

Anonymous Submission – Victim/Survivor unable to leave DFV & coercive control

As an individual who has experienced domestic and family violence, I express my strong advocacy for the criminalisation of coercive control in South Australia. While submitting my account is distressing, it is essential to illuminate the systemic deficiencies in the responses I have encountered. I have navigated a fractured system, falling through every conceivable gap, and the current governmental measures have only exacerbated the abuse inflicted by the perpetrator. My trust in governmental interventions has been irrevocably shattered, and I have now become deeply fearful of interventions that only serve to worsen the violence/abuse and cascading consequences of this. Whilst I will provide details regarding the specifics of the abuse, I will ensure that these are generic to avoid any identification.

Domestic Violence During Childhood:

1. I was born in the late 80s & was raised in a rural community in SA. I grew up with ██████ in a small town and witnessed ongoing and repeated DFV perpetrated by my father against my mother. This was in the atmosphere of the ██████ era of Government Responses to DFV. Specifics included;
2. *2. My father consistently inflicted physical harm on my mother, with such incidents occurring roughly four to five times weekly. He also engaged in sexual abuse towards her. I witnessed a rape on one occasion.*
3. *At night, my mother would often come into my bedroom, weeping and seeking solace from me as a child. A sibling would frequently lend me their Discman to help drown out the distressing sounds of their disputes.*
4. *I recall that in our small community, it was difficult to separate personal relationships from professional ones. My mother had a friendship with a family that included a psychologist, whom I believe was quite ahead of his time. He became her primary source of support and assisted her in considering alternative housing options, with me accompanying her. Unfortunately, due to financial limitations, she was unable to pursue this path. I distinctly remember being around ten years old and feeling a sense of excitement at the prospect of diminished violence in my life, alongside the fear and heartbreak when that hope did not come to fruition.*
5. *My eldest sibling also subjected me to both physical and sexual abuse. On one occasion, they broke my fingers, an incident that my mother did not address until the following day. This sibling frequently entered the bathroom while I was undressed or came into my bedroom to rub against me, further compounding the trauma I endured.*
6. *Abuse perpetrated towards myself during parent's relationship*
7. *My father often directed his aggression towards me and my elder ██████ sibling, while my younger ██████ sibling remained unharmed. I distinctly remember an incident where this aggression led to my sibling suffering a ruptured ██████. The physical violence I endured included being struck repeatedly with the metal buckle of a belt, being forcibly submerged headfirst in a public swimming pool—an apparent attempt to drown me—and being subjected to a series of slaps that left my head shaking for several minutes. On another occasion, I recall my mother expressing concern to him, asking, "Why did you give her a ██████?" (however am unable to remember the assault that led to this) as she feared that this would attract the attention of external authorities. My earliest memory dates back*

- to when I was around four years old, during which I was lifted by the neck and pinned against a wall, my feet dangling in the air.
8. *The emotional abuse I experienced from my father was characterized by his preferential treatment towards my unharmed sibling, showering them with affection while neglecting me. He would often buy sweets and gifts for this sibling, deliberately excluding me from these gestures. Additionally, he would engage in activities and offer encouragement to this sibling and my older brother, while I was consistently left out.*
 9. *My mother, though unable to intervene, also inflicted considerable harm upon me. Her assaults included forcefully smashing my head against a slate floor, pulling my hair, striking me with a plastic spoon, and breaking my glasses. The emotional abuse from my mother manifested in her yelling and shaming remarks, such as, "Why can't you be more like... (insert child's name)?" I received no physical affection, encouragement, or emotional support from her. By way of example, I was approximately 7 years old when a neighbour taught me to tie my shoelaces, approximately 10 years old when an uncle taught me to ride a bike, and approximately 13 years old when I made repeated applications to boarding schools for scholarships (in order to leave the abuse at home).*
 10. *My father regularly subjected my mother to physical violence, with incidents occurring around four to five times each week. He also perpetrated sexual abuse against her. On one occasion, I witnessed an act of rape.*
 11. *My mother often entered my bedroom at night, in tears, seeking comfort from me as a child. A sibling would frequently lend me their Discman to help mask the distressing sounds of their arguments.*
 12. *I remember that in our small community, it was challenging to distinguish between personal and professional relationships. My mother was friends with a family whose male member was a psychologist, whom I believe was quite progressive for his time. He became her primary source of support and helped her explore alternative housing options, with me accompanying her. However, due to financial constraints, she was unable to pursue this option. As a child of about ten years old, I vividly recall my excitement at the possibility of reduced violence in my life, coupled with the fear and disappointment when that hope did not materialize.*
 13. *It is my experience that in a small community, when a child is rejected by their parents, that the community simultaneously rejects the child and the child is at risk of secondary abuses. For example, I was bullied extensively in primary school, which was actively encouraged by one particular teacher. I clearly remember and still experience the consequential emotional effects of the the shame and stigma that came with this broader societal rejection.*
 14. *I recall that there was one visit to my school by the Department of Child Protection who took me and my sister jointly to the Principal's office to discuss 'how things were at home', I was too frightened to say anything due to the concern that I would **not** be removed, and that my parents would become aware of the disclosure and the abuse would escalate. I don't believe that the Government sufficiently takes account of children's wishes in response to DCP investigations. Their voices are often unheard, instead being swept up in 'risk assessments' and 'safety plans'.*
 15. *I remember that I called the Kids Helpline and asked them 'how to make pizza', however was too nervous to speak with them about the abuse, in case they were unable to help, my parents became aware of the disclosure and the abuse escalated*

