

**South Australian Royal Commission into Domestic Family and Sexual Violence  
2024-2025**

**Submission by**

**Northern Adelaide Community Collaboration**

**September 2024**

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## The Bystander Pledge

I will walk with you in the gutter.  
And fly with you in the clouds.

I will hold your hand in the moonlight.  
And fend for you in the crowds.

I will not judge, or place pressure.  
On why or what you do.

My role is just to be present-  
To be there only for you.

Margaret

## **Acknowledgements**

Members of the Northern Adelaide Community Collaboration acknowledge the State's first peoples and nations and recognise Aboriginal peoples as the traditional owners and occupants of the land and waters in South Australia. We recognise that Aboriginal peoples' spiritual, social, cultural, and economic practices come from their traditional lands and waters, and their cultural and heritage beliefs, languages, and laws, are of ongoing importance. We pay respect to the Ancestors and Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge the generosity of those individuals who have come forward so far to tell their stories. Their shared experiences allow us to better understand what helped and did not help in their journeys. They also made very practical suggestions about what is needed to improve the South Australian response to domestic, family, and sexual violence. We also acknowledge the expertise and wisdom offered by those who provide professional and personal support to individuals impacted by domestic, family, and sexual violence.

We appreciate the guidance and support offered by the Mayor of Salisbury Council and the staff of the Salisbury and Tea Tree Gully Councils for their time and input. We look forward to ongoing collaboration.

We are especially thankful for the financial and practical assistance offered by John Fulbrook, Member for Playford and his staff who supported us in establishing the Northern Adelaide Community Collaboration (NACC).

We finally acknowledge the important work of the community service clubs which supported the establishment of a partnership known as RoZSI's Voice based on the belief that the community has a role and a responsibility in working towards ending domestic and family violence. It is through RoZSI's work that a group of individuals who are passionate about positive change came together to lend support in the name of NACC.

## About NACC

The Northern Adelaide Community Collaboration (NACC) 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 and an end to gender-based violence. We all advocate for respectful relationships in our communities.

Our origins lie *firstly* in our own personal commitment to ending domestic and family violence, *secondly*, because of our links to groups which promote respectful relationship values, and, *thirdly*, through a partnership between Zonta Para District Area Club, Soroptimist International Torrens, and the Rotary Club of Mawson Lakes. The Rotary Club of Salisbury SA joined in 2024. This partnership, known as *RozSI's Voice*, states "*Let's build a community that makes a difference. End domestic violence.*"

In essence, it is RoZSI's 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 to assist in both prevention and support strategies. In particular, we are interested in the role of bystanders in the support of family, friends and work colleagues and the training to equip members of the community to be active non-judgemental supporters.

Along the way, we have linked with other individuals who have unique understandings of domestic, family, and sexual violence. This includes expertise/ professional skills in survivor advocacy, support of families impacted by murder and the impact of culture on domestic abuse and service responses.

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 or through other mechanisms.

This submission is presented in the early stages of NACC's community engagement. We are hopeful that the Commission will afford additional opportunities to feed into the enquiry.

## The North of Adelaide

We chose the north because of our working relationships and a realistic decision that we did not have the resources to take a whole of Adelaide approach. By choosing Playford, Salisbury and Tea Tree Gully LGAs we are focussing on approximately one fifth of the South Australian population.

We also believe that the north has some population features which are worthy of special attention by the SA Royal Commission because these features correlate with higher rates of domestic and family violence and sexual assault or may require special local approaches. Some factors which present particular challenges include younger populations, higher birth rates, lower income/economic stress, populations living with disabilities and cultural dissonance with our societal norms.

The 2023-2024 SA Police statistics on domestic violence related offences show that the LGAs of Salisbury and Playford have significantly higher domestic violence related offending rates than the state, with Tea Tree Gully being slightly lower than the state rate. As sexual assault and some other figures are not aligned with postcodes in the publicly available statistics, our analysis of offending rates in Appendix 1 is only indicative. Appendix 1 includes a summary of South Australia's population data from the ABS 2021 Census. This helps to broadly describe the communities we chose.

Below is an overview.

2021 ABS Census	Above State	State median/ %/rate	Below State
Median Age		State 41 yr Tea Tree Gully 41yr	Playford 33 yr Salisbury 36yr
Birth rate	Playford 1.99 Salisbury 1.72 Tea Tree Gully 1.68	State 1.62	
Born overseas	Salisbury 38%	State 28% Playford 28 %	Tea Tree Gully 27%
One or more parents born overseas	Salisbury 58% Tea Tree Gully 48%	State 45% Playford 45%	
Language other than English spoken at home	Salisbury 31%	State 19%	Playford 15% Tea Tree Gully 16%
Identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	Playford 4.2%	State 2.4% Salisbury 2.4%	Tea Tree Gully 1.3%
Unemployment rate	Playford 9.3% Salisbury 7.4%	State 5.4%	Tea Tree Gully 4.5%
Median weekly family income	Tea Tree Gully 7% above	\$1889	Playford 34% below state Salisbury 16% below
% Households with weekly income below \$640	Playford 21.3%	State 19.6% Salisbury 19.3%	Tea Tree Gully 15.7%
% rented accommodation	Playford 36.2% Salisbury 29%	State 27.6%	Tea Tree Gully 18.2%
One or more long term health conditions	Salisbury 40.9% Playford 37.5% Tea Tree Gully 36.3%	State 33.6%	
SA Pol Police recorded DV Related offences 23-24. <i>(note-incomplete postcode figures due to sexual assaults not being coded at that local level in public data set)</i>	Playford 1460 per 100,000 population (or 62% higher than the state rate) Salisbury 1110 per 100,000 population (or 23% above state rate)	Est State rate 910 per 100,000 population	Tea Tree Gully 670 per 100,000 population (or 26% lower than state rate)

***Playford*** when compared to state figures, is, generally speaking, a younger community with higher birth rate, lower population and higher Indigenous/Torres Strait Islander affiliation, a population more dependent on rental accommodation, experiencing more unemployment, lower family income and a marginally higher percentage of households with low-income levels. We know that domestic, family, and sexual violence seem to have higher correlation with younger populations, higher birth rates and socio-economic factors and health can be additional stressors. Higher levels of domestic and family violence in Indigenous communities are also a consideration.

***Salisbury*** when compared with state figures, stands out as having a large migrant and first-generation Australian population with a significant number coming from non-English speaking backgrounds. It shares with Playford some of the socio-economic disadvantages but generally not to the same extent. We know however that the differing cultural backgrounds bring different norms regarding relationships, gender and acceptable behaviour which need to be considered in things like local awareness campaigns and specialist intervention programs.

***Tea Tree Gully*** when compared with state figures, is a more affluent, dominantly English-speaking community with higher levels of employment and income. However, we estimate that the LGA recorded in 23-24 a rate of around 670 domestic violence related offences per 100,000. While this is less than half the rate of Playford and less than the state rate, it is still evidence of a community in need of strategies to address prevention and intervention.

The communities of Playford and Salisbury do warrant special consideration in the design and local delivery of information and awareness strategies. Prevention and intervention strategies need to take into account cultural considerations and stressors that contribute to the make-up of domestic, family, and sexual violence in those communities. In addition, these are communities that will see new housing development, changing migration patterns and evolving business/industries going forward, all of which will influence the socio-economic landscape.

At this stage we are still exploring services, connections, and local issues.

## **Lived experience.**

NACC has interviewed a small number of women who have come forward and we offer some comments on their behalf.

We note that the use of the terms *victim* and *survivor* are not universally acceptable and, for some people with lived experience, they do not sit comfortably. We intend no offence, only to describe the circumstance of an individual in the context of their stories. Other language that is commonly used in the media and amongst the specialist systems can also be off-putting for people.

