



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
(SOUTH AUSTRALIA) INC**

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**Say 'no' to violence against women:
International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women**

AMA(SA) president Dr Andrew Lavender is calling on South Australians to say 'no' to violence against women. November 25 is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, also known as White Ribbon Day, and he is taking this opportunity to urge South Australians to take a stand against violence towards women.

'Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has called violence against women "the great silent crime of our time" – and it is true that, all too often, domestic and other violence against women goes unreported and unpunished.

'But doctors see the damage done by violence against women every day. General practitioners see it in their consultations, and accident and emergency and other doctors see it in our hospitals. They see broken bones, traumatised children, and men and women who are both hurt and hurting.

'Doctors are used to fighting against sickness and disease – we are trained for it. But dealing with injuries that have been inflicted by one person on another can be the most difficult to face, and they leave both physical and emotional scars – scars that can have long-term repercussions on people's health, happiness and success,' he stated.

The United Nations reports that, globally, acts of violence against women cause more death and disability among women aged 15-44 than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents and war combined. Around one in three Australian women experience physical violence, and almost one in five experience sexual violence over their lifetime. In Australia, violence against women and children costs an estimated \$13.6 billion per year.

'While violence against women can take many forms, most often it is inflicted by someone she knows. We all know about 'stranger danger', but for many women, both in Australia and overseas, danger is in the home,' said Dr Lavender.

'Violence at home can be a vicious circle – people who have grown up in a violent household are more likely to be violent in the future. Women who are abused are also at greater risk of harming their own children, and children who have witnessed abuse are more likely to do badly at school, and have trouble adjusting.

'Many victims of violence fail to seek appropriate medical treatment for their physical and emotional wounds because they themselves feel guilty or embarrassed, or feel a misguided 'duty' to the perpetrator.

'I would urge anyone who is dealing with issues around violence to reach out for help. Talk to someone you trust. Talk to your general practitioner. Call one of the helplines, or a crisis service. Violence is not normal, it is not acceptable, and you can get help,' he stated.

Domestic Violence Crisis Service: 1300 782 200 (9-5 Monday to Friday)

Crisis Care: 131 611 (after hours)

Domestic Violence Helpline: 1800 800 098.

Yarrow Place (rape and sexual assault service): 8226 8787 (24-hour service), 1800 817 421 (for country callers)

Women's Information Service of South Australia: 1800 188 158

Lifeline: 131 114

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Contact: Dr Andrew Lavender (08) 8361 0109 or after-hours (08) 8361 0100