

Judith Shepherd-Pemell NCAC BHS

3 October 2017

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Members of the Committees,

I make this submission as a mental health professional who specialises in working with complex trauma and PTSD, and as someone who has been working for the Royal Commission into institutionalized responses to child sexual abuse. I have worked in the field of psychotherapy for 28 years and have extensive experience working with people who experience trauma related to violence and sexual violence.

On this occasion I join with my colleagues to express extreme concern at the funding and management arrangements for the 100 RESPECT telephone counselling service. I am familiar with the service format in which MHS run their service, as I am with RDVSA. The shift of funding to MHS and their 'for profit' service model does profound disservice to consumers who need the service.

Counselling professionals working at RDVSA are specifically trained to respond appropriately to the client population who Sanskrit^{9*})use such a service. Generalist counsellors are not trained to deal with trauma, and do not have the skills to respond to this very vulnerable client group effectively.

The idea of such a service being tendered out 'for profit' to a company that has no concern to protect the confidentiality and safety of clients, and to share information with the legal representatives of perpetrators, is abhorrent in the extreme.

I urge you to ensure that RDVSA safely continue their very important work with the community in the way they have been doing for decades, and that the funding for 1 800 RESPECT be transferred back to RDVSA.

Yours truly,

Judith Shepherd-Pemell