

Ewen Kloas

Dear Steve Dimopoulos MP ,

I am writing to you in response to the latest newsletter I received in the mail from you announcing the long overdue investments in rail upgrades and level crossing removals and also the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

I wish to raise to you, my concerns about the family violence issue.

Here we have a situation of rising family violence, especially toward women, I believe the latest figures are 30 female deaths due to family violence so far this year, far exceeding the average of one death per week.

I believe these incidents are a direct result of the following factors;

- The Julia Gillard government taking the axe to single parent payments and eligibility.
- Lack of access to emergency accomadation for women
- The rising cost of living, especially the high cost of housing, leaving little disposable income for day to day expenses.
- Excessive use of alcohol and drugs

The Julia Gillard move to decimate the sole parent pension which was a fair welfare payment system to an unlivable one is an attack on a section of society which not always wants to be put in this situation. Unfortunately, women who live in a violent household have to now decide on putting up with the violence or taking the kids away from the situation into a life of poverty on the sole-parent payment of today. They are caught between a rock and a hard place. I have personally heard women tell me of this themselves.

In NSW, the government there cut funding for crisis accomadation for women in the city recently.

I believe the high cost of living, especially the high cost of housing is a major factor to domestic violence. Exorbitant costs of housing, be it rents or mortgages takes a huge chunk of a households expenses, leaving families with not much disposable income to survive on, creating pressure within the home that can lead to violence. If you ad unemployment or lack of an livable income into the mix then you have a recipe for tension and pressure and falling into excess drinking and drug abuse. The public housing sector also has been decimated, the waiting lists are way too long and the eligibility for public housing is set way to low.

I was a sole parent pre Julia Gillard era for 13 years and see myself as fortunate to have benifited to a fair sole parent welfare system which I managed my way through with some employment form

time to time. I don't think I could have survived on the current system. I feel sorry for women and children caught up in family violence with no other family support who wish to flee their predicament. Where do they go? What do they do?

I write to you as a concerned citizen and am sad to see the move to the far right of both major parties resulting in a decline in social responsibility and services and the gap between rich and poor on the increase. I hope the Royal Commission into Family Violence doesn't result in just raising penalties for the purportrators and looks more at the causes of the problems of which I mention and does something to make a more fairer and compassionate society than the one we are heading into.

Regards,

Ewen Kloas