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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Addressing gender inequality key to ending violence against women

The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) strongly supports comments made by Australia’s Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick linking violence against women to gender inequality.

In the lead-up to White Ribbon Day (the international day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) on 25 November, AASW National President Professor Karen Healy said: “The link of gender imbalance becomes clear when social workers across Australia are seeing women experiencing violence every day. In a civilised society like Australia, we must work together to stop this abuse.”

In her speech delivered at the State Library of Victoria this week, Commissioner Broderick challenged unequal distribution of resources and power between men and women.

“As Australia’s Sex Discrimination Commissioner, it saddens me that when women living with violence speak, the system doesn’t listen...But it is also equally clear, that women cannot pursue this agenda alone. Men taking the message of gender equality to other men, that is what will change the picture of gender equality in Australia,” Commissioner Broderick said.

Professor Healy agrees that addressing gender inequality is vital in stopping violence against women.

“On average one woman a week is killed by a current or former partner in Australia. To understand and eventually end violence against women, it must first be acknowledged that the majority of women and men hold unequal positions of power in society, and the message of gender equality should be encouraged within our social structures,” Professor Healy said.

It is the hope of the AASW that in the lead up to White Ribbon Day this message will be clearly communicated to the Australian public by the media.

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