



MEDIA STATEMENT

Monday 6 May 2024

Please find below a statement by **Lin Hatfield Dodds, The Benevolent Society CEO** on the **NSW Government's Emergency Domestic Violence Prevention & Support Package**, announced today at **The Benevolent Society's Centre for Women's, Children's and Family Health** in Campbelltown, NSW.

Statement by Lin Hatfield Dodds, CEO, The Benevolent Society:

"As champions of social change to better protect and support women, The Benevolent Society welcomes the NSW Government's Domestic Violence Prevention & Support Package to address the long-running epidemic of gender-based violence against women.

"The Premier announced the package at [The Benevolent Society's Centre for Women's, Children's and Family Health](#) in Campbelltown, south-western Sydney, where our frontline staff are confronted daily with women living in a state of chronic stress, struggling with the ongoing effects of domestic violence and abuse, trauma and ongoing risk to safety.

"We welcome the announcement that integrated services will be expanded to support victim survivors navigate the complexity of the police, courts, healthcare, child protection and housing systems. The support women receive needs to be predictable and consistent no matter which door they walk through.

"The Benevolent Society Women's Centre provides a safe and accessible space where women can access services and supports during times of crisis and recovery, where they feel safe, acknowledged, and validated. We run the ['Staying Home Leaving Violence' \(SHLV\) program](#) at this space as part of a suite of integrated services. This specialist housing program aims to keep women and children safe in their own homes and support them to rebuild their lives after ending an abusive relationship. The Campbelltown program is at capacity and unable to take more referrals, leaving women at risk. We welcome increased funding for the program and its expansion across the state.

"Providing emergency and long-term housing for women fleeing violence is pressing. There is a heightened vulnerability for women who separate or intend to separate from their partners. Support options for women to escape these situations are critical. Affordable housing

availability (crisis, transitional and long-term) is vital to ensure women and children can safely leave violent partners.

“We welcome the implementation of a primary prevention strategy, early intervention support and other steps to strengthen the sector. We look forward to hearing more about proposed changes to improve bail laws and justice system responses to domestic violence. Judicial reform is key. We need a responsive justice system that holds perpetrators accountable and in custody and does not perpetuate further abuse of victim-survivors.

“The Benevolent Society has pioneered positive social outcomes for more than 200 years, particularly for women. We are committed to working alongside Government, other NGOs and advocates in the sector as well as the community at large to achieve whole-of-society change to better protect and support women and families.

“We need continual action to protect and keep safe the women and families who come to our Women’s Centre when they are already at the point of crisis, and the women and families like them all over Australia.”

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About The Centre for Women’s, Children’s and Family Health

The Benevolent Society runs the [Centre for Women’s, Children’s and Family Health](#) in Campbelltown, NSW. Established in 1994 with funding from a range of NSW and Commonwealth Government departments, the centre provides health and wellbeing services and interventions to support women, children and families. This includes crisis intervention, counselling, family therapy, psychoeducation, case management, therapeutic childcare and community education services aimed at educating and empowering women. The centre provides a safe space for women and children affected by domestic family violence, violence, and abuse to go during times of crisis and recovery. Its services promote the health, wellbeing, and healing of women across the life span, with a focus on access, equity, and equality.

About The Benevolent Society

[The Benevolent Society](#), operating since 1813, provides integrated support services to children, young people and families, older Australians, people with disability and carers. It has more than 1,000 people-first practitioners working to help people live their life, their way. As one of Australia’s first charitable organisations, The Benevolent Society has pioneered positive social change and uses its practice wisdom to advocate for a just, caring society.