



Media Release

Women are dying– what can we do?

New research by Shelter SA shows that South Australia is lagging behind other jurisdictions when it comes to the prevention of domestic violence. Shelter SA is calling upon all State election parties and candidates to support the full implementation of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children by developing a State-wide education program for primary and secondary school students, but instead we learned today that Premier Jay Weatherill has announced \$6.7 million to be spent on coding and entrepreneurship.

Shockingly, one woman dies every week at the hands of her current or former partner in Australia and South Australia is no exception. The epidemic of domestic violence affects women three times more than men, with one in three women experiencing physical or sexual violence by someone they know.¹ Shelter SA is interested in domestic violence as South Australia is experiencing more and more women becoming homeless and citing the reason for their circumstances as abuse in their homes. Making the link between domestic violence and gender inequality is essential to change this situation.

Other than increasing the number of social housing properties available for South Australians experiencing domestic violence related homelessness, preventative measures such as education must be implemented.

Education is the most effective prevention method to increase awareness about gender equality and for young people to learn how to problem solve – both are crucial to prevent future violence. Dr. Alice Clark, Executive Director of Shelter SA said, “It’s only by teaching age-appropriate topics like what consent means, how to have respectful relationships and challenging negative gender stereotypes and inequality, that we will start to see a reduction in domestic violence”, and, “we also need to work more with male perpetrators to educate them and support them to stop the violence”.

¹ <https://www.whiteribbon.org.au/understand-domestic-violence/facts-violence-women/domestic-violence-statistics/>

Overwhelming evidence suggests that domestic violence stems from a historical trend of gender inequality. Even now, men continue to hold the majority of top political and corporate leadership positions around the world. We're witnessing a phenomenon with the #TimesUp campaign, of women coming forward in droves to disclose harassment and abuse by men in positions of power, not limited to the entertainment world.

It is imperative that the State of South Australia follows Victoria in its implementation of the government-funded Respectful Relationships program for every child. The anti-domestic violence program aims to teach children to be respectful citizens. There is a common misconception that the measure is just another Safe Schools program in disguise; this rumour undermines the importance of schooling children about gender equality and relationships.

Dr Clark said, "it is crucial for every child in South Australia to receive specific education to prevent women from dying at the hands of their partners". Breaking down rigid gendered behaviour through education is also one of the first steps in preventing the occurrence of domestic violence. Teaching boys that they can show weakness and girls that they can take charge is significant in altering the fabric of society that promotes the concept of men holding power over women.

To find out more see the Shelter SA [research report](#), [workshop report](#) and [poster](#) about the prevention of domestic violence in South Australia

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