

Abusive partners to face united front from police, agencies

Rosie Lewis, The Australian, 12:00AM October 29, 2016

Federal and state governments have committed to reduce domestic violence by sharing information across agencies, conceding they are fighting a losing battle until legal services, police and departments work together to help victims.

A new online tool to report and combat revenge porn — the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and videos — was also announced at a Council of Australian Governments domestic violence summit yesterday, at which the federal government unveiled details of a \$100 million action plan.

Recommendations from Victoria's Royal Commission into Family Violence to introduce a Medicare item for family violence counselling and stop the cross-examination of victims by their perpetrators were discussed, but no final outcomes were agreed to.

Malcolm Turnbull said there was not a "precise timeline" to implement a so-called multi-agency information-sharing service, in which a victim who goes to hospital could also get help from lawyers and police. But the Prime Minister said the goal was to have "seamless co-operation" between departments and jurisdictions. "We now recognise that domestic violence is not a private drama to be played out behind closed doors. It is a crime and we are treating it as a crime," he said. "We have not paid the attention to this issue that we should have in years past."

Under the three-year action plan, early intervention programs will receive \$20m, including resources for new fathers and money to implement ways of working with men who have "complex needs". As well as \$30m for legal services, the plan dedicates \$25m to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders experiencing family violence.

The National Association of Community Legal Centres welcomed the funding but said it was important to recognise it was "very limited". "It is for \$5m to be shared by only 11 of over 185 CLCs across Australia for one year," spokesman Dan Stubbs said.