16. At the time my elder [REDACTED] became aware of the abuse, and was working as a Lifeline volunteer. One on occasion I was on the phone to [REDACTED] when my father started chasing me like a madman, and I yelled for [REDACTED] to 'call the police'.
17. I also attended the local police station when I was approximately 14 years old, having walked there alone at night, wearing a leather jacket to stay warm. I may have looked older than what I was, however my report was dismissed. The police officer was dismissive, and did not write down any details. I was distressed and left without assistance.
18. There was also a lack of any intervention for my neurodiversity. I was later diagnosed as an adult with ADHD and suspected autism. Autism was unable to be diagnosed as an adult due to a flooded system, with an approximately 6 year wait list for a public appointment.
19. I was eventually sent to a rural [REDACTED] to complete high school, boarding with a local family and returning home on the weekends (to significant abuse) I exchanged phone numbers with another student, and when I called them their phone diverted to an adult male. This male perpetrated sexual abuse to me over the next few years, which was [REDACTED] on the internet for a significant number of viewers, Despite, this it was my assessment that it was safer to spend weekends with this person (neither parent knew or cared where I was) than being at home, and I had no other options.
20. On another occasion, following a severe assault on my mother whilst I had returned home for the weekend, I locked myself in the family car to ensure my safety. I was subsequently assaulted when I left the car with the heel of a high heel shoe and was bleeding from my head. I also observed my mother attempt to hang herself in the shed with a rope whilst my father taunted her, and I attempted to prevent her from doing so. On this occasion my father rang the police thinking that it was an offence to attempt to commit suicide. I recall that all police interventions that occurred were in front of me, which was highly distressing. My mother was involuntarily detained, and the police asked 'if she ok?' referring to me, my father said 'yes' and, that was the only response. There was no assessment of my safety. The male drove a significant distance to pick me up and spend the weekend with him (whilst sexually abusing me) The male had bought me items like a mobile phone, and a [REDACTED]
21. I was subsequently asked to leave the local family's home, I suspect owing to the abuse I was experiencing, but this wasn't explained to me. I stayed with a [REDACTED] who was looking to find some extra money from boarding students. They also became aware of the abuse that I was suffering at home, and I was asked to leave. The [REDACTED] commented to me that he liked when he could see my g'string hanging from the top of my pants. The teacher found me a place to stay through a lady at [REDACTED], which was the first abuse free place I had stayed in my life. I remember hiding in the cupboard on the night that I arrived, crying and unable to explain t the woman why. She tried to coax me out of the cupboard, but by that point I did not trust anybody and felt that if I tld her what was upset about, that would be required to leave there as well Devastatingly, I no longer felt safe when the school disclosed the address to my parents. I remember the woman was out one day when they continually knocked on the front door with [REDACTED] and the sheer panic I experienced.
22. Around this time they separated and my mother moved away from the small community. My father financially abused her by hiding assets in her property settlement & also by leaving her with a very small settlement (despite her inheritance from her [REDACTED] [REDACTED] having previously paid off the family home). He alienated my younger [REDACTED] and

