



MEDIA RELEASE – WED 23rd JUNE 2010 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Minister admits misleading public on domestic violence

The Minister for the Status of Women, Hon Gail Gago MLC, yesterday admitted in a [Ministerial Statement](#) that statistics on the *Don't Cross the Line* respectful relationships [website](#) were incorrect and had been removed.

The incorrect and misleading material was brought to the attention of the Minister by leading men's health organisation Men's Health Australia and is still under investigation by the SA Ombudsman.

Spokesman Greg Andresen said, "We are pleased that the Minister now acknowledges that her campaign misled the public and the media for nine months about the reality of relationship abuse in Australia. However, her claim that the errors have been rectified couldn't be further from the truth."

"The original errors have been replaced by a page of statistics about violence against women. As the Minister notes, the underlying aim of the campaign is to educate young men and women about respectful relationships and about the difference between acceptable and abusive behaviour. To equate abusive relationship behaviour with violence against women is simply mind-boggling."

"Firstly, [at least one in three](#) victims of family violence and abuse are male. Why has the minister deliberately misled the public in an attempt to deny that one third of victims – men and their children – exist? Secondly, most violence against women takes place outside of relationships – in the workplace, on the street, at the pub, etc. Why is the minister inflating statistics on relationship abuse by including these types of violence on the website?"

Men's Health Australia is supportive of all efforts to reduce interpersonal violence in the community but is concerned that the regular use of incorrect or misleading 'statistics' by Governments unfairly stigmatises men and boys as violent and abusive, while simultaneously denying services to male victims of violence.

They are also concerned that the Government's approach is not in the interests of all children in families where there is abuse or violence, but selectively favours those children in families where violence is perpetrated by the father. The other one-third to half of children have to fend for themselves without support.

Men's Health Australia is hopeful that the Ombudsman's investigation will lead to the *Don't Cross the Line* website presenting a balanced, accurate picture of relationship abuse, including statistics such as:

- [Over one in three victims](#) of domestic homicide in Australia are male
- [At least one in three victims](#) of family violence in Australia are male
- [As many young people](#) have witnessed physical domestic violence by their mother against their father, as have witnessed it by their father against their mother
- [Equal numbers](#) of young males and females have experienced domestic violence or have been forced to have sex by their boyfriend/girlfriend.

The recently released report, [Intimate Partner Abuse of Men](#), by researchers at Edith Cowan University found that "Male victims of intimate partner abuse and their children suffer a range of consequences, such as psychological distress (including disorders such as depression and anxiety disorders), suicidal ideation, impaired self concept and loss of work."

It found that male victims are often reluctant to disclose their experience of abuse or seek help because of their sometimes justified fears that they will not be believed, that they will not be assisted or will instead be blamed for the abuse.

"Understating the prevalence of relationship violence against men and their children makes it less likely that a man will be believed when he finally summons up the courage to disclose his partner's abuse of him. It also allows Government to continue to develop family violence policies and campaigns that ignore male victims," said Mr Andresen.

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