

Question One Are there other goals the Royal Commission should consider?

To encourage adults & carers to consider that their children are watching and learning from them and learn what they see which can create generational abuse. What a child witnesses in the way adults speak to each other and the lack of respect, can influence the way a child acts when they are in a relationship. They may not witness violence, but if they witness constant negative verbal abuse, this has the potential to lead to violence.

Question Two The Royal Commission wants to hear about the extent to which recent reforms and developments have improved responses to family violence, and where they need to be expanded or altered.

Bringing the issue forward and having programs for reform in place has certainly placed the issue on the public agenda. To expand the response further, we need to target where the violence stems from and educate in prevention. Hence the “Drink Wisely” campaign that reinforces the “Watching Me, Watching You”, to make parents aware of how their behaviour influences the next generation.

There also needs to be consideration to the impact from gaming devices and the attitude to women depicted in some games. It is a huge step in the right direction with games now having a rating but they might also carry warnings about the type of language and attitude depicted in the games. Teenagers watching hours upon hours of these games must be influenced by the derogative demeanour and language towards women in some games.

Question Three Which of the reforms to the family violence system introduced in the last ten years do you consider most effective? Why? How could they be improved?

The public education programs and developing a range of support services I consider as the most effective. Putting the issue out there in the public domain through the White Ribbon Day campaign and having prominent community members speak out on the issue is the most effective way of constantly driving the message through. I believe this could be expanded by printed material / posters to community centres, GP clinics, Government offices such as Local, State and Federal Government MPs.

Question Four If you or your organisation have been involved in programs, campaigns or initiatives about family violence for the general community, tell us what these involved and how they have been evaluated.

Question Five If you or your organisation have been involved in observing or assessing programs, campaigns or initiatives of this kind, we are interested in your conclusions about their effectiveness in reducing and preventing family violence.

Question Six What circumstances, conditions, situations or events, within relationships, families, institutions and whole communities, are associated with the occurrence or persistence of family violence?

Cultural differences in communities can have an impact on family relationships. Wyndham's growth has seen a diverse and wide ranging multi-cultural community groups move into the area which could have contributed to the growth in domestic violence situations in the area.

Some cultures can display a general lack of respect towards the female gender with verbal derogatory language and an expectation of women only being the 'home keeper' for their families. This lack of respect can lead to situations of verbal abuse then to physical abuse.

Stresses of job losses can lead to financial strain for families; drug abuse can also lead to violent situations in the home.

Question Seven What circumstances and conditions are associated with the reduced occurrence of family violence?

The reduced occurrence of family violence can be attributed to healthy joint family relationships where all members contribute to the well-being of the family unit. If both members contribute on an agreed basis, whether that be both working full time and contributing to family responsibilities on an even shared basis displays respect for each other. This will be learned by children and carried forward.

Question Eight Tell us about any gaps or deficiencies in current responses to family violence, including legal responses. Tell us about what improvements you would make to overcome these gaps and deficiencies, or otherwise improve current responses.

To educate women and society that family violence is not just physical. We need to promote in the community the message that Women's Health West has on their home page "What is Family Violence?"

"Family violence includes physical acts like hitting, pushing, smashing things or locking you in.

It can also involve:

- *Stopping you seeing family or friends*
- *Pressuring, tricking or forcing you to do sexual things*
- *Threatening to hurt you, your kids, family members or a pet*
- *Calling you names or deliberately making you feel bad*
- *Stopping you having any money*
- *Constantly checking where you are, what you're doing and who you're talking to*

These things can hurt you just as much as physical violence."

Question Nine Does insufficient integration and co-ordination between the various bodies who come into contact with people affected by family violence hinder the assessment of risk, or the effectiveness of (early intervention, crisis and ongoing) support provided, to people affected by family violence? If so, please provide examples.

Question Ten What practical changes might improve integration and co-ordination? What barriers to integration and co-ordination exist?

A centralised system to prevent people being lost between services.

Promote and expanding Women's Health West to outer suburbs – some may not have the access to travel nor the will power or the courage to travel into Footscray or Melbourne CBD.

Question Eleven What are some of the most promising and successful ways of supporting the ongoing safety and wellbeing of people affected by violence? Are there gaps or deficiencies in our approach to supporting ongoing safety and wellbeing? How could measures to reduce the impact of family violence be improved?

From an electorate office perspective, a guideline of what behaviours to look for and information to hand to people that come to the office that might be seeking help for homelessness, financial stress, counselling services.

Printed materials that can be placed in offices that will be there for people to collect privately.

Prominent members of society to stand up and say "It's ok to say I don't like this and seek help" – look at the impact of that famous speech in Federal Parliament on misogyny!

Anger management courses to support the change of behaviours and counselling for victims to build self esteem.

Question Twelve If you, your partner or a relative have participated in a behaviour change program, tell us about the program and whether you found it effective. What aspects of the program worked best? Do you have criticisms of the program and ideas about how it should be improved?

Question Thirteen If you, your partner or a relative have been violent and changed their behaviour, tell us about what motivated that change. Was a particular relationship, program, process or experience (or combination of these) a key part of the change? What did you learn about what caused the violent behaviour?

Question Fourteen To what extent do current processes encourage and support people to be accountable and change their behaviour? To what extent do they fail to do so? How do we ensure that behaviour change is lasting and sustainable?

To ensure behaviour change is lasting would be to extend behaviour management courses to enable behaviours to be revisited and problems reviewed for an extended period. Reminders with printed material – posters around community centres, government offices, libraries. Ad campaigns.

Question Fifteen If you or your organisation have offered a behaviour change program, tell us about the program, including any evaluation of its effectiveness which has been conducted.

Question Sixteen If you or your organisation have been involved in observing or assessing approaches to behaviour change, tell us about any Australian or international research which may assist the Royal Commission. In particular, what does research indicate about the relative effectiveness of early intervention in producing positive outcomes?

Question Seventeen Are there specific cultural, social, economic, geographical or other factors in particular groups and communities in Victoria which tend to make family violence more likely to occur, or to exacerbate its effects? If so, what are they?

Wyndham has a high multi-cultural mix in the area. Some ethnic groups have a tendency to demean the role of women in society as caregivers only. Low socio economic factors brought about by generational observation, lack of employment opportunities causing financial stress.

Question Eighteen What barriers prevent people in particular groups and communities in Victoria from engaging with or benefiting from family violence services? How can the family violence system be improved to reflect the diversity of people's experiences?

Lack of access to travel to intervention groups and community services can hinder women living in out lying areas from gaining access to assistance. Isolation within migrant groups without extended family support and / or without support outside their own cultural community can also attribute to the problem.

Improvements via Immigration services to connect families with support groups and ensuring new migrants are aware of Australian law and their personal rights when residing in Australia.

As mentioned, printed material to display in medical clinics, community centres, government offices, to constantly reinforce the message that it's not ok for family violence and that family violence is wider than physical abuse.

Question Nineteen How can responses to family violence in these groups and communities be improved? What approaches have been shown to be most effective?

Educational material as mentioned.

Question Twenty Are there any other suggestions you would like to make to improve policies, programs and services which currently seek to carry out the goals set out above?

Women's Health West message is vital – family violence is not just physical, earlier intervention is vital before it leads to physical violence.

Extend this service to outer areas – especially to those areas with limited public transport access.

Review of messages coming through on video games.

Question Twenty-one The Royal Commission will be considering both short term and longer term responses to family violence. Tell us about the changes which you think could produce the greatest impact in the short and longer term.

Printed material distributed for display, reminding people that it's ok to step up and speak out and that support is there.