

Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia responds to NSW Budget.

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[Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia](#) (R&DVSA) has welcomed the increased funding for frontline sexual and domestic violence services in today's NSW State Budget, and the particular emphasis on services that support victim-survivors to stay home safely with the perpetrator removed.

"We know that frontline sexual and domestic violence services were slammed during the pandemic as violence and abuse escalated behind closed doors, and this demand hasn't abated," said new R&DVSA CEO, Hayley Foster.

"It's reassuring to know the NSW Government has responded to the evidence of this need and is putting funding where it is needed most to promote safety at home, at work, and in the community, and furthermore, to hold people using violence and abuse to account."

R&DVSA noted the significant backlog in sexual and domestic violence matters in the NSW Local Court as a result of the pandemic, and the need for increased investment in this area to ensure timely access to safety and justice and trauma-informed processes for people impacted by such violence and abuse.

"We are pleased to see the investment in Local Court infrastructure and personnel. It's vital that people impacted by sexual, domestic and family violence can have their matters dealt with promptly and have access to a safe room and audio-visual link facilities to give evidence when they attend court."

Ms Foster identified this as a critical opportunity for the NSW Government to consider specialisation of courts hearing sexual and domestic violence matters: "It's high time courts hearing sexual, domestic and family violence matters are specialised, and their staff and judiciary receive best-practice training, underpinned by an evidence-based, trauma-informed approach."

R&DVSA will be working alongside key state-wide peak bodies to advise the NSW Government on the biggest priority areas for funding. One of these will be specialist services for survivors of sexual violence.

"It's essential that some of this new funding is invested in specialist sexual assault services, state-wide. This is an area that has too many service gaps, particularly in regional, rural and remote locations, and has been deprioritised and underfunded for far too long," noted Ms Foster.

"We would welcome further funding in the coming year to ensure that everyone impacted by sexual and domestic violence is able to access the trauma-specialist support they need to be safe and to recover, regardless of where they live."

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