

# Media Statement

17 September 2019

## **What is the motivation for this Parliamentary Inquiry into the family law system?**

Women's Safety NSW is extremely concerned by the Prime Minister's move today to establish another Parliamentary Inquiry into the family law system.

*"We have had numerous investigations into the operation of the family law system over the last ten years - all of which have come to the same conclusions", says Women's Safety chief executive Hayley Foster. "The family law system is principally failing in providing safe and just outcomes for women and their children in the context of family violence and abuse."*

### ***"We do not need another inquiry"***

The Australian Law Reform Commission has just handed down its comprehensive report earlier this year and that came off the back of a previous Parliamentary Inquiry in 2017.

*"We know what we need to do to make the family law system safer," says Foster. "We just need the political will to make it happen."*

Women's Safety NSW questions the motivations for the inquiry. In the election campaign, Prime Minister stated that violence against women and their children is arguably the single biggest national security threat facing this Country. Only yesterday did the women's safety peak meet with the federal government to share with them the real-life stories of women and their children who have gone through the family law system in the context of family violence.

In meeting with the Offices of the Prime Minister, the Attorney General, and the Minister for Women, Foster told them that survivors of domestic and family violence had relayed in focus groups that the single biggest barrier to them escaping violence and achieving safety for themselves and their children is the current family law system.

Issues of safety in the family law system have been raised time and time again and have been addressed in the recommendations of each of the inquiries and reports which have proceeded this one.

## ***What is stopping the government from implementing the existing recommendations?***

Women's Safety NSW holds grave concerns that the Parliamentary Inquiry may lead to a postponement of urgent and necessary evidence-based reforms and could in fact popularise an issue that is way too serious to be driven by populist demands.



Advocating for freedom  
from violence

Concern is also held that the Committee is to be chaired by politicians with very strong ideologically held positions on the archetypal family unit and the nature of domestic and family violence.

*“After the meetings we had yesterday where we shared the real-life stories of women and children devastated by a system which failed to protect them, this decision today is like a slap in the face,” says Foster. “We told them we do not want this inquiry. We told them we want action on urgent recommendations now. Once again, however, it seems women and children experiencing terror in their own homes at the hands of the men who are supposed to love them will go unheard and unheeded.”*

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