- ██████████ from her (the effects of this still last today as there is now a fractured family and strained relationships/communication with her).
23. The pedophile found me a place to live in a unit on my own, and went guarantor on the property. I met a boyfriend and cut off contact with the paedophile, and came home to find that he was emptying the unit of all the belongings (bed, kitchenware etc) that he had purchased for me. I was able to convince him not to do this when I cried and sad that I had no other options. I was frequently starving as was on a low income, and a woman at a local deli would regularly give me a free \$2 cheese toastie for dinner. I was unable to afford public transport and if I wanted groceries would have to walk approximately 8km carrying heavy bags.
 24. I graduated from high school and took a job in retail. I was not given any support in high school to consider what options I could pursue academically. I had a baby in my late teens with the thought that 'I have to do something', but was unable to ascertain a pathway forward for me, and observed that I was being left behind by my peers. I developed severe post natal depression, and she was an extremely unsettled baby/toddler and child. I subsequently became a single parent.
 25. I recall I met my ██████████ when ██████████ was approximately 2 years old. I craved the stability of a relationship and any support whatsoever. I moved in with him quickly as I had previously been staying with my mother again due to lack of affordability of accommodation. My mother's trauma behaviours from her abuse continued, she frequently shouted at me, put me down and shamed me.
 26. I enrolled in university to pursue studies in behavioral science and law. It is important to note that I was granted a Commonwealth-supported place for behavioral science, but not for law. Lacking understanding of the distinction and feeling overwhelmed by life's challenges without any guidance, I accepted the full fee-paying course. A significant advantage was the availability of childcare at a cost of \$2 per day, which allowed me to concentrate on my studies and begin the healing process from past abuses. To my knowledge, there is no childcare rebate available for individuals recovering from domestic violence; such support seems to be limited to those currently experiencing it.
 27. To clarify, I am still currently residing with my ex husband for reasons as described below.
 28. The abuse perpetrated by my ex husband started quite early in the relationship. On a trip overseas, I was forced to become pregnant with my ██████████, as he refused to 'pull out', I was not on birth control, and we were in a third world country with limited English speakers & I was unaware how to access emergency contraception there. On one occasion when I was pregnant we were in the bathroom, he slammed the bathroom door which jarred, he left for work and I was trapped in the bathroom whilst I should also have been at work (I did not have a phone with me to call for help).
 29. Following uni, I worked a few jobs and found a supportive employer. However, I have refrained from disclosing the domestic violence I am experiencing with my former partner to my employer. This decision stems from the fact that the business is linked to domestic and family violence, and I fear that such disclosure may lead to inquiries regarding my work capacity. I harbor concerns about the implementation of paid domestic violence leave by employers, as it necessitates disclosure. Although employers are prohibited from discriminating based on this issue, it does not safeguard against being 'managed out' of the organization or having my work capacity scrutinized (especially given that the quality of my work was suffering as a result of the DFV I was experiencing).
 30. To provide further context, I am still living with my ex-husband for the reasons outlined below.

