



SENATOR THE HON ANNE RUSTON:

Minister for Families and Social Services
Minister for Women's Safety
Manager of Government Business in the Senate

Interview Transcript

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E&OE...

LEIGH RADFORD:

We're going to move on now to trying to address the questions around preventing violence against women. Now the federal government has been doing a lot of work on this. In fact the federal Minister Anne Ruston who is the Senator from here in South Australia has released a 10-year draft plan into how to end domestic violence and she joins me now. Senator Ruston, good morning to you.

MINISTER RUSTON:

Good morning Leigh.

LEIGH RADFORD:

Now a lot of work obviously has been done on this. What's the main focus of the report Senator?

MINISTER RUSTON:

Yeah. Absolutely there's been a lot of work. This draft report that's being released today, it's a culmination of 18 months of extraordinary consultation. It started off with a Parliamentary Inquiry and included the national Women's Safety Summit. And so today we've pulled it all together and we're putting it out for final comment before it becomes a final document.

But the focus of it is we have to end violence against women and children. And so this is a very ambitious blueprint for all levels of government, the community at large, businesses and individuals to play their part in making sure that we actually do achieve that outcome. Because right now the incidences of family, domestic and sexual violence are an absolute national disgrace.

LEIGH RADFORD:

And on the rise, arguably too. So this is very complex stuff Senator Ruston. How do you unpack it and address the root causes and change things for the better so that we see less violence?

MINISTER RUSTON:

Well you're exactly right. You have to actually address those root causes and actually understand what underlies many of the incidences of domestic violence. And the research is very clear that gender inequality is a very substantial component. But the other thing that we think is a real key to unlocking how we are able to really address this problem is understanding the lived experience of survivors.

So this particular plan that we're putting out today for comment is very focused on understanding and hearing the voices of victim survivors and making sure they are at the forefront of policy development and practices. We're also very much focused on delivering on Closing the Gap in relation to Indigenous women and domestic violence. Because in Australia the incidence of domestic violence in Indigenous communities is significantly higher than it is in across the rest of the population.

So there are a lot of things that need to be addressed to understand why domestic violence occurs because that must be the foundation on which to build the policies and programs to deal with it.

LEIGH RADFORD:

And just quickly, finally, it's not just the violence itself. It's often that victims of abuse have to relive it over and over again with all sorts of things - with police, lawyers, other supports. What can be done in that regard as well to make things better?

MINISTER RUSTON:

Absolutely making sure that your responses are trauma-informed and making sure that the retraumatisation of the victim doesn't occur simply by the processes you go through. And we're looking to make sure that we have programs that allow people to tell their story once and to have that information be able to be used to make sure that all of the wrap around services that somebody who is a victim of domestic violence may need in the process of their recovery are able to be used in an appropriate way without them having to constantly go through their story.

These are the lessons we've learned over the last 10 years with the first National Plan and now we have to make sure that we implement them going forward.

LEIGH RADFORD:

Well good luck with that Anne Ruston. We've got to move on but thank you so much for your time this morning and for explaining this new Plan. And Senator Anne Ruston is the Minister for Women's Safety and Families and Social Services.

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