

Letter for Royal Commission:

I am a victim-survivor that still suffers at the hands of my perpetrator.

My abuser is [REDACTED]. He was a [REDACTED] pilot. For years, my children and I have suffered at the hands of this man through, physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. This man is an abusive sex addict, he raped me on at least three occasions and sexually assaulted me so often between the years of [REDACTED] that it is impossible to give a number.

All throughout our relationship this man would sexually abuse me whilst I was awake, showering or sleeping. He had a complete obsession with sex in any form and demanded it all of the time, when I would refuse, he would threaten me. When I would inform him that I was unable to have intercourse as I was on my period, he would fly into a rage and check my menstrual pads to see if I were lying. When he would not get his way, he would begin aggressively slamming doors, throwing plates and his phone. My abuser would use his anger as a controlling method. He would regularly hit walls with his fists or head, drive very dangerously with myself and the children in the car to force me into doing what he wanted me to do. This man tried to take my [REDACTED] from her bed in the middle of the night twice whilst intoxicated, shoved me, punched my [REDACTED], and pushed my [REDACTED] down a flight of stairs in our bid to stop him, he fled by stealing their car. This was ongoing on constant.

Many victims, like me, suffer in silence because of a multitude of reasons:

1. Reporting to police – reporting to the police can make a situation much worse as there needs to be a considerable offence or ongoing substantial offences for anything to be done, even just to get a warning, due to the limited action that can be taken by police, victims don't report the abuse as it just escalates the situation they live in, OR they don't know that they can report and it not be actioned but purely noted. (I know I did not report to police as I did not realise you could make a series for reports to build a picture and it was not immediately actioned, I also felt shame at the situation I had found myself in trying to protect my two [REDACTED].) My abuser has contacted me in excess of 223 times this year alone, via email, text, and attempted phone calls under the guise of enquiring about the children or demands to deviate from the Orders, still nothing can be done about this harassment as he has not outright threatened me.
2. Escaping - escaping from domestic violence is extremely dangerous and scary, especially if you are trying to flee with children. This is usually the most dangerous part (I was a [REDACTED] mother with no bank account of my own, no rental history and no assets bar my car. When I went to seek help at Centrelink, I was told to start trying to put cash aside when doing a grocery shop to help me escape)
3. Family Law - the worst step by far. The courts sense of obligation is completely warped, I escaped domestic violence with my two young [REDACTED] so they would never again

experience feeling of being terrified or get so used to the behaviour they were witnessed to that they would make similar choices because they know no better. I presented to the courts all of the evidence I had regarding the domestic violence that I had suffered at the hands of this man and that my children had been a party to. Regardless of the mountain of evidence I had ([REDACTED]) because I had no police reports to back me up it stood for nothing. I was told; because I would no longer be “in the picture” that the problems should subside as the abuse was aimed at me, should anything come to light in trial or in future years then I was to bring it back. It did not matter that the only reason my children were mostly sheltered from the abuse our perpetrator committed was because I protected them. In court, I was subjected to name calling from his barrister and made to feel great shame, calling me “underhanded,” “overreaching” and “snake like” with my evidence and accusations. Throughout the whole process I was able to produce mountains of evidence, but because I had no police reports (because I was scared for my children’s and my lives) and my ex-husband is willing to tell lie after lie, I was told after the family assessment report was done that this was as good as I was going to get unless it went to trial and that trial would cost me at least \$50k. Given I was a single parent with two small children already on Legal Aid and was discouraged from going to trial because of the sheer cost, I signed the Orders because I was told I had no other choice. The courts have failed my children, they have failed me, not even the restraints from the Interim Orders were carried over, leaving [REDACTED] free to follow and intimidate me whenever possible. The courts were so focused on keeping the father’s rights to his children that they have allowed this man to continue his abuse and control over my children and over myself. Even though I have “escaped” the marriage and the house, he now uses my children as the weapons - as I told the courts he would. Whichever parent is perpetrating the abuse toward the other, just because at that moment it is not aimed at the children, does not mean that it will not be. I wish the Legal System would just think: You remove the main target (the other parent) who do they think the target becomes? The children, and in this case my [REDACTED].

Regarding the legal system, it is abundantly clear that it is a failed system, especially for children and victims of domestic family violence. The family court system is only set up to benefit everyone except the children and victims of domestic family violence.

Proof of this is my situation along with so many others. The children’s father has continually harassed, intimidated, stalked and bullied me for the [REDACTED] years since I left him, calling me names, swearing at me, barging into my house to search it, telling my children I am an awful and nasty mother, saying I have mental health issues etc, but because he doesn’t “outright” tell me he will kill me or physically hit me, I am told that nothing can be done until then. He has contravened multiple orders and he and his new girlfriend take great pleasure in using the children as weapons (psychologically – trying to turn them against me, filling their heads with outright lies, and involving them in adult decision making, and neglectfully – [REDACTED] forcing the children into unsafe an unsupervised situations – leaving them alone in parks and at pools in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] when travelling with the children, just to name a few) as he knows that is the one thing he can do that can actually hurt me. The courts have failed my children and myself abysmally. I am looking at having to go back to mediation or to court because the father feels like the orders are no longer working for him as I will not deviate from the Orders for the children to stay in the care of his girlfriend. The law has tied my hands, facilitated this ongoing abuse at the hands of my abuser, even

though I managed to escape – because of the system I have never been able to escape and neither have my children.

You can see why so many people stay in these horrendous, terrifying relationships, been terrorised by their partners just to make sure they can constantly be with their children to protect them.

The system needs to change, and without that change the victims of domestic violence will never be safe. I am devastated for my children that in the face of wanting to be “fair” that an abuser now has access to [REDACTED] who’s lives will be warped for the rest of their lives. It is devastating that in light of everything the court was presented with, instead of protecting my children and myself - they went with what they deemed as “fair.” That this perpetrator still had rights to my [REDACTED] That as a mother I have absolutely no control over protecting my two [REDACTED] from the very person I thought we had escaped. That every week, these [REDACTED] have to go back into the very volatile environment, that I risked my life to save us from - without my protection. Yet every week we are outraged by the death of women and children at the hands of these men, still, nothing changes.

I will not stop fighting for my children’s rights to feel safe, to grow up in a safe and loving home in which I provide for them, or for myself and my right to a happy life without fear.

Please contact me personally if you require any further information, insight, or a voice. I will no longer stay quiet; my [REDACTED] deserve better than my silence.