



Royal Commission
into Domestic, Family
and Sexual Violence

Voices

South Australia | August 2025

Royal Commission
into Domestic, Family
and Sexual Violence

Voices

South Australia | August 2025

© Government of South Australia 2025
All material presented in this publication
is provided under a Creative Commons
Attribution 4.0 Australia license
(www.creativecommons.org/licenses).

For the avoidance of doubt, this means
that this license only applies to material as
set out in this document. The details of the
relevant license conditions are available on
the Creative Commons website as is the
full legal code for the CC BY 4.0 AU license
(www.creativecommons.org/licenses).



Acknowledgment of Country

The Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (the Commission) acknowledges the traditional countries and Nations throughout South Australia on which the Commission has conducted its inquiry.

The Commission acknowledges all Aboriginal people across South Australia who are the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters and of the oldest continuous living culture on Earth. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

The Commission acknowledges and honours the work of Aboriginal people to end domestic, family and sexual violence. Aboriginal people have been caring for their families, their communities and their country for millennia. The Commission recognises that self-determination is essential to addressing the rates of domestic, family and sexual violence experienced by Aboriginal people.

Acknowledgment of people with lived experience

The Commission is indebted to the victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence in South Australia who have shared their lived experiences and expertise with the Commission and to the community groups and organisations who supported victim-survivors to share this advice with the Commission.

The Commission pays its respects to all those whose lives have been tragically cut short because of domestic, family and sexual violence, along with the loved ones who have been left behind. This includes the children and young people whose lives have been taken through domestic, family and sexual violence. This also includes the adults, children and young people who have died by suicide as a result of domestic, family and sexual violence.

The systems that provide services to people experiencing violence will always, without doubt, be better able to provide those services when there is a safe and effective way for these systems to learn from lived experience. The Commission reminds all those tasked with responding to this report of the diversity of people with lived experience, and of the need to ensure this diversity is represented when seeking the advice and expertise of victim-survivors. This includes the advice and expertise of children and young people.

The Commission has published this accompanying report in the words of the victim-survivors and supporters who shared their lived experiences and expertise with the Commission.



Cause no harm by Rachel Abdulla, 2025

This is a summary of the full description of the *Cause no harm* artwork painted by respected artist and Ngarrindjeri woman Rachel Abdulla. The piece was commissioned by the Royal Commission in early 2025. A full description of this important artwork is included on the Royal Commission website.

This piece tells the story of family, connection to land, lore and love, especially for First Nations people. It speaks of the importance of culture, community, inclusivity, safety, listening and learning.

The Grandfather Tree speaks of the 'journey of healing' and reminds us: Healing is sacred.

It begins with truth.

It survives through unity.

It thrives in stories.

And it rises – sunset after sunset – with the power of the people.

Rachel is remembered for her work and advocacy in the domestic, family and sexual violence sector, as well as her beautiful artwork.

About this report

The content of this report has been drawn from the input the Commission received from people with lived and living experience of domestic, family and sexual violence, and their supporters, throughout the Commission's inquiry. This report is in their words.

The Commission is grateful to Curious Communities Consulting whose work allowed for this report to be prepared.


The inputs forming the basis of this report include the Commission's Share With Us online consultation, written submissions received from people with lived and living experience of domestic, family and sexual violence and the postcards distributed by the Commissioner for Children and Young People. Curious Communities were engaged by the Commission to conduct a review and analysis of Share With Us responses, and then further engaged to conduct an analysis of the written submissions and postcards to identify the input for this report.

All written submissions and postcards provided to Curious Communities Consulting were redacted by the Commission to remove personal and identifying information. Where possible, excerpts of submissions and Share With Us responses have been left as in-tact as possible, however some have been further redacted where the details of someone's experience may have presented increased risk of re-identification. The authors of the submissions have provided consent to the Commission to publish the submission with identifying details removed. Quotes within this report have not been edited for spelling or grammar, to preserve the authentic voices of those who have contributed to the Commission.

As this report contains direct quotes from people with lived experiences and those who support them, some content may be distressing or triggering. Please take care while reading this report and reach out to support services, such as 1800RESPECT, if you need assistance.

Contents

Foreword	2
Creating a cohesive and effective system	20
Making domestic, family and sexual violence visible	56
Safe and effective help seeking and crisis response	64
The use of violence	78
Supporting victim-survivors	90
Prevention	106



My experience shows the deep flaws in South Australia's systems for responding to family, domestic, and sexual violence. Instead of providing protection, these systems failed to believe me and left me in a dangerous environment. I was abandoned by the very institutions that were supposed to keep me safe, leading me to a path of homelessness and further trauma. By sharing my story, I hope to shed light on the urgent need for reform.

Victim-survivor written submission

Foreword

The voices of South Australians were integral to this Commission's work and recommendations.

It was a privilege to be trusted with people's stories, insights and experiences, especially about how to improve the current system. In return, we have a responsibility to respond to your criticisms and concerns, and reflect your proposals and suggestions.

In this report (which has been produced to accompany the main report) we hear from women, men and children, people from the LGBTQIA+ community, Aboriginal people, those from within the CALD communities, people with disability, older and younger people, and those living in regional and remote locations.

Topics included the lack of services or the difficulty in accessing services, the need for better education, for improved options for help-seeking, the dire situation around emergency housing, receiving medical assistance, their interactions with the courts, departments and police.

The following pages are confronting. They tell the authentic stories of victim-survivors from all genders, backgrounds, beliefs and postcodes. While their stories share heartbreak and sadness, many exhibit resilience and strength.

There are many suggestions about what we can do to prevent domestic, family and sexual violence and what we can do to protect and support better the people for whom this system is failing.

I derive hope from the way some people envisage a future free of domestic, family and sexual violence.

I thank everyone who engaged with us, through our Share With Us survey or written submissions, our listening sessions and our public hearings. Even the many South Australians who stopped me in the street to talk about the significance of this Commission and their desire for change.

I am also grateful to the children and young people who helped shape our main report – through their input to the Student Summit, the Commissioner for Children and Young People's postcard project or Dr Kate FitzGibbon's 'Silence and Inaction Report'. This engagement has ensured the Commission not only listened to the voices of young people, but has acted on their reflections and recommendations.

While the quotes and comments in this report can be difficult reading, there is a powerful one that stands out:

Domestic Violence can be generational. It stopped with me. But it haunts me, it will always haunt me. But I will always be a woman who can overcome anything because I've done it before. But there is no place in my life now for the unkind, for the aggressors and the perpetrators. I'm no longer a victim, I am a survivor.

I thank everyone who trusted us with their time and their experiences. I assure you, your voices were heard. I hope this violence stops with us.

Natasha Stott Despoja AO
Commissioner

Your voices

Given my background, I hope that my submission will contribute to meaningful change in this flawed system. I consider myself fortunate to be in a relatively stable situation despite my past trauma. Many others continue to struggle, and when they seek help, they often encounter systemic issues that exacerbate their difficulties. It is deeply disappointing to see that those meant to support survivors sometimes contribute to the very problems they are supposed to address

Victim-survivor written submission

[A]s a victim-survivor I am very grateful that the Government is taking this issue seriously. I acknowledge that this is a very complicated issue with no simple fix.

Victim-survivor written submission

We need to continue to provide funding for services for Aboriginal and [Torres Strait Islander] peoples as data shows we are experiencing family/sexual violence at exponential levels. Sometimes lack of access to services could be life or death and this is only getting worse. Thank you for taking these issues seriously.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

In the media when the subject of DV is raised analysed and commented upon [but] very rarely is the most important question of 'why' raised. I hope and trust the Commission will do that. ... 'Why' leads to understanding and understanding leads to solutions.

Victim-survivor written submission

I ask that we truly put system change and resources in to support women and children to not just survive but to thrive.

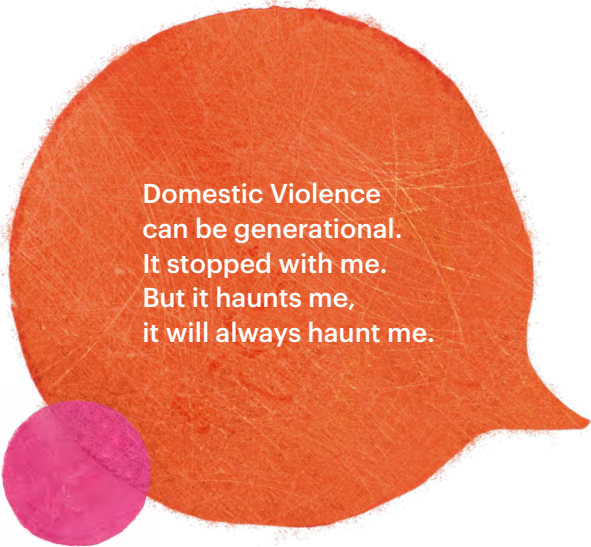
Supporter written submission

It took me a long time to understand that this behavior was abuse; my partner did a very good job of making me feel like it was my fault. Additionally, the common understanding is around violence towards women which makes it even more difficult to recognise or accept and speak about... The reason why I am speaking about this is that, as a man, it is even more difficult to speak up and therefore heal and move on.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

They have to attend their father's house ...He wants them there for one reason and one reason only. And that's because when they're there, they're not with their mum. And that means that he's hurting their mum. He openly tells people that that's his goal...My granddaughter comes home hysterical and leaves to go there hysterical, and my grandson shuts down...So the biggest problem with this system is that why do we need to have a body before the anybody wants to listen and take action?

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



Domestic Violence
can be generational.
It stopped with me.
But it haunts me,
it will always haunt me.

By sharing my story, I hope to shed light on the urgent need for reform. The system must be improved to ensure that every child is believed, supported, and protected. I strongly urge the Royal Commission to take action to address these failings so that no other young person is forced to endure what I went through.

Young Person victim-survivor written submission

By writing this submission I...hope to shed light on the unnecessary difficulties victim/survivors endure on the journey to finding accountability for perpetrators of sexual offences in a justice system that in its current form seems designed to allow them to slip through the cracks.

Victim-survivor written submission

But there's versions domestic and family abuse, and/or sexual violence in every single aspect of my life. it's been EVERYWHERE, no where has been safe - my family home, intimate relationships, workplaces, parties with "friends". There is NO escaping it as a women ...Something NEEDS to change. Not just big things (like a safer, more fair justice system for abuse survivors), but cultures, "jokes", support systems... I don't have answers, I'm just trying to express how DEFEATED I feel.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Domestic Violence can be generational. It stopped with me. But it haunts me, it will always haunt me. But I will always be a woman who can overcome anything because I've done it before. But there is no place in my life now for the unkind, for the aggressors and the perpetrators. I'm no longer a victim, I am a survivor.

Victim-survivor written submission

I am concerned that the Royal Commission could devolve into a binary debate, such as happens so often in the media, that misses the complexity of this societal problem, and ends up further demonising men.

Victim-survivor written submission

In a different relationship and while I was pregnant, police couldn't help because the offending was coercive control which isn't currently policed in SA. So I felt like I was made to wait until the offending worsened before anyone could help me. And of course it did escalate.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Our daughter, passed away on the evening [date]. It is the family's belief that she was subject to coercive control, and that this contributed to her death. There are aspects of the process that followed her death that we find troubling, and we request that the Royal Commission give consideration to recommending changes to those processes in order to prevent others being subjected to the same torment.

Supporter written submission

I am writing this for a number of reasons. Foremost, it was personal. I wanted all I'd been through, all I'd overcome, to be documented, I wanted to dig deep into myself and unpack it all and maybe be done with it because it does still plague me today.

Victim-survivor written submission

I am not a victim of domestic violence, I am a survivor, and I have chosen to share with you what I went through as a survivor and how it all still effects my children and myself to this day with the hope that something is finally done and changes are made for the better.

Victim-survivor written submission

To prevent family and domestic violence SA should teach the parents to be nice.

Commissioner and Young Person Student Voice postcards

What is domestic, family and sexual violence?

Our simplistic black & white paradigm about DFSV and the click bait shock value newspaper selling ways in which incidents are now routinely being reported, prevent us from sufficiently comprehending these complexities and nuances. This is also arguably one aspect of the problem why partners do not leave. The longer and more significant the relationship, the more difficult it can be for either partner to decide to end it and to leave. Victims will experience deep and conflicted emotions that make purposeful decisions difficult. That bond can then also persist in the course of DFSV, and needs to be sensitively handled by those attempting to assist a victim.

Victim-survivor written submission

In the course of my career, I have seen pregnant 12 year old girls (one suspected to have been raped by her father); a 3 year old girl with gonorrhoea; spent entire shifts suturing and dressing wounds resultant from DFV, with some of these patients still having sutures in from a previous wound I had treated less than a week prior; worked with a woman who felt quite justified in breaking her partners arm as he interrupted her favourite soap opera; I have worked in a maximum security men's prison (working with both victim survivors and convicted child sex offenders- often older men who were involved with churches etc.); worked with a young man (multiple) who was prostituted out by his mother and sister as a child ...; spent 15 years in the prison system hearing men regularly minimise their offending and its impact by saying that they were in custody "for bullshit reasons, it was just a bit of fucking DV mate" and worked with women who were pregnant as a result of being raped by their partners.

Victim-survivor written submission

Young people struggle to speak up because they want to protect those involved.

Commissioner and Young Person Student Voice postcards

Sometimes my Dad stays out all night, When he comes home my parents fight. Dad attacks Mum After he's been boozin', And out of her arm The blood is oozing. Sometimes, I have to get away, So I leave home, For maybe a day. When I get back, Dad would be waiting He'd beat me up Without hesitating. I only wish That they could see, All I want, is a happy family.

Organisation written submission on Behalf of Young Person

Family and domestic violence is caused by an imbalance of power within relationships, where someone exercises their perceived power over another. In my case, my ex-partner used emotional manipulation to develop his power over me, and it caused me to question my sanity and reality.

Victim-survivor written submission

I found it very difficult to relate my experiences into your paper's discussions. I have lived a huge part of my life in domestic violence and sexual assault but, what has affected me most is that I had been living under the direction (coercive control) of my eldest child for 10 -12 years that resulted in a very serious assault in which I truly believed I was going to die on my living room floor.

Victim-survivor written submission

What causes sexual violence? A perpetrator's desire for power and control, society's lack of willingness to acknowledge the prevalence of sexual violence, the discomfort, shame and guilt attached to victim/survivors, the lack of legal position for victim/survivors which permits perpetrators' and prevents prosecution.