31. *The abuse inflicted by my ex-husband commenced early in our relationship. During a trip abroad, I was coerced into becoming pregnant with my [REDACTED] as he refused to use withdrawal as a method of contraception. At that time, I was not on birth control, and we were in a developing country where English speakers were scarce, leaving me unaware of how to obtain emergency contraception. On one occasion while I was pregnant, we found ourselves in the bathroom when he forcefully slammed the door, causing it to jar. He then left for work, leaving me trapped in the bathroom while I was supposed to be at my own job, without a phone to call for assistance.*
32. *I revealed my history of sexual abuse to the [REDACTED] while I was pregnant and requested not to share a room due to my fear of men. Unfortunately, this request was overlooked, and I ended up sharing a room for two days. During a gynaecological examination, I was in close proximity to a woman who had male visitors, separated only by a curtain. I was informed that this was a public hospital, and it was insinuated that I should not have requested such privacy, which minimized the impact of my significant trauma. I was subsequently issued a formal apology upon my discharge (however it does not negate that I had to go through this experience). However, I commend the hospital for their care during my labor and their recognition that women who have experienced sexual abuse should be given the option of a delayed epidural, especially since I arrived at the hospital late.*
33. *As the domestic abuse intensified, my mental health deteriorated. I was fortunate to receive continuous psychological support from a specific service, attending weekly sessions with a psychologist. I refrained from disclosing the domestic violence due to concerns that a CARL report might be filed. I remember an incident when my ex-husband placed a phone in my handbag to record my conversations [REDACTED] and on another occasion, he concealed a phone beneath the floor [REDACTED]*
34. *I entrusted a friend and her husband with the care of my [REDACTED] overnight as I was exhausted. When he was five years old, he was indecently assaulted by her [REDACTED] an incident that was reported to the police immediately after my [REDACTED] disclosed it to me. I believe this incident has influenced the Department of Child Protection's assessment of the 'abuse' he has endured. However, there has been no acknowledgment of the fact that I, as a parent, addressed the situation promptly, prevented any further harm, and that my [REDACTED] felt safe and confident enough to confide in me. While I was very impressed with the police's response to my [REDACTED] situation, I found that there were no trauma services available to support me as a parent.*
35. *He began installing cameras [REDACTED] including one that would trigger an alarm on his [REDACTED] whenever I moved my car from the garage or exited through the front door. He started parking his vehicle behind mine to obstruct my ability to leave. He tracked my phone and frequently showed up at locations I visited, such as the gym, which ultimately led me to stop going there. He issued threats of physical violence towards one of my friends and made derogatory comments to another friend who was battling breast cancer that she should "fuck [REDACTED] As a result, I lost these friendships. He informed my mother that 'hated' towards her, attempting to further damage our relationship. He claimed that my [REDACTED] despised me and labelled me a terrible mother. He began addressing me solely by my last name, referred to me as a "kid," and asserted that I lacked social understanding, which he claimed was the reason for everybody hating me. He forcefully kicked me out of the out of the bed, causing me to land on my hip and sustain an injury. On one occasion, he prevented me from approaching my [REDACTED] in a local shopping centre, yelling at me each time I attempted to reach for [REDACTED] He moved his mother from*

abroad on a [REDACTED] who then took control of my home. Together, they rearranged my belongings and gaslighted me into believing I had misplaced them. They restricted my ability to care for my [REDACTED] allowing only his mother to perform parenting duties, justifying it by claiming I was an inadequate parent. Whenever I entered the kitchen, his mother would follow and scrutinize my every action, offering criticism at every turn. He forged my signature on a speeding ticket, resulting in demerit points against my record. If I expressed distress, they would record me with their phones and threaten to report me to the police, labelling me as "crazy." He conveyed to my mother's new husband his desire to kill me and repeatedly suggested that he believed I would not survive the next ten years due to my 'drinking', 'mental health' and 'inability to care for myself'. He stated that he would teach our [REDACTED] specific skills "just in case" he ever found himself in my care. He consistently warned me that he intended to take our [REDACTED] overseas to the [REDACTED] where he had previously lived, asserting that I would not see him again.

36. During this period, I have been engaged in a criminal court case against the individual who sexually abused me in my teen years. It has been five years since his arrest and nearly two years since the conclusion of the court proceedings, yet I still await a definitive resolution. The prolonged wait is as distressing as the original incident, and it represents an extraordinarily burdensome experience. I was offered the use of the [REDACTED] (generally available for children) as I did not have any support, although the [REDACTED] could not attend the evidence room with me (I have evidence through CCTV). However, at the trial the defence asserted that it was my [REDACTED] who had perpetrated the sexual abuse towards me. This was highly distressing and such a question should not be allowed. Additionally, I took issue with my names of my children being mentioned in the trial (being available to the pedophile), this concern was not taken seriously [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
37. My ex partner and I currently reside in the same house, albeit in separate sections, as I have been unable to leave. As elaborated below, I am extremely frustrated with the Government regarding the manner in which my case has been managed. I hold the view that the Government lacks both the comprehension and the capacity to address my distinct situation without inflicting further harm.
38. My [REDACTED] lived with her father, a decision I believed was in her best interest as for the short time she lived with me during her adolescent years her behaviour was difficult to manage. I began to pay substantial amounts in child support, which further limited my ability to leave and to support my [REDACTED] financially. Her father earns [REDACTED] per year, which is [REDACTED] more than me, and I still pay him [REDACTED] per year. Every time I speak with Child Support about this matter, I am treated as though I just 'don't want to pay', which is not the case at all. I do believe it should be fair. I am charged on my pre-tax income (which I don't receive) for my [REDACTED] however my [REDACTED] only receives my financial resources based on my post-tax income. This situation was exacerbated by the financial abuse from my ex-husband, as I was obligated to cover all household expenses (for [REDACTED]), half of the mortgage, and all of my [REDACTED] financial requirements. I often went without food to manage these obligations.
39. I currently have a substantial student loan that takes up a considerable portion of my income (which is also not accounted for in Child Support) When I previously deferred the loan, I received a refund of the payments made; however, my former husband withdrew

