

MEDIA RELEASE

CHILDREN BY CHOICE CALL FOR BETTER RESOURCES TO SUPPORT HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING WOMEN EXPERIENCING PARTNER VIOLENCE

Research led by La Trobe University and recently published in the *Australian New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, has again highlighted the known link between unplanned pregnancy and intimate partner violence, this research has also found that those with violent partners are more than twice as likely to terminate pregnancies as those in non-violent relationships.

Daile Kelleher, Manager of Children by Choice “These findings echo that of our own data; in the 2017/18 financial year 32% of our total contacts disclosed domestic violence. 38% of those contacts reporting domestic violence are in turn experiencing reproductive coercion, which explains the link between domestic and partner violence, unplanned pregnancy, and abortion.”

The link between unplanned pregnancy and domestic violence has consistently presented itself within the data set of Children by Choice. In response to this the organisation commenced the Screening to Safety Project in August 2016.

“The main aim of this project was to increase the capacity of private abortion providers to identify and respond to the needs of women experiencing domestic violence who attend for abortion care, with special focus on the issue of reproductive coercion.”

The project produced a list of 42 recommendations for; the practice of Children by Choice, general health settings, domestic violence service provision settings, abortion providers, research and Government. These recommendations cannot be implemented without sufficient support and resources.

“We cannot further the initiatives of the Screening to Safety project and address the findings from research such as the recently published report from La Trobe University in the absence of designated resources. The commitment of Government support to projects that recognise domestic violence indicators and identify suitable and accessible contraception options for women in violent circumstances is essential to continue to enhance the capacity of health professionals”

Children by Choice is an independent Brisbane-based non-profit organisation, committed to providing unbiased information, counselling and referrals for all unplanned pregnancy options – abortion, adoption and parenting. We also provide sexuality education to young people and professional development training for health and community sector professionals. Founded almost 50 years ago, we work to advance Queenslanders' reproductive choices, and to improve access to safe and legal abortion.

More information on the Screening to Safety Project is available here:

<https://www.childrenbychoice.org.au/forprofessionals/recognisingviolenceandcoercion/screening-to-safety>

Daile Kelleher is available for media comment: 07 3357 9933