We draw your attention to Appendix 3 which is the story of a woman with lived experience who has dedicated her life to advocacy for and support of people like herself. She has explicitly asked for an opportunity to meet with the Commission and we have encouraged her to lodge an independent submission.

## **Awareness**

1. Community knowledge: All commented on the need for better community understanding of the existence, nature, and origins of domestic, family, and sexual violence in our communities.
2. Community Empathy: Some commented on the need for the community at large to have a better more empathic understanding of the impact of abuse on the victims and how trauma and low self-esteem can be exacerbated by unhelpful/judgmental opinions directed at those living in violent relationships.
3. Understanding the impact of community bystander response: One person commented on the recent tendency of witnesses, at the site of violent incidents, filming the event rather than intervening and preventing escalation. This person also acknowledged the complexity and risks around deciding to intervene. However, to a victim, the lack of action/support can be seen as abandonment by others, adding to the trauma of the experience.
4. Inner family/friendship circle behaviour: Whilst victims may have supportive structures around them, one respondent described the negative reactions of family members to them when the abuse was revealed. The victim may find themselves not only managing their own trauma, but navigating the reactions/trauma of others with negative judgements cast about them.
5. Community reluctance to engage: Some commented on the apathy about or avoidance of the issues, speculating about society not caring, people being scared to engage, people not knowing how to engage, and people avoiding their own histories.

## **Recommendations:**

R1: Awareness campaigns should take into account not only the facts about “*what and why*” but also, the importance of how a community reacts to victims and its potential positive and negative impact on “*survivors.*”



R2: Bystander training is a critical part of community awareness strategies as it shows community members how they can help by listening, believing, and supporting in a non-judgemental way. It is also a way to develop a community workforce which has the confidence to call out disrespectful behaviour and explain to others why this is important.

R3: Resourcing support services for the significant others of victim/survivors of DFSV is important to strengthen the capacity of the victim/survivor's family, friends as an informal support network to facilitate their recovery. Often significant others may be unhelpful in their approach to supporting the victim/survivor as they are influenced by myths and stereotypes about DFSV, and D&FV perpetrators may have isolated the victim/survivor by actively sabotaging these relationships.

## **Prevention**

6. Early education. All commented on the need for respectful relationship focussed training from an early age, dividing responsibility between parents and schools to model respectful behaviour. Comments like “fathers should teach their boys how to show respect to girls/ women/ others” were common.

However, because of the incidence of domestic abuse within families, mandated respectful relationship education in schools was seen as essential, coupled with support for those children affected by family, domestic and sexual abuse. One suggested ready access to counsellors, psychological support, therapy dogs, and other supports as important for children in these situations.

- 7 Inter-generational abuse. The social and psychological impact of abuse on children and their behaviour as adults plus potential to perpetuate the abuse cycle were commented on by several people and seen as justification for serious educational work in schools. Several respondents could define inter-generational abuse, multiple victims in extended family units, and the need to stop the cancerous spread.

## **Recommendations**

R4 Breaking the cycle and preventing abuse carrying forward to the next generation and spreading out is a major area of work for prevention of future abuse.

R5: Research is important. We need a better understanding of how victims' and family bystanders' experiences of domestic and family abuse link to their involvement in future abusive behaviour as either perpetrators or victims.

R6: We need to better understand the impact of school based respectful relationship education on those children experiencing abuse and how well

schools are equipped to deal with this. Tailoring Interventions which might reduce the likelihood of exacerbating trauma for that child.

R7: Schools are well placed to identify families at risk and to participate in multi-agency intervention with high-risk families. They may provide a venue for and possibly a role in respectful relationship training for parents -a whole of family strategy might be worth consideration.

### **Intervention:**

8. *The first step towards help:* -Initiating help seeking: Most of our respondents' experiences are from some years ago and service systems and information strategies have changed. However, most referred to an external source which gave them hope or the stimulus for change. This ranged from the knowledge of someone in their family circle, the advice of a general practitioner or the police taking matters out of the victim's hands.

This point is important as it is when the victim dares to hope that change is possible, and this hope could very much depend on the response they receive from others. One woman perceived that she was rejected from help during her second abusive relationship because, despite counselling and past assistance, she had entered another abusive relationship. Several others gained their motivation and energy to act from that critical intervention, some beginning to believe in themselves again.

9. *What helped them through this.* Responses here have been very personal and varied. One woman found a \$5000 grant enabled her to quickly move from the abusive relationship into new accommodation and meet set up costs. With this help she did it all herself. Another had the systems knowledge to arrange help for her mother without reference to any financial, specialist or legal services. Some found intervention orders helpful, others found it escalated the problems.

Counselling and psychological support, whether informal or specialised, seemed important. To be believed and unconditionally supported seem to be critical to victims transcending to "survivors." They valued gaining an understanding of what they have been through and why they accepted or put up with their lot for so long seems critical to their recovery.

One informant commented that counselling services hours did not fit her work routine and consideration needed to be given to more flexibility in programs to allow easy access to support.

Several were persuaded to return to the abusive partner only to leave again later.

- 10 *Healing.* All interviewed to date believe that they have been changed in some way by their experiences. How they were changed varied, but reluctance to trust

others is one element commonly stated. Some describe being a stronger more knowledgeable person now -with greater respect for themselves and the ability to now understand logically why they accepted/ condoned/ tolerated the abusive life.

For several, the journey of healing is still in progress and accessing help and support post the initial crisis is financially and practically difficult. For one, the extended family environment has continued to be acrimonious and the individual states she no longer tolerates abuse, responding assertively and sarcastically to her family and others who cross her.

11. Safety. Most interviewed have had safety issues or concerns surrounding the separation, using solutions like moving interstate or to different areas of the community. Some have used restraining orders/intervention orders. One experienced sexual assault post separation. One described the specifics of extra safety measures like removing herself from the public electoral roll and changing her number plates. Another advised that it is important to remove oneself from the Medicare record and arrange a new number because of the potential of being traced.

Several people talked about returning to the relationship and, later experiencing the same or modified abusive behaviour or coercive control.

### Recommendations

R 8: The first point of accessing help is a critical step in the “victim” gaining confidence, energy, and hope. This first point will more likely than not be a non-specialist provider or family member which means that training in positive support strategies needs to be available.

R 9: Specialised help is most needed at the point of crisis but there must be frameworks for support that help in the longer- term recovery and community re-integration.

### **Children and weaponizing systems**

- 12 Children. Those who had children referred to the impact of abusive environments on them and their future psychological wellbeing, reporting adult anger management problems, drug, and alcohol abuse, estranged or strained relationships and repetition of abuse in the next generation. Young children were traumatised and became involved in the protection of their mother or were sometimes forced to take sides with one party or the other. This can carry on into adult relationships. One woman noted that, since she left her marriage, her daughter talks more to her former husband to this day.

- 13 *Legal systems.* In several cases, parenting conflicts and bogus reports of child abuse were used as weapons. The women involved felt disadvantaged by their financial position and their desire not to affect the children with prolonged battles. Children were coached to present particular perspectives on the relationship, sometimes lying for their own safety.

These processes were perpetuating the trauma, eroding self-confidence and self-belief and forcing ongoing contact with their abuser. In effect, control was still being exerted over the women via the court/system processes.

Several reported partners accusing them of abuse and violence and the police believing their story, and children sometimes supporting the story of the dominant or most threatening partner. Turning the scenario around to a factual picture was difficult. In one interview, we were told that the woman's younger children were taken away soon after birth for their protection because she was in an abusive relationship.

- 14 *Financial supports:* The withholding of financial assets and non-payment of maintenance are significant practical impacts on the economic security of several women. Because of the conflictual nature, it is likely to end up in a court battle where children and property is involved. Several of the women had to negotiate these issues informally or through courts.

