



Ms Lyn Beverley
Committee Secretary
Finance and Public Administration
References Committee
The Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Beverley,

I would like to thank you for your letter inviting me to provide a written submission to the Committee's inquiry into the prevalence and impact of domestic violence in Australia. This submission has been prepared by myself and volunteers from the online collective Destroy The Joint on behalf of more than 45,000 people of whom this group is comprised.

Destroy the Joint is an online community encompassing people of all ages and genders, and with varying expertise in many aspects of the Terms of Reference for this Inquiry. Not all of these have been addressed in the Submission as we feel that other organisations and individuals will have greater expertise in these important areas. Given that the main purpose of the group is to stimulate conversation in the community on issues such as domestic violence, misogyny and other contemporary feminist issues, the views expressed by contributors are necessarily personal. With respect to your guidance on personal cases or grievances, qualitative content analysis has been conducted to report on dominant themes in these online discussions.

I have attached a copy of our Submission as a contribution to the Committee's Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Jenna Pride

August 2014

Destroy THE JOINT™

Destroy The Joint
Submission to the Senate Inquiry into
Domestic Violence in Australia



Destroy The Joint would like to thank all of our Destroyers who participated in online discussions, for sharing their experiences and for making their contribution as part of the preparation of this submission.

Destroy The Joint acknowledges that as Australians wherever we are in Australia, we live and work on Aboriginal land. We pay our respects to Indigenous elders past and present, and to all Indigenous people participating in Destroy The Joint.



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About Us

Destroy The Joint (DTJ) is a unique online community of activists and everyday citizens, united in their concern for women's rights. Established in August 2012 in response to misogynistic comments by a well-known broadcaster, the group has since burgeoned to upwards of 45,000 'Destroyers' as of July 2014, arguably making it one of the most prominent feminist groups in Australia.

DTJ has contributed to national debates on gender equality, misogyny, and the impact of domestic violence in Australia, and has encouraged greater feminist participation in public discourse. The Facebook page reaches over 100,000 people every week and posts on a wide variety of feminist issues. In addition, the Twitter handle @JointDestroyer has over 12,000 followers and provides another online touchstone for swift dissemination of and debate on contemporary feminist issues.

The founding members include people renowned in journalism, academia and education, activism and surgery; with a wide-range of expertise in community service and engagement, feminist policy and politics, gender and sexuality, and organisation change management. The community of Destroyers encompasses a broad array of occupations, experience and expertise which it shares through the online forums. A number of site administrators and moderators run these forums on a voluntary basis in addition to other responsibilities, with most having full time jobs or businesses, family and other voluntary positions.

DTJ has won numerous accolades including being named among The Sydney Morning Herald's 2012 *Most Influential Female Voices*, awarded the *Agenda Setter* in the 2013 NAB Women's Agenda Leadership Awards, and *The Grand Stirrer* award in the 2013 Edna Ryan Awards.

One of the key issues of focus for DTJ is domestic violence (family violence, intimate partner violence). We have run two major campaigns relevant to this Inquiry which will be outlined in this submission. The first is the data collection and public awareness campaign: *Counting Dead Women*; analysing media sources to keep a public record of the women who lose their lives to domestic violence in Australia every year. The second is a successful campaign to convince Telstra to provide silent phone numbers to women who are escaping domestic violence free of charge.

Executive Summary

Destroy the Joint (DTJ) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Senate Inquiry into domestic violence in Australia. DTJ commends the government on the development and implementation of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (2010-2022)* – (The Plan).¹ We support the full implementation of this comprehensive plan. In this submission we have identified a small number of specific issues where policy could be implemented to supplement and strengthen the actions within The Plan.

One of the key issues of focus for DTJ is domestic violence (family violence, intimate partner violence). We have run two major campaigns relevant to this Inquiry which will be outlined in this submission. Analysis of posts, comments and discussions on DTJ social media pages also reveals that domestic violence is an issue that people feel passionately about, and want to see a solution to.

The importance and scale of this problem in Australia is difficult to fully capture due to a number cross jurisdictional measurement and reporting issues. Recent estimates put the number of individuals impacted by domestic violence since the age of 15 in the millions (whether it be physical, sexual or emotional abuse from a current or previous partner). In a country with a population the size of Australia's, it is staggering to consider that 21.1% of women and 12.1 % of men have suffered emotional abuse from a current or previous partner. In just a twelve month time frame, hundreds of thousands of Australians have experienced domestic violence and abuse.²

The human cost of domestic violence to Australian society is being seen in the increasing death toll. Destroy The Joint has commenced a campaign to analyse media sources to keep count of the violent deaths of women in Australia, the majority of whom lose their lives to intimate partners and family violence. The cost to the Australian economy is likewise, overwhelming, with a recent estimate placing the costs of domestic violence (in terms direct, indirect and opportunity costs) at \$14.7 USD billion in 2013. This is roughly 1.1% of Australia's Gross Domestic Product. And yet corporate needs are being put ahead of the rights of survivors of domestic violence. A recent campaign by DTJ

¹ Department of Social Services (DSS): *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (2010-2022)*

² Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS): 4906.0 - Personal Safety, Australia, 2012

highlighted the costs of providing silent phone numbers to those escaping domestic violence. There has been a response from one telecommunications provider on a case-by-case basis, and a Senate Inquiry into the feasibility of a prohibition on charging fees for an unlisted number service. However, a change to the Telecommunications Act 1997 is still required to ensure the protection of survivors' safety without charging them an often unaffordable fee.

With these priorities in mind, this submission has focused on the adequacy of policy and community responses to domestic violence, as it relates to:

- Public Awareness and Engagement: Data Quality and Consistency – A National Approach
- The Counting Dead Women Campaign
- The Silent Phone Numbers Campaign

Recommendations

Destroy the Joint recommends:

1. The establishment and maintenance of an official national government repository of facts about domestic violence and other gendered crimes (such as sexual assault and public violence). This should be based on the latest data from well-respected agencies, from studies using rigorous methodology, and be both easy to access and to understand by the Australian public.
2. The establishment of an official national government register, giving acknowledgement and respect to the death toll of domestic violence in Australia.
3. Further to this, we call for a national domestic violence death review policy and strategy.
4. That amendments be made to *The Telecommunications Act 1997* (The Act) to prohibit the charging of a fee for an unlisted (silent) phone number.
5. In relation to recommendation 4, that all companies providing telecommunication services remove any costs associated with silent phone numbers and do not disseminate personal contact details for any person escaping a domestic violence situation, regardless of whether amendments to The Act are made.

Response to the Inquiry

In responding to the Inquiry Terms of Reference, this submission focuses on the areas where we can contribute most to, namely the adequacy of policy and community responses to domestic violence. Note: for the purposes of this submission we have adopted the definitions used on page 4 in the submission made to this Inquiry by the Australian Women's Health Network (AWHN), in particular that of domestic violence.

