

Dr Baxter: There are disallowable instruments to extend the two sites. That part has already been done. We only need those instruments in order to extend the sites. We will work on the legislative amendments that need to be made for the second part.

Senator SIEWERT: By the time you do the legislation for the second part, the trials, you will be able to tell us how much it is going to cost?

Ms Bennett: We expect that we would be able to do that. Obviously, to introduce the legislation for the next two sites, we would know where the next two sites are, and the costs associated with that.

Mr Pratt: My colleagues will correct me if I am wrong, but I think the steps will be that we need a government determination of the new sites. Once that has been determined, that will identify what the conditions are in both the sites and for the people who will be part of those trials. That will then factor into the negotiations with the card providers about the costs to do that. Clearly, if it is done in the middle of a big city, it will be very different from if it is in a regional area or a remote area. They could be quite different costs. So that is what will determine the cost of that. Our expectation would be that we would know that before the legislation would be introduced.

Dr Baxter: The government has said that it would like to see the first of the expanded sites up in about September. So we would need to have legislation in place before that. That is probably the best indication we can give you at this point.

Senator SIEWERT: Thank you. In terms of the trial sites, under the current legislation there are up to three.

Dr Baxter: The instruments.

Senator SIEWERT: Under the instruments, there are three sites. The new expansion talks about two. Do those two include the one that was never established, the third site? Is that still in play, plus two more?

Ms Bennett: No.

Senator SIEWERT: That is what I want to be clear about.

Mr Pratt: It is the current two and another two.

Senator SIEWERT: So the original third one is off the table? The total will be four?

Mr Pratt: Yes.

Ms Bennett: That is correct.

Senator SIEWERT: It has not been clear in the material I have seen. Thank you for that. You just said in terms of the trials that it could be in a big city and you have not determined, by the sound of it, who would be covered. So we are not necessarily talking about the same parameters as for the other two trial sites?

Mr Pratt: That will be up to government.

Senator SIEWERT: So that is in play. There could be a scenario where we are talking about a different cohort?

Mr Pratt: Possibly, yes. The government has not taken any decisions at all on where the new trial sites will be.

Senator SIEWERT: Okay. I have been given the eye. I did not say 'evil eye' this time!

CHAIR: No, you have refrained from that. I am pleased. Thank you. We will break for lunch and return at 1.30 with Senator Siewert's questions.

Proceedings suspended from 12:30 to 13:30

CHAIR: We will kick off again and commence with questions from Senator Leyonhjelm.

Senator Seselja: Mr Pratt has some additional information for Senator Pratt and the committee.

Mr Pratt: In relation to a few questions about 1800Respect, there are a couple of comebacks. One is there are no male counsellors answering calls on 1800Respect. We can also confirm that specialist gambling counsellors do not answer 1800Respect calls.

Senator PRATT: I appreciate the feedback to us in a timely way on both matters.

Mr Pratt: It is a pleasure.

Senator LEYONHJELM: I asked at the previous estimates some questions about the violence against women campaign. I am assuming I have the right people.

Mr Pratt: Yes.

Senator LEYONHJELM: I asked in particular about the research that informed that campaign. That research was undertaken by the TNS consultancy. It stated, without giving any citations, and I quote here:

There is strong community support for the cessation of extreme violence against women. A significant barrier to achieving this change, however, is low recognition of the heart of the issue and where it begins. There is a clear link between violence towards women and attitudes of disrespect and gender inequality.

At the last estimates, I put a question on notice for a citation about disrespect and gender inequality being the heart of the issue. The question—I did ask it at the last estimates—was taken on notice. In response, I received a reply in SQ17/150 that was six paragraphs. The first four paragraphs advise of ABS statistics indicating more partner violence against women than against men. I assume the department is not intending to argue that these statistics are measures of disrespect or gender inequality or show that disrespect and gender inequity are at the heart of the issue. Am I right in that assumption?

Ms Bell: The campaign is based on a range of research, including international and domestic research. It includes the World Health Organisation's *Preventing intimate partner and sexual violence against women: taking action and generating evidence* as well as ANROW's research for the Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey. A variety of these research pieces go to one of the key elements of violence against women, being disrespectful behaviour and gender inequality, which is why the campaign takes a primary prevention approach to these issues in order to break the cycle of violence.

Senator LEYONHJELM: Well, you did not quite answer my question, but you did refer to the WHO report. Your written answer on notice referred to the WHO report. Your answer cites studies supporting violence against women as a consequence of gender inequality. Are you arguing that the WHO report indicates that, of all the factors, gender inequality is the heart of the issue?

Ms Bell: No. In the campaign, we do not argue that gender inequality and disrespectful behaviour are at the heart of the issue. They are one of the contributing factors. The COAG decision, when the campaign was commissioned, supported that premise. However, it is not the only contributing factor to violence against women.

