



## **BANKSTOWN WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE INCORPORATED**

A.B.N.: 74 181 873 702

Funded by N.S.W. Ministry of Health

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To Whom It May Concern,

We at Bankstown Women's Health Centre (BWHC) are writing to express our concerns to the Senate Inquiry into the changes to 1800 RESPECT's service delivery model. BWHC is a member of a skilled network of integrated healthcare providers that are focused on furthering women's health. We are familiar with the fact that the trauma of Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault is a wide-reaching and dominant issue in the health of our society, and particularly affects the health of women and children.

The changes to the service delivery model of 1800 RESPECT is of significant concern to BWHC, as the Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia (RDVSA) has run the service since 2010. This has ensured that the service is run by skilled, trauma-informed practitioners, and that the service is offered freely, and is readily available, to anyone seeking support relating to DFV or sexual assault. Systems have been in place protecting the safety and confidentiality of vulnerable clients seeking this service.

BWHC remains concerned that changes to this vital service are undermining its availability, safety, and efficacy for current and future clients. We feel that running the service for profit, and with a triage model, undermines the ability of 1800 RESPECT to provide access to skilled, trauma-informed practitioners to *all* vulnerable clients with the immediacy needed in cases of DFV and sexual assault.

BWHC questions the ability of 1800 RESPECT to gather recorded information from clients that is safe from subpoena by perpetrator's lawyers. Increased limits to confidentiality means that client's safety is compromised when disclosing sensitive experiences or information.

1800 RESPECT has been a frontline service supporting victims/survivors, their family and friends, and workers and professionals, dealing with DFV and sexual assault. Domestic, family and sexual violence is experienced predominantly by women and children, and is statistically widespread and alarmingly common. A dilution of the quality of the service model offered by 1800 RESPECT would be of huge detriment to an area of public health that urgently needs greater funding and progress, rather than an undermining of service delivery.

Best Regards

Mariam Mourad  
Bankstown women's Health Centre Manager