DEFINITION

Domestic violence: *“Domestic violence (also family violence, intimate partner violence) may be physical and involve actual physical harm, threatened harm against a person, or someone/something they care for. It may be emotional, and may involve belittling, name calling, and intimidation. It may also take the form of limiting a (person)’s freedom. For example financially, by keeping a (person) dependent on a partner to the extent that it is necessary to ask for money and justify all expenditure; or socially, such as being insulted or bullied in front of others; or being isolated from friends or family or controlling where (they) can go or who (they) can see. It does not have to occur in the home to be classified as domestic violence and can take a number of forms, including stalking and cyber-stalking.”*

Australian Women's Health Network (2014).

[Health and the Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women](#). Position Paper, 2014.

The adequacy of policy and community responses to domestic violence

Domestic violence in Australia is a problem on a huge scale. It impacts on millions of Australians throughout their lifetimes. Recent estimates put the life time prevalence, since the age of 15, of being impacted by domestic violence in the millions - whether it be physical, sexual or emotional abuse from a current or previous partner. In just a twelve month time frame, hundreds of thousands of Australians have experienced domestic violence and abuse. In the twelve month period prior to a 2012 study by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2013)³ it was found that:

- 66,200 women and 33,100 men had been physically or sexually assaulted by their current partner;

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS): 4906.0 - Personal Safety, Australia, 2012

- 66,300 women and 18,700 men had been physically or sexually assaulted by their previous partner;
- 217,000 women and 128,000 men had been emotionally abused by a current partner; and
- 191,300 women and 112,000 men had been emotionally abused by a previous partner.

There is a terrible cost to the lived experience of a large number of Australians, in terms of the restriction of their freedom from harm, threats, intimidation and subjugation. Worse still, is that this abuse comes from someone who was (or still is) an intimate partner.

There is also a cost in terms of morbidity, with dozens of lives lost to domestic violence every year, most of whom appear to be women. The scale of the loss of life is currently unclear, as there is very little public recognition of the death toll, and no unified public record being kept. In order to fill this gap, DTJ has commenced a campaign to analyse media sources to keep count of the violent deaths of women in Australia, the majority of whom lose their lives to intimate partners and family violence. This campaign relies on a small team of volunteers scouring newspaper articles, investigating databases and following up on information passed on by the public, and painstakingly maintaining lists of dead women. Unfortunately, it is difficult to fully capture the relevant data due to a number of cross-jurisdictional measurement and reporting issues. This is why DTJ feels that it is important to establish an official federal government register, giving acknowledgement and respect to the death toll of domestic violence in Australia. This can also be utilized to inform communication efforts and policy responses.

Although Australian society is relatively progressive in terms of legislative protection against harassment and abuse, domestic violence remains a pervasive issue. DTJ commends the policy response taken by the federal government in the implementation of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (2010-2022)*.⁴ A strong communication plan around National Priority 5, (Continuing to Build the Evidence Base) would be of immeasurable benefit in combating misconceptions about the prevalence and incidence of domestic violence.

⁴ Department of Social Services (DSS): *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (2010-2022)*

There are also the economic costs associated with domestic violence. The overall estimated cost to the Australian economy in 2013 was \$14.7 billion USD.⁵ This is roughly 1.1% of Australia's GDP, equating to approximately \$6500 USD per capita. These costs include direct, indirect and opportunity costs, including:

- **Costs to the individual:** such as relocation costs, medical expenses, property damage, lost income, physical injury and disability, mental health problems, and premature mortality;
- **Costs to government:** such as providing additional health care, social services, policing and justice, and reduced tax revenue;
- **Costs to business:** such as reduced productivity of staff, reduced revenue as a result; increased costs from absenteeism and employee replacement;
- **Costs to broader society:** such as reduced social participation, increased taxation to meet the larger need for services, increased volunteer time to bridge the gap in available services and advocacy to meet demand; reduced household income and a pervasive fear of violence in society.

Although these costs to Australian society are vast, for an individual who is escaping a domestic violence situation the costs of even basic safety, security and survival needs can be difficult to meet (e.g., food, safe accommodation).⁶

With these priorities in mind, this submission has focused on the adequacy of policy and community responses to domestic violence, as it relates to:

- Public Awareness and Engagement: Data Quality and Consistency – A National Approach
- The Counting Dead Women Campaign
- The Silent Phone Numbers Campaign

⁵KPMG (2013). Cost of Violence Against Women. White Ribbon International Conference, May 2013.

⁶Bromfield, Lamont, Parker, & Horsfall (2010). Issues for the safety and wellbeing of children in families with multiple and complex problems: The co-occurrence of domestic violence, parental substance misuse, and mental health problems. National Child Protection Clearinghouse

Public Awareness and Engagement: Data Quality and Consistency – A National Approach

The committee will undoubtedly have noted that a wide variety (and quality) of data sources are referred to in the submissions to this inquiry. Some of these data sources involve a large and unbiased sample of the population, such as the 2012 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Personal Safety Survey (PSS).⁷ Others involve use of primary data and the application of rigorous methodology, such as the KPMG report commissioned by the Department of Social Services into the economic cost of violence against women and their children.⁸ When considering an issue as important as domestic violence, it is crucial that there be incontestable use of the best available data to avoid derailing and dismissive arguments about the incidence and prevalence of these crimes.

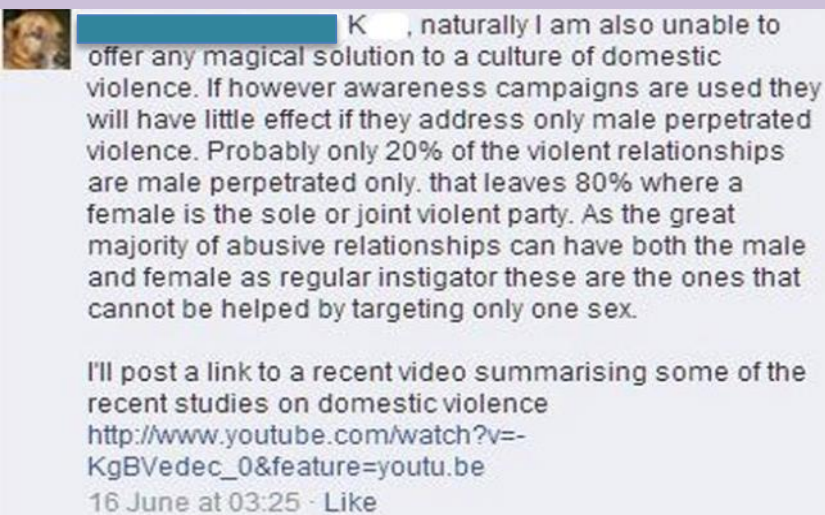


Figure 1: Quote from a member of the public on DTJ Facebook page; misleading statistics, June 2014.

