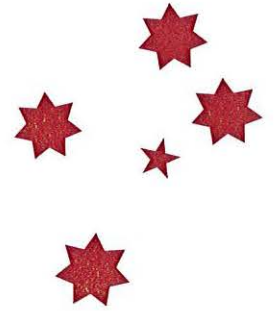


Geoff Howard MP



The Hon. Marcia Ann Neave AO
Commissioner and Chairperson
Royal Commission into Family Violence
PO Box 535,
FLINDERS LANE, VIC 8009

28 May 2015

Dear Commissioner,

Firstly, I welcome the work of the Commission to investigate and advise the Victorian Government of the practical measures we can take as a community to put an end to family violence.

As a White Ribbon Ambassador, I am a strong advocate that all men in this country share a responsibility to stand up against male violence targeted at women and families. We cannot as a community accept anything less.

In my role as a Member of Parliament, I have seen the important work of local family violence support services in my community, including Wrisc Family Violence Support, Child and Family Services, and the Ballarat Centre Against Sexual Assault.

I have also been impressed by the establishment of a family violence unit within Victoria Police – which has provided dedicated, specially trained police officers to respond to family violence issues that come to the attention of police.

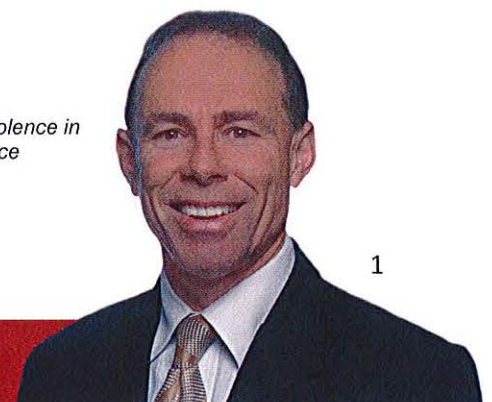
Research¹ has indicated there are higher incidents of family violence in rural and remote locations.

It is shocking that women in regional areas face disproportionate barriers to obtaining justice and support to those in metropolitan areas.

While much good work is being done, further action is clearly required to redress this imbalance, by ensuring that women and children are properly supported and have equal rights to safety and protection in their own homes, work places and communities without fear of violence.

¹ A George, Dr B Harris and Dr L Jordan. *Landscapes of Violence, Women Surviving Family Violence in Regional and Rural Victoria. 2014; Deakin University - Centre for Rural Regional Law and Justice*

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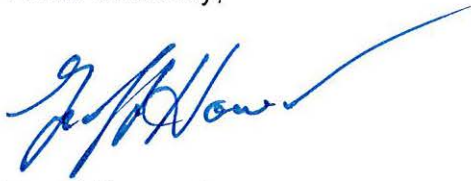
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LISTENS, CARES, ACTS!

It is critical that all men are educated about the impact of violence and intimidation and that all family members are provided with appropriate education in personal skills, rights and have knowledge of and access to quality support services.

Please note I am available to the Commission and its staff should you require further information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Geoff Howard', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Geoff Howard
Member for Buninyong