

Australia's campaign to
stop violence against women

White Ribbon

**PO Box 6303
North Sydney NSW 2059
Telephone +612 9045 8444
Facsimile +612 9045 8448
admin@whiteribbon.org.au
www.whiteribbon.org.au
ABN 57 126 739 544**



Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Email: fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee

Response to Supplementary Submission from Greg Andresen of One in Three to the Finance and Public Administration References Committee Inquiry into Domestic Violence in Australia

Please find enclosed White Ribbon Australia's submission to the aforementioned supplementary submission.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the statements made about White Ribbon Australia. I am happy to elaborate on the information contained on this submission if required.

Kind regards

Libby Davies

CEO



In his supplementary submission to the Committee, Greg Andresen from One in Three identifies three comments made by White Ribbon Australia at the Sydney hearing of the Committee that he takes issue with. Below is our response to his concerns.

1. “Men’s violence against women...is the most insidious form of violence”

White Ribbon Australia stands by this statement as it relates to domestic violence, the subject of the Finance and Public Administration References Committee Inquiry.

White Ribbon believes that all forms of violence are wrong and acknowledges that men and women can be victims. However, we also acknowledge that the majority of domestic violence victims are women. This is clearly supported by available data, including the Personal Safety Survey 2012 and incidents of domestic violence-related assault recorded by Police.

ANROWS has explored this data in depth in their submissions to the Inquiry. This data is also publicly available. As ANROWS note in their submission:

“The Personal Safety Survey demonstrates a qualitative difference between the violence women and men experience. It shows women are most likely to experience violence in their home by a current or former partner that is domestic violence. In contrast, while men report high levels of violence this is unlikely to be domestic violence. Men are most likely to experience violence in a place of recreation or entertainment by a male stranger and the most common type of known perpetrator against a man is an acquaintance or neighbour.”

2. “We find that the tactics and strategies of One in Three to derail the White Ribbon Campaign and to undermine the evidence that exists and the statistical evidence supporting our claim of men’s violence against women to be very disrespectful of the campaign and of the space it occupies.”

White Ribbon Australia works with independent academics and policy makers to formulate evidence-based responses to men’s violence against women through the White Ribbon Campaign and primary prevention programs. White Ribbon Australia programs are independently evaluated. Evaluations are demonstrating the effectiveness of our work in raising awareness about men’s violence against women, changing people’s attitudes and encouraging people to change their behaviours.

White Ribbon Australia welcomes constructive feedback on this evidence base and the resources and materials we develop. When potential errors are brought to our attention, staff take immediate action to investigate and attend to them. It is clear to White Ribbon Australia that One in Three take



an interest in this evidence-base and spend a significant amount of time examining White Ribbon Australia resources and materials. Unfortunately, it is our experience that this interest has a tendency to focus on opportunities to undermine the work of White Ribbon Australia rather than contribute proactively and collegiately to violence prevention.

As the comments of Ms. Davies on page 14 of the transcript from the Sydney Inquiry make clear, White Ribbon Australia has engaged in negotiations and discussions with One in Three about their concerns regarding White Ribbon Australia focus on men's violence against women. During these discussions our opposition to all forms of violence has been emphasised and our commitment to men's violence against women reaffirmed with reference to research.

Despite this, Greg Andresen and One in Three publicly and mistakenly comment on the remit of White Ribbon Australia. The most recent example is this quote from Greg Andresen in a Daily Telegraph article published on 19 January 2015: "Unfortunately the message from governments and NGOs such as White Ribbon and Amnesty International has been completely one-sided - only sending the message that male violence against women needs to be stopped"¹. This is clearly a misinterpretation and misrepresentation of White Ribbon Australia despite Mr. Andresen having been briefed on our position and our work.

White Ribbon Australia sincerely hopes this approach changes and that One in Three look to adopt a more open and cooperative approach to communicating with and about White Ribbon Australia.

3. "We know that there has been a link between the two organisations [A Voice for Men and One in Three], which is quite concerning for us...White Ribbon as a campaign has not used similar strategies to discredit [One in Three]"

We note from the supplementary submission prepared by Greg Andresen that One in Three consider an association with A Voice for Men to reflect poorly on them. White Ribbon Australia is regularly subject to attacks from organisations such as A Voice for Men. These organisations claim to be representing male victims of domestic violence but are instead primarily concerned with undermining the work of White Ribbon internationally. Ongoing legal action over the most recent attack that began in October 2014 prevents us from commenting more extensively on this activity.

One in Three has content from A Voice for Men posted on their website. See, for example a podcast from A Voice for Men founder Paul Elam titled 'Violent Women and Half Truths'

¹ Pearson, M. (2015, January 19). Male victims of domestic violence: Police Facebook post stirs debate on controversial issue. *Daily Telegraph*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/male-victims-of-domestic-violence-police-facebook-post-stirs-debate-on-controversial-issue/story-fni0cx12-1227189639460>



<http://www.oneinthree.com.au/news/2011/3/8/radio-violent-women-and-government-half-truths-usa.html> and a link to an article by Erin Pizzey (owner of whiteribbon.org, a website hosted by A Voice for Men) titled 'Why I loathe feminism and believe it will ultimately destroy the family (UK)' <http://www.oneinthree.com.au/news/2009/9/24/why-i-loathe-feminism-and-believe-it-will-ultimately-destroy.html>.

Similarly, material from One in Three and quotes from Greg Andresen can be found on the whiteribbon.org and A Voice for Men websites. See for example an article on the launch of Our Watch that quotes Greg Andresen titled 'One Third of Domestic Violence Victims Denied Services' <http://www.avoicemen.com/allnews/one-third-of-domestic-violence-victims-denied-services/> and 'Domestic Violence Study Suspended by UNSW for Breach of Ethics' <http://www.avoicemen.com/allnews/media-release-embargoed-12-01am-monday-14-april-2014-domestic-violence-study-suspended-by-unsw-for-breach-of-ethics/>.

White Ribbon Australia is a transparent organisation: we make extensive annual reports publicly available on our website; our financial records are independently audited and we promptly respond to requests for clarification of/correction to our resources and materials. It is unfortunate that White Ribbon Australia needs to spend time and resources protecting and defending itself from unreasonable attempts to discredit the White Ribbon Campaign, Programs and governance by organisations such as One in Three and A Voice for Men. White Ribbon Australia acknowledges that other organisations are also targeted by these groups, for example ANROWS, Our Watch and women's services.

We sincerely hope that these activities by organisations such as One in Three and A Voice for Men cease so our respective organisations can focus on our particular remits. In the case of White Ribbon Australia, this remit is the prevention of men's violence against women.