

# LISA NEVILLE MP

## MEMBER FOR BELLARINE

■ Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water

27 May 2015

I write to provide a submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence and in doing so focus my comments on two specific issues:

- a. The effects of family violence on school aged children and the role of schools in dealing with this violence and
- b. Violated women and children being forced out of the family home.

In my role as the Member for Bellarine over many years I, and my office staff, have directly assisted numerous women who have suffered at the hands of an abusive partner.

And although my submission is limited to the above two issues, all too often I have seen first hand the myriad of devastating effects domestic violence has on these women and their children.

In relation to school aged children of course it is well documented that the effects of family violence can be varied and long term. And schools are in many instances at the forefront of assisting children and their families in dealing with the violence.

It is therefore important that school principals, teachers and support staff are effectively equipped to deal with family violence issues as they present at schools.

From my experience in working with schools within my electorate, I do know that principals, teachers and staff are very proactive in identifying and assisting students who may be subject to violence in the home.

Many impacted by family violence may also see the only avenue of reporting and initial support is through the school via a teacher, principal or support staff with whom they have built a trusting relationship.

Therefore, in my view, it is imperative that in making recommendations to address family violence that the important and pivotal role schools can and do play must be recognised. And without “overloading” our schools provide them with effective tools to deal with family violence when it arises.



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I would also like to highlight the importance of ensuring the issue of women remaining in their own homes is effectively addressed by any recommendations coming out of the Royal Commission.

It is again well documented that women and children who are forced from the family home are faced with a range of ongoing issues on top of dealing with the domestic violence.

Homelessness, especially in rural and regional areas where there is limited housing options, is a major concern. Homelessness for victims of family violence results in being cut off or isolated from family and wider community support networks, financial hardship and potentially being forced to leave employment. The ongoing sense of insecurity and vulnerability can have long term effects on women and children forced from their home by a violent partner.

I therefore urge the Commission in making its recommendations to recognise the importance of ensuring families subject to domestic violence are allowed to remain in the family home and that perpetrators of such violence are in fact the ones who leave the home.

I thank the Commission for the opportunity to contribute this submission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Neville', written in a cursive style.

Lisa Neville MP  
Member for Bellarine  
Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water.