this amount from my account to support his m [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

40. I contacted a specialized organization for financial counselling related to domestic violence. They assessed my budgeting and concluded that it was fine; however, the aforementioned expenses posed significant challenges, and unfortunately, they were unable to provide assistance. Subsequently, I reached out to a Member of Parliament's office, where I was informed that I needed to seek financial counseling or food assistance. I felt deeply distressed when they indicated their unwillingness to advocate on my behalf. I also approached a specialized legal service for domestic violence, only to be told that my income was too high to qualify for their support. It was explicitly stated that their services were intended for individuals receiving Centrelink benefits, and I was made to feel guilty for attempting to access such assistance. I tried to initiate divorce proceedings but found the \$1,000 fee prohibitive, and I was too fatigued to apply for a fee waiver. I resumed my student loan payments and made voluntary contributions, feeling too embarrassed to inform my employer. However, I later discovered that the Australian Taxation Office was unwilling to convert these into compulsory payments, resulting in the necessity to repay the entire year's student loan obligations once more. Despite numerous attempts to leave and requests for him to either compensate me from the equity in the home or to sell the property, he has consistently refused to comply.
41. My ex-husband got in to an argument with my [REDACTED]. Consequently, [REDACTED] DCP services reached out to me and asked to do a 'Home Visit'. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] This situation severely impacted my mental health, as I felt that the Government was once again poised to intervene in a matter they neither comprehend nor are willing to understand, potentially leading to an erroneous decision. I declined any further communication, as it was voluntary at that time, and was cautioned that should another report be filed, it might become mandatory. This also significantly heightened my anxiety, feeling as though the Government would yet again fail me, by not listening and assessing the situation, or having a full comprehension of what has occurred. It also caused me significant anxiety regarding the renewal of my Working With Children Check for employment purposes.
42. I turned to alcohol as a means of coping with the trauma I was enduring. This led to obesity, alcoholism and the onset of health issues. Unfortunately, I was deemed ineligible for support from DASSA, as they considered my situation not severe enough for assistance. There was also not specific DV services for alcohol use. However, I have since overcome my alcoholism following a diagnosis of ADHD. This diagnosis was made by a psychiatrist who recognized the significant distress I was experiencing during a mental health assessment and took the initiative to intervene despite red tape. Without this intervention, I would likely still be battling alcoholism.
43. 1. The police visited my residence multiple times. On one occasion, following the manipulation of text messages I had sent to my former husband, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] This incident occurred in front of my neighbors, which was deeply humiliating and further diminished my support network and community connections. I subsequently lodged a formal complaint with the South Australian Ambulance Service after [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] l. I received a formal apology indicating that the paramedic had failed to consider the dynamics of domestic and family violence. She displayed a horrific attitude towards me, which was also observed by the intern paramedic in the response to my complaint, and appeared to take pleasure in stripping me of my rights. I informed them that I had been strangled and showed them the marks on my neck; however, this was not medically assessed, despite the significant risks associated with such injuries, nor was it assessed at the hospital. The police's judgments were utterly inappropriate, and at one point, in a state of distress, I had to shout at an officer to "Stop yelling at me." While they were present, I contacted my Employee Assistance Provider, a specialist in suicide prevention, who, after knowing me for five years, assessed that I posed no risk of suicide and would manage any such risk appropriately. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I was stripped of my shoes, phone charger, and other personal items, although I was allowed to keep my phone, which eventually ran out of battery. I will never have the opportunity to spend that time with [REDACTED] as the government worked with my former partner deprived me of this chance. I repeatedly requested to see a psychiatrist, but this was not facilitated until approximately 9 AM the following morning, and only after I had contacted [REDACTED]. Upon evaluation by a psychiatrist, I was promptly released after presenting a comprehensive mental health plan that I had developed in collaboration with a psychologist. Additionally, I was monitored one-on-one by male guards throughout the entire duration which was highly distressing. There was a loud beeping in the room the entire night, and I was exceptionally traumatised, I repeatedly requested to be moved to a quiet area, and this was declined on repeat. I will **NEVER** again access police assistance. I have not attended the hospital even for physical medical reasons since. When I see my GP now, I wait in the car until she calls me via the phone and I will then go in to her office.