Senator LEYONHJELM: What else does the WHO report suggest is responsible for violence against women?

Ms Bell: I actually do not have the full details of that report with me. I will have to take that on notice.

Senator LEYONHJELM: Well, I might know the answer to that before you need to take it on notice. The WHO report lists individual factors—low income, low education, sexual abuse, parental violence, antisocial personality, harmful use of alcohol, illicit drug use and acceptance of violence. It lists relationship factors—multiple partners and fidelity and low resistance to peer pressure. It lists community factors—weak community sanctions. And it lists poverty and societal factors—traditional gender norms and social norms supportive of violence. So in none of those does it actually nominate gender inequality as a key contributor. The sixth paragraph in your response refers to an unpublished 2007 paper by Michael Flood and a report of a survey by VicHealth, which was commissioned by your department. The lead author is named as Anita Harris. I am assuming you are familiar with both of them. Did the unpublished paper by Michael Flood support the contention by TNS consultancy that disrespect and gender inequality were more important contributors? Did it compare them to other contributors, such as poverty, alcohol abuse and drug abuse?

Ms Bell: Senator, I am not aware it gave it any greater importance in that research, but it is, once again, one of the contributing factors, which is why the campaign has focussed on it.

Senator LEYONHJELM: Did you have a copy of that 2007 paper by Flood when you prepared your response to my question on notice?

Ms Bell: My understanding is that we did because it was part of the desktop analysis done in 2015.

Senator LEYONHJELM: Are you able to provide a copy to the committee?

Ms Bell: I can take that on notice.

Senator LEYONHJELM: Thank you. Did the survey compare the contribution to violence against women of disrespect and gender inequality against other factors, such as poverty, alcohol abuse and drug abuse?

Ms Bell: Are you referring to the ABS survey?

Senator LEYONHJELM: No. The VicHealth survey that you cited in your response to my question on notice. The lead author is named as Anita Harris.

Ms Bell: I would have to take that on notice.

Senator LEYONHJELM: You will have to take that on notice. In fact, we found that the survey only measured reported attitudes to violence—attitudes, in other words. I do not think it substantiates the argument, but you can take it on notice as to whether you think it determined or indicated any relative importance of those contributors. I would like to go a little further into that survey. That survey, which you cited as a reference source and to underpin the violence against women campaign, states that it is an area of concern that only 60 per cent of young people agree that violence against women is common. That raises the question: can you definitively say that violence against women is common?

Ms Bell: The 2017 national community attitudes survey found a strong relationship between attitudes to gender inequality and attitudes to violence. Some of the research showed that one in four young people is prepared to excuse partner violence and one in five believes there are circumstances in which a woman bears some responsibility for the violent behaviour. That research formed the basis of the primary prevention approach for the campaign when we targeted the influences of 10 to 17-year-old children.

Senator LEYONHJELM: I guess the question, though, is whether violence against women is common. If it is not common and if there is a perception that it is not common, you could hardly expect young people to say that it is. I mention that because the most recent ABS Personal Safety Survey indicates that 1.5 per cent of women reported experiencing violence by a partner or ex-partner during the previous 12 months. I suppose it depends on your definition, but I am not sure that 1.5 per cent would qualify as common, in my definition.

Ms Bennett: It is certainly more than is preferable, is it not?

Senator LEYONHJELM: Indeed. Indeed, it is. I am not suggesting that violence against women is acceptable or desirable or anything other than something to be avoided. What I am questioning is the commitment of taxpayers' funds to a program where, as I raised last estimates, the fundamental assumption is that there is a clear link between violence towards women and attitudes of disrespect and gender inequality. There is a 2013 United Nations quantitative study on male violence against women in Asia and the Pacific by Fulu et al. It indicates that low gender equitable attitudes are less important factors in explaining intimate partner violence than nearly every other factor listed, including the number of lifetime sexual partners, childhood abuse or neglect, a lack of education, food insecurity, oppression and alcohol abuse. Do you consider this UN study to be a credible source?

Ms Bell: I am not privy to the detail of that study so I cannot comment on it.

Senator LEYONHJELM: I would like you to take that on notice. Tell me how you regard that in terms of credibility relative to the other sources which you have relied on in which attitudes of disrespect and gender inequality were regarded as at least as important as other factors, if not more so. If the United Nations quantitative study on male violence against women in Asia and the Pacific is an accurate reflection of the situation in Australia as well, a policy response that focuses on disrespect and gender inequality and does not focus on the other factors that the UN study identifies as key contributors to violence would be inappropriate. It would be misdirected, would it not?

