



YWCA
CANBERRA

MEDIA RELEASE

MINISTER BURCH ON THE RIGHT TRACK BUT FAR FROM FINISH LINE ON ENDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

07 April 2015: YWCA Canberra has today welcomed Minister Joy Burch's commitment to primary prevention of violence, but is concerned regarding the specifics of implementation into schools.

In her statement made to The Canberra Times on Wednesday 1 April, Minister Burch stated that primary prevention should be "lived and breathed every day within our schools", before going on to say she will focus on "improvements to the social and emotional learning curriculum and extra training for teachers rather than programs run by external providers".

YWCA Canberra's Executive Director, Frances Crimmins commended the Minister's dedication to ending domestic violence, but is calling for more clarity around the proposed implementation of primary prevention into schools.

"We're concerned that, without additional funding or support, teachers will not be resourced to provide the level of education on respectful relationships to make this effective primary prevention," Ms Crimmins said.

"As stated in the interim report from the Senate inquiry into domestic violence, primary prevention means delivering targeted, best practice programs that focus on respect, gender equality and diversity. It doesn't mean adding more generalised content on respect into the school curriculum."

"While we're developing the skills of teachers to deliver primary prevention, a process that could take years, what are we doing to equip young people right now with the skills they need for respectful relationships?"

"YWCA Canberra has the demonstrated track record, knowledge and expertise to work with schools on this, and importantly, we have a rigorously developed, award-winning program ready to roll out. It would be a huge oversight to not consider implementing existing programs into schools.

Last Thursday, YWCA Canberra participated in the extraordinary meeting of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council, to inform its advice to the Attorney-General about matters relevant to the ACT Government's participation in the Council of Australian Governments' forthcoming meeting on domestic violence.

At the meeting Ms Crimmins highlighted the importance of funding primary prevention programs in addition to early intervention and emergency services for women escaping domestic violence, and called for a whole of government approach to address the issue.

“I implored the ACT Government to see this as a real opportunity to demonstrate courage and leadership when it comes to ending violence against women.

“I urged representatives of all directorates of the ACT Government to consider how we can ensure we see positive outcomes for children today, so that they can live lives free from violence in the future.

“We look forward to working with the ACT Government’s Education and Training Directorate to make sure the approach adopted is one that means meaningful primary prevention programs will be implemented into schools.”

- ENDS -

Frances Crimmins is available for interview.

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About YWCA Canberra: YWCA Canberra is a feminist, not-for-profit community organisation that has been providing community services and representing women’s issues in the Canberra community since its establishment in 1929. YWCA Canberra employs more than 300 staff across the ACT, and delivers 30 quality programs in children’s services, community development, housing, youth services, women’s leadership, advocacy, and training. Represented in 122 countries, the YWCA has a global reach of 25 million women and girls. As part of this international movement, YWCA Canberra works for a world where reconciliation, justice, peace, health, human dignity, freedom and care for the environment are promoted and sustained through women’s leadership. For more information visit: www.ywca-canberra.org.au

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