44. Whilst I do not believe that my safety is currently at risk, I recall saying to my friend, who is the only person that I have disclosed this to (and I want the Government to take notice of this one) 'If he kills me, I want you to attend the inquest into my death. I want you to tell the Government how their responses and lack of responses contributed to this. How I begged for help at every avenue. I want my death to mean something, not just to be another statistic'.
45. I have only utilized the services of 1800 Respect, but I have not engaged with any domestic violence (DV) services, as my professional role intersects with all DV services in Adelaide, and I work with these services in my professional role. It would be beneficial to have an option for anonymous support. My general practitioner has bulk billed me, allowing me to receive excellent care; however, without this arrangement, I would struggle to afford medical support. I was deemed ineligible for assistance from DASSA because my alcoholism was not classified as severe enough, leaving me with the option to seek help through Alcoholics Anonymous, which consists of individuals who are also dealing with significant trauma and attempting to support one another, which is a recipe for disaster. The Urgent Mental Health Care Centre has also provided me with significant assistance in a fantastic trauma informed way, and I suggest that this should be extended to DFV recovery.
46. There are significant expenses linked to living in a domestic violence situation, including the costs of repairing items damaged by the perpetrator, such as a broken laptop or a scratched vehicle. Victims may also incur expenses for ordering food due to the inability

to safely access their kitchen, costs associated with temporary accommodations over the weekend, and expenses for replacing items that have been taken from them. Furthermore, there are additional healthcare costs, such as medical ultrasounds to monitor conditions related to alcoholism. It is essential that victims and survivors have access to complementary healthcare services designed to enhance their overall wellbeing, which may include mindfulness practices and alternative therapies to address the physical repercussions of stored trauma in the body. These should not be framed by traditional 'medical' conceptions, as it takes away the choice from the victim/survivor of what they know would be healing to them.

47. *Whilst the abuse has mostly stopped, I live in one bedroom of the house, am unable to have connections with friends and family, have been financially destroyed, have had my relationships with my children damaged, and I am constantly monitoring my safety. To be clear, the Australian Government proclaims that DFV is a priority, why do I feel as though my situation has been swept under the rug? Why have I been ineligible for support at every turn, or where I have accessed the support, been further victimised by such "help". The Government has been complicit in perpetuating the abuse through their lack of intervention to the DFV in my childhood, and in my adulthood the inadequate and retraumatising police and ambulance responses, traumatisation during the court experience, exploitation of me via the Medicare Levy, HELP debt, immigration and child support system. These responses have left me feeling terrified that I will be misidentified as the primary perpetrator, involuntarily detained, have my child removed from my care, or hassled for money from the ATO. I can categorically assure the Government that unless there is an overarching multisystemic victim-centric reform that both provides sufficient supports to victim/survivors AND removed existing barriers, that any attempt to 'eliminate DFV in one generation' will fail miserably. Any ill informed interventions may only serve to make matters worse.*

Recommendations:

1. Children's voices and wishes should be heard in DCP investigations. Children's accounts should be 'believed', without the need for further evidence. Children do not make false accounts of abuse.
2. The Government should recognise that children have expertise in monitoring their own safety. Children understand the complex dynamics of the abuse, the patterns and defensive strategies etc. There is little recognition of children as active victims of DFV, more so passive witnesses or being exposed to DFV. This must change.
3. Children should be interviewed separately from their siblings in DCP investigations.
4. Children should be advised in age appropriate manners about the ways in which they can be supported following abuse.
5. Schools should provide a 'domestic violence' worker, enabling children to have a safe person to disclose to, and for families to access trauma informed support. This is the least intimidating place to access support and a place that is monitored less frequently by perpetrators. Schools should also provide a 'drop in' police service.
6. The Government should implement supports that take account of the long term consequences of parental alienation, rather than a sole focus on the short term consequences.
7. The Government should provide additional financial support for adolescents leaving school who have been exposed to DFV to access appropriate education and employment pathways, in recognition of the additional barriers they experience. Exposure to DFV

should also be considered to increase the final ATAR scores to access University degrees. They should be provided with additional career guidance, assistance to obtain a drivers licence (not just the Geared 2 Drive program) and assistance to apply for university and part time jobs.

