

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL Australia

MEDIA RELEASE

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Victims of domestic violence losers in binding financial agreements proposed in Bill

A national advocacy women's group is lobbying key Senators and Members of Parliament in a bid to ensure that the victims of domestic and family violence are not prejudiced in family court proceedings that involve binding financial arrangements.

Soroptimist International Australia has serious concerns about the *Family Law Amendment (Financial Agreement and Other Measures) Bill 2015* ("the Bill").

The Bill is said to provide a strong legislative response that family violence and child abuse is unacceptable and asserts that the Bill provides "*a number of amendments to strengthen protections against family violence...*" to "*...strengthen protections from violence in certain procedural matters*".

Yet, nowhere in the Bill is there provision for adequate safeguards or procedural protections to overcome the prejudice to the victims and survivors of domestic and family violence when negotiating binding financial agreements.

In its current form, the Bill is likely to give perpetrators of domestic and family violence greater power to influence financial outcomes in negotiating binding financial agreements while the victims and survivors of domestic violence will be unfairly prejudiced.

The Bill is likely to come before the Senate in the current sittings of Parliament. Soroptimist International Australia is asking key Senators to consider their position recommending changes that will ensure the non-prejudicial treatment of victims of domestic and family violence.

About us: Soroptimist International is one of the oldest and largest women's organisations in the world holding General Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and with over 80,000 members in around 3,000 clubs in 130 countries.

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Our submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=fc9fd4c1-f7d2-46f6-9fa8-c543507ef9b2&subId=407826>

Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Report:

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/Family_Law_Bill/~/_media/Committees/legcon_ctte/Family_Law_Bill/report.pdf

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