

INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY

Statement

HON CHARLES SMITH (East Metropolitan) [9.44 pm]: Yesterday, Monday, 19 November, was International Men's Day. In this postmodern identity and gender politics world, it would seem that men are under attack, young men in particular, for what reason I really do not know. Nevertheless, it would seem that young men in particular are under attack and being blamed for much of the world's perceived problems. Many social constructionists and neo-Marxists, particularly on university campuses, are making young men's lives miserable. Men are bailing out of university life. The ideological acolytes of identity politics who push neo-Marxist garbage around universities are causing in some cases irreversible damage to our young men. These culture warriors blame a mythical "patriarchy" that dominates society for society's ills. What these culture warriors have done in essence is choose to take a tiny substratum of hyper-successful men and use that to represent the entire structure of western society, concluding that men are all-powerful, existing at the top of society's hierarchy. Under the weight of accusations that their ambitions are something to be ashamed of, boys and young men in particular are starting to doubt themselves and question their reason to exist. This is an appalling thing to do to young men. Universities in particular are becoming inhospitable to men, and society in general is becoming increasingly divisive, with the egalitarian drive for equality of outcomes, with quotas for jobs based on race, gender, sexual identity and ethnicity, above merit, skills and intelligence.

I note the "Going blind to see more clearly" study by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, which showed that the probability of being shortlisted for government work when gender was identified was a 2.9 per cent increase for women and a 3.2 per cent decrease for men. One has to ask: is this the progressivists' anti-racism and anti-sexism at work? Is this discrimination to address discrimination? This is not the equality civilised society demands. No person should be given favour due to their race or sex. It is no wonder young people are struggling to find meaning. Henry Thoreau famously stated, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." That is never more true than today. Many, many young men slip into clinical depression and drug use. Young men feel like the world is turning against them, and that they are burdensome, unwanted and without guidance or place in life.

One of the main goals of International Men's Day is the reduction of the male suicide rate. We need to turn that quiet desperation into action. Let us have a brief look at how dominant men are throughout our society. In 2017, there were a total of 3 128 deaths by suicide in Australia. Of that total, 780 were women and 2 348 were men. That figure was an almost 10 per cent increase on the previous year, so things are getting worse instead of better. Even sadder is the fact that men are three times more likely to kill themselves than women.

The following statistics show some alarming disparities between the genders, and should alarm policymakers about the need to be proactive for the male of the species. In Australia, over six men die through suicide each day, and on average men die six years younger than women. Approximately 90 per cent of the jail population is men. Most long-term unemployed are men. Men are falling behind in schools and at universities, where only 80 men graduate for every 100 women. The majority of the homeless are men. Ninety-five per cent of workplace deaths by accidents are suffered by men. Men are twice as likely as women to suffer violent death. Most victims of violent crime are men. Most people who die in wars are men. Boys and men do worse in school than girls and women. Clearly, men dominate in some fields—those of tragedy. Sometimes kind words and a smile are the best way to destroy the quiet desperation that we all at times struggle with. In the words of John Donne, "No man is an island"; neither is any woman. We need each other.

International Men's Day is designed to promote positive role models in society and develop wholesome individuals. Such developments are badly needed in today's wounded communities that reflect and have succumbed to the clashes among men, women and children that the progressive left has created and is unravelling the fabric of family and society. Ultimately, the current attacks against masculinity will be disastrous for society and they have to stop.

House adjourned at 9.52 pm
