

Women on Temporary Visas who are experiencing Domestic and Family Violence

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A human rights issue

- ▶ Everyone has the right to adequate housing and freedom from violence
- ▶ Access to safe housing for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women and children experiencing violence is a human rights issue
- ▶ CALD women on temporary visas face particular challenges accessing housing and other supports which increases the risk of them experiencing violence
- ▶ Services report this group of women are more likely to stay with or return to a violent partner due to a lack of other housing options

What kinds of temporary visas are women experiencing violence on?

- ▶ Partner visas
- ▶ Family visas
- ▶ Working visas
- ▶ Student visas
- ▶ Visitor visas
- ▶ Carer visas

Access to housing for women on temporary visas experiencing violence and their children

- ▶ Temporary accommodation (max 2 days in NSW)
- ▶ Crisis housing (6 months to 2 years in NSW)
- ▶ Social housing (no access until permanent residency in NSW)

Other issues for women on temporary visas experiencing violence and their children

- ▶ Income (Centrelink and right to work)
- ▶ Healthcare (Medicare and pharmaceuticals)
- ▶ Legal support (Migration and family law)
- ▶ Education and childcare

Overcoming barriers for women on temporary visas experiencing violence

- ▶ Create a culturally safe environment
- ▶ Increase knowledge of their rights
- ▶ Support women to report to police if they choose to
- ▶ Advocate to government (Housing and Human Services)
- ▶ Improve access to social networks (e.g. English classes)

Department of Social Services 2015 'Kitchen Table Conversations' Report

"The fear of losing the right to remain in Australia, whether real or perceived, was a significant factor in a woman's decision-making...

Perpetrators of domestic and family violence use the threat of losing the right to remain in Australia as a means of controlling women, and motivating them to stay in violent relationships.

For some CALD women, returning to their countries of origin carries the threat of strong disapproval and even violence from their families and communities. Others fear having to leave Australia will result in losing custody of their children." - page 25

What systemic reforms are needed?

All Australian governments can:

- ▶ Increase funding to homelessness and domestic and family violence services to provide accommodation, social and material support to women on temporary visas and their children.

The Commonwealth government can:

- ▶ Expand the family violence provision under the Migration Act so that it is available to all women on temporary visas experiencing violence.
- ▶ Provide immediate access to Centrelink, Medicare and appropriate legal support for women on temporary visas who are experiencing violence.
- ▶ Ensure accelerated visa and permanent residency processing for women on temporary visas who are experiencing violence.

The State and Territory governments can:

- ▶ Change policy to ensure women on temporary visas experiencing violence and their children are eligible to apply for social housing and rental assistance and subsidies.
- ▶ Advocate to the Commonwealth government for the law and policy changes that are increasing the risk of homelessness for women on temporary visas experiencing violence.

National Advocacy Group on Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Violence

- ▶ Around 30 national and state peak bodies and a diverse range of services, including women's refuges and other homelessness services
- ▶ Your service can contribute to the national collection of data on women on temporary visas experiencing violence in August 2018
- ▶ For more info and to join us, please contact: advocacy@dvnsw.org.au

For more information

- ▶ Dr Marie Segrave (2017), *Temporary migration and family violence: An analysis of victimisation, vulnerability and support*, Monash University in collaboration with InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence
- ▶ Dr Cathy Vaughan and team (2016), *Promoting community-led response to violence against immigrant and refugee women in metropolitan and regional Australia. The ASPIRE Project*, University of Melbourne, funded by ANROWS
- ▶ Department of Social Services (2015), 'Hearing her voice: Report from the kitchen table conversations with culturally and linguistically diverse women on violence against women and their children', Commonwealth of Australia