



## **NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED**

ABN 95 432 693 034

**Formed in 1902**

**Patron-in-Chief:** Mrs Liz Scarce

**Patron:** Lady Mayoress, Genevieve Theseira-Haese

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### **Submission to Senate of Inquiry into 1800RESPECT October 2017**

#### **Introduction**

The National Council of Women South Australia (NCWSA) strongly oppose the proposed changes put forward regarding the changes to the 1800RESPECT service. where, as of the of 29 October 2017, the Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia will no longer operate the 1800RESPECT service. NCWSA takes this opportunity to make a submission on how the proposed changes directly affect women, children, men and qualified experienced service providers. We strongly urge the Senate to reject the proposed changes that have been put forward.

#### **The National Council of Women South Australia (NCWSA)**

The National Council of Women SA represents 23 women's organisations and 20 associate members. National Council of Women of South Australia Incorporated was founded in 1902 (115 years ago) and re-established in 1920 following a few years in abeyance.

NCWSA is a representative group of women working together to further the interests of women in society, It is affiliated with the National Council of Women of Australia and through that the International Council of Women.

Aims of NCW SA are:

- To promote the interests of women
- To educate and uplift the outlook of the community on the status of women
- To represent the interests of women in general
- To provide a bond of union between women's organisations
- To promote the moral and social welfare of the community
- To hold property real and personal for any of the above aims

Future Goals of NCW SA:

- Make a difference through advocacy
- Participate in seminars and conferences



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- Work together for a better world for women
- Improve our use of social media

Delegates from affiliated organisations and associate members are involved by

- Discussing issues affecting women
- Serving as a volunteer on a Committee
- Voting on decisions of importance for women of diverse cultures

### NCWSA submission

NCWSA's concerns include:

- That women who are experiencing, or are at risk, of domestic violence when telephoning for support and expert advice would not be telephoning directly to a qualified trauma counsellor. Taking away the first line of qualified contact that these vulnerable women speak with is not acceptable. This lack of immediate support may delay appropriate service provision and increase the level of risk hence further threatening these women's and children's safety.
- That calls to the 1800RESPECT number may be recorded. Women who call the 1800RESPECT service do so due to experiencing violence themselves and or their children. These women need to know that their conversations are private and confidential and not able to be used in court or for any other purpose that may place them at further harm.
- The women's files and recordings can be subject to subpoena from perpetrators' lawyers. This action may potentially put domestic violence victims at further risk leading to unnecessary traumatisation as well as threatening their safety further.
- That service provision is subject to cost cutting so that profits can be gained by the service provider. This will impact on the quality of service these vulnerable women receive. Profiting making from vulnerable women is unethical, immoral and not acceptable.

Any changes to the 1800RESPECT service will significantly impact on women's safety. Women know this current service by reputation and have confidence in the current system, a system that relies on specialist service providers working together as a network. These providers rely on, and are accountable to each other, as well as the women who expect qualified expert service provision. Disrupting a system that works, and has worked well, is not conducive to providing high quality women centred care. As word spreads, women will be less likely to use the proposed service due to the increased barriers to receiving appropriate point of call care. Additionally, service providers need to have confidence when making referrals to other services, which has now been undermined.

The National Council of Women SA strongly urges the Senate to reconsider the current proposed changes to the 1800RESPECT service so that vulnerable women, children, and anyone who uses the service, who are already at risk of harm, are not further placed in harms way. Furthermore, that these



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people are not disadvantaged, are provided with a high quality expert service specific to their needs at the point of call.

Regards,

Dr Wendy Abigail Vice-President, on behalf of Margaret Flint OAM President NCW SA





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National Council of Women SA affiliated organisation: 23 associate members.

**Affiliated Organisations**

Asia Women's Consultative Council SA  
Australian Church Women SA Unit Inc  
Australian College of Midwives SA Branch  
Beta Sigma Phi  
Business & Professional Women SA  
Catholic Women's League  
Dominican Old Scholars Association Inc  
GFS - An Anglican Ministry  
Girl Guides SA  
Liberal Women's Council (SA Division)  
Lutheran Women of South Australia  
Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia  
Soroptimist International Region of Adelaide  
Soroptimist International of Torrens  
Soroptimist International Region of SA  
The Mothers' Union Inc  
The Penguin Club of South Australia Inc  
Uniting Church Adult Fellowship  
Women in Agriculture and Business of SA Inc  
Woman's Christian Temperance Union  
Zonta Club of Adelaide  
Zonta Club Noarlunga Southern Vales