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New wrap-around service to target causes of domestic violence

The ACT Government will establish a specialist accommodation and counselling intervention program for adult males who perpetrate domestic violence, to effect long-term behavioural change and reduce re-offending, with new funding announced today by Minister for Women, Joy Burch MLA.

The 2011-12 ACT Budget provides \$424,000 over four years to the Office for Women to deliver the new Family Violence Prevention Program, which aims to enhance the capacity of a community service organisation in providing services that address the needs of individuals. The funding is in addition to the \$1.3 million over four years provided last year to assist the work of the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre.

The program would support the objectives of the ACT Strategy to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children which is currently being developed and will be launched later this year, and aligns with the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022 (National Plan) that the ACT recently signed up to.

“The ACT Government is committed to preventing violence against women and their children and promoting an anti-violence culture within the community, and research tells us that the likelihood of recidivism can be reduced by addressing the underlying causes of offending behaviour.

“The ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Strategy (ACT Strategy) will have a strong link to the National Plan’s objective of reducing the risk of recidivism by targeting perpetrators of domestic violence with both early intervention and prevention as well as with post-sentencing support,” Ms Burch said.

Funding for the program will be awarded to an existing community organisation. Ms Burch said this type of wrap-around approach will reduce duplication of costs and services that the involvement of a number of agencies would entail.

“The points of intervention for perpetrators would include addressing issues underlying or exacerbated by violence: alcohol and other drug dependency, mental illness, accommodation and support and individual counselling.

“The program ensures that adult males using violence have access to appropriate specialist support in their learning to relate without violence and abuse and will provide responses that will help reduce the rates of recidivism,” Ms Burch concluded.

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