



Frank McGuire MP

Member for Broadmeadows

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Dear Commissioner,

Family Violence Submission

Almost 150 women and men braved a wintery Wednesday night on May 20th to provide their experience of family violence and insights to help form a submission into Australia's biggest criminal justice concern. I had the honour of organising and chairing the meeting at the Hume Global Learning Centre with representatives of the three tiers of government to ensure the voice of families in Melbourne's north are not only heard but understood.

A number of members of the public described abuse as not just physical but emotional and financial. It can even extend to newly arrived migrant men restricting their wives from learning English so they maintain control of the relationship. This resonated with many families in Broadmeadows, who come from more than 160 countries, forming a United Nations in one neighbourhood. Many families have arrived without being able to speak English.

Unemployment places further stresses on families and contributes to violence, according to speakers at the forum. Nowhere is this issue felt more acutely than Broadmeadows, where unemployment is 26.7 per cent - higher than Spain and equal to Greece. There are no official figures for youth unemployment but it will be perilously high, likely to be more than 40 per cent.

Other proposed initiatives included new courses in Ethics and Communications at primary and secondary schools to help boys and girls cope better with anger and frustration, diffusing these emotions before they turn into violence. I am also concerned about how boys and girls form their attitudes to each other given access to hardcore pornography, which can expose children and adolescents to extreme sexual and violent behaviour at a susceptible age. I look forward to the Royal Commission addressing these issues concerning education and prevention as well as power and control.

Family violence is an emergency which needs to be addressed with a targeted response for individuals and communities, particularly ones like Broadmeadows which has such complex needs. I extend an offer to the Royal Commission to help coordinate a public hearing in Broadmeadows, one of the communities most affected by this crisis.

Yours faithfully,

FRANK MCGUIRE, MP
Member for Broadmeadows

28/5/15.