8. Schools should provide 'drop in' homelessness workers and financial counselling for students who are living independently.
9. Childcare subsidies should be extended to people who are recovering from DFV to enable them to undertake approved activities to heal from this abuse.
10. Existing childcare subsidies for victim/survivors leaving DFV should be extended for a longer period of time.
11. The DV Paid Leave scheme should be administered separately from employers as staff members do not feel comfortable disclosing the abuse given potential risks to their employment.
12. Application fee for a divorce should be waived for all people seeking to leave a domestic violence relationship.
13. Stamp duty on purchasing a new home should be removed for victim/survivors who leave and purchase a new property. Stamp duty on selling a home should be abolished for victim/survivors.
14. Superannuation contributions tax should be abolished for victim/survivors.
15. There should be holistic property settlement support services that not only work out division of assets, but provide support to sell the home and if necessary purchase a new home.
16. Divorce application fee should be abolished for all people seeking to leave DFV relationship without need for extensive waiver application.
17. Medical abortion should be able to be accessed anonymously to reduce shame and stigma, especially around repeatedly needing to access such services. Consideration should be given to an online or phone based service.
18. Hospitals should provide specialist care to DFV and sexual abuse victims in maternity wards with all birth plans, pain management and hospital stays being trauma informed. Specialist trained midwives should be available upon request.
19. A 'one stop' website should be provided to be able to deal with the Government red tape that comes with DFV. I.e. via one central application to advise ATO, child support, Centrelink, fines enforcement, immigration etc of DFV, and be able to access hardship services.
20. Victim/survivors should be able to 'block' a child's passport without Immigration notifying the other parent. Notification could worsen the risk of abuse.
21. The Department of Immigration should have a policy allowing victim/survivors to access money taken by them for immigration guarantees to be returned to them.
22. Working with Children Checks should make clear that victim/survivors of DFV are not perpetrators, do not abuse their children, and pose no risk to working with children in a professional capacity.
23. Paramedics do who not assess injuries resulting from non-fatal strangulation should be referred to APHRA.
24. It should not be up to the victim/survivor to make complaint to APHRA about paramedic misconduct, this should come from SA Ambulance Service.
25. In cases of DFV resulting in the victim/survivor being involuntary detained under mental health act, they should be granted immediate access to psychiatric assessment to prevent risk of re-traumatisation.

26. The Government needs to provide increased and anonymous support options for victim/survivors of DFV who also work in the DV system.
27. An urgent and immediate review of child support calculations are required, including for paying parents who experience DV. Currently, child support calculations are based on pre-tax income, which is not actually received by the victim/survivor. Child support calculations do not take account of the additional expenses involved in living with DFV. Any hardship application provides personal and private details to the receiving parent (even when they are not the perpetrator) which impacts family court matters, relationships with that partner, and is a breach of privacy – creates additional barriers.
28. The ATO should reduce the amount of tax payable by victim/survivors of DFV.
29. The ATO should reduce the amount of tax payable by women, to represent the rates of the gender pay gap, in order to create a fairer and more equitable society.
30. The ATO should not apply the CPI indexation to HELP loans for victim/survivors of DFV.
31. The SA Government should provide 'safe bank accounts' for victim/survivors of DFV with no account servicing fees.
32. The Government should provide accessible DFV, sexual abuse and childhood trauma recovery centres, that are not solely focussed on clinical recovery but also alternate supportive responses.
33. The Government should provide 'drop In' DV crisis services for victim/survivors of DFV where they can receive immediate face to face support.
34. DCP should provide clear information to victim/survivors of DFV on how the information is used to assess the risk for their child. All DCP information should be transparent and accessible (currently risk assessments are redacted online and FOI applications are required).
35. The SA Government should provide a holistic specialist separation service for victim/survivors of DFV, which can help to provide a non arbitrary response to property settlement. Property settlement expenses take up significant costs which reduces ability to reestablish.
36. SAPOL should flag any property where there has been a prior DV 'call out', to ensure that they are aware of the potential dynamics of abuse.
37. The SA Government should provide a central online reporting system, with an anonymous identification number to enable victim/survivors to be able to record their experiences of DFV without fear of the information being accessed or lost Information should remain anonymous unless victim/survivors activate a request to link it with their identity. . This gives the victim/survivor control over what they report and when and may result in increased reporting. This should allow for text messages, photos and videos to be uploaded.
38. Funding for alternate health responses should be provided, i.e. dental care, hair loss replacement treatment, and physiotherapy and neuro-resculpting therapies for victim/survivors of DFV.
39. The Government should implement neuroresculpting therapies for victim/survivors of DFV.
40. Victim/survivors of DFV should have greater choice and control over the supports that they can access. This could be implemented via a program similar to the NDIS with a set amount of funding allocated and can be administered in conjunction with a plan manager.
41. Victim/survivors of DFV should be granted free assistance to lodge a tax return.
42. Victim/survivors of DFV should be exempt from the Medicare levy at tax time.

