Dear Committee

If I could list some statistics As published in the DAD4KIDS Fatherhood Foundation newsletter.

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Many men die before their time.

Men die from heart disease at 1.7 times the rate of women.
Men die from lung cancer at 2.3 times the rate of women.
Men die from diabetes at 1.6 times the rate of women.
Men die from chronic lower respiratory diseases at 1.9 times the rate of women.
Men account for 95% of fatal work accidents.
Men commit suicide at 4 times the rate of women.
Australia's suicide rate is actually higher than the national road toll.

Many estimate that our suicide rate is 30% under reported. Most of the unreported suicides are men. Suicides by men are 4 times the rate of women. If that is the case then more men die from suicide each year than all the men and women combined who die in motor vehicle accidents each year.

The saddest thought is that most of the above deaths are preventable.

The men of Australia desperately need a voice in government. An Office for the Status of Men and Fathers is the only way to move men's health forward.

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To Address the specifics of the inquiry:

i. level of Commonwealth, state and other funding addressing men's health, particularly prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and depression,

1. There has never been adequate funding for means health within the federal or state budgets. Some state have proposed revising their spending on men's health issues.

2. A lot of the funding for ancillary services have been axed in favour of other important health issues.

3. Currently a significant proportion of the funding around men's health issues comes from the public and private benefactors. This is doing little to stem the flood of men's health issues that are crippling our society.

ii. adequacy of existing education and awareness campaigns regarding men's health for both men and the wider community,

1. Men typically will not sing out for help until it is too late. Education programs need to be made part of the mainstream education system and need to be made acceptable and accessible to all men and women. Some education programs on Basic men's health may need to be part of out primary and secondary education system.

2. This is particularly the case WRT single fathers who suffer at the hands of their children's mother and the biased family court system.

iii. prevailing attitudes of men towards their own health and sense of wellbeing and how these are affecting men's health in general, and

1. In Some cases men are their worst enemy. There needs to be a national and state campaign spanning several decades to lift the profile of the issues men face in all aspects of their lives.

2. Make asking for help and speaking out against injustices acceptable to themselves and to the wider community.

3. Attitudes towards Diet, physical health, moral and family values, women's issues, child rearing, conflict management and many other male centric issues need to be addressed since they become set in the Male culture and are passed on from generation to generation.

4. The rites of passage from boyhood to manhood needs to be instilled in the male Culture to ensure the responsibility is taken together with the Authority.

iv. the extent, funding and adequacy for treatment services and general support programs for men's health in metropolitan, rural, regional and remote areas.

1. I would say the services low to nonexistent as you go from metropolitan to Remote areas. The remoteness itself compounds these issues. Whatever systems are put in place to cater for those that do not have access to a community centre need to be then extended and made available to all men and there families.

2. There are existing foundations, institutions and Not for Profit organisations (DAD4KIDS Fatherhood Foundation, dads in distress) , that already have an significant impact on the advocating for men's health issues and service provision, but are only scratching the surface. They are under funded to address all the men's Issues facing a large portion of our men's population, and consequently the families and society around them. Funding must be directed to them first and quickly so this vital life saving service can be continued even in its limited capacity. Lives are being brought back from the brink of death. To have that service stop would mean we who took the decision to do nothing, let alone remove existing funding, will have blood on our hands.

General comments

I am a dad of 4 boys. I have many friends who are trying to be Good husbands(where it all begins), Good Dads (The future) and Good pillars of Society).

Some of these men are single men who get very little support emotionally, physiologically or even financially to support their Ex and their children. We need to make policy, Law and social expectation that firstly family is where a father and a mother raise their children in a loving supportive home. Where divorce is a last resort all consideration must be given to ensuring the children have what they vitally need, safe and equal access to, and influence from, their father and mother.

In addition fathers must be given the opportunity to have input into their children's life no mater what their marital status is. There should be work policies and benefits, family law, Tax and Centrelink provisions, that all facilitate relationship between fathers and children. In fact studies have shown that Fathers who are more involved with their children live healthier, longer and more satisfying lives.

I know that if we continue on the track we are going our whole society will suffer. Men as head of the family influence their own families and set the scene for the children who will become the future generations of our society. If men are not encouraged and enabled to take their God given role in the family and community, society will continue to crumble as it is today.

We now have the opportunity to develop the counterculture that will re-build Australia into, what once was, a mighty nation.

Regards

Johaan