Too often DTJ encounters attacks from groups and individuals who make use of ‘cherry picked’ data from methodologically flawed or biased research which claims that there is gender symmetry in the prevalence of domestic violence and other gendered crimes (for example, see Figure 1 compared to Figure 2). This small but vocal minority seeks to actively prevent the effectiveness of campaigns. While it is known that domestic violence tragically affects both genders, the fact that it

⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS): 4906.0 - Personal Safety, Australia, 2012

⁸ Department of Social Services (DSS) : Economic cost of violence against women and their children, prepared by KPMG, March 2009

disproportionately impacts women should not be denied (see Table 1). With an average of one woman a week or more dying as a result of domestic violence, public awareness of the prevalence of violence against women must be raised.

Table 1: Prevalence of Domestic Violence in Australia, since age 15 (ABS, 2013)

	Female (n)	Prevalence (%)	Male (n)	Prevalence (%)
Intimate Partner Physical Violence				
Current Partner	226,800	2.6%	115,200	1.4%
Previous Partner	1,158,700	13.3%	318,500	3.8%
Intimate Partner Sexual Abuse				
Current Partner	44,900	0.5%	5,800	0.1%
Previous Partner	382,000	4.4%	2700	0.3%
Intimate Partner Emotional Abuse				
Current Partner	392,100	4.5%	248,000	2.9%
Previous Partner	1,840,600	21.1%	1,024,500	12.1%

There are number of issues preventing an accurate reflection of the number of incidents and therefore the impact of this issue in the Australian community including:

Reporting

- *Under-reporting*: Many crimes are not reported to police or other authorities, so neither the total number of victims nor the total number of perpetrators is captured in their data.
- *Hidden-reporting*: This may occur where a victim seeks services, or reports an incident, but does not disclose family, domestic or sexual violence as the reason for the contact.

Recording

- *Under-recording*: This can occur due to process and procedural variations in recording incidents by authorities or services. There is also the possibility that an incident may be classified incorrectly, such as when a victim presents as a general assault victim and a judgment is made by the individual making the record about the nature of the incident. (ABS 2013)

Monitoring

- There is currently no comprehensive national domestic violence register that monitors and measures incidents and outcomes of domestic violence. In order to identify with any measure of accuracy the incidents of domestic violence across the Australian population a number of data sources must be referenced and cross checked from each State and Territory.

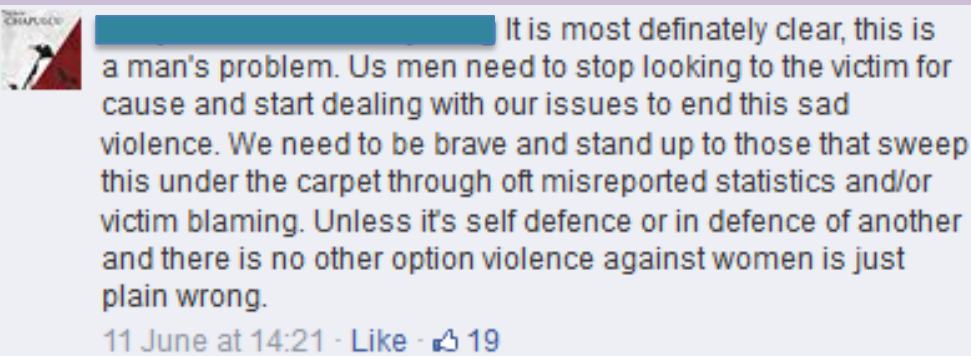


Figure 2: Quote from DTJ Facebook page on the issue of domestic violence made by a Destroyer, June 2014.

Presently there is a great deal of inconsistency in legislative and regulatory requirements, when measuring, and addressing domestic violence in Australia. Each of the States and Territories have different approaches to managing reporting and recording incidents, prosecuting perpetrators of violence and issuing sentences. There are also diverse approaches to tackling the problem. For example, while the Victorian ALP has moved to investigate domestic violence through a state Royal Commission, the ACT government has asked their Domestic Violence Prevention Council to conduct a review of closed cases of domestic violence deaths in the ACT. This has led to a lack of uniformity in the approach on a national level.

A national approach to addressing domestic violence as identified in *The Plan* is increasingly necessary. The proposed National Data Collection and Reporting Framework and related research efforts from the Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)⁹ is critical not only to ensure the safety of women and children and others impacted by domestic violence in the community, but also to communicating the true prevalence and impact of domestic violence in Australia. In relation to the issue of reporting, recording and monitoring data, we specifically commend Priority 5 in *The Plan*.

⁹ Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) (2014). National Research Agenda to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, May 2014

NATIONAL PRIORITY 5: CONTINUING TO BUILD THE EVIDENCE BASE

24. Expand the quality and quantity of national research on violence against women and their children through the implementation of the National Research Agenda.
25. Measure the prevalence of violence against women and their children and community attitudes towards violence through national surveys.
26. Build the National Data Collection and Reporting Framework.

National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children – Second Action Plan (2013 – 2016)

It is understood that the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)¹⁰ will work in partnership with all governments to develop a consistent national framework during the life of the Second Action Plan (2013 – 2016).¹¹ While a coordinated and consolidated approach to data collection is being established, DTJ recommends that an official information page be established where Australians can access accurate, unbiased data and facts on domestic violence in a format which is easily understood.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Destroy The Joint recommends the establishment and maintenance of an official national government repository of facts about domestic violence and other gendered crimes (such as sexual assault and public violence). This should be based on the latest data from well-respected agencies, from studies using rigorous methodology, and be both easy to access and to understand by the Australian public.

¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS): 4529.0.00.002 - Bridging the data gaps for family, domestic and sexual violence, 2013

¹¹ Department of Social Services (DSS): Second Action Plan (2013-2016) Moving Ahead Of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022

Counting Dead Women Campaign

Homicide data used to be collected nationally by the National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP) within the Australian Institute of Criminology. This program started in 1990 and collected and analysed information on all homicides (murder and manslaughter, excluding driving causing death) in Australia. Although the program continues to provide strategic policy and operational information on homicide in Australia, there has been no new data recorded in this system since 2010.¹² To compensate for this dearth in national data collection, on May 20, 2014, DTJ officially launched the Counting Dead Women campaign. This was in order to fill this gap in data collection as well as to honour the women who have lost their lives as a result of violence. A large proportion of these women have lost their lives to domestic violence. Destroyers were asked to assist the volunteers who compile the list by messaging the Facebook page, commenting in the posts or emailing information.



