

Scheme to enforce protection against domestic violence backed Orders to cross borders

WIMMERA legal and women's health experts have backed a National Domestic Violence Order Scheme.

Federal and state governments resolved to implement the scheme at a Council of Australian Governments meeting.

The scheme will make domestic violence orders enforceable across state and territory borders.

Under existing arrangements, a Victorian order is not recognised after crossing the South Australian border, for example.

Mallee MP Andrew Broad said he hoped the scheme would be up and running by early next year.

"If an offender is committing violence against a victim and there's an intervention order out, it should not matter which part of Australia they are in," he said.

"It's relevant particularly to the electorate of Mallee, which has the South Australia-Victoria border.

"We want to give people a bit more security around what an intervention order can offer."

Victoria Legal Aid Wimmera regional office managing lawyer Julia Barling said she supported a national scheme.

"The scheme will be particularly useful in protecting women who live close to state borders and might work on one side of that border and live on the other, along with women who feel their only option is to relocate interstate to escape abusive partners," she said.

She said introducing the scheme was a commitment in the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and

Children 2010-2022.

"We would like to see all the recommendations in that national plan come into effect, particularly around adequately funding legal services that play a critical role in helping to secure safe environments and prevent ongoing breaches of family violence intervention orders that put victims at risk," she said.

Women's Health Grampians health promotion officer Simone Meade said the scheme would go some way to making perpetrators of

violence against women more accountable.

She said while it was a positive step, preventing violence against women was key.

"A primary prevention approach addresses the attitudes and behaviours that justify, excuse, minimise or hide violence against women," she said.

"To eradicate violence against women from our communities, we need to challenge the sexist beliefs and attitudes that lead to gender inequality and

ultimately underlie violence against women."

Ms Meade said governments needed to work to create a culture where women and men were valued equally.

"We need to implement multiple strategies in workplaces, schools, sporting clubs and the broader community to challenge the everyday beliefs and sexist attitudes that support violence," she said.

"We need to build respectful relationships where women and men have equal access to power and resources."