



## **THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP**

Minister for Families and Social Services

## **THE HON MICHELLE LANDRY MP**

Assistant Minister for Children and Families

## **THE HON SARAH HENDERSON MP**

Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **CONTINUING CRITICAL WORK OF 1800RESPECT**

The flagship national domestic and family violence and sexual assault counselling, information and support service, 1800RESPECT, will receive \$10.9 million in additional Australian Government funding to meet ongoing demand.

The funding was announced in Canberra today by the Minister for Families and Social Services, Paul Fletcher, Assistant Minister for Children and Families, Michelle Landry and Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services, Sarah Henderson.

1800RESPECT was established in 2010 to help those affected by domestic and family violence and sexual assault. It is delivered by Medibank Health Solutions (MHS) and three trauma specialist counsellor partners – Women’s Safety Services in South Australia, safe steps Family Violence Response Centre in Victoria and DV Connect in Queensland.

“This multi-faceted service provides vital support to Australians when they need it most, and we want to make sure it’s equipped to meet rising demand,” Minister Fletcher said.

“In 2017-18, 1800RESPECT answered almost 100,000 telephone and online contacts from people seeking support. This was a 54 per cent increase from the previous year. In 2018-19, it’s expected the service will answer more than 160,000 contacts.

“The increased demand demonstrates how trusted and valued the service is by the community, and we want to make sure 1800RESPECT keeps providing high quality and responsive support to Australian’s in need.

“The \$10.9 million funding announced today will boost the number of 1800RESPECT counsellors to the largest number ever. These counsellors will answer calls and provide online counselling. The funding will also fund an additional 33 full time equivalent trauma specialist counsellors and increase IT support and training for counsellors.”

The Assistant Ministers also joined MHS today to launch Sunny, an innovative mobile phone app designed to help women with disability affected by or at risk of violence.

“According to the 2016 Personal Safety Survey, 46.4 per cent of women who had experienced violence by a partner in the last 12 months had some form of disability or a long-term health condition,” Assistant Minister Landry said.

“Developed for women with disability, by women with disability, Sunny recognises that every woman who experiences family and domestic abuse and sexual assault has a unique story.”

“The Australian Government provided \$600,000 to develop the app. The app was developed by MHS, in partnership with *Women with Disabilities Australia* and an *Expert Advisory Group*,” said Assistant Minister Henderson.

“The Sunny app uses interactive techniques to guide users through scenarios designed to help them recognise violence and abuse, learn about their rights and, where appropriate, prepare them to take action towards establishing safety.

“Users can also record their own story using a custom keyboard with predefined words.”

The Sunny app is free and available from iTunes or Google Play.

1800RESPECT is an initiative of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022*. Visit <https://www.1800respect.org.au/> and <https://plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au/initiatives/1800respect/> for more information.

**ENDS**

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