### Recommendations

R 10: Some women need advocacy and support in their interactions with the justice systems to avoid being further disadvantaged. This is a place where skilled volunteers, legally qualified advocates and specialist domestic violence services can collaborate for better outcomes.

R 11: Relationships involving children require strategies to guard against them being weaponised or victimised in the separation and after care process. Independent child focussed support will be necessary in some matters where the children's psychological and physical safety are at risk.

### **Perpetrator Interventions**

- 15 *At risk of exhibiting violent behaviour.* Conversations with the women to date did not focus on identified opportunities to invite their partner to seek help. However, we are aware that some people (men) will ask for help before or soon after an incident. Some are familiar with this from their own family life and are motivated to stop or at least fearful of the consequences to their family relationships and safety. We are also aware that accessing help at the point of highest motivation is preferable. One woman offered that some will not respond to therapeutic strategies and that monitoring and surveillance, and community protection strategies may be more appropriate.

Not all perpetrators may be willing, able, or suitable for counselling/group learning approaches. One woman questioned whether timely joint couple's intervention and support which had been requested by the potential perpetrator might have averted controlling behaviour escalating to more serious violence.

- 16 *Justice System managed monitoring of perpetrators.* One woman advocated an easily accessible register of known perpetrators be made available to women who might fall prey to these men. We note that South Australia does have a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, and we are not sure whether our client was advocating a more liberal approach to the availability of information.

No-one mentioned electronic monitoring systems, possibly because most of the women interviewed so far experienced their abuse some time ago.

### Recommendations

R 12: If we are expecting abusive people/men to change, then we need to be able to offer locally based specialist services which are responsive.

R 13: We understand that there is some merit in the group approach where individuals here the stories of other perpetrator behaviour, its gravity, the triggers, and the stressors.

R 14: We would endorse the comments of those who advocate for a more comprehensive understanding of the histories, motivations, intentions and underlying psychological make up of perpetrators. It may enable therapeutic and justice responses to be tailored for most reliable outcomes.

### **Using Lived Experience Systemically**

17. *Giving Back.* All of the women who have come forward to date firstly want to tell their story but are also motivated by the hope that it will make a difference to others. They were keen to identify system problems but also what helped. They wanted to show how they have survived and the type of person they are today. Although it can be hard for them as they relive the experience, many feel the need to give back.
- 18 *Lived Experience represented as part of the system response.* Some women interviewed/or who are part of NACC wish to actively participate in strategies which help the community understand the issues of domestic, family, and sexual violence. Some of these women are already-
- helping women navigate the justice system.
  - providing voluntary 1:1 support to women of nEsb who live in domestic relationships which are controlling and culturally at odds with the norms we advocate.

- providing practical emergency packages to assist those fleeing violent relationships.
- seeking to become an accredited trainer for community bystander training or engaging in other education to develop skills to support victim/ survivors and the community.
- striving to advocate for improved systemic responses, particularly for women and children.

### Recommendations

R 15: We endorse the notion of creating a framework where survivors/ family members can contribute actively at all levels. We look to the work which has been done within the mental health system. In this system there has been a long journey to imbed the consumer/carer perspective at advisory, policy, education, and peer intervention. This includes people with lived experience as paid/salaried workers, sessional trainers, and consultants.

### **Accommodation -safe places**

19. Women's shelters. Several of the women accessed women's shelters and community support agencies. To date we have not received major negative feedback. We know that getting into safe accommodation is not easy and several women raised the issue of why should they have to leave, why not have men's shelters/respice to which men can go.

Evacuating to motels was not raised, but NACC is aware of the difficulties experienced by women placed in motels on an indefinite basis, particularly when they are supporting children.

- 20 Access to accommodation. One woman commented that it was her own inside knowledge that brought a quick accommodation solution for her mother. Not raised with us, but we are aware that rental accommodation for low-income people is extremely difficult to find. For a survivor with no or limited financial means, it must make the journey to recovery particularly stressful because of the housing uncertainty.

### Recommendations

R 16: A pro-arrest policy should be applied by police called to intervene in domestic violence situations, and engagement with the victim at this time to engage her with support services available to create safety for her and her children should occur.

R 17: Increased funding is required to adequately respond to the need for emergency and longer-term accommodation. This should be apportioned

according to demographic data on the geographical areas of greatest social disadvantage and need.

### ***Special Considerations in the North***

- 21 *Communities with problems.* Our interviews to date have not highlighted particular unique issues. One person expressed specific distrust of the Elizabeth police and concerns about contextual social problems in the area in which she lives.

We are aware that large numbers of migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds live in Salisbury LGA. One of our NACC members is familiar with a sub-group of women living with abuse but declining to venture from the home let alone contemplate the issues observed by outsiders.

We hope to explore further these issues as we interview more women and meet some of the service providers engaged in their support.

### ***Recommendations***

R 18: We are confident that the Commission will hear of the local issues from multi-cultural and service agencies engaged in northern Adelaide and note the special resourcing needs of the north.

## Role of Voluntary Community Organisations

NACC is representative of the individuals out there in the community who care, have some lived experience, have professional knowledge pertinent to families facing domestic, family, and sexual violence and a genuine commitment to the issues at hand.

Some of us are linked to community voluntary organisations with philosophies attuned to respectful relationships, peace and harmony, gender equality and the rights of women and children.

Some of us are part of an exceptionally large volunteer community army which, given the right information, direction, and training, could be better equipped, and mobilised to help the State and Federal government systems deliver a comprehensive response to domestic, family, and sexual violence.

This is an important opportunity for the Commission to help define ways to connect locally based voluntary organisations to a comprehensive system of intervention. Volunteer programs usually enrich core service provision and enhance the quality-of- service delivery. We are mindful of the specialist knowledge required to deliver the core programs but believe there is a way in which the community can demonstrate its concern and caring through volunteering. Some of our members are associated with programs which we believe help survivors regain self-confidence and self- respect. Simply believing that someone cares about them is an important part of recovery.

Examples of where we might fit: -

- Help organise and possibly deliver some aspects of community awareness training, in pre-school, primary and high school respectful relationships training, in sporting groups (anti bullying) and community upskilling (bystander training).
- Help deliver/support special youth focussed trauma informed programs for young people emerging from violent family circumstances.
- Complement government funded crisis response packages for those escaping violence with gifts of practical help during this period (food, personal toiletries, home starter packs).
- Support remotely or on-site, emergency shelters.
- Create *circles of friends* to help in recovery services and help women reengage with their communities.
- Act as volunteer support workers and advocates for women when accessing a range of support services to assist them in navigating these service systems.
- Contribute to/assist in the coordination of local community advocacy and information sharing amongst services - with a commitment to changing the landscape around domestic, family, and sexual violence.



- Provide opportunities through which women in recovery can give back whilst operating in a supportive environment.
- Collaborate with other groups to undertake locally based fundraising to support local initiatives that are considered out of scope of core funding.

At the moment there are many organisations doing their own thing. For example, in the north, we know that many voluntary groups support the Women's Safety Services. As far as NACC knows, we do not have a mechanism for coordinating who does what or any way of agreeing to that as we are all separate unique voluntary groups. In the north, many of us support Backpacks for SA kids, some provide furniture, and other practical aids. In places where communication systems are led by formal mechanisms there is a greater chance of the groups complementing each other.

The Commission is ideally placed to influence the role that the South Australian *volunteer army* plays in prevention and intervention in the future. We ask that you consider and create an opportunity to enable an intersectoral response to domestic, family, and sexual violence. This will help volunteer groups to appropriately position themselves alongside the government and non-government services which will lead service reform and intervention.

## Concluding Comments

NACC values the opportunity to present information to the Royal Commission, particularly the views of women directly affected by violence.