43. Victim/survivors of DFV regardless of their apparent financial situation should be bulk billed by their GP and granted access to a healthcare card.
44. The Government should undertake an immediate review into the interplay between DFV and addiction for victim/survivors, and investigate the harms of referring significant numbers of victim/survivors to 'Alcoholics Anonymous'.
45. DFV victim/survivors who are concerned about DCP involvement should have access to a free and independent service to navigate the system, provide advocacy & understand their rights.
46. Fines and expiations should be able to be disputed on the basis of DFV where it was a significant contributing factor.
47. Victim/survivors of DFV should be alerted if the perpetrator books a domestic or international flight with the child.
48. Victim/survivors of DFV and sexual abuse should wherever possible be granted their choice of gender of the responding police officer.
49. SAPOL and Paramedics who exert unhelpful personal values and biases, dismiss complaints, or make decisions that further place the victim/survivor at risk should be subject to severe penalties. A 'slap on the wrist' and a training course is not enough to recognise the harm done that is often lifelong.
50. Public posts regarding unsubstantiated child abuse reports (regardless of if by the perpetrator or other person) should be criminalised (not solely via the offence of Criminal Defamation). A specific offence is required to recognise the objective seriousness of this offending.
51. SA should criminalise the offence of 'Assault – DV' to provide validation and recognition victim/survivors of DFV that this is separate to mainstream assault offences.
52. SA should provide an online risk assessment available to victim/survivors, that enables them to access statistical information to calculate their risk of harm, i.e. answer questions/enter information that will tell them what their future risk of 'intimate partner homicide' or 'severe physical assault is', and allow to include variable factors such as leaving a relationship or attending court. This provides control for victim/survivors to monitor their own risks, where they are unwilling or unable to access specialist DV support. This information is generally 'silo'd by support services.
53. Victim/survivors of DFV who are in social housing or community housing are currently responsible to pay the cost of property damage caused by the perpetrator if they do not provide a police report. Providing a police report may heighten their risk and many victim/survivors have experienced trauma in doing so. This should be reviewed.
54. Victim/survivors of DFV should have access to comprehensive psychiatric assessments in a timely manner that are not solely limited to mental health, but also encompass personality disorders, cognitive and neurodiversity assessments. It is essential to know what needs to be addressed to recover, rather than taking a 'shot in the dark'.
55. The names of victim/survivors of sexual assault's children should not be shared in sexual abuse trials where their names are irrelevant to proceedings.
56. All victim/survivors should have access to assistance animals in court.
57. DFV services should be appropriate and accessible to all people, including those with neurodiversity or do not appear to be the 'perfect victim'.
58. There should be ongoing and anonymous mechanisms for victim/survivors of DFV to make recommendations for change to the Government.
59. There should be increased opportunities for victim/survivors of DFV to share their experiences with the Government,.

I am willing to answer any questions regarding this submission. Due to the anonymous nature of this submission, I have not provided my personal details. My email address is [REDACTED] If I can be assured confidentiality I would be keen to provide further evidence of my experience by attending in person.