

Media release

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Innovative trial supporting 17 Geelong households to stop family violence

More than 64 people from 17 households in the Geelong and Barwon region are currently participating in local Safe at Home trial, a Victorian-first early intervention response to support people experiencing family violence and prevent homelessness.

The three-year Safe at Home trial is being funded by the Victorian Government and led by McAuley Community Services for Women (McAuley), which released new data on the groundbreaking program to mark tomorrow's **International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls**.

Launched in March, the Geelong and Barwon Safe at Home trial is the first of its kind to provide integrated, holistic support for whole households including the person using violence.

New data reveals who the Safe at Home trial is currently assisting:

- Most people reside in the Greater Geelong area, with a few households located in the Surf Coast and Colac Otway Shires;
- Around 45% of the adults being supported are aged between 36-45 years – this includes both victim survivors and people using violence;
- At present there are 30 dependent babies, children and young people participating in the response, and 17 of them are infants or pre-school age. They are treated as clients in their own right and provided with tailored supports;
- 31% of people currently in the Safe at Home response were born overseas (as opposed to 14.5% of the general Barwon population), with 92% of those having lived in Australia for over 10 years.

McAuley CEO Jocelyn Bignold OAM said new approaches focused on system change are needed to address high rates of gendered and family violence in the community.

“Family violence and gendered violence are huge problems that affect people from all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, and family violence is the biggest driver of homelessness across Victoria and Australia.

“To end this violence we need to have the courage to do things differently, and the Safe at Home trial is all about trying to change our default system of women and children having to flee violence, to one where they can be supported to stay safely in the home of their choice while we work to disrupt the violence,” said Ms Bignold.

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For further information or interview requests please contact:

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