Figure 3: Campaign picture 20 May, 2014: Counting Dead Women. Destroy The Joint

¹² Australian Institute of Criminology (1989 – 2010). National homicide monitoring program

The list of dead women counted to date by state is shown in Table 2, with the list of names for each year in Appendix 1.

Table 2: Counting Dead Women (2012 – 2014)

Australian States and Territories	2012	2013	2014 (to date)
New South Wales	3	15	15
Queensland	10	8	12
Victoria	7	10	6
South Australia	5	2	2
Australian Capital Territory	2	0	0
Northern Territory	5	5	2
Western Australia	9	8	5
Tasmania	5	2	1
All of Australia	46	50	43

DTJ commends **National Priority 3: Supporting Innovative Services and Integrated Systems** outlined in *The Plan* (Second Action Plan). In particular we are supportive of **Action 19: Drive continuous improvement in systems through reviewing of domestic and family violence-related deaths and child deaths.**

Further to this, we call for a national domestic violence death review policy and strategy, and a national register for all lives lost to domestic violence, as outlined in the Discussion Paper produced by the Domestic Violence Death Review Action Group, 2008, or a similar best practice framework.¹³



This is so terribly sad, but so very necessary. We must never forget these women, nor should we lose sight of those who live in constant fear. My thoughts are with all who's lives have been affected by domestic violence.
10 June at 19:17 · Edited · Like · 3

Figure 4: Quote from DTJ Facebook page on Counting Dead Women made by a Destroyer, June 2014.

¹³ Domestic Violence Death Review Action Group (2008): Dying to be Heard: Domestic and Family Violence Death Reviews Discussion Paper

An analysis of the contents, social media 'reach' and comments on the five main Facebook posts by Destroy the Joint for the Counting Dead Women campaign has been conducted. This analysis is detailed in Appendix 2 to this submission. Overall there were 3314 'Likes', 1821 'Shares' and 419 'Comments'. Note that the independence of likes, shares or comments has not been assumed (see Figure 4 for example comment).

The comments across these four posts have been analysed using a summative content analysis to report on the broad sentiments of our community on this topic without referring to individual cases or grievances. There were nine main themes which emerged from the 419 comments made. Essentially the view of the DTJ community is that this is a worthwhile and important campaign. Destroyers thanked Destroy The Joint for the work that they have been doing and the time it takes to keeping track of the names of the women who have been murdered. On the whole, there was a high level of dissatisfaction with the government response to this crisis.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Establish an official federal government register, giving acknowledgement and respect to the death toll of domestic violence in Australia. (Destroy The Joint is currently running a volunteer campaign which is Counting Dead Women).

RECOMMENDATION 3: Further to this, we call for a national domestic violence death review policy and strategy.

Silent Phone Numbers Campaign

In February, 2013, a survivor of domestic violence contacted DTJ as a result of her interactions with a telecommunications provider (Telstra). 'Rebecca' (a pseudonym used to protect her privacy and safety) had recently relocated after escaping a violent partner. When she asked Telstra for a silent and unlisted home phone number, the call centre operator was going to impose a charge of around \$36 a year. This was despite the fact that she had an Apprehended Violence Order (AVO) against

her former partner and was in financial difficulties due to the burden of relocation and related costs which are incurred by many victims of domestic violence (as detailed earlier in this submission¹⁴). The call centre operator stated that under no circumstances would the fee be waived. The supervisor of the call centre asked for further private details and then went on to say that silent numbers are a privilege, not a right.

It is clear from prevalence data reported by the ABS¹⁵ that physical, sexual and emotional abuse is more likely to occur or escalate after a relationship has broken down, and that separation is the most dangerous time for women leaving an abusive relationship. The lifetime prevalence of intimate partner violence for all Australians the age of 15:

Physical abuse

- Current partner: 2.6% of women (226,800) and 1.4% of men (115,200);
- Previous partner: 13.3% of women (1,158,700) and 3.8% of men (318,500).

Sexual abuse

- Current partner: 0.5% of women (44,900) and 0.1% of men (5,800);
- Previous partner: 4.4% of women (382,000) and 0.3% of men (27,000).

Emotional abuse

- Current partner: 4.5% of women (392,100) and 2.9% of men (248,000);
- Previous partner: 21.1% of women (1,840,600) and 12.1% of men (1,024,500).

Protecting the privacy and safety of those who are escaping domestic violence should be a priority. As Telstra is a supporter of the White Ribbon Campaign¹⁶, this policy should be a part of its key corporate responsibilities and values. A DTJ representative contacted Telstra senior management and they agreed to waive the fee for 'Rebecca'. DTJ admins made a conscious decision to continue to lobby Telstra management to ensure this fee was waived for all victims of domestic violence. This lobbying continued for weeks, but with good will on both sides. Telstra finally agreed to revise its policy on February 26, making an exception for victims of

¹⁴ Department of Social Services (DSS) : Economic cost of violence against women and their children, prepared by KPMG, March 2009

¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS): 4906.0 - Personal Safety, Australia, 2012

¹⁶ White Ribbon Campaign Supporters and Partners: <http://www.whiteribbon.org.au/partners>

domestic violence who are in financial difficulties. DTJ commends Telstra for this action. DTJ informed Destroyers that we would continue to pursue this issue until the rules were changed for all victims of domestic violence, rather than on a case-by-case basis.

An analysis of the contents, reach and comments on the two main Facebook posts by Destroy the Joint on the Silent Phone Numbers campaign has been conducted. This analysis is detailed in Appendix 3 to this submission. Overall there were 1811 'Likes', 149 'Shares' and 227 'Comments' Note that the independence of likes, shares or comments has not been assumed (see Figure 5 for example quote).



Figure 5: Quote from DTJ Facebook page on Silent Phone Numbers made by a Destroyer, February, 2013.

The comments across these two posts have been analysed using a summative content analysis to report on the broad sentiments of our community on this topic without referring to individual cases or grievances. There were ten main themes which emerged from the 227 comments made. The views expressed by Destroyers are that anyone should be provided a silent phone number at no cost when they are under threat and in need of the protection this would provide – their name, number and address should not be publicly listed. Telstra was thanked; however, there was a good deal of dissatisfaction with the situation and past handling of requests. It was acknowledged that there needs to be a more permanent policy change rather than dealing with case-by-case situations for people in need, like 'Rebecca'. Destroyers were thankful to DTJ for the good news, good work and a great outcome.

Following on from this campaign, on 28 February 2013 the Senate referred an *Inquiry into the Feasibility of Prohibiting the Charging of a Fee for an Unlisted Number* to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications for

inquiry and report by 15 May 2013.¹⁷ The impetus for this inquiry was a recommendation in the report from Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) on Australian Privacy Law and Practice such that:

“The Telecommunications Act 1997 should be amended to prohibit the charging of a fee for an unlisted (silent) number.”¹⁸

Two recommendations emerged from the subsequent Senate Inquiry. The second recommendation was that the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) produce material for consumers which explains where their personal information is published and how it may be made private. DTJ commends the committee on this recommendation.

