

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE.

SUBMISSION MADE BY: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Background information:

I am the Mother of a domestic violence victim. My daughter left her marriage [REDACTED] years ago due to financial and emotional abuse, and Coercive Control.

Throughout the marriage she was financially responsible for the [REDACTED] children. Her husband had organised their mortgages to enable him to access money for large projects involving classic cars and borrowed money from others without her knowledge. He had little to do with the children and could not cope when he was required to care for them, forgetting to feed his daughter until prompted.

When annoyed he would turn the electricity off to the house and leave her in the dark and cold with [REDACTED] very small children and disappear for hours. He had cameras positioned so that he knew if she left the home. He has always seemed to know where she, as though he can track her.

I attended their home at about 11pm one night to get her and the children out as she did not know where he was and what he was doing other than her personal items had been ransacked and things were missing from the house. She was terrified.

They came to my home and lived with me for about [REDACTED] months and then went into a rental property. COVID hit and the property was taken back by the owners. She returned to live with me.

Throughout this time the "person who uses violence" had access to the children alternate weekends. The baby would return with nappy rash that on at least one occasion required immediate medical attention. My [REDACTED] cut his forehead and needed ED care but my daughter was not allowed to care for her [REDACTED] during the hospital visit and told that police would be called if she attended the hospital. On return to his Mum my [REDACTED] wanted to know why she had not come when [REDACTED] needed her.

Many events occurred and continue to occur like this. He physically restrains them when he has custody, to prevent them from any physical contact with their Mum. He punishes them if they speak to her. He does not provide adequate care or attention to them, leaves them locked in the house alone, fails to provide proper food or clothing. He refuses to take them to their activities, such as their sports etc.

My daughter endures an ongoing and continual barrage of email and SMS demands that at often the basis of some strange or unnecessary lie he is using to make her seem like a bad Mother. He has caused issues at the Kindy, barricading himself in an office to access my [REDACTED] paintings, and yet people seem unable to stop him. He is now doing similar things at the school, has intimidated the swimming coaches, dancing teachers, cricket coach, soccer coach and anyone else that does not do as he wants. He is very confident as he is never challenged about his behaviour.

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He attempted to place my home as an asset and took me to court for access to my Bank accounts. He is now asking the children about their [REDACTED] will.

Court Orders are in place and his behaviour was similar in court, where he simply refused to answer questions thereby dragging the process out for an extended period until my daughter could not emotionally or financially cope any longer. He made a deal that he would not seek further access to the children if she handed over most of the finances, he sold his kids!

So desperate and distraught was my daughter, and so scared and intimidated by his presence and ongoing ability to lie and get away with it, my daughter relented. Despite being an avid saver since the age of [REDACTED] she was left broken both financially and emotionally. She will likely never own her own home and will not have a proper Superannuation Fund. He never had either and all money that went into the marriage was my daughters. He had clause added to the financial orders that he will never financially support his children. He will not even pay for a donut on special school days.

Despite a Court ordered Child Psychology report being completed, the court ignored the advice given and allocated the children to him for 5 nights per fortnight and 7 nights straight for school holidays.

My daughter and grandchildren lived with me until recently, scared of his continual harassment, stalking, following both of us, being outside my home, stealing school clothes that she then has to replace. He searches the children's school bags and takes anything that we may have given them to help; a hairbrush for my [REDACTED] as he does not do her hair for days, books for them to read when they are there.

He has openly told people that his mission in life is to make my daughter's life Hell. He does this mostly be psychologically harming the children, telling people awful things about their Mother in front of them. He shows a photo of a smashed-up face to people, including the children, telling them that my daughter and I beat him up.

Time is passing and his behaviour is escalating. The children are questioning what he says. And he is beginning to physically harm them as well. There are counsellors involved although this is difficult and he has to be informed and once that occurred he threatened the children about anything they should speak about. Some people are now beginning to see how dangerous he actually is. Every time a woman dies at the hands of her partner, a little piece of me dies. This WILL be my daughter one day as no one will stop him. He has told the children that WHEN something happens to their Mum and I, they get to live with him. The kids are terrified.

