PREMIER URGED TO KEEP WOMEN’S REFUGES OPERATING

The NSW Government is being urged to reconsider its decision to discontinue funding for women’s refuges in inner-Sydney. MPs will attend a forum today to discuss the issue.

Independent MP for Sydney, Alex Greenwich, said that many of these services had been providing shelter to women and girls for up to 40 years but are now being forced to turn them away.

“This week the Deputy Lord Mayor of Sydney and I heard directly from service providers about the scale of this crisis, and how vulnerable women will soon have no place go. It’s time the Government started listening, and opened its heart to the specialist needs of vulnerable women who have experienced childhood sexual abuse, mental health issues and substance abuse.”

“We are getting to the stage where hospitals and public spaces will soon need to be used for pop-up shelters to provide alternative emergency measures for women and children fleeing violence, abuse and homelessness, which highlights just how serious this situation has become.”

“It is just not possible for many women and girls to go to counselling or attend residential programs with men – some are as young as 13!”

“We need the Government to listen. The tender process did not allow women-only services to apply for funding and some are already beginning to wind up their operations.”

A spokeswoman for SOS Women’s Services, Kate Timmins, said the forum was an opportunity for MPs to hear exactly how the closures will affect thousands of women and children each year experiencing issues such as child sexual abuse, mental illness and substance dependency.

“One of the first things Mike Baird said when he became Premier in April was that protecting vulnerable people was one of his key priorities. But this decision fails on that commitment.

“The Prime Minister quarantined homeless services from cuts to the recent Federal Budget to ensure critical funding could continue and gave a guarantee before the Budget that he wasn’t going to let people down.

“Can the Premier make the same commitment?

“These centres have operated successfully for decades and not one of them has ever had their funding threatened. Both Labor and Liberal governments have recognised the good work they do, but for some reason this Government think they should close.

“The Premier has raised money for a women’s refuge in Manly and spoken about how important its work is. Does he only support women’s refuges in his own electorate?

“We urge the Premier to reconsider this decision and fulfil his commitment to protecting the most vulnerable people in our community.”

Media Contacts:
Alex Greenwich 0458 042 342
Kate Timmins 0413 019 877

For more information visit www.soswomensservices.com
Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

Brought to you SOS Women’s Services - a coalition of women and women’s services protecting the rights of homeless women and children in NSW