Most women interviewed have chosen not to make their statements available for publishing and we have not included their full documents as attachments to this submission. However, Hannah's Story, Helen's Story, and Adriana's Story have already been forwarded to the Commission. Several others are still being written and we will forward these in due course. One is attached in appendix 2 in full.

NACC will continue to publicise the Commission's work and explore with individuals and groups their stories with the intent of feeding information through to the Commission.

We intend to explore opportunities for closer connections in the north and hope for the creation of a strong advocacy and information network for service providers and community groups with an interest in domestic, family, and sexual violence. The intention would be to strengthen the collective knowledge and share resources, particularly amongst community organisations.

In particular, we hope to encourage community-based voluntary groups to see themselves as active bystanders and a resource to be used strategically alongside the specialist services for prevention of and intervention in domestic, family, and sexual violence.

We ask that you consider and create an opportunity to enable an intersectoral response to domestic, family and sexual violence. This will help volunteer groups to appropriately position themselves alongside the government and non-government services which will lead service reform and intervention.

We are hopeful that the Commission, when framing the recommendations, considers how service clubs and community organisations can be supported and encouraged to build the knowledge and confidence of community members so they too can help eliminate family, domestic and sexual violence. Many would like to be able to help and our conversations with people have often highlighted their willingness to help make a difference.

## Summary of Recommendations

R1: Awareness campaigns should take into account not only the facts about “*what and why*” but also, the importance of how a community reacts to victims and its potential positive and negative impact on “survivors.”

R2: Bystander training is a critical part of community awareness strategies as it shows community members how they can help by listening, believing, and supporting in a non-judgemental way. It is also a way to develop a community workforce which has the confidence to call out disrespectful behaviour and explain to others why this is important.

R3: Resourcing support services for the significant others of victim/survivors of DFSV is important to strengthen the capacity of the victim/survivor’s family, friends as an informal support network to facilitate their recovery. Often significant others may be unhelpful in their approach to supporting the victim/survivor as they are influenced by myths and stereotypes about DFSV, and D&FV perpetrators may have isolated the victim/survivor by actively sabotaging these relationships.

R4 Breaking the cycle and preventing abuse carrying forward to the next generation and spreading out is a major area of work for prevention of future abuse.

R5: Research is important. We need a better understanding of how victims’ and family bystanders’ experiences of domestic and family abuse link to their involvement in future abusive behaviour as either perpetrators or victims.

R6: We need to better understand the impact of school based respectful relationship education on those children experiencing abuse and how well schools are equipped to deal with this. Tailoring Interventions which might reduce the likelihood of exacerbating trauma for that child.

R7: Schools are well placed to identify families at risk and to participate in multi -agency intervention with high-risk families. They may provide a venue for and possibly a role in respectful relationship training for parents -a whole of family strategy might be worth consideration.

R 8: The first point of accessing help is a critical step in the “victim” gaining confidence, energy, and hope. This first point will more likely than not be a non-specialist provider or family member which means that training in positive support strategies needs to be available.

R 9: Specialised help is most needed at the point of crisis but there must be frameworks for support that help in the longer- term recovery and community re-integration.

R 10: Some women need advocacy and support in their interactions with the justice systems to avoid being further disadvantaged. This is a place where

skilled volunteers, legally qualified advocates and specialist domestic violence services can collaborate for better outcomes.

R 11: Relationships involving children require strategies to guard against them being weaponised or victimised in the separation and after care process. Independent child focussed support will be necessary in some matters where the children's psychological and physical safety are at risk.

R 12: If we are expecting abusive people/men to change, then we need to be able to offer locally based specialist services which are responsive.

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R 14: We would endorse the comments of those who advocate for a more comprehensive understanding of the histories, motivations, intentions and underlying psychological make up of perpetrators. It may enable therapeutic and justice responses to be tailored for most reliable outcomes.

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R 16: A pro-arrest policy should be applied by police called to intervene in domestic violence situations, and engagement with the victim at this time to engage her with support services available to create safety for her and her children should occur.

R 17: Increased funding is required to adequately respond to the need for emergency and longer-term accommodation. This should be apportioned according to demographic data on the geographical areas of greatest social disadvantage and need.

R 18: We are confident that the Commission will hear of the local issues from multi-cultural and service agencies engaged in northern Adelaide and note the special resourcing needs of the north.

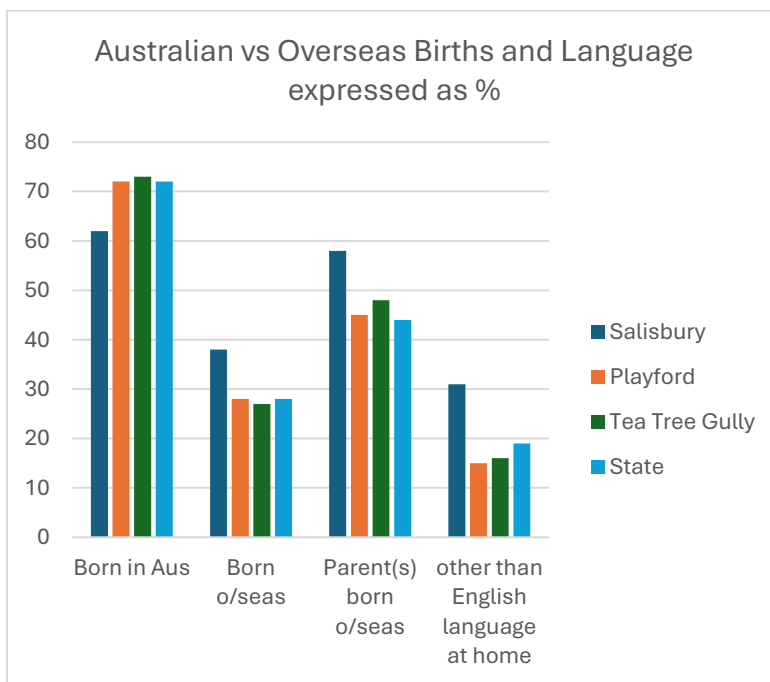
## Appendix 1: Data from 2021 Census ABS- South Australia

### 1. **Population:**

The 3 Local Government Areas chosen by NACC account for approximately 20% of the state’s population with Salisbury having the largest, comprising 8% of state’s people at the last Census in 2021.

South Australia	Salisbury LGA 8% population	Playford 5.7% of population	Tea Tree Gully LGA 5.6% of population	Total 19.4% of state population
1,821,200	147,932	103,414	102,619	353,965

### 2. **Birthplace:**



**Country of Birth**

LGA of **Salisbury** stands out.

- ❖ nearly 4 in 10 people were born overseas
- ❖ nearly 6 in 10 had 1 or more parents born overseas
- ❖ 3 in 10 live in a home environment where languages other than English are spoken

**Indigenous population**

The LGA of **Playford** has nearly double % of residents identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander 4.2% compared with 2.4% statewide. Salisbury matches statewide figure

The LGA of **Tea Tree Gully** has 1.3% identifying as Aboriginal or

### 3. **Age:**

The median age of people varies between reporting local government areas from

- 33 years (Playford) to
- 41 years (state and Tea Tree Gully).
- Salisbury sits in the middle at 36 years.

