I would like to add my voice to the inquiry.

I am most concerned at the continuing rates of suicide in men (being around 4 times higher than women, and I believe higher than the national road toll)

I am also highly concerned with the way men are portrayed in not only the media but also some government publications as the sole perpetrators of domestic violence – it is my understanding that more mothers kill their children than fathers do. It is also my understanding that DV includes much more than physical violence – of which I have seen many demoralised men after being mentally and emotionally abused by their female partner (she has often also been physically violent, but this is explained away as self defence or "she was driven to it by him" – which is never an excuse in my opinion). I have heard women speak of "preferring" physical violence over emotional abuse as the bruises heal much quicker than the emotional wounds – I believe the same would be true for men and yet our media places sole focus on physical violence as being the most damaging. I suspect that if the media portrayed emotional controls and abuses as DV then many more people (including women) would be feeling uncomfortable by the adverts because it would reflect their home-life.

I think the drought response to mental health in rural and remote communities has been good, but not extensive enough – and what happens when the drought ends?

I believe there has been progress in men's health that has been driven by men in communities out of desperation – I believe it is well due time for the government to take a more active role in caring for men.

I know many men feel the same as I do in not wanting to be competing with women for the health dollars. I believe strongly that we need new and specific funding for men, particularly in regard to prostate cancer and the other areas where men are primary sufferers of disease and health issues.

There is good work being done by organisations such as Beyond Blue and Andrology Australia, but I think we need to work on improving men's image and importance in our communities – giving men identity again.

When there is a television campaign against violence - it should be against <u>all</u> violence and not just show men as "perpetrators" and women as "victims". When the Office for the Status of Women sponsor or publish documents they should be in gender neutral language, or at least identify that their intention is not about destroying men to help women in a "women versus men" mentality (although it may be for some individuals).

We walk this planet together so we have to exist together – I believe we can work well together. Men and women are not the same and never will be – but we are complimentary and perfectly matched to function together for the best outcome for our children and for our planet. What is needed now is a better approach to men's health and appreciating men in our communities.

I live and work in the Eastern Eyre area of South Australia – and we had for a short time a couple of Men's Health worker positions regionally and locally which were well received by the community and have since been sadly missed. I believe we in country SA were beginning to lead the way in men's health until funding shifted and we reverted to a much less pro-active approach. Primary Health Care demands that we work on prevention and education rather then wait until people are acutely and chronically unwell, which is also when they become a large financial burden to the health dollars. Common sense demands improvement to men's health – it should only be debated about how we best go about ensuring it.

Thankyou for accepting my contribution

Graham Parish