



Homelessness Australia

*Creating a framework for ending homelessness*

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Remembering homeless women on International Women's Day**

As we mark International Women's Day 2010, it is important to remember that women make up almost half of those experiencing homelessness in Australia.

About 46,000 women are homeless in Australia. Domestic and family violence is the largest issue contributing to their homelessness.

Women experiencing homelessness use a variety of support. They access refuges and shelters, or they rely on the good will of family and friends for accommodation.

Women can experience homelessness at many different points of their life. Young women are the people most likely to use homeless services, with nearly one in every 50 young women aged between 15 and 19 staying in a homeless service. An increasing number of single women now face homelessness, which is likely to increase as the population ages over coming decades.

Women often face homelessness with their children. A large percentage of the children who accompany an adult to a homeless service are in the care of a woman, usually their mother, escaping domestic violence.

"We support the Federal Government's National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children. Addressing and reducing domestic and family violence will be integral to achieving the Government's target of halving homelessness by 2020", Pauline Woodbridge, Homelessness Australia spokesperson said today.

Ms Woodbridge called for a change in community attitudes towards domestic and family violence as well as increased funding of specialist homelessness services.

"While new services established under the White Paper will go some way to addressing homelessness, more resources are needed for specialist services. We still see half of the women who approach services for women escaping domestic violence turned away", Ms Woodbridge said.

Ms Woodbridge posed the question, "On International Women's Day 2020, how many women will be experiencing homelessness? We have an opportunity with the White Paper and National Plan to end women's homelessness in Australia".

#### **For comment:**

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*The Women's Services Network is a Founding Council of Homelessness Australia, the national peak body for homelessness.*