### 4. **Fertility Rate:**

All 3 LGAs sit above the state rate of 1.62 with

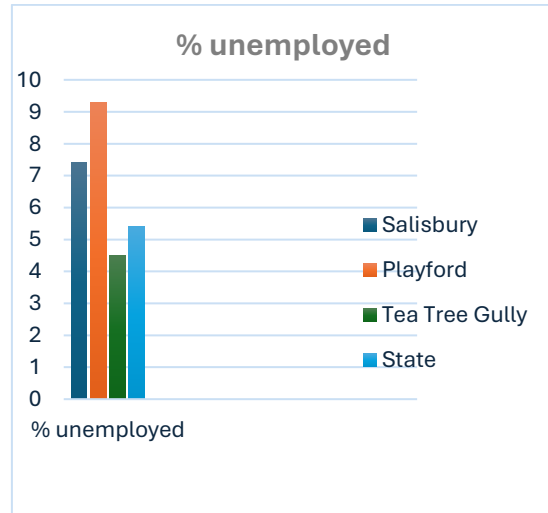
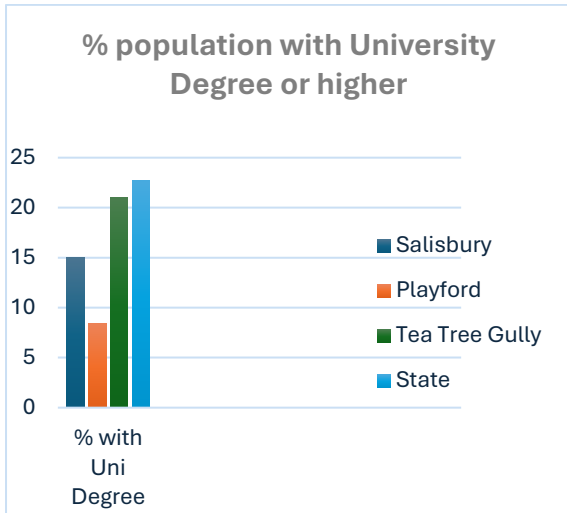
- Playford at 1.99, 23% higher than the state.
- Salisbury sits at 1.72, 6 % higher than the state.
- Tea Tree Gully at 1.68, 4% higher than the state.

5. **Health:**

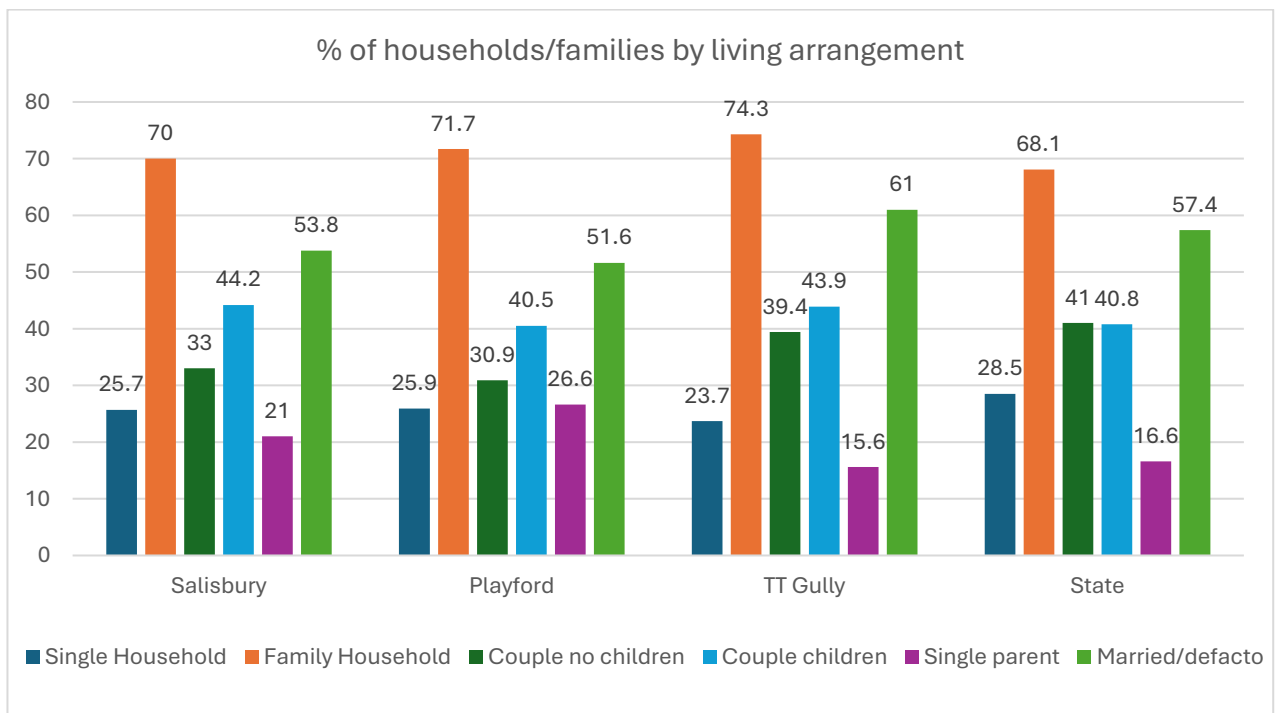
Compared with the state figure of 33.9%, all LGAs reported higher % of respondents stating they had one or more long term health conditions.

- Salisbury sits 6.7% higher at 40.6%.
- Playford at 37.5%.
- Tea Tree Gully is 36.3%

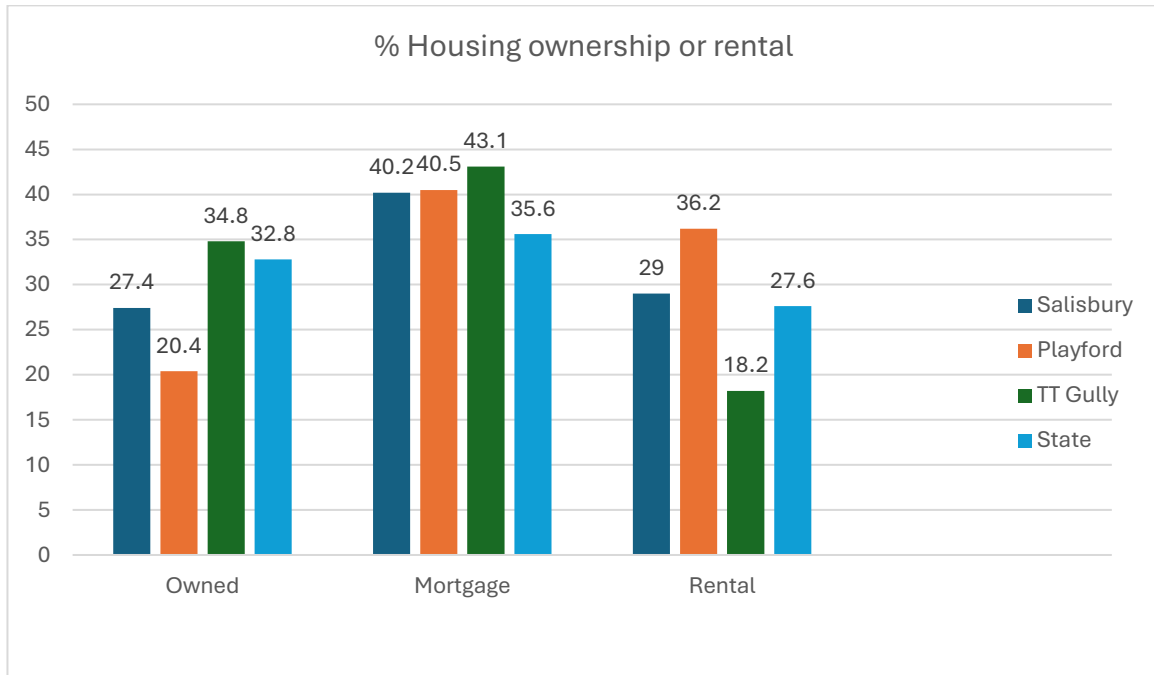
6. **Educational achievement and unemployment**



