

Northern Adelaide Community Collaboration

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Interim Chair: Margaret Farr 0407714505



August 9, 2024

Ms Natasha Stott Despoja AO

The Commissioner

SA Royal Commission into domestic, family, and sexual violence,

PO Box 464,

Adelaide SA 5001

Dear Ms Stott Despoja

We write in support of engaging the community with the work of the SA Royal Commission into domestic, family, and sexual violence. We stress the importance of seeking feedback on both the underlying issues and the perceived local solutions from SA communities as well as from victim- survivors, their families and the specialist systems engaged in prevention and intervention.

We believe this Royal Commission is of utmost importance to the future safety and wellbeing of South Australians. Most of us cannot truly comprehend the size, scope and complexity of this community issue and the mental, psychological, social, and economic costs to our community. There is no doubt in our minds that domestic, family, and sexual violence and its underlying causal factors represent the biggest/top local, national, and international threat to our safety and wellbeing as human beings.

Who are we? The Northern Adelaide Community Collaboration is an informally constituted group of community members who have personal and professional experiences of abusive and controlling behaviours and/or who give volunteer hours to advocate for the safety of women and children, an end to gender- based violence and for respectful relationships.

Our origins lie *firstly* in our own personal commitment to ending violence, *secondly*, because of our links to groups which promote respectful relationship values, and, *thirdly*, through a partnership between Zonta Para District Club, Soroptimist International Torrens, and the Rotary Club of Mawson Lakes (formed 2023). This partnership, known as *RozSI's Voice*, advocates “*Let's build a community that makes a difference. End domestic violence.*” In essence, it is our belief that the community has both a role in, and a responsibility to be part of the solution. We are an evolving partnership which is still finding its way, but we believe our focus is to raise awareness and build community capacity which can assist in prevention and in support strategies. In particular, we are interested in the role of bystanders in the support of family, friends and work colleagues and what training will better equip members of the community to be active non- judgemental supporters.

Along the way, we have linked with other individuals who have unique understanding of domestic, family, and sexual violence. This includes professional skills in survivor advocacy, support of families impacted by murder and cultural considerations in domestic abuse.

With the advent of the SA Royal Commission, we formed the Northern Adelaide Community Collaboration (NACC) with the specific intent of providing *a grass roots up* way of raising awareness of the Commission's work. We are focussing on northern Adelaide communities (LGA's of Salisbury, Playford and Tea Tree Gully) and offering assistance to individuals and groups to express their views in submission form. Over the next few months, we will have conversations in libraries, community centres, at community markets and with existing groups of interested parties. We will then summarise experiences, concerns and suggestions which may throw light specifically on the special needs of northern Adelaide residents. Our hope is that community members will take the opportunity to engage in discussions and, in so doing, consider what will advance community safety in the home and what role we/they can play in the process.

NACC is a volunteer workforce with encouragement and support offered through the office of John Fulbrook Member for Playford. We are an example of what committed volunteers can do. We are a small representation of a voluntary workforce which contributes in so many ways to the wellbeing of our communities. There are many groups out there which may be willing and able to collaborate with government and non-government specialist organisations, working together towards solutions.

There are many examples of volunteer groups offering support to people in crisis or during a period of healing.

In client support: - Mental health uses *peer support workers*; refugee/migrant programs use *circles of friends*; child welfare uses *volunteer transport officers*.

In Information services: - Volunteers provide simple guidance on how to find resources suited to their needs.

In events: Volunteers support events organisation, deliver information to the public in many settings.

In community organisations: Volunteers lead and model appropriate behaviours/ leadership in sporting and community groups. These are very practical ways in which we can contribute in response to community issues.

We ask that the Commission's deliberations and recommendations highlight the ways in which community engagement, participation, grass roots advocacy and volunteering might contribute to solutions going forward.

We enclose an electronic version of our NACC brochure and are happy to answer any questions you might have about our group and processes.

Yours Sincerely

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Margaret Farr

For NACC