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Affordable accommodation options urgently needed for domestic violence survivors say Baptist leaders

This week, more than 40 leaders from Australian Baptist organisations are meeting with federal parliamentarians in Canberra to call for coordinated action on domestic violence support services, especially affordable accommodation options.

“As we increasingly understand the scale and severity of domestic and family violence, demand for support services has been growing steadily in recent years,” said Elizabeth Hukins, spokesperson for Baptist Care Australia and experienced support worker and manager of services for women and children escaping violence.

“We will be speaking with parliamentarians about our new report on domestic and family violence support services in local communities which surveyed services in 28 electorates around Australia,” Ms Hukins says.

[No room: a report on domestic violence services in Australian communities](#) provides a picture of services stretched to the limit, struggling to provide the help requested by those escaping domestic and family violence.

“Sadly, this very important and costly community problem spans both state and federal governments when it comes to funding and coordination.

“Although we’ve had a national plan to address domestic and family violence since 2010, there remain many gaps in data, services and understanding around unmet need. We’re in Canberra this week to call for national leadership in establishing a database of services and demand that will help all governments better address this issue,” Ms Hukins says.

“However the most pressing and urgent need is one where state and federal governments absolutely must work effectively together. The need for safe, secure and affordable permanent housing for families leaving violence is critical.

“Until we can fix the shortfall of 500,000 social and affordable houses, families will continue to be forced into homelessness or back into unsafe situations.

“And in the meantime, we need urgent stopgap funding for short term and crisis accommodation given many services are currently simply unable to meet demand,” Ms Hukins says.

[Download the report](#)

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[Baptist Care Australia](#) agencies provide support services to people fleeing domestic violence, those impacted by homelessness and addiction, and families and children. [Baptist World Aid Australia](#) is a DFAT-accredited aid and development agency operating in more than 18 countries around the world. [A Just Cause](#) is the advocacy arm of [Australian Baptist Ministries](#). Local Baptist churches support their communities through kids clubs, child care centres, youth groups, playgroups, men's sheds, and seniors groups.