

Men's Health

March 12, 2009

Senate Committee Submissions
Men's Health Senate Committee
Parliament House
Canberra
Australia

Dear Senate Committee,

I am a father and twelve months ago became a single parent, although my son is 14 he has lived all his life with his mother, while I lived alone for 14 years. Being Male in Australia at this time has stresses and issues.

Before my son came to live with me there was the struggle of arranging contact and ensuring that was functional, paying the maintenance, dealing with the Child Support Office, working with the Family Court and constantly ensuring that I had my own mental health in check.

It is possible in Australia at the moment for women to place unfounded accusations to police restricting access to their own children, the rules that were designed to aid children are now used to isolate them from their fathers and half their relatives (the fathers half). I applaud the current program of working with depression in men as from my own experience this is a cause of great impact on society through the reduction of an effective and fully engaged workforce.

There is great strength found in family support and when men are removed from their families that reduces their effectiveness and their risk of depression. Consequently men become less effective in their role as father and employee/employer. While women can indeed be good leaders, the largest companies are lead by men, most likely supported and driven by a family/wife. I believe it is important for regulations and policies to become more family friendly.

There are other issues that need to be included in men's health other than mental health, and effectiveness of men, they include male specific cancers. There is a large amount of funding provided for Breast cancer and that is fantastic, however there is little funding for male cancers such as prostate and testicular cancers, or perhaps there is not as much public awareness of the level of funding for this cause. I ask the Senate Committee into men's health to review the funding into male specific cancer treatment.

Perhaps there is a greater issue of drawing the attention of men to their own health issues. Of recent years there has been a new magazine on the shelves "Mens's Health", but is that enough, should there be a more public approach to raising the need for men to give attention to their health? With a high rate of male suicides in rural locations, the next question becomes, is there enough funding of men's health in rural and regional areas?

With the current world economy the issue of men's health will be exacerbated as more men are made redundant around the world but more particularly in Australia. This will put pressure on the families, society and ultimately further pressure on the economy. I implore the Senate Committee increase the funding for men's health in the interest of the individuals and the interest of our wonderful country.