Recommendation 1 was that “the Telecommunications Act 1997 **not be amended** to prohibit the charging of a fee for an unlisted (silent) number on a public number directory.” The reasons given for this included “developments within the telecommunications industry” which had apparently “negated the need for regulatory intervention to abolish fees being charged for silent lines.” The list of developments included the roll-out of the National Broadband Network, a policy which has been dramatically modified since the change of government in late 2013¹⁹. Also included in the list was the change in Telstra policy for “eligible vulnerable consumers, such as victims of domestic violence.”

It should be noted that three out of the seven Senators on this committee disagreed with Recommendation 1, including the Deputy Chair, and found that the charging for a fee for an unlisted (silent) number should be prohibited. They spelled out their reasons for this in a Dissenting Senators Report.²⁰

The dissenting senators went on to explain:

- The recommendation from the Australian Law Reform Commission had widespread support from consumer and privacy advocacy groups as well as

¹⁷ The Senate Environment and Communications References Committee. Final Report on the feasibility of a prohibition on charging fees for an unlisted number service, May 2013.

¹⁸ Australian Law Reform Commission (2008). For Your Information: Australian Privacy Law and Practice (ALRC Report 108)

¹⁹ Schaffarczyk (2013). A tale of two NBNs: the Coalition’s broadband policy explained. The Conversation: <http://theconversation.com/a-tale-of-two-nbns-the-coalitions-broadband-policy-explained-13304>

²⁰ The Senate Environment and Communications References Committee. Final Report on the feasibility of a prohibition on charging fees for an unlisted number service, May 2013, pg. 22-24.

sections of the telecommunications industry. The assenting Senators had chosen to ignore the evidence received and seek to protect the corporate interests of Telstra.

- Of the 19 submissions, the only submission that advocated the continuation of unlisted (silent) line fees was made by Telstra. Their submission was focused on ensuring the continued profitability of Telstra, through the charging of unlisted (silent) line fees, and of Sensis, the subsidiary that is responsible for the production of the White Pages directory.
- This was opposed by groups like the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, the Privacy Commissioner and Legal Centres from around Australia - all built on the work of the Australian Law Reform Commission. Their submissions were focused on concerns about privacy and safety. They also focused on ensuring that all telecommunications users are able to enjoy those two rights, regardless of their ability to pay, or meet complex eligibility requirements.
- The claim by assenting Senators that the prohibition of charging a fee for an unlisted number would undermine the purpose and usefulness of the national telephone directory does not withstand even basic scrutiny.
- As it stands, 16% of fixed line users are currently paying a monthly fee to have their details removed from telephone directories. This has not had a deleterious effect on the use of telecommunications directories, which is still used by 88% of Australians in the past year.
- Dissenting Senators have taken the view that citizens' right to privacy and personal safety are more important than a theoretical decrease in the usefulness of Telstra's White Pages directory.
- Dissenting Senators agree with the Australian Law Reform Commission view that a fee can act as an impediment to accessing a service that will help protect privacy, particularly for individuals on fixed or low incomes.
- Dissenting Senators call on the government to undertake consultation in order to set out a clear timetable that would see the abolition of the charging of fees for unlisted (silent) lines.

DTJ commends and agrees with the views of Senator Cameron, Senator Bilyk and Senator Ludlam in this report. DTJ also recognises the 18 organisations which made submissions to this inquiry which supported the removal of the fee for silent phone lines. It has been noted that the only submission of the 19 in total which advocated for charging a fee for silent phone lines was submitted by Telstra. Telstra has since been contacted by DTJ for an update on the uptake of silent phone numbers based on their current policy, and their views on the importance of this policy.

*"We now have several thousand customers who have the silent number charge waived, with a relatively consistent number added each month. Consultants are reminded regularly about the silent number rules and processes including the exemption...
...This is an area where it is important to look after people who are exposed."*

Spokesperson from Telstra to Destroy The Joint, August 2014

DTJ would recommend that the comments made by the dissenting Senators should be considered by this Inquiry. With that in mind, our recommendations on this matter are:

RECOMMENDATION 3: Amendments be made to *The Telecommunications Act 1997* (The Act) to prohibit the charging of a fee for an unlisted (silent) as recommended by the Australian Law Reform Commission on Australian privacy law, and the Dissenting Senators Report in the Inquiry of the Senate Environment and Communications Reference Committee into the feasibility of a prohibition on charging fees for an unlisted number service.

RECOMMENDATION 4: All companies providing telecommunication services remove any costs associated with silent numbers and non-dissemination personal contact details for any person escaping a domestic violence situation, regardless of whether amendments to The Act are made.

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White Ribbon Campaign Supporters and Partners:
<http://www.whiteribbon.org.au/partners>

Appendix 1: Counting Dead Women

2012-2014 Table A1.1: Counting Dead Women - 2014

	Number	Dead Women 2014 (To 30 July 2014)
Australia (Total)	43	
New South Wales	15	<p>January 3: Theresa Brown (52)</p> <p>January 22: Victoria Comrie Cullen (50)</p> <p>January 31: Monika Chetty (39)</p> <p>February 14: Unnamed woman (72)</p> <p>February 19: Margaret Tannous (47)</p> <p>April 02: Nicole Weate (53)</p> <p>April 05: Barbara Anderson (63)</p> <p>April 08: Unnamed woman (25)</p> <p>April 11: Judy Townsend (61)</p> <p>April 16: Unnamed woman (34)</p> <p>April 22: Unnamed woman (42)</p> <p>May 10: Marie Darragh (82)</p> <p>May 10: Isobella Spencer (77)</p> <p>June 03: Leonie Geldenhuys (46)</p> <p>June 06: Unnamed woman (32)</p>
Victoria	6	<p>January 14: Jeanette Moss (69)</p> <p>March 18: Maryann Sikia (41)</p> <p>April 02: Rani Featherstone (34)</p> <p>April 18: Fiona Warzywoda (33)</p> <p>June 28: Renea (Yuk Ling) Lau (32)</p> <p>July 07: Dong Mei Sun (age unknown)</p>
Queensland	12	<p>January 27: Melanie Perks (38)</p> <p>January 27: Ebony Perks (12)</p> <p>February 16: Sherelle Locke (23)</p> <p>March 01: Meena Naraynan (27)</p> <p>March 16: Alexis Jeffrey (24)</p> <p>March 30: Unnamed woman (34)</p> <p>April 01: Sophie Collombet (21)</p>