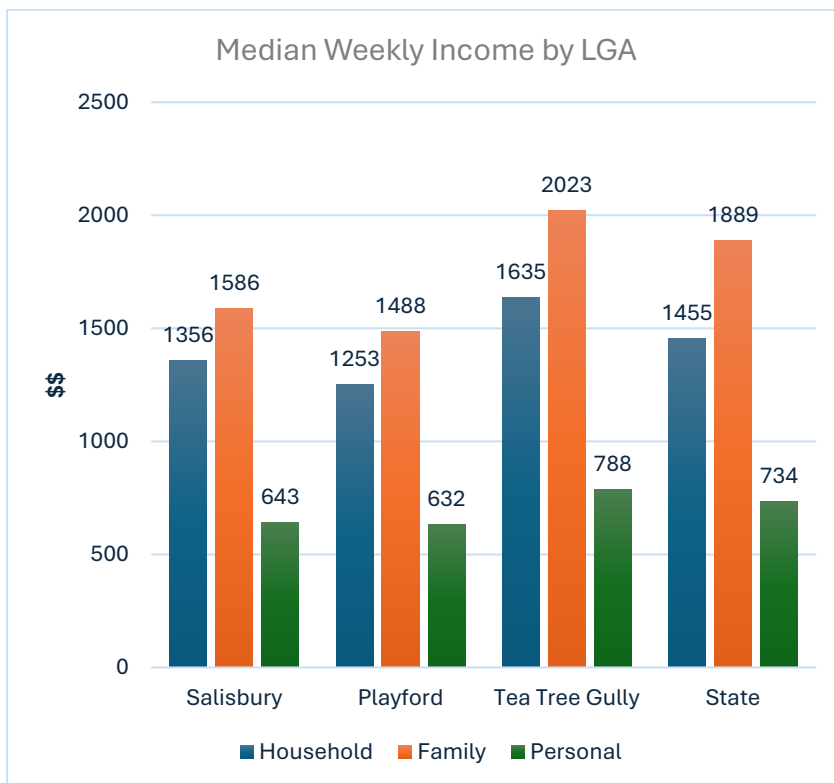
7. **Households and Families**



## 8. Housing



## 9 Income



### **Salisbury**

Household = 7% below state

Family = 16% below state

Personal = 14% below state

### **Playford**

Household = 14% below state

Family = 34% below state

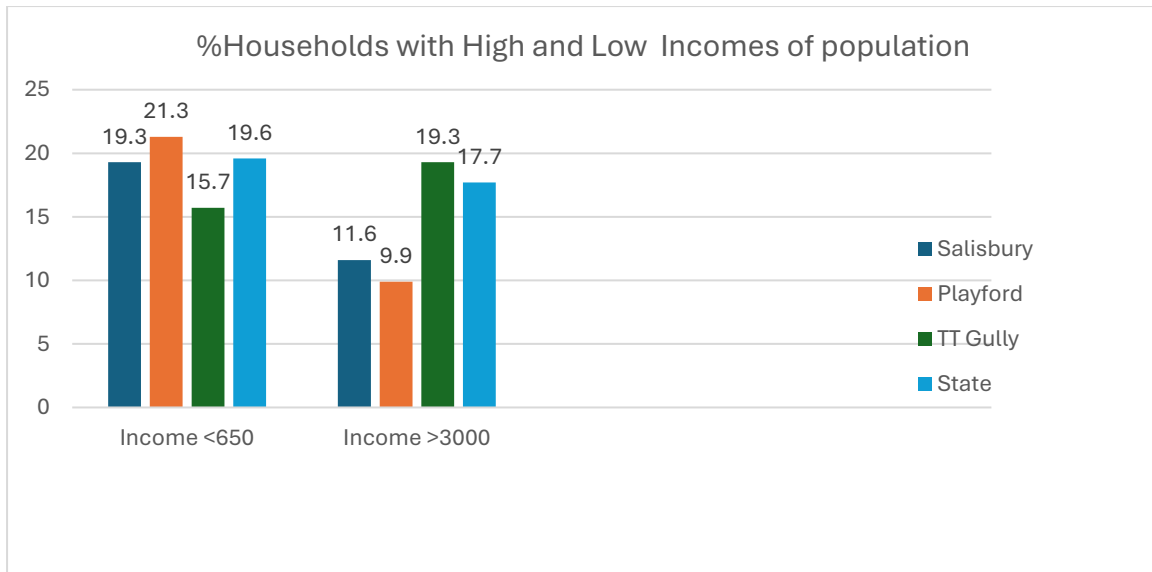
Personal = 14% below state

### **Tea Tree Gully**

Household = 12% above state

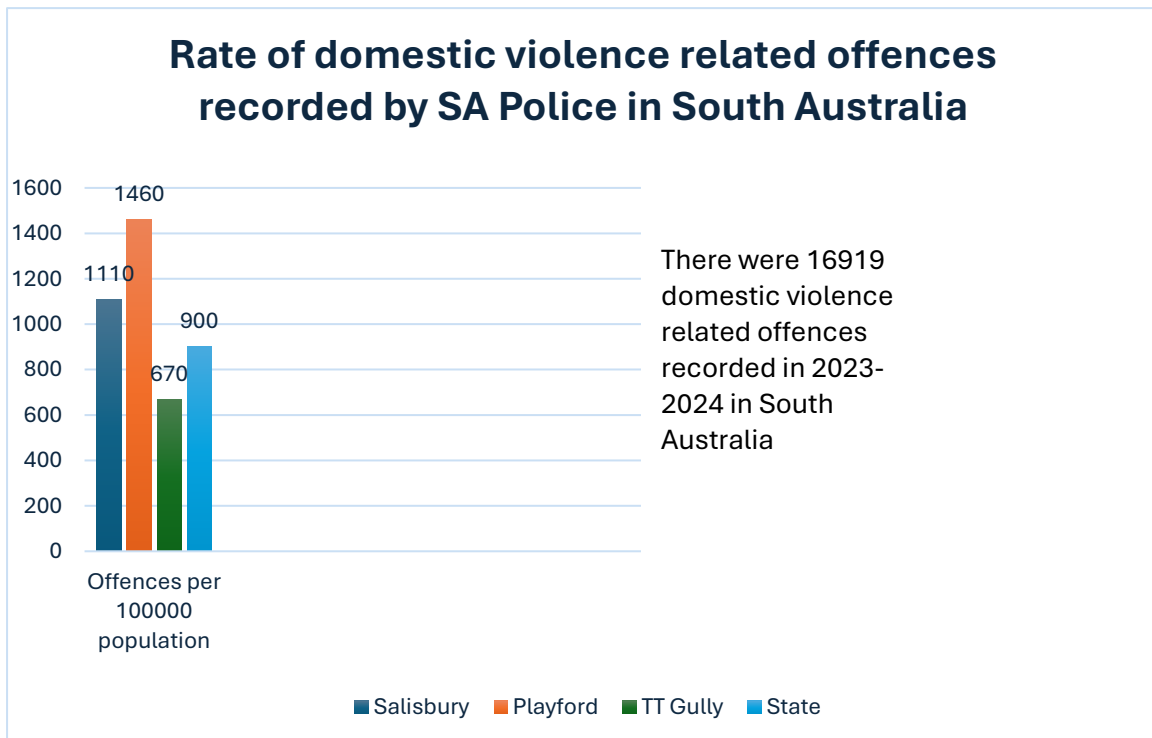
Family = 7% above state

10 High and low income expressed as %



11. Domestic Violence Related Offences in South Australia 2023-2024

Note: some offenses not recorded at postcode level because of privacy -dataset therefore incomplete -figures below indicative only





## Appendix 2: Statement of Lived Experience

# Some reflections on life

### Introduction

I am in my seventies now. On a day- to- day basis, I do not think a great deal about my own experiences or the personal impact on me of domestic violence or childhood abuse. I think more about the abuse of others-vulnerable people by neighbours, strangers, business- people, service providers and by families and partners. This was a feature of my working life. However, the things that I experienced no doubt affected me and my family, and probably how I relate to the world.

