

4th October 2017

Submission to the Senate Inquiry into 1800 RESPECT

Good evening.

My name is . I'm a Women's Health Nurse Practitioner and Registered Midwife. I work in two non-government women's health centres in Sydney's south west and west. I am very concerned for both staff and clients of services that work with Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault of both men and women and Child Sexual Assault of both genders. My concerns relate to privacy, confidentiality and the triage model itself relating to Trauma Informed care

Non-government women's health centres in NSW work tirelessly with marginalised women such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, low income, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse including refugees, the LGBTQIA community and women with disabilities. All of these women are particularly vulnerable to domestic violence, sexual assault and child sexual assault. Women's Health Centres view women's health through a lens of feminism and holistic care which has a focus on the social determinants of health. We work in partnership with women's Refuges and Domestic and Family Violence services including up until now 1800RESPECT run by Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia. Liverpool women's Health Centre is one of two centres where I am employed has a Domestic Violence Hub run in conjunction with Bonnies Refuge.

There are 23 women's health centres in NSW and Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia have played a major part in our sector. Formally known as NSW Rape Crisis service, RDVSA is considered an important adjunct service to the work Women's Health Centres do. The counselling team at RDVSA work within a trauma informed model which is world renowned and forms the focus of a lot of women's health NGO's work as well. Partnerships with RDVSA enable trauma informed counsellors to work with adult survivors of child sexual assault in women's Health Centres in NSW.

Training over the years has been provided to staff at Women's Health Centres on the highly acclaimed trauma informed model of counselling. This is best practice work and the network of women's Health Centres puts a lot of trust in the knowledge and skills of the workers employed by RDVSA. We know that women will be treated with respect, kindness, a non-judgemental approach and empathy. Those experiencing sexual and domestic violence would not have to tell their story to a call centre worker who might not necessarily have the skills and knowledge to handle the complex trauma. Traumatized clients don't want to have to tell their stories over and over or risk breaches in confidentiality such as recording conversations and releasing files to lawyers which may happen in a for profit model.

I would urge the enquiry to reinstate RDVSA to manage the 1800 RESPECT service so that our clients, staff and stakeholders can be confident that 1800 RESPECT clients are receiving the world class trauma counselling model they need and deserve.

Thank you for your consideration.