



Our ref: DHS/02748
Your ref: 7254463

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Ms Nat Cook MP
Member for Hurtle Vale
PO Box 158
WOODCROFT SA 5162

Sent by email: tristan.rust@parliament.sa.gov.au

Dear Ms Cook

I refer to your application under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991* (the Act), received by the Department of Human Services (DHS) on 5 February 2019, seeking access to:

Copies of any and all documents (including but not limited to physical and electronic material) regarding DHS, SAHT, SAHA or Ministerial Paper 18MHS/0714.

Two documents were located that fit within the scope of your request and I have determined to release these documents in full. Please find enclosed a copy of the documents released, and a document schedule containing a brief description of each document and determination in summary form.

In accordance with the requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular PC045, details of your FOI application, and the documents to which you are given access, may/will be published on the agency's disclosure log. A copy of PC045 can be found at <http://dpc.sa.gov.au/what-we-do/services-for-government/premier-and-cabinet-circulars>.

If you have any questions in relation to this matter, please contact Fiona Braendler, Senior FOI Officer, on telephone 8413 9094 or by email at DHSFreedomofInformation@sa.gov.au. If you disagree with publication, you will need to advise the Senior FOI Officer within two weeks of the date of this determination.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Schutz'.

Matthew Schutz
ACCREDITED FOI OFFICER

4 / 03 / 2019

SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS – DHS/19/02748

Freedom of information application from Nat Cook MP seeking access to copies of any and all documents (including but not limited to physical and electronic material) regarding DHS, SAHT, SAHA or Ministerial Paper 18MHS/0714.

No	Author	Date	Description of document	Determination	Reason
1.	Ellie McEvoy, Senior Policy Officer, Office for Women	24/10/2018	Briefing – 18MHS/0714 - Correspondence from Coalition of Women's Domestic Violence Services	Released in full	No exempt material
2.			Attachment 1 to Document 1 – Draft response to Ms Milenka Vasekova	Released in full	No exempt material

18MHS/0714



Government of South Australia
Department of Human Services


TO MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES

RE: CORRESPONDENCE FROM COALITION OF WOMEN'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

Decision/action required by:...../...../.....

Reason:.....

Recommendation	Response
1. That you send the attached draft response to the Coalition of Women's Domestic Violence Services SA	Approved / Not Approved / Noted

Comments:	
.....	 Hon Michelle Lensink MLC 24 / 10 / 2018

PURPOSE

To provide you with a draft response to a letter from Ms Milenka Vasekova written on behalf of the Coalition of Women's Domestic Violence Services SA Inc (the Coalition) regarding women with temporary visas experiencing domestic violence and not being able to secure an income from Centrelink. A draft response is attached for your consideration (Attachment 1).

KEY POINTS

- Ms Vasekova is Program Manager of the Migrant Women's Support Program (MWSP) within Women's Safety Services SA (WSSSA). Ms Vasekova has written on behalf of the Coalition.
- The letter outlines the Coalition's concerns that women on temporary visas in Australia are at high risk of experiencing violence and poverty because they do not have access to the same income supports through Centrelink as other women in Australia.
- The Coalition is asking the South Australian Government to look at establishing a funding source to help women's domestic violence services to support women on temporary visas beyond a crisis response.
- You have previously written to the Minister for Women, Hon Kelly O'Dwyer MP, supporting the recommendations of both the South Australian Social Development Committee and the Council of Australian Government (COAG) Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence Against Women and their Children that victims of domestic and family

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violence are not disadvantaged by the processes attached to visa applications (18TDHS/987).

RISKS/SENSITIVITIES

There is no risk in responding to this correspondence on this matter.

DISCUSSION

The Coalition is the peak body for domestic and Aboriginal family violence services in South Australia. The Coalition represents 30 programs and services in South Australia. Members of the Coalition include WSSSA services, Victim Support Services Inc, Nunga Mimirar, Junction Australia, and Kornar Winmil Yunti. Where an organisation runs more than one domestic violence service, each service is separately represented on the Coalition; as such, MWPS is an individual member of the Coalition.

MWPS provides a culturally sensitive support service to women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds including risk assessment, safety planning, information, advocacy and referrals.

South Australian women's domestic and Aboriginal family violence services are funded by the State and Commonwealth Governments through the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement. The contracts are managed by the South Australian Housing Authority.

The Coalition letter raises the issue of immigrant women on temporary visas experiencing domestic violence while being ineligible for government financial assistance to help them stay out of high risk situations. Domestic violence services can provide crisis services but are not funded to help these women beyond the crisis period. The Coalition notes these women are usually women who have come to Australia to marry an Australian citizen, have joined partners on work visas, are international students, tourists, or are on bridging visas. These women are reliant on their partners for financial security making it difficult to leave abusive situations.

