

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**  
**2016-2017 Additional Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome Number: 2.1 Families and Communities**

**Question No: SQ17-000152**

**Topic: Violence Against Women Campaign**

**Hansard page: 131**

**Senator David Leyonhjelm** asked:

Can you give a citation that suggests that poverty, alcohol abuse and drug abuse are not where extreme violence against women begins and are not at the heart of the issue?

**Answer:**

While alcohol, substance abuse, and poverty can be contributing factors to violence, they are not the causal factors.

The relationship alcohol and drug abuse have to domestic, family and sexual abuse is associated with the diminishing impact on a person's ability to control impulses and maintain normal social controls (Abbey 2011<sup>1</sup>; Foran & O'Leary 2008<sup>2</sup>; Bennet & Bland 2008<sup>3</sup>, Graham et al. 2010<sup>4</sup>).

These contributing influences alone do not explain why most men who use violence against women do not use violence against other people in their lives, for example their friends and work colleagues (Mouzos & Makkai 2004). This suggests underlying socio-economic inequality and discrimination to be reinforcing factors that increase the frequency or severity of violence against women.<sup>5</sup>

*Change the Story: A Shared Framework for the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women and their Children in Australia*, a joint publication by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), Our Watch, and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth), states that:

“there is now consensus in the international research that examining the way in which gender relations are structured is key to understanding violence against women.

Studies by the United Nations, European Commission, World Bank and World Health Organisation all locate the underlying cause or necessary conditions for violence against women in the social context of gender inequality.”

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<sup>1</sup> Abbey, A 2011, Alcohol's role in sexual violence perpetration: theoretical explanations, existing evidence and future directions, *Drug and Alcohol Review*, vol. 30, pp. 481–489

<sup>2</sup> Foran, HM & O'Leary, KD 2008, Problem drinking, jealousy, and anger control: Variables predicting physical aggression against a partner, *Journal of Family Violence*, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 141–148

<sup>3</sup> Bennet, L & Bland, P 2008, *Substance abuse and intimate partner violence*, National Resource Centre on Domestic Violence, Harrisburg, PA

<sup>4</sup> Graham, K, Bernards, S, Wilsnack, SC & Gmel, G 2010, 'Alcohol May Not Cause Partner Violence but It Seems to Make it Worse: A Cross National Comparison of the Relationship Between Alcohol and Severity of Partner Violence', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, viewed 24 January 2014, <http://bit.ly/1FRx0CE>.

<sup>5</sup> *Et al ibid*.