

Make your voice heard on family and domestic violence



Leeanda Smith
Women's Coordinator
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In response to the recent horrific murders of Hannah Clarke and her three children in Queensland in February, many people are questioning how this can happen.

There is despair and outrage as, yet again, a woman escaping violence is brutally murdered and her three children, Laianah, 4, Aaliyah, 6, and Trey, 3, were also killed when her former partner poured petrol over them and set them alight.

The community is demanding that governments take serious practical steps to address the scourge of family and domestic violence, and a number of organisations, led by Fair Agenda, have started a petition asking for MPs to act.

At the time of these murders the Counting Dead Women project — on the Destroy the Joint Facebook page — confirmed nine women had been killed so far this year at the hands of their partner or former partner and reported there are several deaths yet to be confirmed as such.

Senior lecturer in Social Justice and Sociology at the University of Notre Dame, Sydney, Denise Buiten wrote about familicide in *Women's Agenda* cautioning that “too often, when fathers kill their children, the tendency is to frame it as a case of mental illness rather than gender-driven violence”.

She also pointed out that the mainstream media “largely fail to provide domestic violence resources such as 1800Respect in their reporting of these cases”.

In a statement from former Australian of the Year Rosie Batty, whose son Luke was murdered by his father in 2014, she spoke of being “overwhelmed and, like so many, full of despair. This unspeakable act of violence should give pause for all our elected leaders to think deeply about their leadership on this epidemic.”

She also said: “it is apparent the tragedy that has occurred in Brisbane was the final act of power, control and ultimate revenge, committed by a family violence perpetrator against his former partner.”

The Prime Minister led tributes in Parliament in the week following the murders and a statement about reducing violence against women and children was included in the [13 March COAG meeting communique](#).



Renee Carr and Joanne Yates from Fair Agenda state: “These are things COAG should have on their agenda, and commit to act on urgently; in addition to long-term planning.

“And these decisions about how to address this national crisis must be made in partnership with the experts — victim-survivors who have faced this broken system and the service specialists who work with them on the frontline — who know how this system actually works, and what needs to change to really make women and children safer.”

Fair Agenda and a number of other organisations have established a petition designed to put pressure on MPs to act. They state that while there is “no one single fix to this national crisis ... it’s crystal clear that we can only make women and families safe when governments properly resource the services that help them escape abusive and controlling partners, and intervene with men using abuse and violence”.

Federation has a strong history of campaigning for better services and funding to address family and domestic violence and we urge members to support the current campaign being coordinated by Fair Agenda and sign this petition fair-agenda.good.do/asafuture/email.

If you or someone you know is affected by domestic or family abuse you can contact 1800 RESPECT for 24/7 support on 1800 737 732 or at 1800respect.org.au.

Men can access counselling, information and referral for their use of violence by calling Men’s Referral Service on 1300 766 491.