



31 August 2021

Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston
Minister for Families and Social Services and
Minister for Women's Safety
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CC: Senator the Hon. Marise Payne, Minister for Women

Dear Minister Ruston

RE: TWELVE PRIORITIES FOR THE WOMEN'S SAFETY SUMMIT

I write to express Amnesty International's strong support for the joint call urging the Government to commit to twelve priority areas for actions¹ for the next National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Children. The Summit on Women's Safety is an important opportunity for the development of this National Plan and for the Government to demonstrate its commitment to creating a future where women and children live free from violence.

As a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women since 1983, Australia has committed to ensuring that women can fully enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms. However, there is still a lot more the Government needs to do to ensure that women and girls in Australia are free from gender-based violence.

Violence against women is one of the most widespread human rights abuses in Australia and indeed worldwide. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children and communities continue to experience disproportionately high rates of violence resulting from more than two centuries of colonialism, dispossession and discrimination. Women with disabilities or migrant women, lesbian, bisexual and transgender women are also particularly vulnerable to violence.

Amnesty International's Australia Human Rights Barometer 2021² shows that 52% of Australians regard women's rights as a marked area of concern. And 22% of supporters of an Australian Human Rights Act feel that a national legal framework would provide meaningful protection for vulnerable people, including the rights of those who are at risk of gender-based abuse and violence.

¹ <https://www.safetysummit.org.au/>

² [Amnesty International: Australia Human Rights Barometer Report 2021](#)

Amnesty International has joined key organisations around the country to call on the Government to:

1. Build stronger foundations in our community to prevent violence before it starts.
2. Increase capacity across our communities to recognise and respond to early signs of abuse.
3. Increase and extend investment in specialist support services.
4. Increase and expand the focus on sexual violence.
5. Shift the burden to the person who uses violence.
6. Recognise children and young people as victims in their own right.
7. Expand research to build evidence-based services.
8. Reform the Family Law system.
9. Prioritise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led initiatives.
10. Tailor initiatives and responses to community needs.
11. Expand victim-survivor choice and control through expanded pathways for support and accountability beyond police and criminal courts.
12. Invest in programmes with long-term funding to give them enough time to work.

I urge you to ensure these priority areas for action are foundational to the next National Plan.

I send my wishes for a successful summit. For further information or to discuss and organise a meeting, please contact Kyinzom Dhongdue at kyinzom.dhongdue@amnesty.org.au or 0416695590.

Yours sincerely



Sam Klintworth
National Director
Amnesty International Australia