Supporter written submission

My earliest memories of domestic violence was when I was 4 years ...My father was a chronic alcoholic who on a regular basis beat my mother... Then at the age of 14 years old I experienced my first boyfriend who gave me a black eye.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I was often severely bashed, and habitually emotionally and verbally abused...Mum was female, blonde and well dressed. Because of this, she got away with it all. If she was ever caught out, she would simply cry, and everyone would back off. Domestic violence is NOT only males attacking females. It is NOT simply violence against women. Females can be perpetrators too. This 'violence against women' narrative actually enables female perpetrators, as it disbursts female perpetrators of responsibility.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I am an educated and intelligent person, with a Bachelor's degree, Diploma, and Certificates, and consider myself to be very perceptive. I was completely aware that my ex-partner's behaviour was extremely degrading and disrespectful towards me, but I stayed, partly because I was so starved of love and affection, and because he always knew exactly what to say to convince me that it would improve.

Victim-survivor written submission

I have memory of sexual abuse perpetrated by him throughout my entire childhood, dating back as early as toddlerhood, as well as documented overt coercive control and emotional abuse my entire life.

Victim-survivor written submission



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.

Supporter written submission

This male perpetrated sexual abuse to me over the next few years, which was live streamed 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.

Victim-survivor written submission

...I have been subjected to Elder, Domestic and Human Rights abuse. As no government department has heard of this sort of [abuse], I feel have been placed in "the too hard basket".

Victim-survivor written submission

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.

Victim-survivor written submission

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 deceased parents having previously paid off the family home).

Victim-survivor and supporter written submission

During the time I was with my abuser he strangled me, choked me at least 40 times, punched me in the face, routinely pushed me to the floor, kicked me in the stomach, pinned me to the bed screaming and threatening me, sexually assaulted me, threaten to kill me, threaten to take my son away, called me crazy constantly, in total there were hundreds of physical assaults and thousands of verbal assaults and threats.

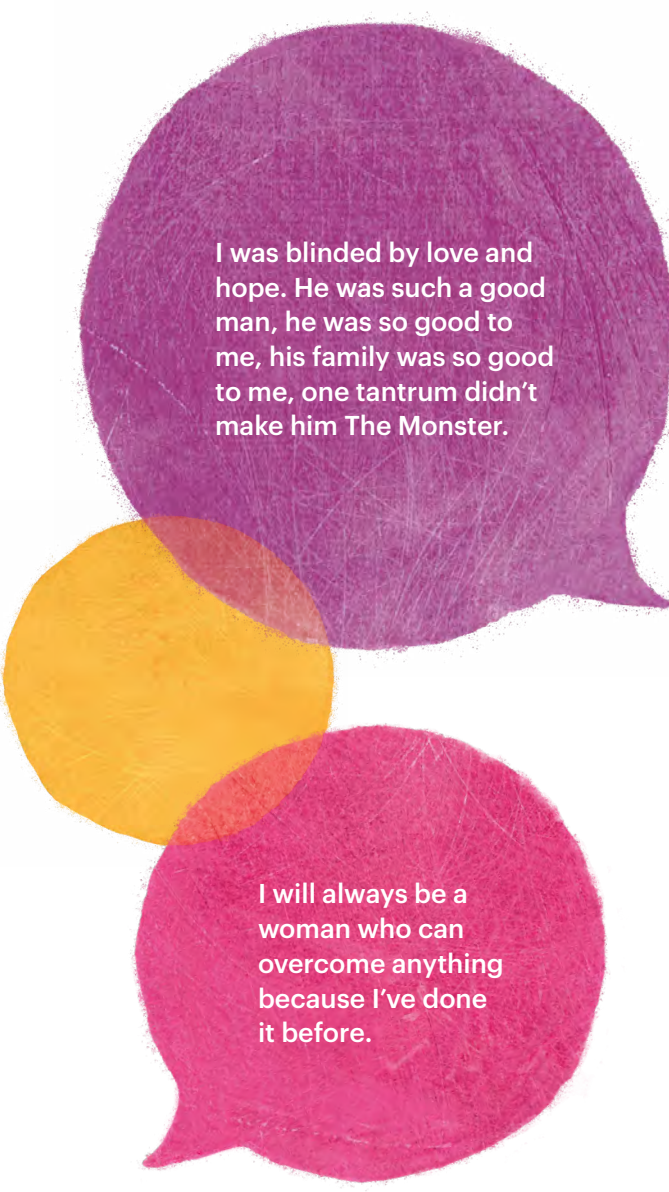
Victim-survivor written submission

I accepted so much of this because was raised to believe that queer and neurodivergent/ disabled people deserved less or had it to good I figured out this was not true, and now I work in a rights granting related role, so I can easily apply it to others, but when it comes to myself I still have a harder time believing it from so many years of feeling like a monster.

Victim-survivor written submission

I chose to move out of my home because, despite knowing that my brother has stolen from them and sexually abused me as a child, my parents continue to let him live there. He has labelled himself as their main carer, but he doesn't care for them at all. He can't drive, and despite both my parents having [significant health issues], they don't attend the appointments they need. He doesn't cook or clean; instead, he expects them to do all the cooking, cleaning, shopping, and driving, even though they're legally not supposed to.

Victim-survivor written submission



I was blinded by love and hope. He was such a good man, he was so good to me, his family was so good to me, one tantrum didn't make him The Monster.

I will always be a woman who can overcome anything because I've done it before.

He would rip televisions off of walls, punch holes in walls and break furniture. I would come home to glass tables smashed, children's toys and belongings destroyed, and my personal items ripped up or missing. He started off throwing items near me, then to me and eventually throwing items at me directly hitting me. Whilst pregnant he would shove me into walls, push me and back me into corners yelling in my face while I cower. I was 8 months pregnant and shoved me into [the] laundry where I fell over and he stood there screaming at me throwing things at me... This continued after my children were born where he would pull babies from my arms, throw things at me while I was holding them and even pushing while cradling them. I have been punched, hit and held so tight that my arms felt like breaking and then every time, made to feel that it was my fault, I was told that my children and I were a burden, that he was angry because we set him off and would even have his mother tell me "don't set him off, you know he is like this".

Victim-survivor written submission.

I have since found out that I am neurodivergent, which I think likely increased my naivety and vulnerability. I just didn't think I was worth anything more than what I was getting in that relationship.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I was in a coercive relationship with a transgender woman several years my senior. I found it very hard to articulate my experiences and only realised what I was experiencing was IPV after the relationship ended. More support for young people navigating adult relationships from the ages of 14-18 are definitely needed, especially spaces for young women navigating the online world. You feel like you're invincible when you're young and then come to realise you're not, and there aren't many places to go when your relationship doesn't fit into the usual male/female narrative.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I walked into my local police station and reported my husband for physically assaulting me. It was not the first time that it happened, but on this occasion he did it in front of my two eldest sons... My two boys stepped in to protect me from their father and I knew in that moment that I could not absorb this one like the previous times as this would demonstrate to my boys that physical violence was an acceptable method to get your wife to do what you told her to do.

Victim-survivor written submission

These days, I am exposed to FDV from my 15 yo son who has ASD and ADHD. This is a massive gap. There is nowhere else for my son to go so we have to persist in NDIS funded therapies in the hope they stop the abuse.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I suffered a brain injury from the domestic violence incident physical assault. I had broken ribs, a broken collarbone, broken nose and my teeth were punched out.

Victim-survivor written submission

He would send me constant messages saying 'I will make sure your boys hate you one day' and 'I'll be making sure these boys know their mum was a whore who wrecked their family'. I was on my own, with little support, scared & threatened daily. All of these things are the reason I didn't seek formal custody arrangements from the beginning. I didn't want to die, I needed to be here for my boys.

Victim-survivor written submission

Frequent domestic violence is occurring between disability participants who live together and it is not being recognised as domestic violence when clearly it is.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Being psychologically abusive, emotionally abusive, financially abusive, sexually abusive, spiritually abusive was completely different to the extreme physical and verbal abuse that I had gone through before. This relationship definitely had physical and verbal abuse also but in an entirely different way. It was still abuse, just with a different face on it. I would have to say that I felt confused during this relationship. I was trying to work out what I was doing or saying that might have been wrong for him to behave the way he did, I was so hurt because I felt like he wasn't happy with me for who I was, I had to be someone else. I found this confusing. There were times of course where I felt like he loved me, but then as quick as I felt that, was as quick as he stripped it all away by something else that he would do to hurt me. Nothing made sense and I was just left confused by the whole ordeal.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

[He] has convinced me I am a bad mother, unable to look after the children. That I am stupid and useless, that I can't do anything for myself. He has also told me for many years I am unstable mentally, I have bipolar and regularly have psychotic episodes, when the violence escalates and it was highly possible the neighbours would have heard, he would make me go to the neighbours and apologies for my Bipolar and psychosis...I was truly believing I was crazy.

Victim-survivor and supporter written submission

The stalking, verbal abuse, financial abuse and fear of potential physical abuse lasted for years after I left the relationship. He made endless calls to me at home, at my workplace and to my parents' home. Call after call only minutes apart.

Victim-survivor written submission

My eldest son scared me, he would seethe with anger and hatred, blaming me. He threatened me physically several time [with weapons]. He treated me disrespectfully like his father did and called me the most horrendous names. He became the new abuser of the home. If you can't beat them, join them, attitude. I was advised by my psychologist and... case worker that he had to be removed for our safety. I have not seen or spoken to my eldest son for the last nine years.

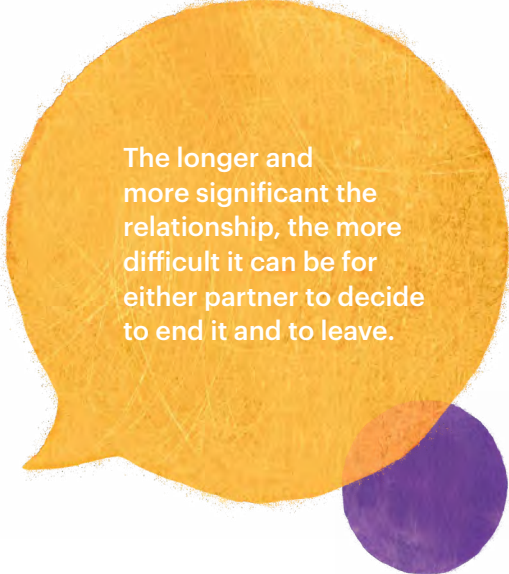
Victim-survivor written submission

She never had money, she would transfer her income to him every week (I have bank statements that show that) therefore her debt was/is huge. She would request money from me to purchase food, I would not give her money I would take her shopping.

Supporter written submission

Looking back, the future was clear but then, I was blinded by love and hope. He was such a good man, he was so good to me, his family was so good to me, one tantrum didn't make him The Monster. I'd seen what bad guys were like and ... was good and sweet. So I ignored it, and I ignored his warning and went on to marry him.

Victim-survivor written submission



The longer and more significant the relationship, the more difficult it can be for either partner to decide to end it and to leave.

During our marriage I was subjected to verbal, emotional, physical, psychological, coercive control as well as witnessing child abuse. She traumatised and abused our eldest son to the point that he felt worthless. He wrote a letter stating that he was a brat and signed it, "from the worst person in the world".

Victim-survivor written submission

The use of the term "Domestic Violence" as a catch-all descriptor for all the various streams of domestic abuse is unhelpful, counter intuitive and creates confusion amongst the general public. Especially for those who have never been exposed to / have absolutely no knowledge of the various other streams of abuse that are increasingly prevalent within the community (e.g. coercive control and sexual violence).

Victim-survivor written submission

What is the impact of domestic, family, and sexual violence?

It is proven by psychologist[s], [and] criminologist[s] that the children who are exposed to family violence even by proxy (witnessing a parent being emotionally and physically abused) results in childhood trauma that goes into adulthood.

Victim-survivor written submission

The very nature of receiving abuse often becomes a decent into madness. There were times when X and I were fighting, and I feel sure I would have come across as the aggressor. When a perpetrator is the one in control with their manipulative tactics, it leaves the victim in a vulnerable position. As with [his previous partner, she looked] like the abuser, not [him], she was the one who looked crazy. And I'm certain I was the same. Gaslighting begets crazy.

Victim-survivor written submission

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.

Victim-survivor written submission

What I've seen from the victim-survivors I've spoken to is the longer they stay in an abusive relationship, the more traumatised they are and the greater the trauma suffered by their children (if they have any).

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

My son has not returned to school since his suspension & being at his dad's house. My son ... has not been in school for 18 months and is not working. I called to report this to the education department & DCP and was basically told their list was 'too long' and a then 14 year old would not be investigated.. Another system that has failed both myself and my son.

Victim-survivor written submission

To prevent family and domestic violence SA should stop parents from fighting because they're drunk.

Commissioner and Young Person Student Voice postcards

Between these blow outs between us, there was intermittent reinforcement of love which would swing between telling me I was his soulmate / the one / perfect etc etc; and then he would swing to telling me that he loved more than me. While retrospectively and from the outside it seems obvious to leave this situation, when in it, it felt impossible to leave. I had to correct the narrative and prove that I was a supportive and loving partner, and I felt desperate to prove in moments of doubt that I was "the one". I assume the random intermittent reinforcement created the intoxicating, addictive obsession I felt to [him].

Victim-survivor written submission

I am male. I lived with a woman who by almost every definition was a perpetrator, but because I am male I was immediately deemed to be a perpetrator... I suffered cigarette burns , kicking , being spat on , called every name you could think of all while she maintained the perfect public appearance. I never had access to my own pay and had to beg to buy anything, it was a demoralising experience that will live with me for the rest of my life. Please, please help the men out there, if you can keep one good dad with their children, it will be worth it.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

To escape and survive DV is brave and I would not wish this experience on anybody else, and long to see improvements with supporting individuals in all areas, whether they be female or male, DV destroys lives. On the night that I escaped, I was terrified, and had left my work place prepared that I would not survive, knowing the risk of the person that was at home and had an alcohol addiction.

Victim-survivor written submission

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.


Victim-survivor written submission

The sickness I know is due to prolonged ongoing stress from all the abuse sustained. People just like me are victims of crime, but no one recognises abuse victims as such (as it is usually done in secret) and we don't have the strength to fight.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

He has also continued to subject our children to controlling, harmful and unsafe behaviour, which child protection calls "inappropriate parenting". My children are unable to get psychological support because their father threatened the services we attended until they said they cannot provide their services to us.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



... there is no place in my life now for the unkind, for the aggressors and the perpetrators. I'm no longer a victim, I am a survivor.

When I went inside the nursing staff gasped, they immediately called for a Cranio Facial team, I was transferred to the RAH and underwent complex Surgery, an eye orbit repair and Cranio Facial surgery using the iliac crest portion of my hip bone to rebuild my face and had 3 subsequent surgeries to repair my eyesight as best they could.

