

Homeless, Not Houseless – Violence Against Women Leads to Rising Rates of Homelessness

8 July 2016: Domestic violence is causing rising rates of homelessness for women and children with many unable to live in the houses they have because the risk of abuse is too great, according to White Ribbon Australia.

Forced to flee, a growing number of women and children are living in cars, caravan parks, boarding houses, refuges or couch surfing. It is a hidden crisis compounded by winter temperatures.

“Imagine having a house but you’re unable to go there because you’re not safe,” said Liam Dooley, Community Manager at White Ribbon Australia and a White Ribbon Ambassador.

“Our homes should be safe havens but for some women they are places of fear, control and intimidation. For them, fleeing is the better option, despite the cold and uncertainty.”

On average one woman a week is killed in Australia as a result of intimate partner violence, with 36 so far this year. Women are three times more likely than men to experience violence from an intimate partner.

“Most Australians would be shocked to hear that the single greatest reason for homelessness of women and children is domestic violence. And research has shown that the combination of these two traumas creates increased risk of mental health, behavioural and learning difficulties in children. It is a growing crisis,” Mr Dooley said.

White Ribbon is dedicated to highlighting the scourge of violence against women and working to prevent it from occurring at all. It seeks to create a change in culture that allows this violence to take place and an Australia in which violence against women is no longer misunderstood, excused or joked about.

One of the ways it does this is by raising awareness and operating prevention programs. **July 29 is the White Ribbon Night annual campaign** to raise critical funds for these vital prevention programs.

For an important cause, people can enjoy a night in with family and friends in their homes or hold an event to highlight this terrible reality for so many women and their children while raising funds to expand White Ribbon Australia’s prevention programs in schools, workplaces and the broader community.

The themes of the campaign this year embrace some of Australia’s most popular pastimes - footy, film and feast – to encourage everyone to come together and join the movement to end men’s violence against women.

The White Ribbon Campaign is the largest global male-led movement to stop violence against women. In Australia, White Ribbon’s prevention work engages men and boys to lead social change through its programs in schools, sporting codes, workplaces and communities. White Ribbon Night is one of the organisation’s two major annual campaigns, alongside White Ribbon Day on 25 November.

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