To the Committee on Men's Health,

I am very happy to see this enquiry taking place on the shores of my beloved Australia.

I am a separated father, now living full time in Norway in order to have contact with my 2 son's who live and are growing up here.

I have first hand knowledge on what it means to be separated from ones children and have worked extensively with the men's movement in Australia as an attendee of men's gatherings, facilitator of men's groups, counsellor for men who commit domestic violence, counsellor for children, families, parents and fathers with Kids Help Line and finally, conducted research into the area of men's health within my master's of counselling university education at The Queensland University of Technology, successfully graduating in 2007.

I have therefore personally experienced, seen, herd and read about the many heartbreaking tales of families that have to live in this state of emotional distress day after day, and it's not easy.

However, there is always hope that through the right research and with enough people standing together, both men and women, and the public and private sectors, this devastating problem that eats away at the fabric of our culture and home life can begin it's long and overdue healing process.

It does as we all know take time for these deep wounds to begin to heal and for many people it's still a matter of taking a day at a time.

I really want to share with this committee advice and knowledge that is both practical and to the point.

Questions that might be useful in asking or considering from my own practical experience:

- What are the right questions that need to be asked in order to sufficiently gather the information needed to fund new projects for men's health?

- How are you now presently researching this information?

- What sectors of the community are involved?

- Do you have balanced approach in regard to gathering this information, for example: what research methods are being used and are you successfully gathering knowledge from both academic fields as well as the "Grass Roots" sources?

- We understand that education is the key, what are the constrictions presently stopping the funding for the study of more men's health related topic's within university under graduate courses?

- To my knowledge in 2007 there was only one Australian University offering a subject on Men's health related issues, why is this?

- Men's health related education in 2007 was predominately shared with the wider community through individual initiatives that were volunteer based.

- How can this committee successfully gain access to enough funding to set up a national based service?

- Can this new service work in partnership with presently operating services such as The Men's Health And Well Being Association of Queensland, Men's Line, Dad's in Distress, Kids Help Line and The Fatherhood Project?

- To really work the new service for Men could base it's operations on (to my own personal knowledge as a former employee) the Kids Help Line model of operations.

- To my knowledge in 2007/08 KHL received a funding package of 10 million Australian dollars funding from the federal government, what's stopping a similar amount of funding being given to a new an improved men's national health initiative?

- To really help men in the wider community the national programme would need to offer counselling services, offer comprehensive advice on local support and health services offered in the area that the individual lives in, and provide the much needed research to the various government bodies for further analysis.

- What can the committee gain from research in regard to eduction on health issues for men in other countries?

- What else can I do to help you?

- What can you do to help me in my own project in starting up a national men's health counselling and referral service in Norway (As this is now my adopted home, due to having two Norwegian son's growing up here).

- If I want to make a submission for funding my own initiative that directly helps Australians who are separated fathers living outside Australia, due to having children with non-national Australian's what information do you specifically need from me, who can I talk to who can help me directly?

Gentlemen please find attached a copy of one of my own personal experiences that aired on the Fathers Day special for Dads on the Air in 2007 that I hope can be used in some way to keep the spirits of all separated father's uplifted, encouraged and willing to fight for their own emotional health and well being.

With warm regards,

Dallas Bentley (Dipconsel.Mcounsel)