We have attempted to speak to police, but the response is embarrassing. The school has called Police, they refused to attend. NOBODY does anything except stand at a Crime Scene and say "why is this happening." He has breached the court orders so many times and yet we have been advised that no one in the courts care. Nothing will be done about him taking the kids out of school when he shouldn't or taking them goat shooting at night and forcing them to witness the beheading of goats!

I don't know where to stop as the horror of our lives is all consuming. My little grandchildren are beautiful. They are fun, polite lovely little people who do not deserve to be his pawns in his game of revenge.

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## THE ISSUES

### Prevention:

Domestic violence is ingrained in our society. Few people wish to acknowledge that the violence in our sports, head high tackles and slamming players to the ground are just a form of violence that is NOT appropriate nor was it ever meant to be part of the sport. A MAN is not determined by whether he can handle that kind of physical abuse but every week we listen to the commentators say the game needs to be physical, and there too many rules etc. Now there are too many long-term injuries. Perpetrators of this violence don't stop on the field of play.

Violence need to be dealt with at ALL and EVERY level. Ban players, stop making them look like heroes. Treat those that use Violence with the full force of the law at the very beginning. Don't allow them the idea that just once is OK or tell a victim that they must wait for a second offence to seek help. They may not live through the first.

Put the people who rely on violence in a cell overnight. Give them a taste of what its like to be uneasy about your surroundings. Every call to police MUST be recorded to build a picture of these monsters. It is not up to individual officers , who often have NO life experience to tell someone to "just stay away from him." Difficult when you are inside your home and he is outside of it!

## EARLY INTERVENTION

Information about those who use violence needs to be disseminated widely. This includes ATO, to prevent them earning and hiding large quantities of money when they have managed to convince a court they are broke but can pay a [REDACTED] fee without working! Australian Business Number department should be aware to stop the development and closure of businesses to further avoid taxes. Centrelink should also be able to monitor these people.

A register of potential people of interest that have been named as the user of violence. The name could be removed after a period of time whereby the person has remained free of further incidents.

Local Police stations need to be aware of these people and know that to simply say "that's Family court, we don't get involved," is not a good enough response. How are they going to feel when MY daughter is harmed. They need to know that they will be held accountable.

Local domestic violence Services must be informed of potential Users and more importantly must be staffed with appropriately trained personnel to handle such situations and be able to deal with these people.

At the moment many users of violence just fly under the radar. Physical abuse is not always present or is well hidden, my [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is pinched on the underneath of [REDACTED] arm to ensure she does not speak to [REDACTED] Mum. My [REDACTED] head is held to make sure [REDACTED] can't turn to say goodbye. Only other victims see this behaviour and know what it is!

Noone else sees the disgusting emails and messages received by my daughter, late at night and threatening behaviours when he has the children.

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Schools / Education Department, need to be aware and also be held accountable so that a child cannot be taken out by the wrong parent and something is done when the child is not present on a normal school day.

If EVERYONE involved in the victim's life plays even a small part of sharing the burden and in believing them when they try to keep themselves and their children safe, it would make a huge difference. Too many people DO NOT WANT TO GET INVOLVED! Suddenly it becomes too late!

### RESPONSE

The biggest barrier to reporting Domestic Violence is the LACK of someone who cares. The Police DO NOT. They will not attend even when asked by the school. I am aware of one situation whereby my ex-son-in-law was outside his [REDACTED] home abusing her and she called police to be told if he wasn't armed, they didn't have time. Apparently, they then rang him, can you imagine that conversation. OH, Mate I wasn't doing that. She is just a stupid old woman. Does anyone believe for one minute that incident got recorded by police, and yet, there is another example of his violent nature.

