Women's Legal Services Australia

Working for a legal system that keeps women safe

Federal Election Platform

Background

There has been a lot of debate around women's safety from family and sexual violence in recent years. Unfortunately, the Federal Government's response has not been adequete to create meaningful change.

Women's Legal Services Australia members from around Australia have determined the five most critical reforms for urgent action by the next Australian Parliament. This election platform will be shared with all candidates contesting the 2022 Federal Election.

Action on these five issues would represent significant progress towards a community where all women are better protected from violence in their homes and the community.

Action plan for the next Australian Parliament

1. **Strengthen the family law system's legal and safety response for women and children**
   This includes early judicial assessment of family violence in family law proceedings, removing the legal presumption of equal responsibility from the Family Law Act, developing a specialist family violence early intervention and mediation service and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of women and children is prioritised at all times.
2. **Provide greater economic justice to women through law reform and representation**
   This includes considering family violence as a factor in family law property division, and implementing both the recommendations of the Small Claims Large Battles Report and the Debts and Disappointments Report.
3. **Invest in specialist women's legal services' capacity to represent and protect women**
   This includes increased investment in specialist women's legal services, as part of a strong community legal sector, to provide representation and support – including to support women experiencing family violence around economic justice and poverty alleviation.
4. **Improve outcomes for women experiencing sexual violence and harassment**
   This includes implementing the recommendations of the Respect at Work Report, investing in innovative responses to sexual violence, piloting a specialist sexual violence court, and developing a national model for positive consent.
5. **Create a national framework and approach to women's safety and gender equality**
   This includes creating a national specialist women's legal services secretariat and introducing gender impact analysis of proposed federal policy and draft legislation.

About Women's Legal Services Australia

Women's Legal Services Australia (WLSA) is a national network of specialist community legal centres working to improve the lives of women and their children through legal representation, support and advocacy. WLSA members also advocate for stronger human rights and economic justice outcomes.

More information: www.wlsa.org.au