The Coalition asks you to consider a Western Australian (WA) Government brokerage type grant program, in place since January 2018. The program recognises the specific support needs of these women due to their immigration status and provides access for WA domestic violence services to financial support to address basic needs of each client on a weekly basis, while the client is on a temporary visa or their visa matters are being processed by the Department of Home Affairs.

OFW has contacted the Western Australian Government to learn more about their grant program but is yet to receive a response. OFW will provide further advice once this information is received.

Visas and visa applications are established by Commonwealth legislation as are rules regarding Commonwealth financial support through Centrelink. In July, you wrote to the federal Minister for Women noting your support for the recommendations in the report by the Social Development Committee of the South Australian Parliament and the report of the COAG Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence Against Women and their Children, that women experiencing violence on temporary visas have applications made in a timely manner and that options for income support be explored. Your letter stated that you would like to ensure that the victims of domestic and family violence are not disadvantaged by any of the current processes attached to visa applications, specifically the 1410 Family Violence Provision. You

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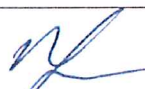
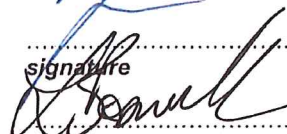
suggested that the matter could be raised at the upcoming COAG Violence Against Women Summit or at a Women's Safety Minister's meeting.

Currently women on temporary visas in South Australia who are experiencing domestic violence are very limited in accessing support services. When a woman in this situation contacts the Women's Information Service she is referred to MWPS, to financial counselling and to financial support crisis services provided by charity groups. There are no financial support services which specifically provide ongoing help while visa applications are processed.

As you are aware, OFW is currently developing a new framework for the prevention of domestic, family and sexual violence. The new framework includes the Government's domestic and family violence election commitments as well as actions that have arisen through feedback from stakeholders and/or that reflect South Australia's commitment to the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. As such, the issue of women on temporary visas experiencing domestic violence has been included as an action area in the new Framework. Specific actions are still under development but are likely to include ensuring women on temporary visas have relevant access to information about domestic violence laws in South Australia and how to find out about support services.

BUDGET

Are there financial implications	No
Is there a budget impact	No
Is there an FTE impact	No

Division	Office for Women	
Director	Fiona Mort	 signature 4.9.18
A/Chief Executive	Lois Boswell	 signature 5.9.18 date

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft response to Ms Milenka Vasekova

Contact Officer:	Ellie McEvoy, Senior Policy Officer 8303 0518, ellie.mcevoy@sa.gov.au
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**Government
of South Australia**

Minister for Human Services

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18MHS/0714

Ms Milenka Vasekova
Program Manager
Migrant Women's Support Program
PO Box 79
HILTON PLAZA SA 5033

Milenka,
Dear Ms Vasekova

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Coalition of Women's Domestic Violence Services SA regarding women on temporary visas who have experienced domestic violence.

As you are aware, both visas and the application process, as well as Centrelink payments, fall under Commonwealth laws. However, I recently wrote to the Commonwealth Minister for Women, the Hon Kelly O'Dwyer MP, raising this matter with her and stating my support for any actions by the Australian Government that would increase safety and supports for women on temporary visas who are experiencing domestic violence.

I plan to raise this matter directly with Minister O'Dwyer at our next meeting, and again highlight that protecting and supporting women on temporary visas who have experienced domestic violence is a recommendation of both the South Australian Social Development Committee and the Council of Australian Government's Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence Against Women and their Children.

At a State level, the Marshall Government is committed to addressing domestic and family violence through our election commitments as well as through new programs and policies. As you know, we have been consulting closely with the sector through a series of domestic violence roundtables held in Adelaide and regional South Australia. We are currently in the process of developing a new framework for the prevention of domestic, family and sexual violence.

The framework will be informed by feedback from stakeholders and our commitment to the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children. Women on temporary visas will be recognised within the framework as a vulnerable group requiring specific prevention and support measures.

With regard to the Western Australian Government's program to support women on temporary visas, I have asked the Office for Women to investigate the program further and if such a program could work in South Australia.

I can assure you that the South Australian Government will continue to explore options to improve the situation for women on temporary visas and to maintain the dialogue with the Australian Government about how both levels of Government can collaborate to achieve this.

Thank you for bringing the Coalition's concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely



Hon Michelle Lensink MLC
MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES

24/10 / 2018