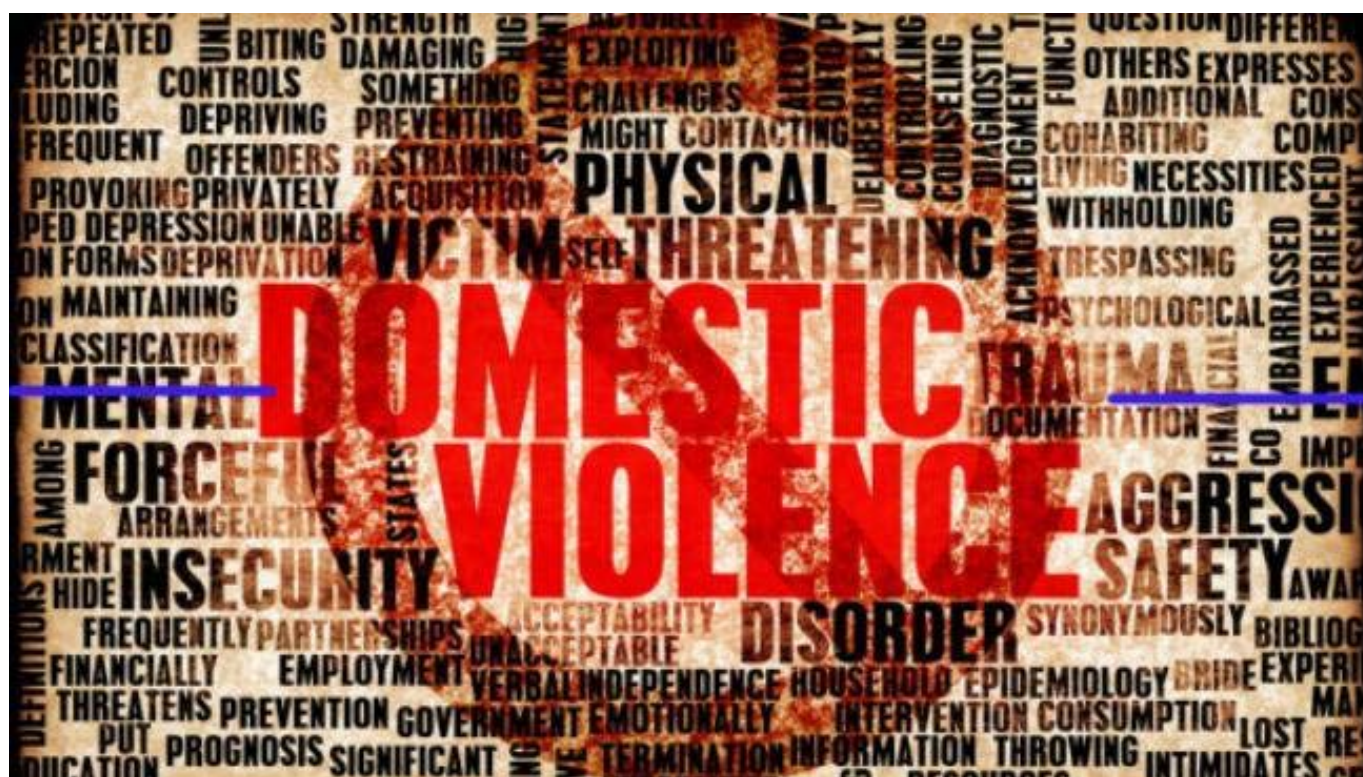


Funds to fight domestic violence

Sept. 24, 2015, 10 p.m.

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TAMWORTH domestic violence support services are “cautiously optimistic” about the \$100 million the government has committed to protecting women and children.



Tamworth Family Support Services spokeswoman Tanya Rogers said she hopes the funding takes into consideration the unique difficulties regional and rural areas present in the fight against domestic violence.

“The GPS tracking of abusers is a great idea, but there are lots of black spots around here,” she said.

“There is funding for a team to focus on people who cross border regions in Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory – but there are a lot of abusers and victims that frequently cross the NSW and Queensland border as well.”

She said increasing the number of local women's case workers and the establishment of specialised domestic violence units are fantastic ideas but hopes the government enhances established programs that are already working well, rather than inventing new programs.

The multi-million package was announced in response to the initial advice of the Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull announced the package yesterday, calling it a "safety net for women and children at high risk of experiencing violence".

The money will go to a number of immediate measures to keep women safe, such as GPS tracking of known offenders, a safety button for women so they can call for help and providing women fleeing domestic violence with new mobile phones.

The package also includes long-term measures which aim to shift the nation's culture surrounding domestic violence.

The Safer School website will be expanded to include resources for teachers, parents and students on respectful relationships and the MensLine service will receive \$2 million for tools and resources to support perpetrators not to reoffend.

Package breakdown

* \$17 million to keep women safe in their homes by expanding successful initiatives like the Safer in the Home program to install CCTV cameras and other safety equipment, and a grant to the Salvation Army to work with security experts to conduct risk assessments on victim's homes, help change their locks and scan for bugs

* \$14 million to expand the domestic violence-alert training program to police, social workers, emergency department staff and community workers, and deliver training to GPs

* \$12 million to trial the use of innovative technology to keep women safe, such as GPS trackers for perpetrators

* \$5 million for safer technology, including working with telecommunications companies to distribute safe phones to women

* \$5 million to expand 1800RESPECT, the national telephone and online counselling and information service

* \$5 million for local women's case workers, to co-ordinate support for women,

including housing, safety and budgeting services

* \$5 million to change the attitudes of young people to violence

* \$3.6 million for the Cross Border Domestic Violence Intelligence Desk to share information on victims and perpetrators who move around the cross-border region of WA, SA and the NT

* \$2 million increased funding for MensLine for tools and resources to support perpetrators not to reoffend