Victim-survivor written submission

I grew up in loneliness and fear. Never having a safe place to shelter, a shoulder to lean on or a kind word uttered in my direction. I was both verbally and then physically attacked by my sister when I became old enough to fight back. I grew up believing I was nothing. That I had to play the role of the good daughter in order to survive. I kept my head down, heart closed, and mouth shut. I have briefly mentioned my childhood experiences because it is vital for people to understand the repetitive cycle of generational abuse.

Victim-survivor written submission

When I contact agencies for help I am told that their funding agreements with government prevent them assisting men. When I have taken this up with Ministers the agencies are untruthful and say they do not discriminate on gender grounds...Just as vast numbers of male sexual assault victims were revealed by the Royal Commission into institutional sexual abuse, there are large numbers of male victims who will never appear in any data.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

It took me years to rebuild my life and regain my confidence. For years, I've been fearful of his ability to track and monitor me through social media. For many months after I left, I had difficulty leaving my apartment to take the rubbish out, hop in my car to go to work or even the supermarket. Yet I had to work in order to live independently of him. My legal fees were more than my monthly wage. I've since discovered, this is common.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

My mother has had mental health issues since she was a child due to sexual abuse inflicted on her by her father. Due to living in a country area there are never any government funded professionals available. She has had one phone call over the phone and nothing more. (We need) more services like these readily available.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

My abuser would scream abuse at me, threaten me and physically hurt me in front of my son. My son had developmental delays and a severe stutter as a result. I took him to speech therapy for about 5 years via the school and local council services.

Victim-survivor written submission

As access to my finances had been removed, and I was fleeing from police (due to being told that they were targeting me to intimidate me I took refuge in my car and hid in various parking lots around the city.

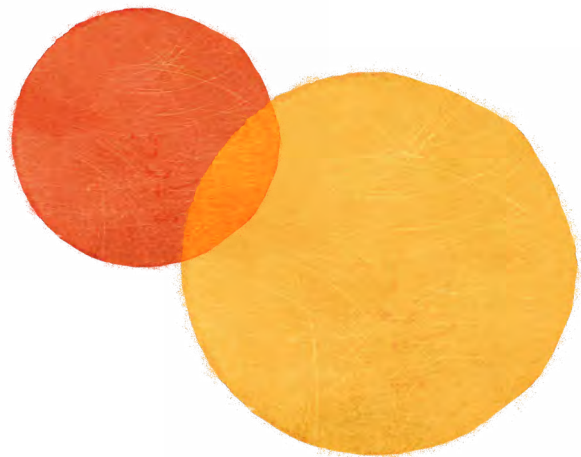
Victim-survivor written submission

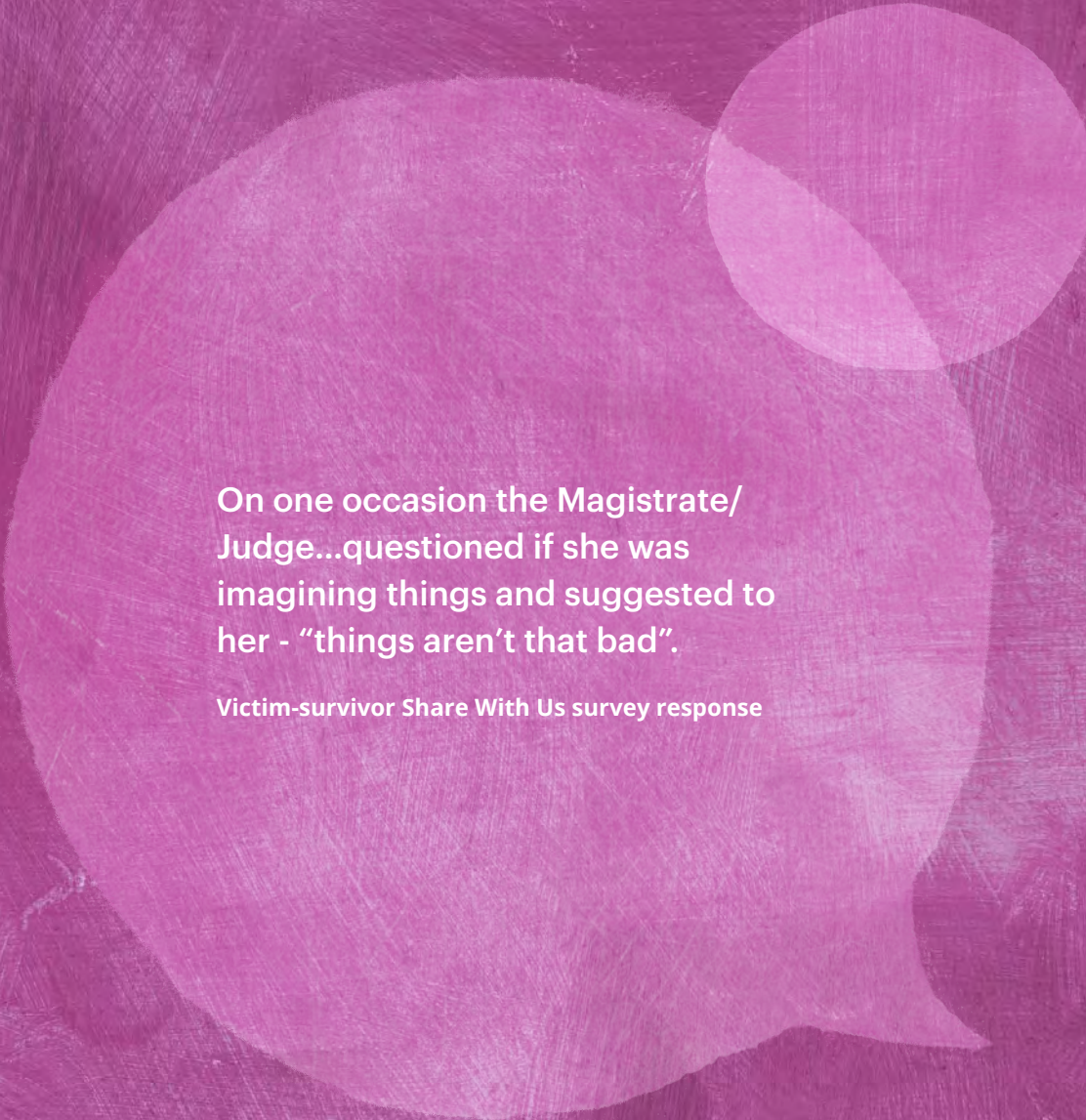
My son at 15 now is a complete replica of my abuser ...The system completely failed me but what is worse? It failed my beautiful child... he was a beautiful child and now I have lost him.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The one thing that I would like to see for victims is free counselling to assist with gaining that control back, being able to find yourself again. I now lack confidence in every aspect of my life and I'm not sure that will ever change.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response





On one occasion the Magistrate/
Judge...questioned if she was
imagining things and suggested to
her - "things aren't that bad".

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Creating a cohesive and effective system

System challenges

When I think of initiatives addressing the issues the only thing that comes to my mind is – what initiatives? The ones where people within services have flow charts to follow and boxes to tick to make sure they can document they did their job right? Because those initiatives feel less like support and more like, oh here is another thing for me to go and do, oh I have to go through all this shit again to see if maybe I might get support and if this one service doesn't work then I have 5 others I can try but that requires having the ability to access further resources, the time to and the mental/emotional capacity to do so.

Victim-survivor written submission

If we as a nation are serious about addressing the scourge of domestic abuse in all its forms ...we must address the often institutional enablers of domestic/family abuse at their source.

Supporter written submission

Easier access to support to deal with finance abuse. Banks need to be more involved for large scale loans for business interview individually. I was just brought in to sign for loans, no understanding or involved in due diligence.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The lack of support once you leave is completely inadequate. The current initiatives, within what are supposed to be, services provided to support victims, are actually enabling the perpetrators. In my experience the DV service, police and child protection are horrifically inexperienced, untrained, unqualified and unprofessional... If those employed to help are not contributing to the solution how can we expect our community or the perpetrators to change?

Victim-survivor written submission

Who was the least helpful? The DV support services, the Commonwealth Government (ATO and Centrelink), one on one supports for the oldest lad and the prosecutor.

Supporter written submission

I can categorically assure the Government that unless there 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.

Victim-survivor written submission

Another government agency that let my Children and I down...is the Department of Child Protection. All three of my Children witnessed their father do things to me that no child should ever witness. The Department of Child Protection did not offer any type of specialised counselling or any mental health help at all for my Children.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I had my ex turned briefly into my carer ... Centrelink wanted to investigate for neglecting his duties as my carer and they were willing to bring the police into it....During the time that my ex and I lived together I was often denied food ... and was only allowed to have it when he was home.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Due to low rates of reporting, coupled with even lower rates of trial and conviction, victims are often hesitant to come forward. The trauma inflicted by the system, combined with the minimal likelihood of a justice outcome, discourages victims to report and reinforces a belief for perpetrators they will not face consequence.


Victim-survivor written submission

Governments now speak of 'whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' responses to DFSV, but what they usually mean is that governments must be more coordinated in their organisation and intervention, and that everybody in society has a role to play in being informed and aware and doing what they can to prevent such behaviour, in themselves and in others. That is all reasonable, but what governments do not normally mean, but what they should also mean, is that governments are the principal perpetrators – not the only ones, but statistically arguably the most consistent, on multiple levels, including in their failure to fully and effectively implement any of their own policies. And governments must therefore bear part of the blame for this problem.

Victim-survivor written submission

Support services and early intervention organisations should stop DV in its tracks however, currently it is empowering and enabling the perpetrators. Through failures in their follow up, professionalism and interventions, for example mistakes and poor records by DV services contracted by the government to process family interventions like referrals to services and supports. I have witnessed recording of minimal information, recording incorrect information and refusal to accept written information from victims.

Victim-survivor written submission



When an abused person has found the courage to reach out for help, but is greeted with suspicion, accusations and indifference, something is very wrong.

Every preventable death from DFSV is a failure of many individuals working in dysfunctional systems, and the chain of that responsibility can be traced all the way back to whoever abused and traumatised the perpetrator – assuming that somebody did – and whoever failed to stop it. It is predictable psychology that some victims will then become violent, and that violence is a re-action against a prior act of injustice against them, not a gratuitous act that occurs within a vacuum. Those who do not become violent often still experience other difficulties.

Victim-survivor written submission

Individual services have been amazing in what they can do, but the systems and policies seem to be set up based on an idea that people experiencing violence are without money or education. This is not the case, it can affect anyone.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Early intervention services were underfunded, and I was unable to access the help I desperately needed as I was on a very long waitlist. I felt hopeless, and it became clear that without legislative reform and adequate funding for support services, women and children like me are left without the protection they deserve.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Government social services require that people comply with an arbitrary set of rules in order to receive support- delaying in differing opportunities to make decisions for yourself, determine your future and therefore hone your instincts and move towards a safer life. Instead, the services are often violent- perpetuating this same violence that caused the nervous system to develop towards dysregulation. This is not a system that is geared towards healing a system geared towards healing would increase access to safe housing, nutritious food, relationships support an education, and decision making.

Victim-survivor written submission

I think there's a lot of community support services that collaborate/network with each other, which enables them to connect their clients or people accessing the service to other services if they cannot provide that kind of support. I think there should be more focus on how this is done. Receiving multiple leaflets on services that might be available to me, is overwhelming but also disheartening when reaching out to a service only to come find out that it's an irrelevant service to my needs.

Victim-survivor written submission

I have lost total faith in our police and courts. The courage it takes to leave an abusive relationship is monumental. Having lived through the process, I can say with absolute conviction it is highly flawed. When an abused person has found the courage to reach out for help, but is greeted with suspicion, accusations and indifference, something is very wrong.

Victim-survivor written submission

When a child expresses concerns for their safety, they should be immediately removed from the harmful environment and placed into secure and supportive accommodations. Strict Oversight: Cases should not be closed prematurely. There should be independent reviews before a case involving a minor can be dismissed, to ensure that all aspects of their safety have been considered.

Young Person victim-survivor written submission

Every individual who comes to the attention of any services or other family member, friend or work colleague as experiencing any form or degree of DFSV should immediately be treated as being at risk of their murder. Existing risk assessment practices are not effective, and action plans for victims in the event of an incident do not protect them – women with such plans have been killed, so they are not effective.

Victim-survivor written submission

The authorities who were involved in the last week of her life included the police, the ambulance for the person using violence and the school counsellor for my daughter. The police and ambulance did not reach out to our family, I'm not aware that they contacted her school. I feel sharing of information would have helped us all to understand the situation better. The information that the person using violence had a gun licence and access to guns would have been invaluable, I'm not sure the police even put this information together, let alone shared it with anyone.

Supporter written submission

I am a social worker and I assist men who are victims of domestic violence and their children. I have 5 current men I am supporting. None have received support from DV services. Services always expect men who are victims to actually be perpetrators (Marram principles).

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Housing and homelessness

Financially, we were impacted by losing my home, being sent bankrupt, and having to rent in private rental – this left us during the rental crisis, homeless... When I was a Category 1 when homeless, I was told to forget ever getting a property, as I was a functional human being that was able to previously maintain private rental. This left me and my children without a home for 7 months. I applied for 200 rental properties and eventually had to relocate my family away from the connectedness of their community and start from scratch, this added an additional layer of trauma to their lives after their experience of family violence.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

Women and their children are placed into motel accommodation in “safe locations” that most perpetrators are actually very aware of believe it or not so you are always on edge. You are required to speak with your domestic violence support worker every day, self-fund some part of the accommodation and also are required to send through 10 or more rentals a week that you have applied for and gone to the open inspections for. Failure to do this could result in the termination of your safe accommodation. If you're lucky enough you might secure a short term rental and be able to move into a place with your children but again you are required to speak to your support worker every week, have face to face meetings every week and also again send through 10 or more rentals you have applied for and viewed.

Victim-survivor written submission

I reached out for help ... and the only support I received was emergency accommodation and access to transitional accommodation. No further support re accessing finance (Centrelink, etc), legal advice or counselling.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I picked up my sons, put them in the car, rang a crisis centre (shelter) and was advised that I could go there immediately with 2 of my sons but my eldest was 14 and he could not go there. This was horrific, no way would I let any of my sons out of my sight. We... slept in the car.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

There will never be sufficient funding or emergency accommodation for victims of domestic violence. So what happens is the charities and government services evaluate women on the basis of the most desperate need. As a result, women who are educated, employed (even if she is earning an unsustainable wage) or have the capability of becoming employed, are left to fend for themselves.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

I have a spare bedroom which could (with appropriate and approved supports) provide an additional short term respite to at least one victim who otherwise has no other conceivable option to remain at greater risk to ongoing abuse outcomes.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Country women are at high risk particularly those involved in farming of DV. A severe lack of housing/ rental crisis in country areas makes it difficult for women to leave as they literally have no where else to go. This is what prevented me from leaving as my partner knew I had no where to go and there were no emergency housing or even being able to find a rental house to go to as I lived on a farm at the time.


Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I refuse to go to women's shelters where people are broken and miserable. I didn't feel it would be a safe place for my children or me. I didn't want to be surrounded by people that I didn't even know. The thought of it is frightening, which causes further feelings of fear and insecurity. Abuse victims just want the fear to stop.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

[When she] rang the DV service to request support, she was informed because she was not homeless or staying in a motel they could not support her. I was furious, because she had a supportive family she could not receive support, the service did not know her family, maybe we were not supportive, maybe we thought she should go back, they did not know or ask deeply what was going on for [her]. I was furious. I rang the executive of DV, she confirmed they did not have resources to support [her].

Supporter written submission



Due to low rates of reporting, coupled with even lower rates of trial and conviction, victims are often hesitant to come forward.

A system accrediting private providers of suitable housing needs to be set up by DV Services or Housing SA... Many of us survivors of DV are now in a position to provide our own rentals but are not recognised for referrals by (NGOs) as viable options because we cannot gain accreditation. Such a system would help resolve the dilemma of long term housing if it included constant monitoring. Do not rely on land agents to do this!

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

When I was eventually offered shelter accommodation, crisis services did not explain what it was and what supports I would get – I was not entitled to services for housing, I was told they could not help me. I was technically employed, but I had stopped working and was on income protection. I felt that I was not eligible for any services at all. I think it would have been helpful if there was a temporary service I could have accessed to help me bridge the gap. I did not find emergency services to be helpful. I did not have anywhere to stay and resided with my mum for some time, but this wasn't long-term and was affecting my mental health and led to family dramas and has impacted negatively on our relationship with them and my children. I have been couch-surfing with friends and other ex-partners.

Victim-survivor written submission

They would not house me or my child because I had a job... it was extremely distressing, and I felt extremely discriminated against... I find it incredibly distressing that as a woman and a mother who has faced physical abuse, I have been forced out of my home. My abuser refused to provide the police with the keys and has been violating the intervention order by accessing the property. I have incurred significant expenses for moving, including bond, cleaning, and hiring trucks.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

There is not enough help available to find ongoing housing for victims. Emergency housing is great but then it is a battle to find somewhere when your emergency housing finishes. The private market is too expensive for what these people can afford and public housing is not available when needed. The waiting list is crazy.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Accommodation costs need to be within the reach of all people, the families I support cannot obtain private rentals anywhere because they are on Centrelink payments. I have one lady who has applied for over 60 rentals and cannot even get a viewing and has had no offers whatsoever for a rental property, this leads to anxiety, frustration and depression. People give up trying to leave and then the cycle continues.

Supporter Share With Us survey response

At this DV motel, I found the staff to be painfully ignorant and misinformed. Being so scared for your safety that you have a (furniture) and a microwave leaning against your door while you try and get some sleep, and then being awoken loudly by banging at 11am for someone to clean the room. There should be protocol in place for DV victims staying in these places because we need security, people need to take into consideration that people may be coming after us and motel staff should not only be considerate of that but also have to formally identify themselves before I am expected to open a door.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Another aspect that felt deeply unfair was that my children and I were the ones forced to leave our home, while he was allowed to stay. Leaving meant facing enormous upheaval—not just finding safe shelter, but also losing a familiar environment and facing financial instability. Having to leave put an additional burden on my children and me, disrupting their schooling and creating further emotional strain during an already traumatic time. In cases of domestic violence, it is unjust for the victims-survivors to be the one uprooted, particularly when the home environment is a shared one. I urge consideration of policies that prioritise the safety and stability of victim-survivors, allowing them to remain in their home whenever possible.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I get so angry when politicians talk about giving a woman some money to relocate. NO! The perpetrator should relocate and be monitored. Our safety is paramount. Provide housing these men can go to.


Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Housing situation is a major challenge in SA and a lot of the victims choose not to leave or might leave but eventually get back with the perpetrator as they have nowhere else to go with the children, and/or pets. Even though there are emergency accommodations for victims of DV, the hotel/motel rooms provided cannot accommodate very well for a big family or for young kids as there is no cooking facilities for the victim.

Supporter Share With Us survey response

And one of the things that I want to make really clear that...needs to be changed is going into motels... That has got to stop. I mean, you have high end drug dealers and... organised crime going on in hotel rooms ... these girls who are leaving DV are getting put into these motels... some of them are the most dingiest, dodgiest. I mean, it's scary... my daughter and I have had experiences where we've had beds piled up against the door and just trying to keep ourselves safe.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



... everybody experiencing any form of DFSV should automatically be regarded as being at maximum risk.

I had previously had my older son taken off me when I was with my first abusive husband (I had to move out for my own safety, but they wouldn't let me take my son because I didn't have stable accommodation, and wasn't near his playgroup—so I had my son taken away from me). This first incident of losing my son destroyed me. I had a full time job during this time – I had to pay maintenance. I had saved money to leave .. I used to put away \$50 a fortnight.... I had to leave my older son at the house because I couldn't let him know what I was doing. He wasn't allowed to stay with me in the shelter because he was 17/18yo. He ended up staying with friends. He wasn't allowed in to see me at the shelter for visits even.

Organisation and victim-survivor

So many women are having to jump through hoops to get a housing transfer as a result of the debt that the man has caused throughout the tenancy and the 'anti social behaviours' which in fact was actually DV. Feeling like you have to prove yourself to Housing SA before they want to move a family.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response combined written submission

Women and mothers and children should not be displaced from the family home. I think there should be more...placement of the man out of the home and the home should be made safe. I think you should help them change locks.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

[I went to a DV shelter] – Staff were only there from 9 – 5 and after 5 was when the ex-husbands and partners would come and visit. Other women would let their abusive partners come in to the shelter – after 5 and weekends. [My son] learnt a lot of bad stuff. He had/has ADHD and OCD and depression and he shouldn't have been in the shelter.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

I have currently been living in 2 motels... My experience with the staff running both motels has been horrible. I have been made to feel worthless, ostracised, and treated like a burden. The staff have no understanding of trauma and have no empathy of what government funded guests are going through and are feeling. I have felt degraded, resentment, and unwanted. The attitude of staff is enough to make a dv victim leave and just go back to the abuser. The shame and judgement are something that add another layer of pain and shame to victims.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

At the motel, it wasn't the safest place for me and my 4-year old daughter. It made me feel anxious and caused a whole lot more anxiety.


Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I had no place to go and weeks later I'm still homeless sleeping in my car. The police have not found him yet so there is no restraining order yet. I feel extremely unsafe and I hate that I asked for help to get away from him, I hate that I was kicked out and I hate being homeless.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

There needs to be more stability particularly in the most acute phase of when women leave violent/abusive relationships (entering emergency accommodation) as they are frequently placed in unsafe environments such as budget motels with very little security and high concentration of other people experiencing social barriers such as drug use, criminal behaviour, mental health challenges and financial hardship. In my experience as a social worker, shelter-based accommodation (that appears like community housing [ie fully/semi-detached properties with full amenities]) provides the most security and stability, particularly for women with children and from Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and CALD backgrounds.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



[My son] learnt a lot of bad stuff. He had/has ADHD and OCD and depression and he shouldn't have been in the shelter.

I need a stable home for my son and I, and its stressful not knowing how to get into community housing. My worker cannot advocate for me and the places I apply for don't have anything available. Even (though) I'm on category 1 on housing trust it could still take 5 years to get a home. I would like more housing provided for people who have escaped DV.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Make it financially survivable for a woman to leave the relationship. Many women have to put up with the abuse as they can not afford rent or have nowhere else safe to go.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Unfortunately for me the transitional accommodation through another agency was substandard (no hot water or shower head, unclean and needed maintenance work on security screen doors and windows), so I terminated and vacated the property within days of signing the lease. This accommodation was located 200kms away from my usual place of residence, where I knew no one. The agency has since apologised but the situation should not have occurred in the first instance. Nor have they offered any further accommodation, hence the return to my partner.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Justice system

Just before trial all charges were dropped due to the prosecution having concern about my brain injury and the ex trying to use this against me.... He got away with everything! No charges. No restrictions. No monitoring. No way for me to seek reimbursement for the damages he caused. Left with financial hardship. Unable to keep myself safe or know when he will try again.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I have never been involved with legal proceedings and went into this legal situation...believing in the legal process. I was a fool. The legal system has allowed him to continue the DV, specifically the control, verbal and mental abuse... with no repercussions and giving him an element of control over my daughter... he has told her he will continue the legal proceedings until both my daughter and I are financially ruined...I feel so let down by the system and can now understand why women are scared to leave a DV situation.

Supporter Share With Us survey response

My ex is using the court system to hurt me and my child and he gets away with it ...I am told it doesn't matter what happened, he has a right to have a relationship with his child. What about my child's rights to be safe?...I'm not just fighting my ex to keep my child safe anymore, I'm fighting the court system to keep my child safe from being a victim of domestic violence and falling into that cycle.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

He learnt how to play the Courts. You see a Federal Family Court was supposed to protect my children and I was supposed to be protected by a State Magistrate Court and the South Australian Police. Although we were a family our protection came under two different Court systems. These two Courts never communicated with each other. The Family Court granted Access when there were five Orders Of Restraint taken out against him. So no one ever saw the whole true picture of our lives which were filled with his ongoing abuse and control. With no one to stop him his abuse and control over us became emboldened. The Court systems lessened our ability to protect ourselves against him as he became more and more powerful and ruthless.

Victim-survivor written submission

All victim/survivors should have access to assistance animals in court.

Victim-survivor written submission

Character references in court - I don't know why this is still a practice. It's already hard enough when people blindly side with the abuser, but to allow this kind of 'popularity contest' into a court room?

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The legal system expunges all crime on death, so the fact that the person using violence completed suicide immediately after gave us no sense of satisfaction or closure. He was never called a murderer or found guilty. In addition, he left half a million dollars in life insurance to his mother. I don't feel that was justice.

Supporter written submission

The court system which requires victims (women) to sit physically in court with the offender, and with other victims and offenders is UTTERLY reprehensible. This is terrifying for most of these women and understandably places them at greater risk. The joy the offenders would get from this as a form of continued power over the victim is something we are effectively sanctioning in our court system.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The perpetrator actually tried to kill us all (children too)but was only ever convicted of assault... I feel like I was failed in my case, my children and I have PTSD, anxiety, disability from injury and have lived in fear for years. I believe he will kill the next woman he has a relationship with.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The magistrates also removed my children from the intervention order even though he had continually abused me in front of the children, assaulted the eldest child and the children being present when he last assaulted me and advised it to be referred to the family court.

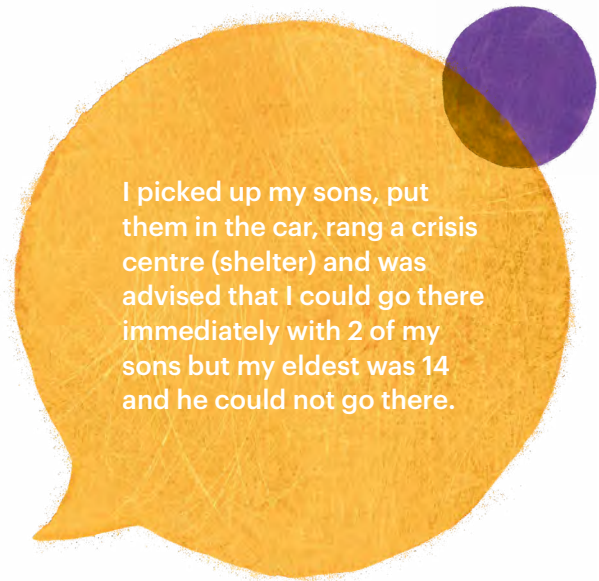
Victim-survivor written submission

Separate trials for victim and abuser...Court is a lengthy process and being seen and heard by my abuser, having to be in the same room or building as him has had a tremendous negative impact on my mental health.... I believe it wouldn't be so bad if I had the correct support to take my abuser to court without having to interact with him.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I would feel safer if my family was protected & we wouldn't have to fight for our safety. If processes were put in place to protect siblings even if they weren't harmed. If it was easier to find info about injunction orders.

Commissioner and Young Person Student Voice postcards



I picked up my sons, put them in the car, rang a crisis centre (shelter) and was advised that I could go there immediately with 2 of my sons but my eldest was 14 and he could not go there.

After [my] ex had a siege with police holding (my children) at gunpoint, we each had a police intervention order against him. Family court (granted) weekly unsupervised (visits) for both kids with their dad.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

[Her] husband strangled her and was removed from the home in handcuffs. The police had enough evidence to convict the abusive husband, however, the judge said, "I'll dismiss this case. You are from a good suburb and your career would be adversely affected by a guilty verdict (of aggravated assault)" and let the perpetrator go free. The judge also said "I would have hated to know what would have happened if your daughter had not come out and interrupted you." Please note the judge's language in this, demonstrating that he prioritises a man's career over the lives and safety of women and children

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

There needs to be Truth in sentencing. Magistrates & Judges need to all provide sentences that befit the crime, perpetrators past record or behaviour and for the legislative punishment. Too many offenders get less sentences for same/similar crimes against women and children. It needs to be uniformed.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

When I asked for my barrister to file a vexatious litigation application, he said he'd be laughed out of court... It's hard enough to actually leave the relationship and then you have to fight the legal system as well...I think it would be beneficial to educate judges, magistrates, and the legal profession on ways to deal with certain types of behaviour or start enforcing court orders to be followed.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

There needs to be a reasonable timeline for the process to go through court and not be continually delayed by the perpetrator. It is almost two years since my ex-husband was first arrested for aggravated assault and the process continues to drag on in court 'because he has a right to a fair trial'. What about the rights of the victim to a safe life? There needs to be consequences for a perpetrator not following the direction of the magistrate. My ex-husband was told three times to bring a lawyer with him, each time delaying the process again by 6 – 8 weeks, but there was never any consequence for not obeying this order from the magistrate.

Victim-survivor written submission

The back and forth between lawyers when there is legislation seemed to be for the purpose of increasing billable hours and increasing profit by inciting clients to attack through the court. The aggressive nature of lawyers in the court room is unnecessary especially towards victims who have used all their courage to leave an abusive home.

