



Zonta Club of Para District Area Inc.

Submission to SA Royal Commission September 27

We did forward a submission to the Commission on August 16, and this follows on from that paper. Our club chartered in 1978 is one of 10 in South Australia, one of 33 in District 23 and one of the 104 Zonta clubs in Australia. Zonta International founded in 1919 has over 26,000 individuals in 1100 clubs in 64 countries. Our shared vision is.

Zonta International envisions a world in which women's rights are recognized as human rights and every woman is able to achieve her full potential.

In such a world, women have access to all resources and are represented in decision-making positions on an equal basis with men.

In such a world, no woman lives in fear of violence.

Our current call to action is **build a better world for women and girls.**

In order to achieve this better world, Zonta clubs participate in service and advocacy projects across the world as well as locally. We are focused on improving living conditions and the elimination of domestic abuse would significantly improve the lives of many women and children,

Whilst we are conscious that we do not provide front line services to victim survivors, we do support these services in a variety of ways, and we believe that we can play a greater role in the prevention of domestic abuse. For many years we have provided information to the community about the realities of domestic abuse. Our marketing materials have highlighted the horrific statistics and have lead to many conversations with community members. The banner on the right was produced after we talked at a dinner about some of the facts and a woman in the audience donated the funds to allow us to produce this banner to use in other situations. Wherever we have displayed it, it has provoked some lively discussions.

We have interacted with many community members at stalls and expos and sometimes we have been educating the community and very often we have been told stories of a person's experience as a victim survivor and often as a frustrated support person. Recently at a local council expo a grandfather talked with us about his concerns that his granddaughter was in a coercive control situation. He was frustrated as he had sought help in a variety of places and was told as she was 16 there was no support he could get to remove her from the partner's influence and until she asked for help, no- one else could intervene. He was not aware that he could talk to 1800RESPECT about her



situation. At the same expo a grandmother told us how she had moved from Queensland to support her daughter who had moved here with her children to escape a violent partner.

Every time we have had a stall we have had similar conversations. We have been amazed at what has been shared with us when we are strangers. We have been able to provide contact details for referral services and to describe the help they will be able to obtain from them. It is made clear to them that we are not counsellors, but we are listeners and more importantly believers.

It is our belief that to eliminate domestic, family and sexual violence is a long-term complicated process that will involve many people at different stages. Whilst there is a need for skilled, experienced front-line services there is also a place for the community to be better educated and equipped by a volunteer army of service clubs and community organisations.

In 2023, our club in collaboration with Rotary and Soroptimist International used a council grant to run a Bystander taster workshop in collaboration with the Mates programme run out of Griffith University. We saw this as one way we could provide community members with the confidence to become more active in the prevention of domestic abuse. The feedback was encouraging, and one person was impressed enough to undertake the training so she can now run sessions, and she has encouraged another person to also train.

There are many ways service clubs like Zonta can be involved and we encourage the Commission to consider clubs and community organisations when framing their recommendations. Clubs and individuals can educate the broader community (including schools), support existing programmes and agencies, develop new strategies, work collectively and encourage others to reach out and listen to those who may need help.

We see the value of partnering with others in order to have a greater reach and set up a collaboration with a Rotary and a Soroptimist International club to reduce domestic violence and have been building a following with workshops, education materials and social media. Zonta has partnered with Rotary in the running of the Walk for Respect this year and last year. We see the value of partnering with others in order to have a greater reach.

Another useful recommendation would be facilitating connections and sharing programmes of service agencies. In western Adelaide the Western Collaboration against Family and Domestic Abuse (WCAFDA) is supported by three councils and has links with over 100 people from local service agencies. They share programmes and strategies and hold forums focused on particular target groups. There is a similar group in southern Adelaide but not one in northern Adelaide. We have been trying to set up a group there with the support of local councils, but they have been reluctant to take on the organisation of such a group.

We noticed that a recommendation of the Victorian Royal Commission was that respectful relationship be incorporated into school curriculum and this is currently being trialed. As it fits into the national curriculum a similar programme could be introduced into South Australian schools.

There are many service clubs and organisations which would work together if they saw the opportunities and had support. We are hopeful that along with recommending actions which directly support victim survivors there will be some which consider the **power of the community** and empower members to be part of the solution.

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Submitted on behalf of the Zonta Club of Para District Area by President Pam Fletcher

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