

Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence

Submission

I write specifically regarding the aspect of 'Prevention'.

I acknowledge from the outset that what will be suggested below will never be popular with human rights advocates, however, it is a child's right not to be brought up in a family with existing family and sexual violence, and it is our responsibility as a society not to simply allow that to happen.

I draw the Royal Commission to the outcome of a Dutch Court in The Hague where a serial sperm donor was restricted from fathering further children due to the potential future damage and trauma caused to future children and grandchildren.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/apr/28/dutch-court-orders-sperm-donor-to-stop-after-550-children>

Should the man father again, the court will fine him 100,000 euro for every child.

Though overseas, it is this precedent that I urge the Commission to consider; a court ruling the child more important than the privilege of an adult to parent.

I worked for homelessness services for nearly two decades, and we see one problem time and time again; adults becoming new parents after already being convicted of domestic violence, child abuse or neglect. One client in our service now has a father who has spawned almost forty children - from several mothers - and is still going. Not one of the children are allowed near him with his bikie associations, and neither does he take responsibility for them.

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Though it comes in waves, between 50 and 90% of the youth in the homelessness system have all come from families whose parents should never have been allowed to fall pregnant a second time.

No doubt, children under guardianship of the minister will be similar statistics.

The existing system has in place the ability for the Minister to take responsibility of a newborn as soon as they arrive in the hospital with the parents already flagged as a danger to the child. But the system could be in place earlier than this by discouraging would-be parents - who should never be parents – from parenting again.

Potential levels of discouragement should be considered, including but not exclusive:

- Encouraging permanent contraception to parents who have already had a child removed and/or been convicted of domestic violence or child abuse.
- Ordering permanent contraception lest the parent be fined.
- Fining a substantial amount to any new birth of a parent who has already had children removed or have been convicted of family violence or child abuse.
- Reward in exchange for permanent contraception, e.g. \$10,000 bonus to convicted parents - or parents who have already had children removed. The uptake would likely be quite high, which means the number of future children born into violence will be significantly lower than today's numbers. The suggested award may seem high, but each child taken into guardianship or ends up in the homelessness system costs both State and Federal Governments and NGOs \$100,000+ each year.

Action should not just be taken after a child is born to prevent family violence.

Action can be made prior to conception, which will prevent future children being born into family violence, abuse or neglect.

Again, I acknowledge this would be an enormous human rights issue to mount, however, as the above precedent in The Netherlands shows, it should be the right of future children not to be born into violence and abuse that overrides any privilege a parent has to give birth to yet another child after they have already proved to the State that they should not be around children.

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I hope you consider this submission.

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