Victim-survivor written submission

The legal system needs to be far tougher on perpetrators, not letting them out on bail and much tougher penalties for breaching AVOs, whether it be prison, ankle tracking etc... It seems that the victim needs to make all the changes and loses out while the perpetrator can carry on as normal. How is that a punishment for the perpetrator?

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Abuser's should not be given copies of victim's statements and evidence. My abuser has paraded around my statement and evidence and has used it as a tool to further abuse me.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



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 Police Court dog (generally available for children) as I did not have any support, although the dog could not attend the evidence room with me (I have evidence through CCTV).

Victim-survivor written submission

A single court handling both criminal and family matters related to domestic violence could prevent perpetrators from exploiting separate legal avenues to exert control. This court should have specialised personnel trained in domestic violence and the psychological dynamics that often accompany these cases.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The legal system is set up to allow perpetrators to continue the abuse for years through the family court system. Most legal professionals I've had dealings with do not understand the emotional or financial stress that is inflicted through these proceedings, instead telling me he has every right to do what he's doing.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Family court needs to be awarding costs for vexatious claims - especially when the claims are 100% unfounded with the evidence to prove it.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

And legal support is hit-and-miss. My first lawyer blatantly referred my Aboriginality as a "not pertinent" to my case in the first hearing, and I felt I was ridiculed behind closed doors by her. I changed lawyers who thankfully had taken my case more seriously.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

[We need] independent Legal representation for Victims - I still recall the moment I found that I would be a witness in my own rape. The DPP were not there prosecuting for me, they were there for the best interests of the state. I had a naive belief that I would be represented, that someone would tell my story and fight for me.. I was wrong.

Victim-survivor written submission

Even while he was in jail I had to take days off work to attend 15+ court dates which kept getting put off as his lawyer kept giving random dates he thought he would be released by but never did.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I was belittled and blamed for not protecting my children from him. I was made to carry the guilt and shame. Why did I let him do that to our children?... Not once did anyone ask why [he] strangled his children? If anyone else had done to our children what their father did, they would be in jail right now.

Victim-survivor written submission

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.

Victim-survivor written submission

Men need harsher penalties, for all kinds of abuse, including non physical abuse (as that is usually only the start and can lead to physical) as too many times you hear of Intervention orders being broken and women or kids have to die before people take notice.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

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.

Victim-survivor written submission




I was put on trial not him. If I cried, I was mentally unfit. If I didn't cry, I was a cold-hearted manipulating bitch.....

I have just been through 3 years of hell in the SA District Court, in a Domestic Violence case against my Ex Husband. I was made to feel like the offender, having my morals and integrity questioned. He was charged with [multiple] counts of unlawful choking, [multiple] counts of aggravated assault, property damage, but of course the charges are used as bargaining chips, and his charges were drastically reduced. I am disgusted in the way that it was played down. He tried to kill me!

Victim-survivor written submission

After...years in family court and \$150k paid to lawyers, settlement being dragged out because he kept going to prison and appealing, my ex was able to start brand new family court proceedings (due to an "accidental" clerical error on his part).... this cost me more \$1000s.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



... we both have worked through our guilt in not “doing something” [for our daughter], but the coercive control of both her and the children was extreme [so it went unnoticed].

I have just spent two weeks watching my [family member] go through a trial due to domestic violence. To watch what she went through on a nine day trial, was absolutely brutal. Everything that has happened seemed to make it look like she was the perpetrator and not the actual victim in this case. It was so heartbreaking to watch someone you love be put through this. These men seem to have all the rights and women have to fight so hard just to survive. There [were multiple] charges and he was only found guilty on one !!! He is now out on bail. They say he will go to jail, but I do not want my [loved one] to be the next statistic to be added to yet another female hurt or killed.

Supporter written submission

Family court to be STATE run and NOT FEDERAL so that SAPOL can act on a family IO if children are taken. But this will also equal quicker family court order changes to occur and have the ability for SAPOL to advocate on the FV.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

After being charged with aggravated assault against me the magistrate only sentenced him to 24hrs in jail despite him having two prior suspended sentences for aggravated assault which he breached within the sentencing time frame in addition to breached good behaviour bonds, breaching of intervention orders. Yet the magistrate did not adhere to the breach in suspended sentence and felt that only 24 hours was suitable even though he had significant history of abuse across multiple victims.

Victim-survivor written submission

Only on one occasion was he charged. He was found guilty ... and received a 6-month good behaviour bond for one order breach. I cannot help but grieve over the fact that the perpetrator of my abuse finally got a criminal conviction for one breach of an intervention order, but never had any investigation of, or charges laid in relation to threatening to kill me, threatening to kill (and actually killing my pets), and for a number of physical assaults...The burden of evidence lies with the victim' is a line I have heard time and time again. And I believe it. Accountability for abuse certainly doesn't lie with the perpetrator; and it is never the responsibility of the law.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The day before he went to court, the prosecutor called that they were not going to go ahead with the court case, that as she was intoxicated the weekend of the assaults they felt the case was not strong enough, apparently photos of bruises and burns, statements that was the same every time she told the story was not enough. Apparently if you are a drunk you deserve to be assaulted and burnt, told you are useless, told you are crazy and have bipolar, told if you take the children they will hurt you and your parents, keep the children from their mother for five weeks, it is okay to be a terrible, abusive, violent, manipulative human if the person you are abusing is intoxicated.

Victim-survivor and supporter written submission

The Family Court process needs to take into consideration that Family Violence (FV) contributes to a high proportion of separations. The current adversarial process suits the perpetrators of FV as the high conflict, no fault current system means that the psychological and financial abuse continues throughout the Court process.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The...Family assessor (social worker) determined that I was definitely a victim of domestic violence as she witnessed my terror at seeing the abusive ex-husband, and yet she chose to advocate for unsupervised access for my daughter. I hold her responsible for the harm done to my daughter. Judge ignored all the information about domestic violence and chose to provide [my daughter's] dad with unsupervised access to her. I hold him responsible for the harm done to her also. In my opinion he may have held her down whilst she was raped.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

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.

Victim-survivor written submission

My ex-husband tried to burn the house down with us inside... The prosecutor was an absolute joke and the justice system still fails us now. Because I (acted swiftly by calling emergency services) the fire (caused) minimal damage...all counts of endangering lives were dropped, he was released and bailed back to the property within... hours of court appearance and the arson charge was downgraded to a minor offence... Not even 3 months jail time and he is free with no home detention, no monitoring whatsoever.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I was sexually assaulted and raped... The support services and police were great - the court system is appalling. The matter is still in the District Court with ongoing delays caused by the perpetrator. He lies and doesn't turn up to court, the court doesn't take any action with his bail. I am continually retraumatised over and over because of their ridiculous ways of doing things.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The courts released my ex husband on bail to an address that was only a 2 minute walk from my house and I was left in fear that he would return. The court system was so hard and I was made to feel like I was lying about what happened while going through the process... the crime which had the biggest maximum sentence was for property damage not the 3 attempts to kill me. This left me feeling completely worthless and like my life was worth less than the mobile phone he smashed and the holes in the walls he made.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The justice system is not a deterrent for FDV perpetrators. My former partner has repeatedly cycled in and out of prison and has continued to beat, rape and threaten other women.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Since commencing in Family Court, I have also been left very disappointed. There is not enough protection for DV survivors in family court. And it almost seems geared to support the abusers...(he) has spent over \$200,000 of marital assets. Selling assets, which I have the loans for, and not paying loans out...I was told that although I was entitled to money from settlement and my ex has done the wrong thing, but the money is gone now there's nothing that can be done.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

My ex-husband uses the Family Court to financially control and abuse me, refusing to allow the sale of assets, depriving me of resources to manage debts he helped create...Despite his incarceration, he actively seeks to minimise my financial stability, using shared resources to fund his legal defence in both family and criminal cases. This ongoing financial abuse is exacerbated by the family court system's seeming disregard for the impact of his actions on our safety and well-being.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I was raped on a night out ... While my interaction with Police was positive, the justice and DPP is broken. I was victim blamed, traumatised and told I was believed but the case wouldn't be a home run. The justice system has to do better for victims... As a privileged white woman who was the "perfect witness" I still couldn't get justice. My heart breaks for the women in any minority, they have no chance.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

He was charged with multiple charges, including strangulation with intent, assault with intent and a rape charge... I received a trial date...however, the DPP dropped all charges... I had medical reports, photos, screenshots of abusive and threatening messages, and still this wasn't enough... No one told me at the DPP that when the charges were dropped, so was my intervention order.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

About a month before my case was due to go to court, the Department of Public Prosecutions... told me that my case would no longer be taken to court. I'd like to emphasise that I wasn't asked how I would feel if it wasn't taken to court, I was simply told that it would not be. The reasons I was given for this is because my witness' testimony appeared to have changed over time, and because the men being prosecuted all had the same story... Respectfully, no shit. It was a gang rape...a group of men decided to take my power of choice away from me, and then another group of men decided to take my power of choice away from me. I would have liked some more empathy, and consideration, in the process of choosing not to pursue my case.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Some of the things said to me by DPP staff during my multiple meetings with them include: "You didn't ask him to stop or push him off when you woke up, he may have considered that consent"; "maybe you don't remember consenting"; "You're very credible, but not reliable, you were too intoxicated" ; "Taking antidepressants and drinking alcohol can cause gaps in memory, again maybe you don't remember consenting". The manipulation that took place to make me feel I would not win in front of a jury and that they were doing me a favour in not proceeding makes me feel sick when I look back now...To have to sit in a room and be told "we all know this happened to you, and for that we are very sorry, but the defence will use all of these things and we don't think it will be beyond a reasonable doubt" was, and still is, soul-destroying as a victim of sexual assault. This narrative perpetuates the social culture that exists of blaming the victim.

Victim-survivor written submission

My ex-husband and I went to court for property settlement. I did not come out well. DV and coercion was not taken into account. This coercion ensured I had no money and huge debts. I believe that DV should be able to be used as evidence in a property settlement issue. From owning my own home, I came away with \$5,000 because his needs were considered more than mine.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

More investments and investigations from family court to investigate how family network of functioned as a family. Court writing needs to remain unbiased, have compassion (and) build trust with children before writing reports. My child thought that they were going to be taken from both parents if they spoke out about either one of them. So they colluded together even though they were young. They felt compelled to say both parents were lovely and caring.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Some simple and early investigations can be implemented to determine which party is being difficult, coercive or belligerent, and that there should be consequences to deter parties and lawyers from using the Family Court system to punish their ex-partner, and waste valuable Family Court time & support services resources, which would be better spent dealing with genuine cases.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The first issue with the Family Court is that it is an adversarial rather than inquisitorial system...WA has its own family court jurisdiction, SA should too and change it at its roots by making it inquisitorial.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

So, you see, it is "safer" to stay in the relationship and in the home. At least a safe parent will see their children every day and will be able to be there to protect them. Outside of the relationship, the children are even more vulnerable to escalating post-separation abuse and there is no safe parent there for them. They are Court-ordered into harm. A safe parent is harmed by this judicial punishment when they have done no wrong. A safe parent is subject to the same control they were in the relationship, except this time it has the veneer of being "legal."

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Domestic violence, coercive control and financial abuse needs to be admissible in the Family Court and the repercussions of such need to have heavy penalties. We as woman desperately need access to community legal services, at present only accessible if you have kids. Where perpetrators self represent, the Family Court needs to understand that this comes at a massive financial cost to the victim and it thus must be considered in property settlements. Abusers use this process of self representation to further the violence and the financial abuse.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I feel like coercive control is sort of limping its way through the Australian South Australian legislature. But it's very late, and people's lives are profoundly changed by this experience.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

As a result of family court hearings, (my) child was forced to spend time with the perpetrator who abused them for many years until they were old enough to make their own report to the police at the age of 11... the perpetrator still has parental responsibility and controls all aspects of school enrolments and medical care for the child, who is disabled and has very high needs.

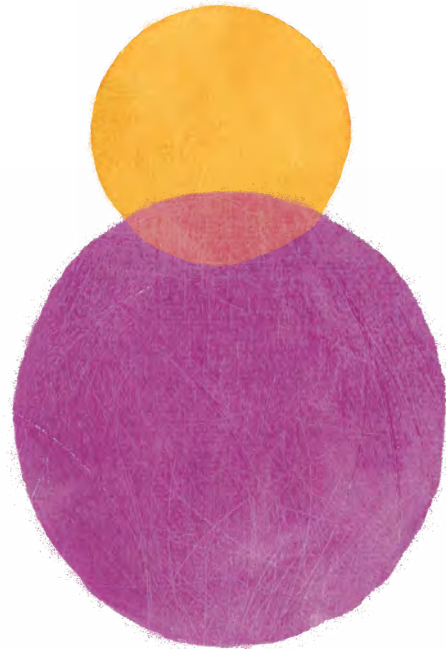
Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The federal court system gave the person who is domestically violent, my children (for the) majority of the time. I am now having to try to return to court to get majority care of my children as they are being abused and manipulated. The courts gave the abuser full NDIS control over both my children and he has completely failed to comply with the federal orders or the boys therapy.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

What I didn't realise was that child protection in Australia is all run by separate entities in each state. This meant once arriving in South Australia, we were no longer in (the other State's) Child Protection jurisdiction, therefore the case (interstate) was finalised with the recommendation that the father not have the children, and then closed. Because they are not one national service, we do not have an open case here in SA. This has negatively effected our family court proceedings. This is one thing that I believe needs to be changed to ensure adequate protection of children in Australia. For my children, if child protection was not run by each state, we would already be finished in family court.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



Police

The SA police were amazing at helping our family and supporting us through a traumatic situation after my ex husband tried to burn the house down with us inside.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

For nearly one year of my life I was ignored, scrutinised, dismissed, patronised, isolated and intimidated. These are the basics of any perpetrator's toolbox but apparently, also the South Australian Police when it comes to sexual offences, based on my experiences and unfortunately, a large number of other victims.

Victim-survivor written submission

I had an experience with domestic violence. I want it to be known that the South Australian police officers who helped me were absolutely fantastic ...There was also the officer who first took my statement in person... a female officer ... She was important as the initial step to take was difficult and upsetting for me. For all the reports and times that the offences are not handled well, I am so grateful that I was assisted, taken seriously, supported, and the police did their work with care towards me and my family. I am so grateful for their service, and I am aware that their work in this area is so difficult.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Police need to be trauma informed and better understand the dynamics of DV.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Generally, I have found domestic abuse focussed services to be supportive and non-judgemental, however the lack of support from SAPOL unravels the good work done by these services and compounds the trauma that abuse survivors are already living with.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

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 daughters

Victim-survivor written submission

The police force should be completely restructured- with recruitment based on values- not the adrenaline junkies of cops wanting to catch 'crooks'... they need to have social workers embedded with every single police incident with the first reporting via social workers- not the cops - they are all too often victim blaming and dismissing.

