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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

“As we celebrate 100 years of International Women’s Day, it is shameful that in this, the ‘Lucky Country’, of the 27,324 homeless persons in New South Wales, more than 12,000 are women” Laurie Maher, Executive Officer of Coast Shelter said.

As the speeches on International Women’s Day at Gosford City Council said “We have come a long way in addressing the discrimination against women over the last hundred years, but the reality is we still have a long way to go”.

“One in every fifty young women between the ages of 18 and 19 stayed in a refuge for homeless women last year” Maher said “and it is most unfortunate that of all categories of homeless people, it is young women who are most likely to need to use homeless services”.

Gender imbalance in employment opportunities, fair pay and other important areas are significant issues of discrimination, which still need to be addressed. However, it is important that Governments at all levels and the community generally, recognise that women are at an increased risk of homelessness. “This is as a result of their greater exposure to violence, poverty and inequality generally, than the rest of society” Maher stated.

Disgracefully, domestic violence remains the major cause of women’s homelessness.

As we celebrate International Women’s Day, it is important that we recognise that one in five women over the age of 15 will experience physical violence, a recent report from Homelessness Australia stated.

“At a time when funds will be made available for a Central Coast Housing Strategy, it is important that the Central Coast gets its fair share of available dollars, to ensure that homelessness generally and women and women with accompanying children, in particular are given priority” Maher stated.

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