronger Communities, this must begin with addressing the national emergency that is occurring within the family home across Australia." Christine Craik is available for interview.

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