Have a specialist Family violence team on every shift. Not just the team dealing with the convictions and offenses that are established, a team ready to deal with new events on a shift-by-shift basis. These police need to be trained specifically and supported by the courts. Social workers and counsellors could form part of the team to ensure the victim gets the support they so desperately need straight away.

Ensure the perpetrator is fully aware that the behaviour is noted and the file will continue to grow and they WILL be dealt with. Counter accusations MUST be proven. TOO MANY LIES are being told and NEVER tested for truth of factual reality.

Health departments could be asked to check in with victims on a regular basis, ie Mental Health concerns are high. I don't know how my daughter gets up every day except to see her with these beautiful children that do not deserve this difficult world, answers my questions. They love her so much and that is all she needs to keep going.

Best practice police response: RESPOND

Best practice Justice system: look at the evidence and DO NOT allow someone to just avoid the issues being dealt with. If a person refuses to be part of mediation and does not provide a decent reason, rule against them. Look at the financial beginnings of each person, and just because someone chooses NOT to be responsible with their earnings, should it mean they are entitled to take from the other. Shared care of children is not having them for the same amount of time. EVERY PARENT should have to pay for their children and this should be handled through Social Service and ATO. Someone who has [REDACTED] properties and [REDACTED], is NOT POOR and has to be earning somewhere. Yet they are getting away without paying a cent and they think it is hilarious!

Children should be allowed to ask to speak with a court approved Counsellor throughout their lives so that their feelings and experiences are being noted and action is able to be taken to make their lives safer and better. Even the adult victims could benefit from a person through the court systems that can hear and record concerns that may be the warning signs to escalating behaviours.

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## RECOVERY AND HEALING

The biggest and hardest hurdle for many survivors must be the financial position they are left with. Banks will not even speak to my daughter; she has gone from being financially very secure to almost bankrupt. The perpetrator had worked out many ways of making her financial status his and used his friends in financial employment to do this. He took money from the bank accounts and then had them frozen! The banks saw [REDACTED] as the guilty party for quite some time until they had to deal with him. She was left with outstanding debts that he refused to pay, even a portion of. An independent body need to handle this and allow the victim the right to be financially free and start again. There need to be a lending system for such people to allow the opportunity to own their own home. Currently she is paying rent equivalent to a home loan. No banks will lend her anything and now prices are so high it is almost impossible anyway. Add the fact that he still insinuates that he will be entitled to any further money she or I may receive in the future!

Despite trying her hardest to limit actual contact with the perpetrator, my daughter receives so many emails, threatening court and insinuating that he can be show her to be to be an unfit Mother! This should be monitored and contact should be policed by a social worker attached to the victim. It is the inferred threats and ongoing bullying that is relentless and so very tiring.

Even as I write this my daughter is receiving these messages. [REDACTED] Why isn't he working, she is!

Leaving the immediate situation does not stop the violence. There has to be a way to make these perpetrators stop continually harassing, bullying, intimidating and threatening these victims. They should not be entitled to know where the victim lives or any other personal details about them but the courts state they should. All claims by the perpetrator that allow him to demand details about her life all the time.

Then there are the times he will just appear, as if by magic, knowing where she will be even to the precise time. Victims' phones and vehicles need to be checked for devices that track! Perpetrators should be charged with stalking.

HELP THE VICTIMS FEEL SAFE.

GIVE THEM DIRECT ACCESS TO THE POLICE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE.

ATTATCH THEM TO AN OUTREACH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CENTRE WITH LAWYERS, SOCIAL WORKERS AND COUNSELLORS.

PROVIDE THEM WITH FINANCIAL AND MORAL SUPPORT.

SHOW THE PERPETRATORS THAT THEY ARE KNOWN FOR WHAT THEY DO AND NOBODY THINKS ITS OK. LIMIT THEIR ACCESS TO OTHER WOMEN AND CHILDREN VIA SOCIAL AND SCHOOL VOLUNTEERING. Register them so that they cannot be on these forums.