		<p>April 19: Jo La Spina (26) April 20: Unnamed woman (27) June 06: Beth Staveley (69) June 16: Tia Landers (28) July 17: Kirra McLoughlin (27)</p>
Australian Capital Territory	0	None in 2014 to date
South Australia	2	<p>April 06: Elizabeth Phillips (66) May 16: Graziella Dailer (48)</p>
Northern Territory	2	<p>April 24: Unnamed woman (23) April 28: Unnamed woman (46)</p>
Western Australia	5	<p>April 03: Fiona Pauline Booth (50) April 30: Unnamed woman (47) May 31: Unnamed woman (47) June 01: Deann Jean Ashby (68) July 19: Unnamed woman (38)</p>
Tasmania	1	February 8: Jodi Eaton (28)

Table A1.2: Counting Dead Women – 2013

	Number	Dead Women 2013
Australia (Total)	50	
New South Wales	15	<p>January 12: Julie Grant (41) January 20: Salaseini Batirau (46) January 31: Unnamed woman (66) February 25: Shan Wu (30) March 29: Felicia Crawford (45) March 10: Clare Weston (23) April 21: Noleen Pal Hayson (30) July 11: Sue Glasgow (49) July 22: Unnamed woman (25) July 29: Purvi Joshi (28) August 03: Allira Green (23)</p>

		<p>August 10: Sandeep Thind (30)</p> <p>September 16: Unnamed woman (58)</p> <p>September 19: Deborah Wolfgram (54)</p> <p>October 16: Unnamed woman (62)</p>
Victoria	10	<p>January 03: Cathy McPhee (58)</p> <p>April 06: Sharon Siermans (29)</p> <p>July 15: Teresa Paulino aka Mancuso (49)</p> <p>July 21: Tracy Connolly (40)</p> <p>August 01: Kylie Blackwood (42)</p> <p>September 28: Elizabeth Barnes (37)</p> <p>October 11: Rekih O'Donnell (22)</p> <p>November 04: Suzi Oghia (31)</p> <p>December 08: Korinne Aylward (35)</p> <p>December 20: Cathy Browning (47)</p>
Queensland	8	<p>February 09 : Shandee Blackburn (23)</p> <p>March (nd): Chantal Barnett (27)</p> <p>May 21: Joan Ryther (27)</p> <p>August 21: Louise Dekens (43)</p> <p>November 13: Liselotte Watson (85)</p> <p>November 24: Eunji Ban (22)</p> <p>December 01: Anne Cheek (59)</p> <p>December 21: Unnamed woman (42)</p>
Australian Capital Territory	0	None in 2013
South Australia	2	<p>July 12: Diann Rogan (52)</p> <p>October (nd): Jacqueline Franklin (34)</p>
Northern Territory	5	<p>February 19: Unnamed woman (25)</p> <p>April 06: Unnamed woman (27)</p> <p>August 16: Unnamed woman (32)</p> <p>November 26: Unnamed woman (29)</p> <p>December 06: Unnamed woman (48)</p>
Western Australia	8	February 09: Rita Addenbrooke (59)

		<p>April 06: Amanda Wood (43)</p> <p>May 15: Venesa Farcich (31)</p> <p>May 18: Charmaine Winmar (36)</p> <p>August 21: Unnamed woman (42)</p> <p>September 26: Helen Rocha (40)</p> <p>December 29: Maureen Horstman (67)</p> <p>December 29: Tamara Horstman (26)</p>
Tasmania	2	<p>September 02: Jill Evans (62)</p> <p>November 29: Unnamed woman (52)</p>

Table A1.3: Counting Dead Women – 2012

	Number	Dead Women 2014
Australia (Total)	46	
New South Wales	3	<p>May 04: Debra Martin (43)</p> <p>July 16: Rachael Yeo (31)</p> <p>August 19: Leisl Smith (23)</p>
Victoria	7	<p>February 12: Julie-Anne Trennery-Rogers (35)</p> <p>April 29: Preetika Sharma (35)</p> <p>August 23: Adriana Donato (20)</p> <p>September 22: Jill Meagher (29)</p> <p>October 04: Sargun Ragi (23)</p> <p>November 10: Sarah Cafferkey (22)</p> <p>December 19: Robyn Hall (35)</p>
Queensland	10	<p>January 07: Bettina Gregory (42)</p> <p>January 22: Rebecca Doran (40)</p> <p>April 20: Allison Baden-Clay (43)</p> <p>May 09: Noni Zischkle (55)</p> <p>June 28: Roxane Jones aka Gilbert (38)</p> <p>July 10: Gail Lynch (55)</p> <p>July 15: Natasha McCarthy (28)</p> <p>August 17: Angela Dean (37)</p> <p>September 03: Sarahjane Dower (26)</p>

		September 27: Angelia Moore (34)
Australian Capital Territory	2	March 27: Paula Conlon (30) April 02: Ottilia Aranyi (75)
South Australia	5	July (nd): Dianne Rogan (52) September(nd): Jessie Wilson (24) October 01: Katrina Coker (30) December 05: Rebecca Wild (16) December 05: Jessie Fullerton (22)
Northern Territory	5	March 07: Hilary Bradley (69) March 08: Unnamed woman (42) May 15: Kirsty Ashley (35) December 10: Unnamed woman (26) December 25: Kumanytjayi Nelson (22)
Western Australia	9	January 16: Julie Kuhn (73) February 22: Kurukulasuriya Silva (50) April 07: Rebecca Ward (25) June 06: Nickesha Bundabar (14) June 25: Veronica Messina (62) November 8: Unnamed woman (41) November (nd): Unnamed woman (39) December 07: Unnamed woman (62) December 18: Tracey Holloway (51)
Tasmania	5	April 23: Margaret Foran (77) August 09: Jessica Kupsch (29) August 15: Angela Hallam (31) December 16: Meagan Wilton (31) December 20: Delys Weston (62)

Appendix 2: Results of Summative Content Analysis on the DTJ Counting Dead Women Campaign

An analysis of the contents, reach and comments on the five main Facebook posts by DTJ for the Counting Dead Women campaign has been conducted. The quantitative details are outlined in Table A2.1. Note that the independence of likes, shares or comments has not been assumed (i.e. Destroyers may have contributed several times in the comments section of a single post; the same Destroyers may have shared or liked more than one post).

Table A2.1: Facebook Posts and Conversations for the Counting Dead Women Campaign

Link to posts	Date	Number of Dead Women at time of post (in 2014)	'Likes'	'Shares'	Comments (used in content analysis)
Post 1	17 July, 2014	40	400	175	71
Post 2	3 July, 2014	38	72	49	20
Post 3	10 June, 2014	30	924	456	105
Post 4	4 June, 2014	16	868	478	150
Post 5	20 May, 2014	Launch	1050	663	73
Average (to nearest integer)			663	364	84
Total			3314	1821	419

The comments across these four posts have been analysed using a summative content analysis to report on the broad sentiments of our community on this topic without referring to individual cases or grievances. Figure A2.1 shows the nine main themes emerging from the analysis of 419 comments across five posts.

