



# PARLIAMENT of AUSTRALIA

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Parliamentary inquiry into a better family law system to support and protect those affected by family violence

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Issue date: 4 September 2017

## Parliament hears from people affected by family violence

A parliamentary committee has heard from over 3,000 Australians affected by family violence, and will start releasing some of these insights publicly.

The [Parliamentary Inquiry into a better family law system to support and protect those affected by family violence](#) was launched five months ago. In that time, the Committee has received [formal written submissions](#) from family law experts, non-government organisations, academics and individuals who have been affected by family violence.

The Committee's work has also been informed by those with personal experience at the intersection of family violence and the family law system. The Committee has made available an anonymous, online questionnaire and has encouraged anyone wishing to make a personal contribution to the inquiry to take the time to complete the questionnaire.

Committee Chair, [Sarah Henderson MP](#), said, "From the outset, the Committee wanted to ensure that it received the valuable insights of members of the community who have experienced family violence and who have been through the family law system."

The questionnaire has now been completed by over 3,800 Australians, 82 per cent of whom have been affected by family violence.

"It is of course a great tragedy that so many Australians have experienced family violence. This Committee has sought to give those people a voice," Ms Henderson said.

"The Committee understands that, for individuals affected by family violence, revisiting these experiences can be very distressing. We are therefore particularly grateful to the thousands of people who have completed the online questionnaire and shared their experiences and insights with us. One of the great strengths of this inquiry has been the opportunity for Members of Parliament to hear directly from community members about their experiences."

Responses to the questionnaire were made anonymously. However, respondents had the option of allowing the Committee to share their comments publicly. The Committee has collated and analysed responses, and will be publishing a series of 'snapshots' over the coming weeks.

"The first questionnaire snapshot has been released by the Committee today. It focusses on the challenges of navigating state and federal court jurisdictions and concerns about safety during court proceedings. Further snapshots addressing different aspects of the family law system will be released in the coming weeks."



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Further information about the inquiry, including questionnaire snapshots, can be accessed from the inquiry web page at: [www.aph.gov.au/fvlawreform](http://www.aph.gov.au/fvlawreform)

Please be aware that the Committee is unable to intervene or provide advice in relation to individual circumstances. If you are in immediate danger, please contact 000. If you are experiencing distress or would like to speak with someone about your situation, the following support services are available:

- 1800RESPECT national helpline: 1800 737 732
- Women's Crisis Line: 1800 811 811
- Men's Referral Service: 1300 766 491
- Lifeline: 131 114
- Relationships Australia: 1300 364 277
- Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800

**Media enquiries:**

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**For background information:**

Parliamentary inquiry into a better family law system to support and protect those affected by family violence

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Interested members of the public may wish to track the committee via the website. Click on the blue 'Track Committee' button in the bottom right hand corner and use the forms to login to My Parliament or to register for a My Parliament account.

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