

## Domestic violence: COVID exposes home truths

December 10, 2020

Federation is marking the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, at a time when grim evidence is mounting of a dramatic increase in cases of domestic violence in Australia during COVID.

The 16 Days of Action for the elimination of violence against women campaign ends on International Human Rights Day this Thursday, 10 December, after commencing on 25 November, the UN's Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

CEO of Women's Safety Hayley Foster has been shocked by the increased case numbers she has seen this year.

"2020 will be remembered as the worst year for domestic violence that any of us who are in the sector now have ever experienced," she told *The Guardian*.

In July, a survey by the Australian Institute of Criminology revealed almost 10 per cent of Australian women in a relationship had experienced domestic violence during the coronavirus crisis.

Further, a survey of workers in the welfare sector by Monash University showed more than 50 per cent have reported an increase in the frequency of domestic violence since the initial stages of the pandemic.

Federation's Women's Coordinator Leeanda Smith said: "Ending violence against women is everyone's business."

There are a number of online resources available to help navigate the domestic violence problem beyond the 16 days of this annual action and provide a practical guide to identifying signs of domestic violence including advice for support and action.

The official UN women's resource [lists 10 ways](#) you can safely make a difference.

On 25 November, Unions NSW hosted the launch of a new workplace resource, "[Working from home isn't safe when home isn't safe: How to respond to family and domestic violence in home-based workplaces](#)".

This resource was developed by the Rape and Domestic Violence Service Australia in conjunction with the Australian Services Union, to assist unions and employers address the health and safety issues associated with working from home and experiencing family and domestic violence.

If you would like to watch a recording of the event, you can do so [here](#).

For assistance call:



- Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia 1800 943 539
- 1800 Respect 1800 737 732
- Federation's Professional Support 1300 654 367