



Violence ad provokes new fight

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THE Howard Government's contentious domestic violence campaign will be relaunched today amid claims it is failing to provide assistance for abused women and children.

TV and cinema ads declaring "Australia Says No" to violence were first run last year. They urge victims of violence to ring for help on a phone service run by Lifeline.

The Opposition and women's shelters said the Government was indulging in media exercises while victims of domestic abuse were turned away from refuges.

Labor's spokeswoman for women Tanya Plibersek accused the Government of freezing funds for shelters while 60 women and children a day were turned away.

The NSW Women's Refuge Resource Centre said 1300 women had been turned away from shelters since March because of a lack of funding.

A spokeswoman for the minister responsible for women, Kay Patterson, said the Government was

committed to tackling violence against women through its "Australia Says No" campaign and a \$75 million women's safety agenda.

She said the Lifeline hotline had received 44,000 calls since it was established last year.

"While that level of calls is concerning, it proves the success of the campaign because people have needed help and sought it," she said.

Ms Plibersek said the Government's offer to the states of \$932 million over the next five years for the program that funded women's refuges provided for no new funding.

Senator Patterson's spokeswoman said the program would be discussed at a federal and state ministers' meeting on Wednesday.

The "Australia Says No" campaign provoked fury among some anti-domestic-violence workers last year because it was seen as too soft and defensive.