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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Australian of the Year award puts family violence on agenda

The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) warmly congratulates Rosie Batty on being named the 2015 Australian of the Year.

“Ms Batty’s determination to publicly recognise family violence and her tireless advocacy for achieving practical change is inspirational,” says AASW National President Karen Healy.

“Her selection means that domestic and family violence will now be central to our nation’s agenda, and gives courage to women and children living in fear.”

The AASW is deeply concerned about the rate of violence against women and children.

Of particular concern is the fact that one woman a week is killed by a current or former partner.

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

“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,” says Professor Healy.

The challenge now is for governments to put in place the practical changes needed to achieve safety and well-being for families affected by violence. These changes include committing substantial funding for evidence based behavior change programs to enable those perpetrating violence to achieve change. Protocols need to be established to ensure that families have the information and practical resources required to achieve protection from violence. Access to safe housing is a priority.

Rosie Batty has so eloquently stated that her son’s legacy should be an end to family violence. It is now up to the political decision-makers and our communities to achieve this legacy.

The AASW represents approximately 8,000 social workers, many of whom work with victims of domestic violence.

Media Contact:

Laura Edwards

Media and Communications Officer

P: (02) 6232 3911 or 0400 613 516
