NATIONAL ADVOCACY GROUP ON WOMEN ON TEMPORARY VISAS EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE

The National Advocacy Group on Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Violence (NAG) consists of over 30 state and national peak bodies, service providers, organisations and individuals working to address violence against women across Australia.

On 31 October 2026, the Administrative Review Tribunal announced that from Sunday 1 November 2026, "you will need to pay an upfront fee when applying for a review of a protection visa decision."[i]

The NAG opposes the new requirement for people seeking a review of a protection visa decision to pay an upfront fee of $1,863.50. Particularly given the limited scope for exemptions.

This fee creates another significant barrier for women and children fleeing family violence, many of whom are already experiencing financial abuse, housing insecurity and limited access to income. It risks preventing victim-survivors from exercising critical legal rights and pathways to safety.

Australia's migration system should support victim-survivors to seek help, access justice and make decisions that keep themselves and their children safe. The NAG calls on the Australian Government to uphold its National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children ("The Plan")[ii] and implement the asks in the Blueprint for Reform 2026[iii] to ensure that access to safety is not determined by a person's visa status or their ability to pay.

The National Plan recognises the "increased risk and unique forms of violence" experienced by victims-survivors on temporary visas. It also commits to a "person-centred service system". This new requirement is inconsistent with those objectives, further limiting the ability of women on temporary visas to assert their rights and access safety.

The revised Blueprint for Reform, released by the NAG in July 2026, calls on the Australian Government to amend legislation and policy at the Administrative Review Tribunal, to create better access for victim-survivors and facilitate trauma-informed procedures within the Tribunal (Recommendation 1.4). Rather than advancing these reforms, the proposed fee change fails to address the NAG's recommendations and instead creates additional barriers for women seeking safety and justice.

The main objective of the Administrative Review Tribunal, as stated in Section 9 of the *Administrative Review Tribunal Act,* is to be "fair and just" and to "promote[s] public trust and confidence in the Tribunal". This fee change is contrary to this aim and will further disadvantage victims-survivors of family violence.

Media Quotes

"No woman or child should be denied de novo merits review of their protection claims because they cannot afford a $1,863 fee. This change creates a barrier for victim-survivors of family violence who may have already faced financial abuse, systems abuse, insecurity and trauma. Opportunities for women and children to escape violence and for Australia to ensure that it does not breach its international protection obligations should not be removed." – NAG Member, Amy Faram, Northern Community Legal Centre

“As a single mother with no income, finding nearly $1,900 is an impossible hurdle. It would have forced me to choose between the immediate survival of my children—buying food, paying rent, keeping the lights on—and our long-term safety.” – Client Quote, Name Undisclosed, Northern Community Legal Centre

“I would have felt completely trapped and panicked. I wouldn't have been able to simply lodge the form and figure out the money later.” – Client Quote, Name Undisclosed, Northern Community Legal Centre

“It would make me feel like the legal system is closed to people like me, leaving us completely unprotected just because we are poor.” – Client Quote, Name Undisclosed, Northern Community Legal Centre

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[i] Upcoming fee changes for protection reviews | Administrative Review Tribunal

[ii] https://www.dss.gov.au/system/files/resources/national-plan-end-violence-against-women-and-children-2022-2032.pdf

[iii] https://wesnet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/BLUEPRINT-FOR-REFORM_2026.pdf