Ms Bell: I think we are making an assumption. We have quite considerable evidence that supports this campaign. We have not used the particular report that you are talking about so I cannot do a comparison. But, based on a COAG agreement to this campaign, which is based on considerable evidence, both domestic and international, we have enough of a supporting basis for this campaign to go ahead. The evaluation of the campaign shows the success of the campaign and the fact that it has reached the primary target audience and has changed perspectives on the issue. The traction that the campaign has only got with only one phase of advertising is quite considerable. We got 41 million views of the ad domestically. The research also shows that we have reached our target audience as predicted, and we have 69 per cent understanding the messaging and people acting on it. We have had 450,000 visits to the website and over 20,000 downloads of material. We are now going into a phase to investigate how we extend that campaign and get even further influence.

Senator LEYONHJELM: All right. That is based on the assumption that the heart of domestic violence against women is disrespect and gender inequality. So you have achieved, by those measures, a degree of awareness. Presumably, you consider that indicates a success. How much higher would those figures be if you had addressed the issues that the United Nations quantitative study found are equally, if not more—in fact, they said more—important as contributors to domestic violence? How much more successful could you have been?

Ms Bennett: We cannot possibly take a hypothetical thing that we did not do and then have a look at what outcome it might have had. It is not possible to do that.

Senator LEYONHJELM: I appreciate that. I am suggesting that there is a danger—and I am suspicious—that you have selectively taken the evidence rather than taken it as a whole. Ms Bell has said there is a

considerable amount of evidence. I hope you have given me the evidence in response to my question on notice at the last estimates. If there is other evidence that I have not received that underpins the basis of that campaign, I would like to see it.

Ms Bennett: We have provided—

Mr Pratt: We will go and further explore whether there is any other source of evidence—

Ms Bennett: That was used.

Senator LEYONHJELM: That would be good. I would like to know, because what you have sent me so far does not do it justice, in my view. I suspect that the program is misdirected and it could be more successful if it were redirected. This is my final question, because the Chair is going to wind me up in a moment. I wonder if you agree that the literature on partner violence splits into two camps; they are referred to as the patriarchal perspective and the family conflict perspective. Is that a reasonable assessment? Are you familiar with that idea?

Ms Bell: I am sorry, Senator, I am not. It has not gone to part of the work we have done for the campaign. It may be in a program or policy.

Senator LEYONHJELM: I might put a question on notice for you for that one. It might be a bit unfair. I will leave it there. Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Senator Siewert is not here. I understand Senator Hinch has roughly five minutes of questions.

Senator HINCH: Thanks, Chair.

Ms Bennett: In what area, because there are numerous people?

Senator HINCH: We are talking about redress.

Ms Bennett: I will just get the right people up for that.

Senator HINCH: Thank you. This is probably for Mr Pratt or maybe Senator Seselja. It is about the timing of the redress. In October 2016, the Attorney-General and Minister Porter said that the Commonwealth scheme is expected to be established by 2018. Later that year, it was to start in early 2018. Now it commences in 2018 with a dedicated phone line from March. Not until July 2018 will applications for redress be open to survivors of Commonwealth abuse. What is the timetable now?

Ms Bennett: That timetable stands. The first stage of it is a dedicated phone line. There will also be information on the website. That allows people to have a look at the parameters and some information about the support they would have. This first stage of the scheme is only for survivors that were in Commonwealth institutions. You would have seen Minister Porter and, at the time, the Attorney-General, when he announced that there was strong encouragement for the states to refer powers and opt into the scheme or, at the very least, have textual referrals that would allow organisations to. Partly it has been about some of the systems that we need to build—the architecture. Part of it is the ICT. Part of that is about training people. Part of it is about doing all the decision mapping that builds the scheme together. At the beginning of March, people will be able to look at a whole array of information and make a decision. Was it a Commonwealth institution? They might make decisions that they had received a previous payment that might be in excess of this payment and they might be interested just in counselling support and in the direct personal response, because they make up those three elements, a core to the redress. That will give them time to talk to people on the phone. And then the technical ability to be able to make an application will be available for assessment and going through that process.

Senator HINCH: Now this is only, as you stress, victims of the Commonwealth scheme?

Ms Bennett: At this stage.

Senator HINCH: That is a miniscule amount of victims. Most are in the states. When will state victims be able to start kicking in?

Ms Bennett: We have had bureaucratically, and the minister has had, several discussions about how as soon as the states make that decision for the referral of powers, they can join. The way the architecture of this has worked is that we will have in place processes—IT, information and support; it is the building blocks of it—that can be scaled up in terms of the resources, such as more people answering phones, for example, or more people processing claims. That can be scaled up to the number of survivors that come in if the states opt in or it creates that referral that allows an institution to opt into the scheme.

Senator HINCH: Last year, it would appear that all the states were coming on board except South Australia, which is going it alone. How many states have signed up so far?

Ms Bennett: No states have given a formal indication yet. When I attended the hearings for the royal commission and the royal commissioner asked those same questions, certainly the states were generally just