



# Why you should know what the word Penda means

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**EARLIER THIS WEEK IN PARLIAMENT HOUSE, AN INNOVATIVE NEW PHONE APP WAS LAUNCHED IN CANBERRA WHICH HAS THE POTENTIAL TO SAVE A LIFE.**

Penda is an app that helps women to navigate their way through the scenario of domestic violence. It provides safety, financial and legal information and referrals for women at risk and includes a safety lock-screen games function to decrease the likelihood of discovery by a partner.

Created by the Women's Legal Service QLD, the app has now been tailored to the other states and territories to include information and local referrals to services relating to safety, money, visa and immigration, children, legal matters, housing, wellness and other services available.

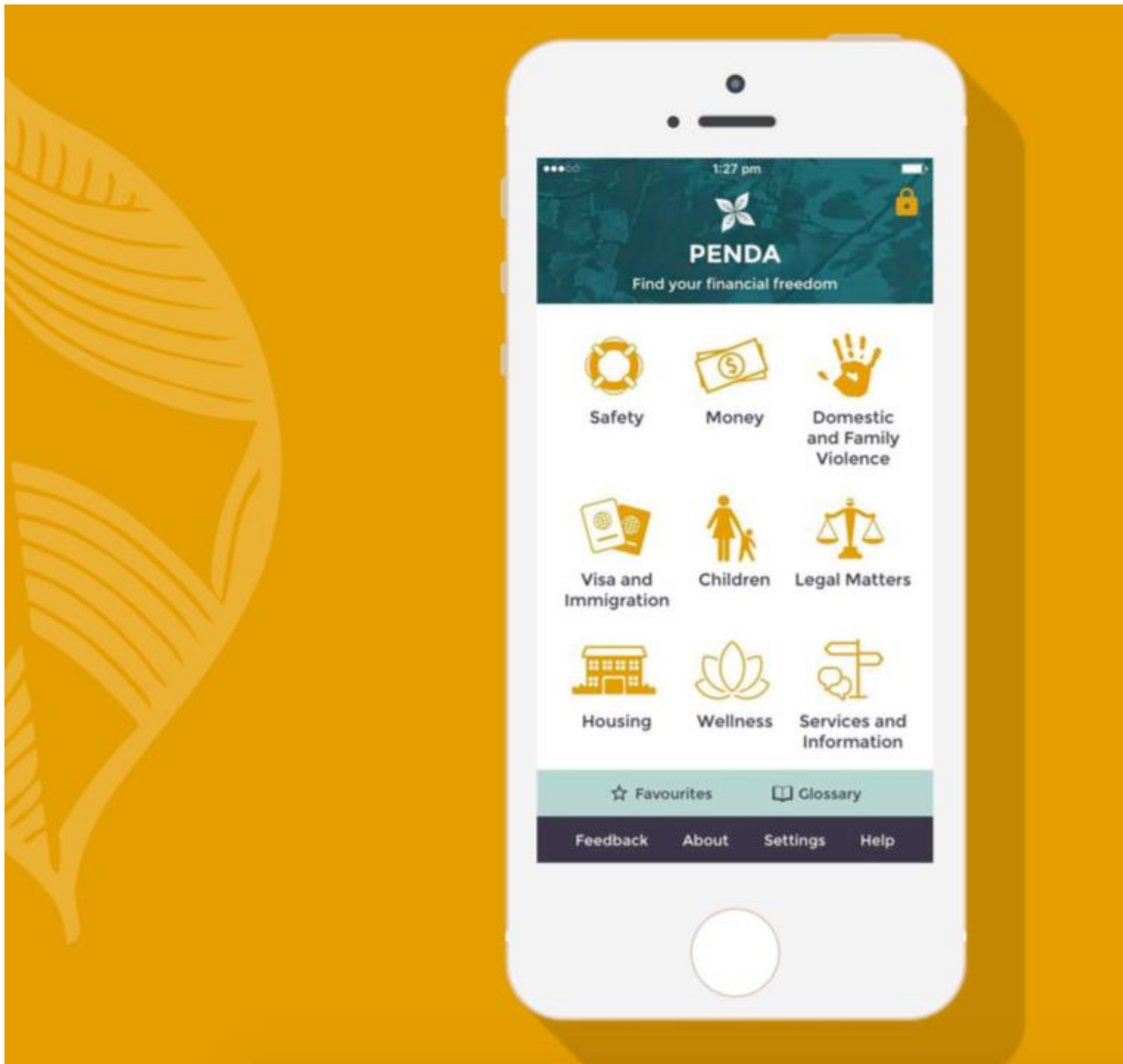
While it targets those confronting domestic and family violence, the app may still be relevant to other relationships, or women who are separating where domestic violence is not a factor.

The app is not intended to replace key services such as domestic violence support services, lawyers or the police, but to increase user's knowledge and connect users with these services.

According to the chief executive of the Domestic Violence Crisis Service Mirjana Wilson, who attended the Parliamentary launch, the app has widespread applications.

"It is really aimed at anyone who thinks what they are experiencing might be domestic, family or intimate partner violence, for people who might be feeling frightened, threatened or intimidated and not sure what to do or where to turn to."

“It is information in one place which applies to people across the nation and it contains really useful links that can take people to things which are more related to their jurisdiction or their particular situation.”



Mirjana said the app had many great features and was extremely user-friendly.

“Instead of just focusing on physical safety, the app also focuses on finances as one of the key barriers to leaving a violent relationship.”

Financial abuse is an enormous barrier to women leaving an abusive relationship and becoming safe and financial insecurity is one of the leading reasons women stay in or return to an abusive relationship.

Financial abuse often involves being controlled through finances and may mean not receiving access to money, being excluded from financial decision making, taking on relationship debt and being unaware of the consequences or not being allowed to work or study.

Financial protection and security are key requirements to ensuring women’s long-term safety from violence because poverty and financial hardship can be a cause of women staying in, or returning to abusive relationships.

User safety has been the primary focus throughout the Penda App development process and a number of safety features have been integrated including an inconspicuous icon and name, lock screen game function which can be accessed quickly by tapping icon or shaking the device, passcode setting optional to open app, and safety warnings prior to and after download.

Mirjana said that the safety game feature was a particularly ingenious way to help ensure the safety of “anyone who is concerned about their partner accessing their smart phone or tablet.”

Steps for downloading the app include:

## **STEP 1**

Think about your safety. Separation can be a dangerous time. If your (ex) partner monitors you, makes you feel scared, intimidated or controlled, please consider if it is safe for you to search for or download the app.

## **STEP 2**

If safe, go to your app store of choice and search “Penda”. Tap to download.

## **STEP 3**

Follow the download prompts.

## **STEP 4**

If it is not safe to use this app, consider asking a friend, family member, employer or support person to instead, or call 1800 RESPECT on 1800 737 732.

*You can download Penda [here](#).*