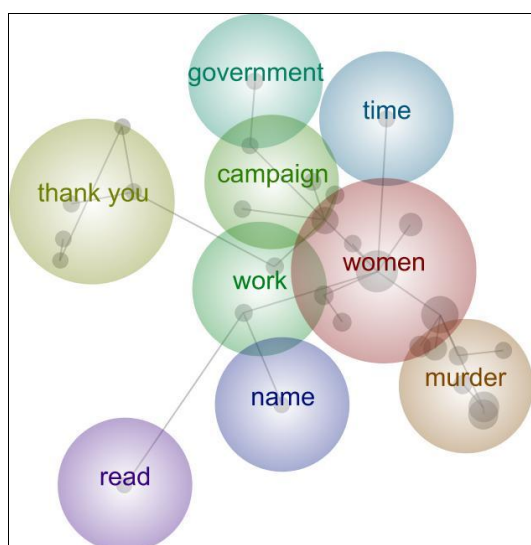


Figure A2.1: Concept Map – Main themes from Counting Dead Women posts

Essentially the view is that this is a worthwhile campaign. Destroyers thanked Destroy The Joint for the work that they have been doing and the time it takes to keeping track of the names of the women who have been murdered. There was a high level of dissatisfaction with the government response to this crisis.

Figure A2.2 shows a more detailed inter-related concept map which show further commonly used themes extracted from the comments, which were most frequently used in conjunction with one another. For example; along with ‘Thank You’ themes were ‘sad’, ‘tragic’, ‘page’ and Destroy The Joint (‘DTJ’).

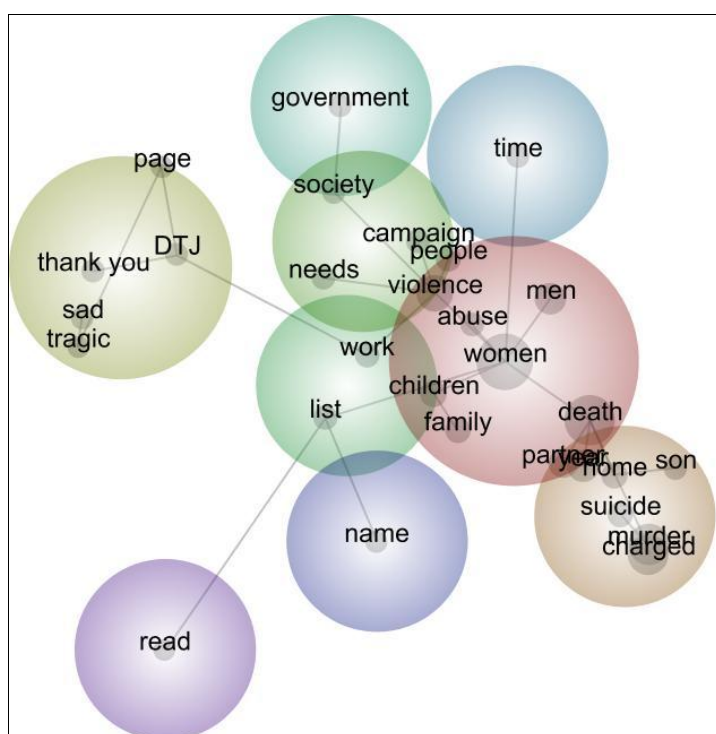


Figure A2.2: Concept Map Counting Dead Women posts – 100% visible concepts, inter-relationships

Table A2.2 shows all of the concepts used by Destroyers accounting for over 5% of the total qualitative data – which equates to around 10 uses of a concept.

Table A2.2: Ranked Concepts from Facebook post and comments content analysis

Word Concept	Count
Women	204
Death	171
Murder	84
Violence	82
Charged	81
Men	67

Year	36
Partner	35
Thank you	25
Sad	23
Children	22
People	21
Family	19
List	19
Home	16
Suicide	16
Work	16
Government	16
Campaign	15
Needs	15
Time	14
Tragic	12
Destroy The Joint (DTJ)	11
Society	11
Read	11
Abuse	10
Son	10

Appendix 3: Results of Summative Content Analysis on the DTJ Silent Phone Numbers Campaign

An analysis of the contents, reach and comments on the five main Facebook posts by DTJ for the Telstra Silent Numbers campaign has been conducted. The quantitative details are outlined in Table A3.1. Note that the independence of likes, shares or comments has not been assumed (i.e. Destroyers may have contributed several times in the comments section of a single post; the same Destroyers may have shared or liked more than one post).

Table A3.1: Facebook Posts and Conversations for the Telstra Silent Numbers Campaign

Link to posts	Date	'Likes'	'Shares'	Comments (used in content analysis)
Post 1	14 February, 2013	1371	120	184
Post 2	26 February, 2013	440	29	43
Average (to nearest integer)		906	75	114
Total		1811	149	227