### My history

As a small child I lived on a farm. We would regularly visit my grandparents, and I loved the contact with them. My grandfather used to come and stay with us. We would also stay in Adelaide as a family, and sometimes just us children, with other relatives who were childless. My grandfather died when I was still young and contact with the other relatives virtually stopped when I became an adult. I do not recall maintaining contact with either side of my extended family beyond my teens. By my mid-teens, we were living in Adelaide where I have remained. I completed year 12, went on to university then worked continuously in the human services field until my mid-sixties.

I have always been drawn to others' problems- defended fellow students on the basketball court if they were being bullied; lent money when someone was in trouble; personally intervened in several neighbourhood domestic violence disputes; worked with those who had the least opportunities in life and stood up to people who pushed and tried to manipulate others. My friends and colleagues have described me as a rescuer. Personally, however, I was and still am slow to trust, reluctant to share much personal information, and have a need to be in control. This is a source of amusement to some and a frustration to others. I get a touch paranoid when someone is challenging me. Fortunately, I can recognise this for what it is, at least most of the time.

### Family Revelations

One night in my early thirties, and at home with my husband, I received a telephone call from a sibling advising that we had better get over to mum and dad's. Mum, who was at that time in her 60s, had just told dad that her father, my granddad, had sexually abused her between the ages of 4 and 15. I was told we would have to tell them what had happened to us, not only at the hands of our grandfather but also by our aunt and uncle. I had never had a conversation with my sibling before on this subject and frankly have had few since. In this frenetic phone call, my sibling told me that she knew I had been abused and she felt guilty that she had not protected me.

I was not aware that my sibling had experienced abuse. I was not aware that my mother had been abused. In fact, although I recalled being uncomfortable during adolescent early teen stays with my aunt and uncle culminating in breast fondling at the age of thirteen, I was not really aware that I had been abused by my grandfather until it was put to me clearly and simply that I had been. The conversation with my sibling that night

and since has never included details of the abuse either of us experienced, but occasionally, we make reference to it when we talk about our parents.

Not knowing about the abuse by my grandfather is not true, but it had not entered my consciousness as reality until that night. I had very occasional, and bizarre dreams in my childhood and younger life, but cannot actually remember how old I was. One was standing by a bed and holding the erect penis of a man who I could identify, and in a room which I could identify. The other was my sibling's shocked face when she once found me in the cellar under the house sitting next to three jars of yellow fluid. Her face is the main thing I remember, not the circumstances. I cannot remember either "flashback" being accompanied by distress, and I have not chosen over the years to dig deeply into my memories seeing it as pretty pointless. However, I speculate I was lucky and that I was only at the beginning of the grooming journey. My grandfather stopped coming to the farm around the time I started school, became sick, and died several years later.

The thing I find remarkable is that, through my young eyes, even now I could draw a picture of 3 or 4 scenes of abuse in my early life, 2 around which I am left only with a feeling of naivety, the others, a feeling of distress, embarrassment and ultimately anger by the time I reached 13.

Picture the night that unfolded at my parents' home. A stoic and proud woman having to reveal her childhood nightmare years, then hearing that her children had also been impacted as well. Hearing about the abuse of us not only by her father but also by members of her husband's family.

My sibling did the talking and I mainly nodded affirmation. My father was very distressed, but I do not feel he internalised the fact that his sibling and her partner were part of the abuse scenario. At one stage he sought reassurance that he had not abused us.

That night, I had to face the enormity of what had happened to my mother, deal with the affirmation of my own journey and accept the loss of control of my own privacy where my story went public, not by my choice. Although I was shattered at the end of it, I was a pragmatist. I thought we would put ourselves together and get on with life.

### **The Ripples**

We talk about the ripple effect, the disruption of the natural order, and the expanding impact. Well, this evening and the knowledge that unfolded had a ripple effect which I think was largely beyond our control. What started out as a family crisis, one which we initially hoped would settle, emerged into abuse by my father towards my mother. Despite our training and experience we did not predict the journey beyond this night. We both acknowledge that my father was emotionally vulnerable, anxious, and not always easy to deal with, a little odd, but not a bad father. But physically and psychologically abusive-no? I lived in that household for 23 years and it never occurred to me to define this as a household overshadowed by abuse. Looking back there were indicators in his mental state, but our stoic mother probably protected us. This crisis however triggered for him a sense of personal outrage about how he had been treated.

Early on, after this night of revelation, my dad offered to go to counselling with my mum. She apparently declined. On reflection this is the one point in time where we may have been able to positively intervene. Had they gone, maybe professional intervention could have helped him with his anger and distress.

It soon emerged that my father was now psychologically and physically abusive towards my mother. He started using demeaning language in our presence, there was evidence of physical bruising and stories of threats, “interrogations” in the middle of the night and controlling acts designed to humiliate mum. I recall on one occasion telling my father to “grow up” when he was ranting- not exactly a constructive intervention and probably dangerous for my mother. Mum told us once that he stood over her and forced her to write letters to her sisters that he dictated to tell them about the abuse. We tried damage control tactics and reached out to our aunts both of whom became angry, said they were too old or sick to be dealing with this and if it was true, why had our mother not raised this with them earlier/warned them. We both decided not to debate the truthfulness as, in our minds it served no purpose to distress these women any more by pointing out the realities. We speculated that others in our generation may have experienced similar abuse at the hands of our grandfather. We also thought there was a distinct possibility that they had been aware of the abuse that my mother suffered.

### **Taking Action**

In the end we feared for our mother’s survival and hatched a plan to visit mum in dad’s absence. We put it to her that she was likely to be killed the way things were going and she agreed to leave the home that day. We were able to pack some belongings and help her leave. Her parting note to him left on the table “My help has come.” Fortunately, my sibling was able to accommodate mum and in time we found priority aged independent living accommodation for her, organised Centrelink payments and furniture. At this point I was grateful for my systems knowledge, and we were able to bypass the 1980s specialist domestic violence services.

From that time on, our support divided into my sibling listening to the stories mum gradually revealed and providing practical support to dad and me confronting the challenges of property settlement (“she doesn’t deserve anything”), and listening to the ruminations (“I should have killed her”) and the blaming (“It’s your fault I didn’t leave”- referring to a time when he was threatening to leave the marriage when I was still a Uni student and living at home.) Our relationship was never the same and we maintained a cool hostility towards each other.

I never regret the steps we took with our mother, and she enjoyed her later years of life. Later on, we found that dad had tracked her home one day whilst she was out shopping and asked her to get into the car. Fortunately, she did not. Dad also seemed to gain some pleasure in life eventually moving into a retirement complex where he was “popular.” Although in my presence I could still feel the dark rumination and the Will Kit was often on display suggesting his ruminations.

My mother’s explanation for not revealing her plight to dad many years previously was “he would have killed him” meaning granddad.

### What helped?

- **Having knowledge** -our own resourcefulness- many people would not have this knowledge and are put in the position of having to ask for help, to tell their story sometimes multiple times, to justify receiving assistance.
- **Having family support working in the same direction**-this enabled us to move swiftly with certainty and remain in control of those things we could. (The hostile negative responses of my mother's siblings were not shared with her. As far as I know they did not contact her.)
- **Finding Shelter and Financial Resources:** an accommodation service which had a priority list favouring people in my mother's circumstances and immediate financial assistance external to the marital bank account.
- **Survivor family/community engagement:** my mother was able to play an active and productive life role in her families strengthened by her greater freedom. She felt useful and engaged and this was part of a healing process allowing her to live her last decade of life with dignity.
- **Advocacy:** an informal intermediary bore most of the brunt of negotiations regarding money and property without legal fees. This helped protect our mother from ongoing contact and legal costs, and hopefully from additional trauma.

