

From: <http://www.communitynews.com.au/guardian-express/news/greens-outline-540m-plan-to-tackle-domestic-violence-in-wa/>

Greens outline \$540m plan to tackle domestic violence in WA

[Guardian Express](#)

GREENS Deputy Leader Larissa Waters and Perth candidate Tim Clifford were in Northbridge this morning to launch the party's plan to tackle the domestic violence epidemic.

Senator Waters and Mr Clifford were joined by WA Senator Rachel Siewert at the Women's Health and Family Services to call on Labor and the Liberals to match their funding commitment of \$540 million over ten years for domestic violence services in WA.

The WA funding forms part of the Greens' \$5 billion 10-year commitment.

Senator Waters said Australia is in the midst of a domestic violence crisis, with vulnerable women being turned away from shelters and other frontline services because of a lack of funding.

"More than halfway through the election campaign, we still haven't heard commitments from the old parties that are strong enough to ensure every woman who reaches out for help to escape domestic violence is supported," she said.

"We are committing \$500 million nationally each year for specialist domestic violence services, such as women's shelters, crisis phone services and perpetrator programs."

Recent figures show in WA women seeking refuge from domestic violence make up 40 per cent of people accessing homelessness services.

Mr Clifford told the Guardian Express he had spoken with a number of homelessness services organisations who could not believe their funding was being cut while the problem reached crisis point.

"The awareness campaign nationally has been massive, but at the same time homelessness services have had funding cuts," he said.

"The staff are perplexed to see people are talking about domestic violence but they are not getting the funding they need. The need is dire; especially in crisis shelters to get people immediately out of the dangerous situation they are in."

Mr Clifford raised the issue of funding cuts to Legal Aid as another obstacle for women facing domestic violence.

“The situation can already be overwhelming, and then there’s the experience of going through the courts as well,” he said.

Mr Clifford has been door-knocking every day for the past month in the Perth area and met single parents who had spent time homeless because there was no space at shelters after they escaped domestic violence.

“They were homeless until extended family members could help them,” he said.

“This is not something remote from the majority of people. It could be your neighbour; it could be your friend. Without the support in place, it is very hard for people to find the courage to speak out and seek help.”

Senator Siewert said “no woman in Western Australia should have to choose between homelessness and violence, a decision that would be all the more heartbreaking for mothers to make”.

She said the new domestic violence initiative was in addition to the Greens’ previously announced commitment to double Federal funding for homelessness programs and our commitments on affordable housing.