

27 September 2024  
[REDACTED]

Commissioner Ms Stott Despoja AO  
Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence  
GPO Box 464  
ADELAIDE SA 5001  
[RoyalCommissionDFSV@sa.gov.au](mailto:RoyalCommissionDFSV@sa.gov.au)

Dear Ms Stott Despoja AO

### **Community Development approach to help address domestic, family, and sexual violence**

The City of Onkaparinga has a long history of supporting actions to prevent violence against women and support those experiencing violence across the Commission's five focus areas.

The *Local Government Act 1999* highlights a principal role of council is to '*act as a representative, informed and responsible decision-maker in the interests of its community*'. City of Onkaparinga use community development approaches to meet these principles '*to provide for the welfare, well-being and interests of individuals and groups*'.

In this submission, we demonstrate the support role of local government that enables positive social change for domestic violence services, to collectively collaborate their responsiveness to awareness, prevention, behavior change, and recovery for victim-survivors. The City of Onkaparinga is responsive to our residents, organisations, and businesses. Our community is very aware of the domestic violence national crisis and is active in raising awareness to support behavior change.

On 21 May 2024, Elected Members recognised violence against women as a national emergency and committed to engaging with community groups, government agencies, and local leaders to address this crisis. They emphasised the importance of collaboration to ensure women can live free from harm in all aspects of their lives.

The City of Onkaparinga has signatory membership with the *Onkaparinga Collaborative Approach (OCA)* for the prevention of domestic and family violence and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence. The OCA membership consists of mostly service organisations that meet regularly to share knowledge and resources, provide training, and deliver programs for prevention and recovery. Council facilitates and provides administration at monthly OCA meetings and assists to plan and implement group actions.

We support the [RESPECT Community Action Group \(CAG\) Onkaparinga](#) in its annual calendar of events for the International 16 Days of Activism, through programs at our community centres and libraries, venue provision, display of roadside banners, permit fee waivers, social media promotion and staffing assistance.

We have worked with [Spirit of Woman](#) and the late Helen Oxenham OAM to create and unveil the first 'Ripple, Place of Courage' at Rotary Park, Christies Beach, and a second Ripple site at Seaford Community Centre. These sites along with others in South Australia are places of comfort and healing, promoting courage to speak up and out and providing a powerful symbol of a peaceful and unified community.

From 2019 to 2023, the City of Onkaparinga collaborated with the Southern Domestic Violence Action Group, the Southern Women Matters Campaign, OCA, and Zonta to advocate for a southern women's hub for domestic violence prevention and recovery. This effort secured SA Government funding for the Yellow Gate at Noarlunga Centre, which serves as a first point of contact for local women seeking support. Council recognises the important role Yellow Gate has for women and families experiencing or at risk of domestic and family violence, with ongoing funding for Yellow Gate, part of council's [Advocacy Plan 2025–26](#) to ensure long-term financial security.

We are aware of an acute need for increased funding as per the Commissioner's inquiry on the five key areas (Prevention, Early Intervention, Response, Recovery & Healing and Co-ordination) and encourage future consideration of the following as part of the Royal Commission:

- funding gaps in crisis response and accommodation in outer suburbs and regions
- continued funding for Adelaide's outer southern region Yellow Gate women's hub
- funding to support increased culturally responsive services to outer suburbs and regional areas that are now diversifying
- funding for councils and community groups to assist with awareness campaigns and events for prevention, including men leading men's behaviour change and youth focussed healthy relationships workshops, and events for both victim-survivors' recovery and support
- state government departments working together in funding commitments that support domestic and family violence initiatives. Victim-survivors require 'joined up' service provision across multiple portfolios that include Health and Wellbeing, Housing, Multicultural Affairs, Women and the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence, Child Protection and Aboriginal Affairs. Funding cuts in any one of these areas may prevent a holistic response to the complex needs of victim-survivors.
- a mapping of regional accessibility to support services.

As you know, local government is the tier of government closest to our community. Over many years our community service delivery has been at the forefront of social impacts. The current cost of living and housing crises is evidence of that. The change in political and budget cycles over many decades has been detrimental to women and families in our city. Primary healthcare and community services have been regarded as 'discretionary spend' during these cycles. This has resulted in funds redirected to acute health care settings, crisis response, and police and correctional services. To remedy this, we believe a reinvestment in community services is required. Our community centres and libraries provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive place of connection and are often the first point of contact for people seeking support services and assistance, supporting at risk families to connect with support services.

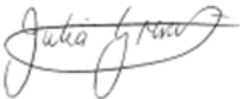
As in the case interstate, we would advocate for baseline state funding for 100 per cent of community centres, estimated to be an additional \$5 million (approximately) across the state. Full funding will provide a safe and supportive community service closest to the women and families that need it most.

We believe a constant and secure funding model will be cost effective and deliver quantifiable results.

As a council, we continue to pledge our support for eliminating violence against women and seek to continue this legacy of collaboration and working together to find solutions.

We thank the Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Panel for considering our submission. If you have any queries regarding this submission, please contact [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julia Grant". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Julia Grant  
Director Community