



Zonta Club of Para District Area Inc.

We write as a service club based in northern Adelaide which is part of Zonta International, a worldwide organisation designed to make **a better world for women and girls**. A very obvious way for this to happen is to eliminate domestic, family and sexual violence.

It was heartening to hear that a Royal Commission had been established to inquire into these forms of violence and that there would be opportunities for submissions. Having read the issues paper and the questions asked within it, we can see that front line service agencies and departments will be able to provide relevant and insightful observations. Answers to these specific questions are not in our realms of experience and expertise.

Our purpose with this submission is to highlight the value of community organisations and service groups and to request that they are **consulted** during the commission period and also included in the recommendations. Individually we have hundreds of members but collectively we number many thousands, and we can make a difference.

We have supported groups such as Women's Safety Services over many years through service projects such as supplying them with toiletry bags and quilts but recently have taken a more **active advocacy** role in the community and used the 16 Days of Activism to set up displays and hold functions which inform the community about domestic violence. We also developed a brochure about the 16 Days and circulated this. Many other service clubs and organisations support, inform and advocate in similar ways.

In recent years, we have combined with other groups in order to have a stronger voice and to spread the word more widely. We partnered with the Rotary Club of Mawson Lakes and Soroptimist International Torrens in 2022 in holding a candlelight vigil and in 2023 we formalised this collaboration by setting up **RoZSI's Voice** with a Memorandum of Understanding. This group, with the aid of a council grant, held a forum for community members in partnership with Griffith University where we introduced the concept of **bystander** training. We set up a facebook page to share information about our events as well as those of other likeminded organisations and developed a brochure explaining the concept of coercive control. We are now on our third printing of this. A coercive control workshop was also held for 30 front line staff supported by a White Ribbon breakfast grant. We are becoming better known and have other groups expressing interest in joining.

As a group, we have participated in a number of **community markets** where we have provided information about coercive control and domestic abuse. We have been surprised at the number of people who have initiated conversations and shared stories of their own or others' experiences. This has illustrated to us that they want to tell someone and often they have also talked about what they thought was not done properly and sometimes it was many years ago but the pain and hurt is still there. We used this concept of market conversations in our funding application to a local council.

Possibly due to the link with Rotary, Zonta was invited and joined with Rotary in the planning and delivery of the first **Walk for Respect** in November 2023 and have continued this link for this year.

Again, volunteer groups join together to have a greater impact and show others in the community that this is a shared concern.

RoZSI's Voice has continued to look for partners and when the Royal Commission was announced, we formed **Northern Adelaide Community Collaboration (NACC)** by inviting community members we knew had similar concerns about domestic abuse to join us in ensuring there are northern Adelaide views presented in the submissions. We have developed a brochure explaining the Commission and the work of NACC and approached 3 local councils to support our work.

Australia has a clear record of valuing and effectively utilising volunteers, and the Sydney Olympics demonstrated this to the world. We need to develop another volunteer army.

These examples of community work and **collaboration** illustrate the value of utilising existing groups who have seen the need to eliminate domestic abuse. Whilst we do not have the expertise to directly support victim survivors and the many affected by domestic abuse, we can work to make a difference in other ways, and we want to be involved.


Already there are many models where organisations are required to run training session in areas such as mental health, multicultural perspectives, Disability support and First Nations of Australia. Following the Victorian Royal Commission one implemented recommendation led to Respectful Relationships being incorporated into the school curriculum. If we want change, we need to follow this concept and promote **educative programmes** in schools, workplaces and importantly in the community.

It is our belief that many community members are interested in stopping this abuse but need support to recognise signs and to feel confident in offering information and help. If we can develop and grow community networks, we are on the right path. 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.

We have seen the effectiveness of **domestic violence networks** in southern and western Adelaide and are actively promoting one in northern Adelaide. Support for these networks will help make a difference.

Domestic, family and sexual violence are not inevitable. They are preventable and every person can play a part in making a difference in our community.

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

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