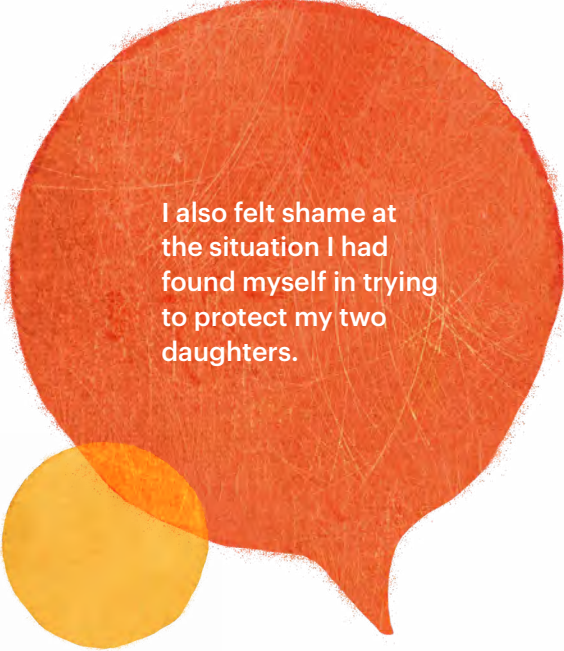
Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

We have attempted to speak to police, but the response is embarrassing. The school has called the Police, they refused to attend... He has breached the court orders so many times and yet we have been advised that no one in the courts care.

Supporter written submission

Once I finally reported, the person at SAPOL that took action literally saved my life that day. The way he responded and understood my needs to protect my children and the confidentiality it required with (us) both being police members was outstanding. If he responded any other way, I would have withdrew the complaint to protect my children.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



I also felt shame at the situation I had found myself in trying to protect my two daughters.

My FDV situation was with a Police Officer, I reluctantly had to make a police report to access (support)...I was advised by the Senior Constable... that my information would be locked down and no one could access the report except within their office. Sometime later...my ex-husband was made aware of my Police Report (by another member of the Police Force)...I lodged a complaint and was advised that there was nothing (they) could do.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

SAPOL were outstanding with their handling of the current issue- but are unable to assist in anyway due to Coercion and control not being illegal in SA... Our system and laws are failing victims and putting them further at risk”.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I reported my sexual assaults 20+ years later and the police were great.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Despite promises of improved police training, this has clearly not been implemented, and nobody can have confidence that any police officer attending a DFSV call-out will have been adequately trained. Police continue to make many mistakes, to neglect to properly record and investigate incidents, and are reported as displaying bias.

Victim-survivor written submission

There should always be a female police officer present to a DV call out. On the night of the assault, it was very overwhelming and any officer that came into contact with me that night would ask me to tell them what had happened, after a few times of repeating what had happened I just went into autopilot because it was very traumatising repeating what had occurred so many times.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The police system in SA failed me. They lost my application for restraining order...The police then lied about the situation to cover their mistakes but (we were) ... able to confirm to the super intendent that police officer who took original statement was lying. Police officer received an informal warning for this matter... I was going to use the restraining order as a first step to then pursue criminal charges for horrendous violent and sexual acts perpetrated against me but I was failed by SAPOL and will never see justice or accountability or receive compensation.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

On several occasions I would call the police because I thought the perpetrator was going to kill me... When the police attended and wrote their report, they downplayed the situation and put it down to a minor disagreement and stated the perpetrator was calm and collected. This minimisation has caused me to feel there is no point in reaching out for help anymore.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

[I supported] a female police officer with a male police officer partner ...who was perpetrating severe and prolonged physical, emotional, psychological, social and financial abuse. Their profession made it impossible for her to seek help from SA Police, specialist family violence services, child protection, private counselling and therapy or legal advice... without serious personal consequences.

Supporter Share With Us survey response

(I was) gang raped by my ex partner and his friends. I reported this to Police and was told I needed to seriously consider the effect my report would have on the lives of the men who had harmed me as they were 'good men' in the community. I did not proceed with charges as I was utterly defeated by the reaction from SAPOL.... The men who did this to me have continued with their lives seemingly unaffected....As the victim of the assault, I felt that I was not even considered, it was just the perpetrators and the effect on them.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Generally, I have found domestic abuse focussed services to be supportive and non-judgemental, however the lack of support from SAPOL unravels the good work done by these services and compounds the trauma that abuse survivors are already living with.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Seeking help from the police after threats were made to my wife and myself was hugely disappointing, as soon as the policeman heard that the threats occurred in a family violence setting he said that the only available help was to talk to a social worker from the department of aging, and he looked very pleased with himself for dismissing us without providing any help.

Supporter Share With Us survey response

It wasn't until the officer had said the words 'I'm concerned about you, and I'd like you to continue to come back in' that it all sunk in. Much like an addict, I had to accept there was a problem before I could face it and do something about it.

Victim-survivor written submission

I am so impressed with most people's awareness and ability to recognise ALL forms of family violence... I literally started to cry when the SAPOL officer read the information I had provided him and looked at me without any explanation and said I'm sorry you're going through this, this is not ok- this is very clearly not about your children it's about his control of you, its coercion and control and it's not ok

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

For my daughter the police response was swift, supportive and thorough. She felt believed, safe and able to be honest. It was the judicial system that damaged her appreciation for the police, as she felt all their hard work and support of her was for nothing. The detectives were not in uniform, they had time and patience to work at her pace and within the space she felt safe. They cared for her and reassured her that she was safe. This all helped her to feel supported in their response to her.

Supporter written submission

Dismissing reports and being told there is not capacity to help is not good enough - there need to be referral pathways available at all police stations and all officers need to be trained in how to have a conversation with someone who is subject to domestic violence when there are not apparent physical signs of abuse.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The detective handling the case was good to us, but he could have kept us more informed rather than me having to chase things up. Additionally, they did not take statements from all of us. I guess it was an open and shut case, but I felt the need to have my say. I had to chase them to make a statement.

Supporter written submission

Police need MORE training on how to approach, speak to, support & care for victims. Police also need far more support by Prosecutors and Judges for what they, in the most part fight hard for (or arresting/charging offenders at grass roots level) only to be let down by Courts

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

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. Unfortunately, this information was disregarded, and I was involuntarily detained.

Victim-survivor written submission

When I sought help from the domestic violence police unit, their notes were minimal, leaving me without the information I needed to pursue a restraining order...Detailed police records are essential in domestic violence cases, yet the lack of thorough notes and access to evidence limited my ability to protect myself.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I feel like there needs to be more awareness or better training given to SAPOL with regards to how they manage a person that is victim to emotional abuse, that is also struggling with drug and alcohol abuse as a coping mechanism...I have a long history of mental health episodes and drug and alcohol abuse, so when I contacted SAPOL on countless times for help, they refused to listen, I almost felt belittled by them...I was treated like the criminal because of my past.

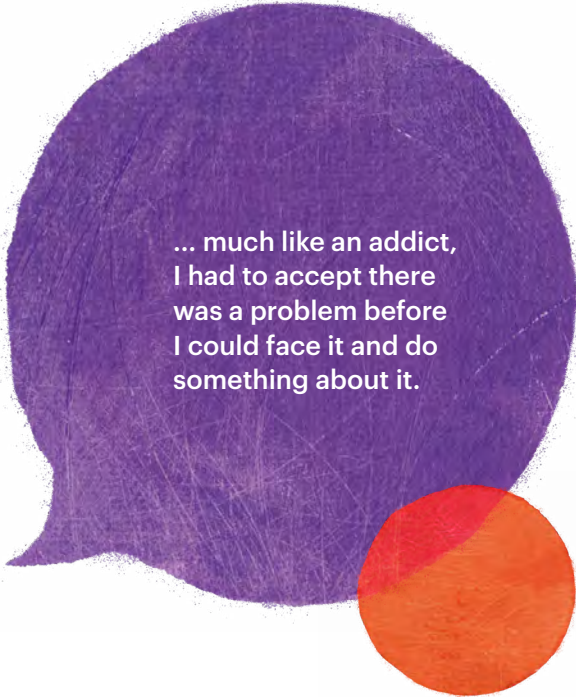
Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

During that week, I walked out to our letterbox, and was horrified to discover an envelope with the police station's logo on the front, sitting inside my letterbox. Inside was a copy of the police report I had made, addressed to me. I hate to think of what might have happened, had my ex-partner been the one to check the letterbox that day, because I had to share ALL information with him.

Victim-survivor written submission

Some police officers are reported as themselves being perpetrators in DFSV; this may on occasion be due to them developing work-related PTSD, which has its own incidence of DFSV but which is not being openly acknowledged, and it is possible to develop PTSD without being aware of it and to continue to work. Police also have a known masculinity culture that may be prejudicial. Self-investigation and self-regulation by police forces and poor independent oversight, regulation and discipline are affecting DFSV responses, and also need to be changed.

Supporter written submission



... much like an addict,
I had to accept there
was a problem before
I could face it and do
something about it.

It would aid my daughters recovery immensely if...cohesive control was made a criminal act. The police... while they (were) very, very good, were unable to stop the relentless mental, emotional and financial abuse from the perpetrator. He would use anything to get to her, including the children.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

When I attempted to leave, my interactions with police left me feeling vulnerable and unsupported. On each occasion, my husband was present while I tried to explain the situation, making it impossible to speak openly. Without privacy or safety assurances, I feared saying anything as I needed to return home. Additionally, when I sought help from the domestic violence police unit, their notes were minimal, leaving me without the information I needed to pursue a restraining order.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Non-government sector

After the first relationship, I had sought the help of the [Domestic Violence Service] and they were kind and helpfully encouraging in teaching me about the 'red flags' to look out for the next time. But, it obviously didn't work to well, because I ended up in this next abusive relationship. I needed shelter, stability, security, support and safety. The 5 S's. I really needed a shelter (my own safe place).

Victim-survivor written submission

The DV services I engaged with were all very helpful. I was most grateful for the two services I engaged with (Victoria and SA). They provided me with good advice and some opportunities for group activities – all of which facilitated healing and a pathway forward. I wanted to take my case worker home in my pocket, I was so alone apart from her. I did ring the 1800Respect number once. They were pretty good.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

Throughout this experience I had been trying to access various support services, including through the Domestic Violence Crisis Line, however I was constantly being rejected from access to those services without understanding why.

Victim-survivor written submission



I needed shelter,
stability, security,
support and safety.

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.

Victim-survivor written submission

My experience with the DVCL was fantastic but the wait times were insane. Nearly 2 hour wait times for an emergency service is absolutely horrific, I sat there the entire time shaking and crying scared my partner would return and kill me ...The support services that I eventually accessed were very understanding and helped find me emergency accommodation.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The DV counsellor (who) connected to the SAPOL disclosure scheme was superior in all aspects ...I cannot speak about her skills more highly. There should be a whole multidisciplinary team supporting this role with multiple staff to prevent burnout.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I was linked up with a case manager from [organisation] who was a god send, but who could only really assist me with understanding how stupid and unjust our protective services and laws are. I also spent hours talking with Women's Legal services and Respect, hoping to receive any form of help or information they could offer.

Victim-survivor written submission

Health

Victims should have been engaged with mental health support programs especially around healthy relationships, coping mechanisms, and setting boundaries, etc. as the lack of knowledge and skills make them vulnerable to either accept the violent partner back or fallen into a new relationship which is abusive or manipulative.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I revealed my history of sexual abuse to the hospital social worker 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).

Victim-survivor written submission

I was in a relationship, my male partners mental health declined, and he became violent, abusive and controlling. There were no mental health services available to meet his needs due to being Aboriginal.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I also feel when there has been extensive physical assault and trauma, then it should be automatic the victim is linked into a psychologist.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

After this incident I went to see a psychologist for family counselling. I desperately needed help. This was the first time the word 'abusive' was used about my ex-husband. The psychologist brutally criticised me, placing the responsibility for [perpetrators] behaviour on me. This crippled me, re-enforcing my parents views, shutting me down even more.

Victim-survivor written submission

I was not referred for psychiatric assessment or psychological/counselling services by my GP, continuing the medication roundabout, often being told to read books and meditate.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

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.

Victim-survivor written submission.

My general practitioner has bulk billed me, allowing me to receive excellent care; however, without this arrangement, I would struggle to afford medical support.

Victim-survivor written submission

Behaviour change programs should be 12 months intensive and then follow up for 5 years- they should be mandatory for any police incident reported. the south Australian government has been completely silent on this issue- I am disappointed with the premier and all the politicians- this should be bi-partisan approach and women's rights should be the goal of every government initiative as only through gender equality will women and all children be safe. Women's rights include access to termination and this should be a medical concern not legislative. Reproduction coercion is significant and women need free access to healthcare to respond to the impacts of dfv including accessible terminations.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I did seek professional counselling for my daughter who was experiencing symptoms of PTSD... There are limited counselling services in regional areas. The only one available under a mental health plan that we could access in a timely manner did not appear to have the skills to help my daughter manage the trauma.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Being listened to, believed and validated has been a critical turning point for me, however if I had support earlier in life or knew where I could turn to for support, I believe I would have been much healthier as an adult... [The psychiatrist] minimised my diagnosis, lectured me for the majority of my appointment on soldiers with PTSD, told me that I didn't need medication and that I should read a book. The implications of this were that there were people in the community who had been through a lot worse than me, so who was I to complain.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

There needs to be a SIGNIFICANT amount more funding to get more mental health services / psychologist out there for to assist both sides, but also get the cost down to access psychological services for survivors (i spend \$600 a month on psychologists / psychiatrists a month out of my own pocket to help me overcome the trauma of what was done to me).

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Access to ongoing free counselling in trauma and sexual violence. CAMHS offer a limited crisis counselling, this was more related to my daughter's mental health, due to her self harm and suicidal ideation. My daughter connected to the therapist but then had to change therapist as the role was limited, this caused significant distress and resulted in a suicide attempt at the fear of this perceived rejection from someone she felt safe to speak with.

Supporter written submission

Being referred to mental health care was often found to be a difficult experience for many... members, sometimes taking many years to occur. Even when appropriate referrals and interventions were eventually offered, there were frequently administrative barriers and availability barriers. Obtaining a referral to a service provider or form of healthcare does not mean your referral can be accommodated. When a referral is accepted, it was reported that there are often significant waitlists, depending on how referrals are triaged.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

My husband got lost in the men's mental health public service- his assigned counsellor had resigned, and no one got back to him with a new contact. A lot of support programs did not have capacity to take us on- the public system was inundated and lacks resources or trained people. I could not find suitable support in the private sector.


Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Emergency Mental Health at WCH are well equip for mental health but not so much for trauma. My daughter would often report she felt distressed, that her dysregulation, and suicidal ideation, was related to trauma and not a mental health issue, she felt the trauma was not as validated as a mental health diagnosis might have been.

Supporter written submission

In the adult Health response to Sexual violence Yarrow Place support a victim/survivor with a peer support to sit at the hospital with them; to comfort them, to reassure them they are safe and not alone in the initial response of the health system. This peer support is not offered to paediatrics. It would be beneficial if there was a single staff member who is trauma informed and able to sit with the young person and/or their parents.

Supporter written submission



... there needs to be investment in structured data capture to better understand factors that predict the use of DFSV and to evaluate the effectiveness of perpetrator programs at stopping DFSV

There is a massive gap in services for girls aged 14-16 as Yarrow place only manages 16+ & CPS are disinterested after about 13 unless it is familiar rape & sexual assault. There is no counselling or services for young women who are raped or sexually assaulted under 16.

Supporter Share With Us survey response

There was and is no help. I had a mental health care plan to see a psychologist. The waitlist was longer than the plan timeframe. I waited over 18 months for a psych, only to see someone whose service was not professional by any means... there is a whole population of people, children and adults who were let down by the systems and continue to be let down due to lack of follow up care particularly around trauma and mental health.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

More accessible Aboriginal Health services in urban areas to be able to train their staff properly..., including cultural ways. The last thing I wanted to do was go and sit alone in a room with a man to talk about what had happened. It made me sick to my stomach and I never went back for help.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I woke up in a bay in the ED surrounded by other patients... I could hardly talk as my throat and face was in so much pain from being strangled multiple times ...Between doctors doing tests and having CT scans, X Ray and MRI's I was made to give my statement ... (people) could hear everything. There was no privacy or no effort to make sure I felt ok talking to the police so close to other people.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

One of the greatest challenges I faced was not realising that what I was experiencing was coercive control... Accessible counselling or psychological support from the start would have helped me understand the signs and effects of coercive control, empowering me to take protective steps sooner.... Early psychological support is essential not only for recovery but also for recognising and addressing abuse patterns in their early stages.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I have cancelled or rescheduled multiple psychologist appointments because I couldn't afford them. I know that EMDR is useful for my recovery from PTSD (which was a result of sexual violence) but currently I can't afford it and it is negatively affecting my health, work, and relationships.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Lived-experience advice and expertise

We endorse the notion of creating a framework where survivors/ family members can contribute actively at all levels. We look to the work which has been done within the mental health system. In this system there has been a long journey to imbed the consumer/carer perspective at advisory, policy, education, and peer intervention. This includes people with lived experience as paid/salaried workers, sessional trainers, and consultants.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

Members unanimously spoke to the promise and significance of engaging lived experience when developing, designing, or delivering any service or system for victim-survivors of FDSV. Not only does this mean better solutions are found faster, but the practice itself becomes a healing and meaning-making experience for victim-survivors as individuals and a community.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

We also need new recovery models that are informed by those with lived experience of DFV. Please fund projects that invite DFV survivors to co-design such models.

Victim-survivor written submission

I've been many things in my life: a daughter, a sister, a granddaughter, a guilty survivor, a rebel, a tearaway, the beaten, the laughed at, the nursemaid, the instigator, the follower, the thief, the hungry, the desperate, the molested, the hated, the despised, the forgotten, the ignored, the saved. A runaway, lover, wife, mother, beaten, worthless, left with nothing. nanna, stepmother, another lover, the loved, the cherished, the carer... the business owner... the kinship carer, a friend, a mentor, a champion of causes and people. I have been many things but all I really am is a woman who survived.

A woman who wants to make a difference.
A woman who found something to believe in.
A woman who eventually climbed her mountain and found her way in a sometimes unforgiving world.

Victim-survivor written submission

There is no emphasis on lived experience in the sector, it feels like acknowledging lived experience can put you at a disadvantage in terms of jobs and workplaces, because it's seen as a vulnerability/ risk factor rather than a strength. (And what does that say about the view of the sector servicing us?! A lot!)

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

As a victim survivor with 39 years of lived experience, I believe I gave a lot to offer the Government in regards to strategies to support individuals, including developing and implementing programs to be put in place in schools, this is the only opportunity society has to support eradicate the horrendous experience of DFSV.


Victim-survivor written submission

Lived experience needs to have more of a voice to drive the change in recovery we need.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

People without lived experience can perhaps acknowledge or appreciate or sympathise with victim survivors. Those of us with lived experience know firsthand and so can truly understand the thought processes and challenges victims and other victim survivors experience - how it makes us feel and why it's so hard to leave. All victim and victim-survivors have heard "why don't you just leave?". The broader community needs to learn the reasons we don't "just leave" and how they can provide support around this. Systemic change will only happen with the meaningful input and consultation with DFSV victims and victim survivors.

Victim-survivor written submission



All victim and victim-survivors have heard "why don't you just leave?"

The call to action

I feel like the situation I'm in is unfair and no one does anything about it and me and my sister don't deserve this.

Commissioner and Young Person Student Voice postcards

I beg of you to consider implementing a state wide crises support agency or foundation for religious and spiritual abuse for women and people within the LGBTQIA+ community...Religion (was) used as a method to control me. I was denied access to secular education. I had the inability to think for myself.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

We need to educate the kids and provide prevention and awareness so they don't turn into adults who are either perpetrators or victims. We need support services for men, so they don't continue this behaviour. We need more support services for the kids who experience trauma associated with family violence.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Can we please include straight male victims, lesbian victims and gay victims in the discussion?

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Men need to be held accountable for changing male culture...There should be a commissioner for women's equality in the South Australian government.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I often feel, we don't want to challenge the men in our lives (by) putting something so confronting, but we need to, it needs to be front and centre on bus stops. Be relentless and get the message out there.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

But what I do think could have the biggest impact is if we move our focus from being reactive to the issue and begin to be proactive... Protecting young people from harm and breaking the cycle of abuse. If we are looking to reduce the amount of women dying from domestic violence each year then we need to start turning to the men who display the high risk behaviours and understanding what they need.

Supporter Share With Us survey response

The best intervention is early intervention and prevention. It is important to note that there is no short-term fix for CPTSD and childhood trauma – it is an ongoing, life-long treatment to overcome. No one just walks away from DV, it impacts every part of a person's life for a very long time.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

Women will leave or attempt to leave up to min of 5 times before they break free. There needs to be crisis teams who can swing into action with immediate 24hr 7 day access to personal safety, child safety, pet safety.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

There needs to be a Police Task Force or specialised DV/FV Police available across the state. Many Police do not have the training or knowledge in how to assist a person experiencing/ or has just left a DV situation.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Every woman that goes into hospital for DFSV should have access to a social worker... so they are aware of what services are available. They should be referred to trauma counselling specific to DFSV and be linked with a social worker from Centrelink to help them immediately.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Support, emotionally and financially. Being taken seriously during and after the situation. The right to privacy and not allowing the media to cast aspersions on the character of either party, good or bad.

Supporter written submission

My perpetrator was female and the focus is very gendered...I know it's rare but it is felt that people won't be believed if (the perpetrator is) a woman".

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

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.

Victim-survivor written submission

I think there needs to be more support/info/advice for families supporting a loved one experiencing DFSV and that first responders should have mandatory training in recognising, responding and making appropriate referrals for people experiencing DFSV.

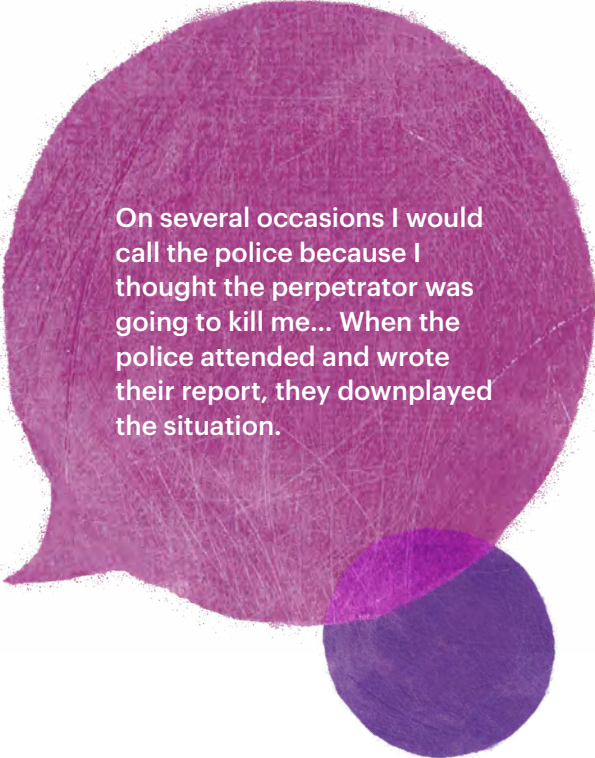
Victim-survivor written submission

Embed technologies to support the person / family- centred approach, including data collection, data-sharing in partnership with stakeholders to improve the quality and accuracy of the data and evidence so victim-survivors do not need to repeat themselves. Other advantages may include offering anonymity and confidentiality.

Victim-survivor written submission

Nothing will change with domestic violence statistics until we can engage men and encourage them to change. I am not sure what the answers are but women and children cannot carry the burden.

Supporter Share With Us survey response



On several occasions I would call the police because I thought the perpetrator was going to kill me... When the police attended and wrote their report, they downplayed the situation.

Complete review of the funding requirement for agencies so that it can be shown that they are providing services for all those at risk of family and domestic and sexual violence. There are currently limited checks and balances about the kinds of services being provided and how the money is spent. Specific services for men and boys should be put in place including counselling and refuges.

Victim-survivor written submission

The risk of escalation by a perpetrator is not predictable, and therefore, everybody experiencing any form of DFSV should automatically be regarded as being at maximum risk. The vast majority of perpetrators do not kill their victims, but some do, and that can occur without any prior history of physical violence.

Victim-survivor written submission

Develop risk and safety systems which protect the identification of persons who are considered at risk of experiencing or perpetrating domestic, family and sexual violence (manage anonymity and confidentiality).

Victim-survivor written submission

Early intervention is essential to ensure the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable individuals, but in my case, this was handled poorly. When I finally came forward about my situation, DCP and SAPOL dismissed my concerns after a brief investigation, failing to offer me any protection. They closed the case quickly, deciding there was no need for intervention, even though I was at immediate risk.

Young Person Victim-survivor written submission

Evidence-based assessment tools. Currently, women under-go a “risk assessment” that will identify if the risk is a crisis or a risk over a period of time. Currently, the “risk” for a woman must occur within the last 14 days to be seen as a crisis – then she is eligible for a service. Longer than 14 days, and she is influenced by counsellors to “stay” with family or friends.

Organisation written submission

We need to have a victim centric support model that helps survivors navigate the complex maze of post event stakeholders, rather than leaving them to fend for themselves in what is a time of intense trauma. These topics are uncomfortable and often taboo, however many victims want to be heard, we want to be part of the solution and not see others go through what we have had to. No one person can come up with a magic bullet, it's a collective voice and shared experience that will guide SA to better outcomes for women and children.

Victim-survivor written submission

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 ‘siloed’ by support services.

Victim-survivor written submission

Effective management of individuals at high risk of experiencing or perpetrating domestic, family, and sexual violence requires a multifaceted approach. By combining safety planning, legal measures, counselling, risk assessment, and community support, a comprehensive strategy can be developed to address the immediate and long-term needs of those at risk.

Victim-survivor written submission

Health services being linked in with crisis housing in rural and remote areas, to enable a safe place of discharge once any health needs had been addressed. Visiting female GP services to rural and remote areas without resident female GPs, to enable victims to discuss concerns with a female practitioner. Formal processes to support health services ‘move’ a victim to a safer community from a rural/remote hospital if that is what the victim would like support with (eg, maybe having a link with angel-flight or similar organisation).

Victim-survivor written submission

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.

Victim-survivor written submission

[We need] easy access and availability to direct front line and outreach services for 'victim survivor of family, domestic and sexual violence' that provide information about domestic violence, risk assessment tools, referral details for services and supports, safety planning and Intervention Order/ protection orders. (service directory).

Victim-survivor written submission

[We need access to] front line DV and mental health services; legal assistance; housing services that are culturally-responsive and acknowledge individual difference that embed cultural and holistic perspective into their practice.

Victim-survivor written submission

[We need a] legalised statewide framework or guideline, which allows access to information that is accurate and updated.

Supporter written submission

Interstate Communication: There must be seamless communication between states to track and apprehend perpetrators. This will prevent them from using state borders as a shield to escape justice.

Victim-survivor written submission

Healthcare; Education; Schools, Universities, Childcare; SA Police; Courts and Legal services; Social services; Community and NGOs; Workplaces; Financial institutions; Telecommunications and technology providers. These systems all play a vital role in identifying individuals at high risk of experiencing or perpetrating domestic, family, and sexual violence. Effective coordination and information sharing between these systems are crucial to providing timely intervention and support.

Victim-survivor written submission

There is unquestionably a need for better police training in the area of DFSV, free or more affordable legal aid for all who need it (including male victims), major law reform and better education of the legal profession, improvements in the court system and in para-legal procedures, and radical improvements at every point in our carceral system, rehabilitation and social re-integration, behaviour modification programmes, and other mental health care of both victims and perpetrators.

Victim-survivor written submission

All of these elements of the DV 'support' system need an independent service, so that if the victim feels like the system is not keeping them safe there is somewhere neutral to go and raise these concerns and request further support.