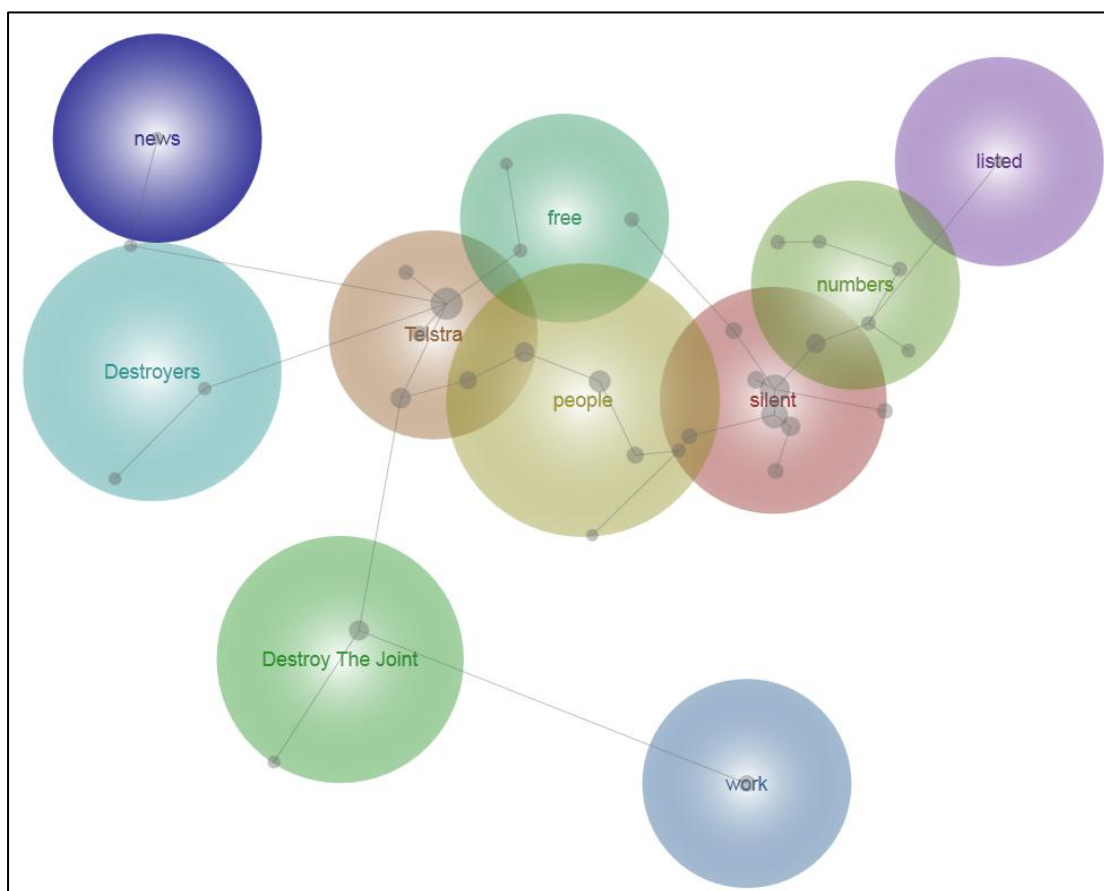


Figure A3.1: Concept Map – Main themes from Silent Numbers posts

The comments across these four posts have been analysed using a summative content analysis to report on the broad sentiments of our community on this topic without referring to individual cases or grievances. Figure A3.1 shows the nine main themes emerging from the analysis of 227 comments across the two posts.

The views expressed by Destroyers are that anyone should be given a silent phone number for free when they are under threat and in need of the protection this would provide – their name, number and address should not be publically listed. Telstra were thanked, however there was a good deal of dissatisfaction with the situation and past handling of requests. It was acknowledged that there needs to be a more permanent policy rather than dealing with case-by-case situations for people in need, such as ‘Rebecca’. Destroyers were thankful to DTJ for the good news, good work and a great outcome. Figure A3.2 shows a more detailed inter-related concept map which demonstrates further commonly used themes extracted from the comments, which were most frequently used in conjunction with one another.

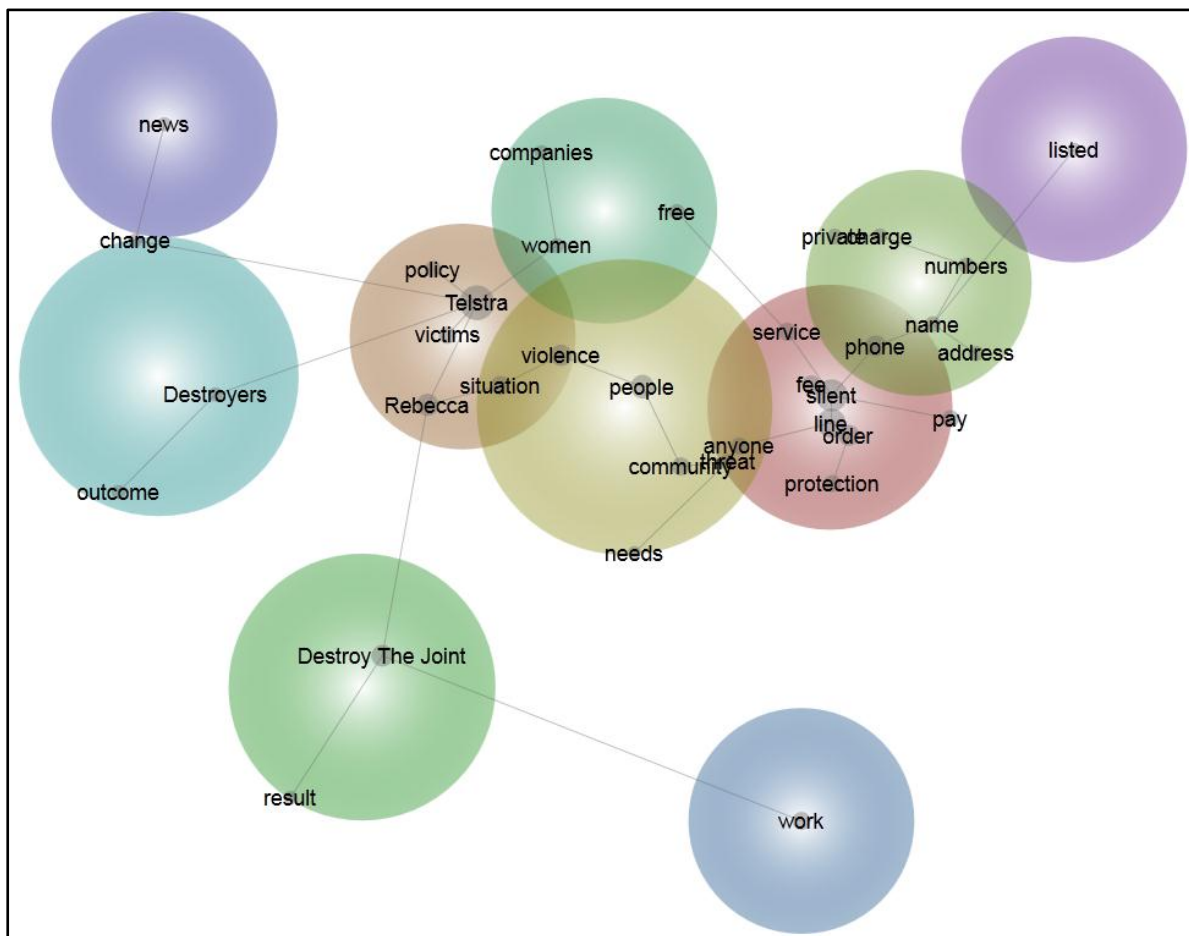


Figure A3.2: Concept Map for Silent Number posts – 100% visible concepts, inter-relationships

Table A3.2 shows all of the concepts used by Destroyers where this concept has been use 10 or more times. In this smaller sample of comments this equates to 18% of the total qualitative data analysed.

Table A3.2: Ranked Concepts from Facebook post and comments content analysis

Word Concept	Count
Telstra	57
Destroy The Joint (DTJ)	40
Work	31
Silent	27
Line	22
“Rebecca” (pseudonym)	21
People	18
Violence	14
Phone	14
Situation	13
Outcome	13
Pay	12
Result	12
Destroyers	11
Fee	11
Service	11
Numbers	11
Change	11
News	11
Policy	10
Free	10