Submission: Senate Committee on Men's Health 20-02-09

Dear sir/madam,

I wish to submit the following suggestions for consideration by the committee on Men's Health.

1. I suggest that men's health considerations be prioritized by the committee according of the seriousness of impact each issue under consideration has on men's health. For example considerations of male suicide or violence against males be prioritized over advertizing sports heroes or the need to ingest vitamins.

2. I make two suggestions to the Committee, the first from my own experience of domestic violence. Myself and my children suffered regular violent physical assault from my ex partner (children's mother) and we had to regularly flee from the family home in order to escape this. On one of these occasions we had nowhere to stay for the night so telephoned a "women's refuge" and asked if they could offer emergency accomodation, counselling or referrals to other emergency services we needed. The response of this women's shelter was to *tersely* remind me that only women have such services. I had two very small children by my side as i made the call. In this case my children and I slept under an abandoned derilect house with no money and only the clothes on our backs until we could get help from relatives. My children and I have since escaped this abuse and the children live full time with myself and never see thier abusive mother due to legal protective orders. So my suggestion to the Committee is men or fathers-and-children who are suffering violence be afforded access to the many services women already have and that the senate committee immediately draft legislation that all current shelters and services for women suffering violence be changed to non-sexist services. As I understand it is illegal anyway to have services for one gender only with no corresponding service for the other.

3. That a 'Minister For Men' post be established to deal with men's issues and men's needs in a non disciminatory fashion, instead of the present unsatisfactory position whereby women's advocates hold responsibility for reporting on male needs and the attendant distribution of funding and services to males. This has been shown to be inadequate by funding disparities alone.

Thank you for considering these issues,

Regards,