



# Ministers for the Department of Social Services

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**The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP**

Media Releases

## Addressing family and domestic violence in the Social Security Guide



4 May 2023

The Albanese Labor Government will continue its commitment to better support those who experience family and domestic violence by amending relevant Social Security Guide pages.

From Monday 8 May 2023, amendments to the Social Security Guide will further clarify safeguards for victims of family, domestic, and sexual violence who are receiving or claiming a social security payment.

The amendments update provisions that outline how family, domestic, and sexual violence should be considered by Services Australia when determining whether a person is a member of a couple for social security purposes.

Since the age of 15, one in four women and one in eight men in Australia have experienced violence by an intimate partner or family member.

Minister for Social Services Amanda Rishworth said these changes are the result of meaningful consultation with advocacy groups and the community sector.

“Our Government is committed to working collaboratively with organisations to ensure, where appropriate, their issues of concern are resolved within the limits of social security law,” Minister Rishworth said.

“Victims of family, domestic, and sexual violence should not be unfairly punished as a result of how their relationship is recognised under social security law.

“Violence against women and children is a problem of epidemic proportions in Australia. The impact of this ripples out across families in Australia, communities and society.

“If we are to end violence in one generation, we must ensure our social security safety net recognises the circumstances of people who are experiencing violence.”

A person is a member of a couple under the Social Security Act 1991 if they have a relationship with another person, where both people are over the age of consent, are committed to each other on a permanent or indefinite basis, are not in a prohibited relationship and are either legally married, or in a registered relationship, or in a de facto relationship.

The amendments clarify how the circumstances of victims of family, domestic and sexual violence should be considered in the administration of member of a couple considerations.

This aligns with the vision of the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*, which describes how all areas of society need to work together over the next 10 years to end violence against women and children.

The Social Security Guide is regularly reviewed to support the administration of social security. More information on the amendments to the Social Security Guide is available on <https://guides.dss.gov.au/>.

If you or someone you know is experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, family, domestic, or sexual violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit [1800RESPECT.org.au](https://www.1800respect.org.au).

If you are concerned about your behaviour or use of violence, you can contact the Men’s Referral Service on 1300 766 491.

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