### What could have helped?

- **Counselling at least for my father:** Our focus on our mother and, in my case hostility about my father's reaction, probably did not take into account the enormity of the impact on my father's mental state, in effect ignoring his needs. My sibling did contact his doctor and express concern about what was happening in the home, but we have no way of knowing if he was offered any help.
- **Child safety education:** I have no idea whether my mother contemplated our vulnerability in contacts with our grandfather. I have no recollection of child safety education in my schooling. We were not a family that talked about issues really and so I am not sure what impact external knowledge would have had on our early childhood experiences.
- I do know my experiences gave me an antenna for stranger danger but also equipped me to initiate sexualised behaviour before I was emotionally mature enough to understand the consequences. I navigated these issues without any external input.
- We can only hope that educational input in schools nowadays helps young people with these issues. We also hope that parents are able to discuss more openly matters of sex, relationships, recognising discomfort and unsafe situations.
- **External support:** Whilst in this case there was sufficient positive strength in the family to deal with the immediate needs of my mother, the impact of the revelations on individuals and their reactions should not be underestimated and this may produce additional trauma/harm for the survivor. The availability of non-judgemental support grounded in knowledge about abuse should be readily available to people who need/want support.

- **Support for families/community:** Although our family forged a private journey, people may benefit from advice and assistance on how to be a *helpful support* to those directly impacted. The reaction of others towards a survivor is likely to have a significant impact on that person when they are at their most vulnerable. People need information on how to provide constructive help that is trauma informed.
- **Sound legal advice:** We chose a pathway which controlled the advocacy available to our mother. Whilst she did not object, the availability of independent legal advice was not offered to her. There was no talk of restraining orders, criminal prosecution, legal assistance with property settlement or advice on the restrictive terms of my father's will.

We did it all thinking we were preserving her dignity and privacy. (and really our own). This may have robbed mum of feeling a sense of justice.

### **The broader context**

The vulnerability of children to abuse of all forms as victims and “witnesses” is an ongoing grave community issue, and its impact is long lasting in terms of how it shapes the personality, behaviour, psychological wellbeing and health of small children, adolescents, teenagers, and adults. Stranger danger, although serious, is in fact less of a concern given the prevalence of abuse in the context of family relationships. These are people in the child's environment who they are encouraged to trust. I suspect that revealing that you have been abused is extremely difficult for a child because of their limited capacity to understand the concept, apprehension to talk about someone who is often a trusted member of the family, finding the language to get their story across and the fear of getting into trouble themselves.

Unfortunately, the child protection remedies which disentangle children from childhood abuse can produce additional trauma because of a sense of family abandonment, difficulties with attachment and other issues. I do not have the answers only the questions. I only have admiration for those who work professionally in this area and attempt to untangle the messes that us humans sometimes make of each other's lives.

The call to provide mechanisms where perpetrators of abuse can be engaged in court directed and/or voluntary psychological and social interventions which help them to understand their behaviour and contributing factors is strongly supported. However, I think there will be some who will not be motivated by the carrot or the stick approach where monitoring and surveillance, separation and containment will be necessary. These will be the people who see no fault in their behaviour, no empathy for their prey and no inclination to behave differently, and a few who appear to have no or limited control over their inclinations.

## **Appendix 3: Response from Glyn Scott**

### **Contact Details**

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### **Background information**

Glyn has expressed a desire to speak with the Royal Commission about her lived experience and her observations of the current state of the South Australian response to domestic, family, and sexual violence.

Glyn has advocated in this area for many years and has first-hand experience of counselling and supporting individuals who are experiencing violence.

NACC approached Glyn for comments as she provides support to women across Adelaide. Her summary comments are provided below but we believe that the Commission may be better served by interacting directly with Glyn. Her lived experience, High Court challenge about rape in marriage and the recognition of her contribution to the community are well documented in the media.

Glyn is the founder of **the Love Hope and Gratitude Foundation**. Its stated aims are-

*“The Love, Hope and Gratitude Foundation aims to raise community awareness and bring hope, love, and support to those who need it most.... because no woman, man, child, or animal should ever have to live in fear. We invite you to join us on our journey to help stop domestic violence and put an end to the suffering.”*

[Love Hope and Gratitude Foundation | A Safe Haven for Those At Risk | Adelaide Hills, SA, Australia](#)

## Glyn's comments

In summary, Glyn states that there are widespread examples of abuse, the most disturbing of which relate to the lack of support and resources for women and children and their pets, and who therefore sadly continue to be victims of Family and Domestic Violence and also serious Sexual Assault.

Glyn made the following observations on the state of domestic, family, and sexual violence in Australia, the adequacy of our system responses, and what we need to change.

.....

“Many of the incidents are physical, causing severe injuries and long- term disabilities. These are exacerbated by financial abuse where women are coerced into transferring all their money to the perpetrator due to threats, isolation, and severe coercive control. Increasingly, the severity of coercive control is evident, and this goes as far as depriving women and children of basic necessities including sanitary items, medications, and food, and of course access to friends and family.

Children’s pets are also maimed and killed in revenge, not to speak of the women and children who have lost their lives at perpetrators’ hands. Simply because our laws and powers of police are archaic and very out of date.

**After working in this field for more than forty-five years, I can say unequivocally that the horrors of FDV and SA has escalated out of control.**

It would be an epiphany to all if I just spoke of a micro-amount of disgraceful acts perpetrated on women and children, and, I have to say, some men also are very traumatised by the abuse they have suffered. This is also under- estimated.

I am a lived experience woman who suffered more than 10 years of abuse resulting in many hospitalisations and severe injuries that are life-long. And the deaths of my two sons can never be erased from my heart and mind. As are so many of the women and children I support and advocate for. Simply because nothing is adequately being done to change the status quo.

Nothing much has changed in 60 years. This is happening multiple times a day, right across our state and also across the nation.

Our systems are failing families and their pets every single day.

Unfortunately, the help that is continually pushed out on Radio Television, pamphlets and conferences and forums does not even come close to stemming this serious cruel pandemic. The powers at the top that make decisions have no true idea what is happening on the ground. I am sure many other dedicated individuals trying to help families would agree with me.

**Stronger police powers are needed to actually do something. Every government department that is supposed to help, is hamstrung by box ticking and ridiculous red tape. What we need is action not words.**

It is my hope that the Royal Commission will listen more to those of us who have lived experience and who are working on the ground every day amongst the broken bodies, tortured minds, financially deprived, sexually abused, isolated, and emotionally traumatised by those who supposed to love them while those who have the power to stop it, sit on their hands and shuffle paper from one side of their desk to the other.

**Enough is enough and women, children and families need action, and they need it now!**

I would also like to add a couple of extremely important but serious issues that need urgent attention, and it is needed now.

- ❖ perpetrators who abuse physically and in other ways, the mother of their children and in many cases, abuse the children as well, should not be allowed access visits overnight under any circumstances. They give up that right when they perpetrate while their children are made to watch in fear.
- ❖ All Apprehended Violence Orders (AVOs) should be policed strongly, and treated with the importance of making sure children and women are sufficiently protected.



The current police laws do not go far enough and need to be upgraded urgently, at the moment most AVOs are a joke. How many more women and children have to die before these orders are policed properly and taken seriously without doubt.

- ❖ Financial support should be made easier for mothers who, at the moment they leave are at maximum danger, and are too often being put through unnecessary gruelling and intimidation when they are already so traumatised they very often cannot even think what they might need tomorrow.
  
- ❖ More community involvement should be encouraged to help families and their companion pets to be supported in a meaningful and appropriate way.
  
- ❖ Vital training is needed across all government departments, services, and agencies, including Police, Lawyers, Judges, the legal system generally, and the medical profession and also mental health departments which are also seriously lacking.

I would like to have the opportunity to speak to the Commission about a number of burgeoning issues that have a lack of support, respect and basic human rights being forced upon our most vulnerable families due to continued violence and AVOs not followed up on.

Glyn”