Victim-survivor written submission

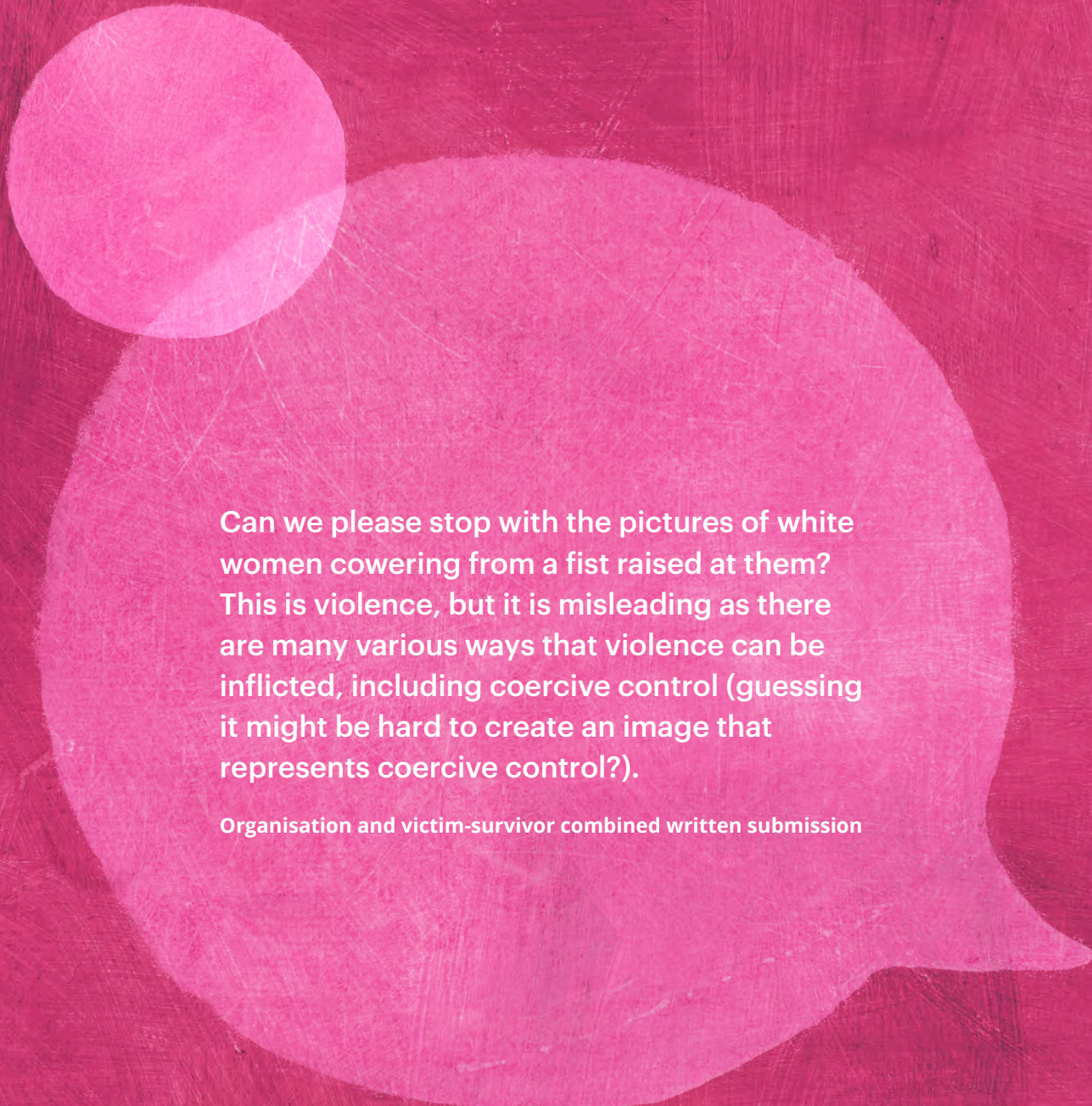
[We need] cross collaboration between states and areas that gain information on DV. Centrelink, DV crisis centres, psychologists, DCP, police and government need to be aware of all cases. There are too many internet sites that give different information it needs to come from 1 or 2 sources only.

Victim-survivor written submission

To end this submission, the main point, among many other points is that victims need to be protected, that should be every systems priority: lawyers, mediators, facilitators, courts, phycologist, councillors, and rehabilitators of perpetrators, the victim's safety and welfare should be the main priority.

Young Person Victim-survivor written submission





Can we please stop with the pictures of white women cowering from a fist raised at them? This is violence, but it is misleading as there are many various ways that violence can be inflicted, including coercive control (guessing it might be hard to create an image that represents coercive control?).

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

Making domestic, family and sexual violence visible

Community awareness

We should have been collecting a range of data in a national, coordinated and systematic manner, which could all be analysed, evaluated, regularly published, and which could improve our understanding of the nature and complexity of DFSV.

Victim-survivor written submission

Everybody says about female abuse which I feel for- there are very bad men out there, but when it comes to male abuse no one listens or believe us. We are the quiet ones that protect our kids from the abuse.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Better statistics are needed in order to clearly see the issue in its entirety and magnitude. How can we expect people to be more informed when services, statisticians, government agencies, and academics still struggle to come to an agreement on definitions and terminology.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

There are more types of abuse that are not often discussed, like financial abuse or coercive control, and kids or partners may not even know what they are facing is actually a form of abuse. Or they may fear for their livelihood or threats to their children if they speak up. Ensuring safety is so crucial to people who cannot leave without their kid[s] and do not have the finance or support network to [c]are for them. Knowledge of other people's experiences and knowing they are strong.

Commissioner and Young Person Student Voice postcards

What happened for world to spiral into such a bad place, and I have spoken [with my husband] about this a lot, we both have worked through our guilt in not "doing something" [for our daughter], but the coercive control of both her and the children was extreme [so it went unnoticed].

Supporter and victim-survivor written submission

The broader public needs to be given more information about how to respond, to not be bystanders. Campaigns to not only increase awareness but educate people on specific and helpful responses when they suspect or detect DV would be ideal.

Victim-survivor written submission

It was only by luck that someone referred me to the Women's Legal Services who were fantastic. They helped me get myself and more importantly, my son out of a safe relationship with the help of a civil intervention order when SAPOL refused to help. This service was not promoted by SAPOL which would have been hugely helpful.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

He was good to the kids, he had a job and provided well and as long as I did things within the lines of his expectations everything was fine. He was just being overprotective. He was jealous because he loved me so much. He was worried he'd lose me because he loved me so much. He knew of all my hardships, so he wanted to protect me from the whole world because he loved me so much. It would be years before I'd even realise it was his way of controlling me.

Victim-survivor written submission

We were materially privileged and there was no one who I could speak to and get help... There is too much emphasis on crisis response there needs to be consideration for helping women understand their experiences as dfv and give them the tools to work out their options. Also more focus on recovery.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I believe because especially with situations where coercive control (which is present in every type of violence against women) is dominate, the harm or concern for safety isn't present until the risk of harm escalates. Many signs of abuse can easily be explained away because they might not always be harmful, which is why it can go unnoticed until there's a pattern of behaviour over a period. The abuse needs to get worse before it gets noticed, otherwise it doesn't get noticed and either it escalated and then steps can be taken, or significant harm occurs and it's too late for the victim to receive help because their life has been taken.

Victim-survivor written submission

There needs to be more information / factual information about what rights women and children have in regards to financial control, separation, cohesion etc. Many women do not identify for a long time that this is DV and when they do decide to leave they are conditioned to not 'take' any of 'his' money for fear of more serious reprisals.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I am now out of those relationships and recognise what the red flags are that can lead to domestic violence situation. However, at the time I did not recognise the abuse was happening due to my disability which is autism. Many of his friends and family are under his manipulation and have now apologised for not stopping the abuse.

Victim-survivor written submission

I strongly believe that Domestic violence services are underfunded - extremely and it is visible that (the) current system is not coping with demand. With the current media representation around the funding, clients are aware that there is big amount (of money) in the sector, and we often hear frustration for not being able to meet their needs, despite government allocating huge amounts "according to them".

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

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!

Supporter written submission

I know there are many varied and complicated reasons that domestic violence occurs, and each situation can be different and difficult to identify, there are some behaviours for both people with lived experience and people who use violence that can be recognized and acted upon. This needs to be done at a young age, as soon as the behaviour starts. Schools are a valuable resource. I know our teachers do so much for their students, but this has to be the first-place behaviours can be identified. Those involved need to be assessed and assisted. In the case of my teenage daughter, she did not turn to me when she had issues, she turned initially to her friends and then eventually to the school counsellor. More widespread knowledge of what behaviours in relationships are acceptable and what are not would have assisted both my daughter in recognizing her situation and also her friends in advising her (hopefully to seek help).

Supporter written submission

Often significant others may be unhelpful in their approach to supporting the victim/survivor as they are influenced by myths and stereotypes about DFSV, and D&FV perpetrators may have isolated the victim/survivor by actively sabotaging these relationships.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

To prevent family and domestic violence SA should have more ways to [anonymously] report it. without whoever is doing it finding out it was you.

Commissioner and Young Person Student Voice postcards

[She] lived in DV for ten years, having no idea that this is what she was living in...The media had represented it as a low socioeconomic male in a blue singlet giving a woman a black eye. This hadn't been her experience, so she just figured she was in a difficult marriage that required more effort on her part to make her husband happy.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

People should learn to talk to others about DV and sexual violence, I regularly went to work with choke marks around my neck and no one said anything to me. It should not be a taboo subject. The violent person should be removed from the home.

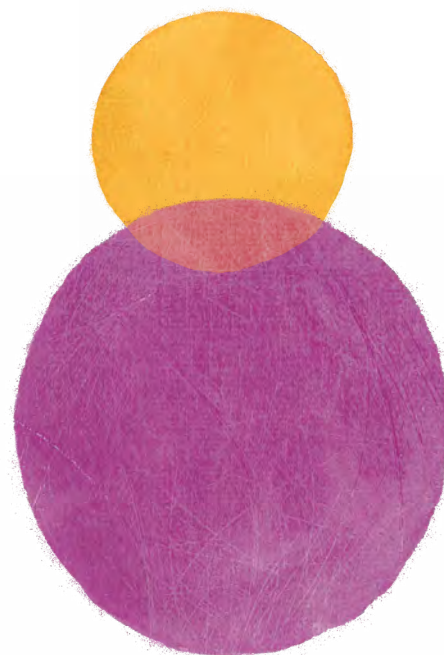
Victim-survivor written submission

The Media... needs to be called out ... There needs to be mandatory reporting standards for cases of domestic violence particularly those that have resulted in murder. I cannot emphasize this enough... I think of what we hear on the radio, what my daughter hears on the radio or reads on social media and the way these things are reported is simply not good enough.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Even the Media('s)...portrayal of men who murder women, "he was a family man"... it needs to end.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



Education and training

To prevent family and domestic violence SA should take children seriously. Provide training to school teachers or staff to be aware of domestic violence or bullying.

Commissioner and Young Person Student Voice postcards

A complete overhaul and scaffolding of capability development through education, training and experience for all response workers including Child protection intake, police, DV services, school educators, doctors etc...The current education, experience and work readiness for staff in critical roles especially in Child Protection and the police is completely inadequate. The child protection training and recruitment standards as a case in point.


Victim-survivor written submission

A lot is said that this is a women's issue- It is not. It is a MENS issue and funding needs to be directed to EDUCATING men. Education is needed for respect at a primary and high school level so the next generation does not have to go through this.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

This Royal Commission is being asked to develop recommendations that will remedy this situation for victim/survivors of sexual offences in South Australia. Culture change for institutions was named by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse as an important aspect of improving institutional responses to victim/survivors of child sexual abuse, and the same can be recommended in relation to the criminal justice system's responses to adult victim/survivors of sexual violence. If culture change initiatives are not put in place to shift these cultures of scepticism and victim blame within the key actors within the criminal justice system, the efficacy of any new policies/programs/practices implemented because of this Royal Commission into DFSV will be undermined.

Victim-survivor written submission



Often narcissistic, highly manipulative and extremely good at masking their violence and coercive control. The perp will often present as sane, friendly and cooperative...

The current education, experience and work readiness for staff in critical roles especially in Child Protection and the police is completely inadequate. The child protection training and recruitment standards as a case in point.

Victim-survivor written submission

Autistic and other neurodivergent women are likely to be unaware that their experience with partners is abusive, due to their experience of social differences throughout their lives. More needs to be done to educate and advocate for more respectful communication within families.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Counsellors on phone lines such as 1800 respect and Full Stop need to be better trained in trauma sensitive treatments. Standard counselling training is not enough and they are not equipped with enough knowledge of support services to effectively triage. My experiences asking for local support services have been poor. Often I was given incorrect information or given no information at all.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The violence I experienced was from my foster son who has Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. FASD affects an estimated 5% of the population and frequently results in violent behaviour. In my opinion, the prevalence of FASD needs to be considered by this review...Many of the children in the foster care system with FASD end up involved with the criminal justice system (studies have shown that 30% of men in prison for violent crime have FASD) or the mental health system. Many end up homeless. Many end up responding to frustrations or disappointments as adults with anger and violence.... Please consider these two issues in your report - the impact of FASD on family violence and the issue of child to parent violence.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

There is an inherent lack of understanding when it comes to the state that police will find the victim/survivor in when attending DV situations. The victim/survivor is, more often than not, highly traumatised... There is also a lack of understanding regarding the personality type of DV perpetrators. Often narcissistic, highly manipulative and extremely good at masking their violence and coercive control. The perp will often present as sane, friendly and cooperative...Police education surrounding what to expect when attending DV situations would be invaluable.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

To prevent family and domestic violence SA should educate the children that they have the right to speak up for [themselves]. And no one has [the] right to hurt them or bullying them or touch them inappropriately. But we also need to get the people who are being violent to change their behaviour.

**Commissioner and Young Person Student
Voice postcards**

That all Social Work/Social Sciences/Youth Work/Psychology/Counselling studies have a full course in understanding SDFV/Coercive Control so that all these practitioners are fully across the issue and can recognise it and provide appropriate early intervention.

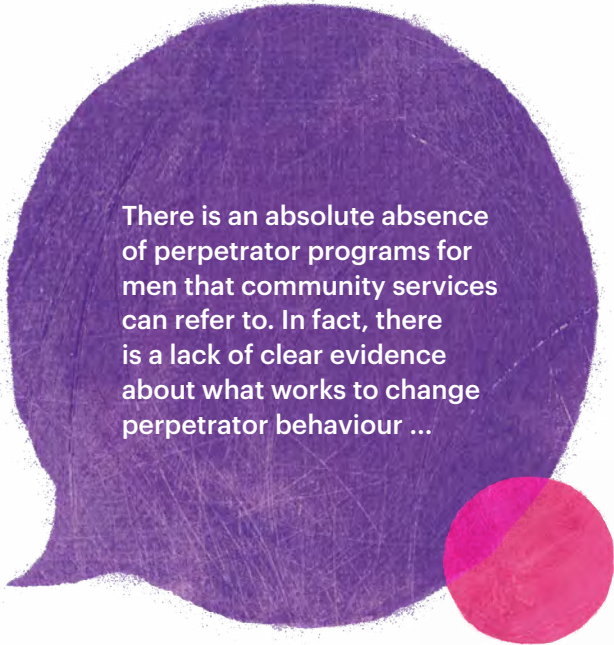
**Organisation and victim-survivor
combined written submission**

It is vital that support services understand that family and domestic violence and sexual violence can and is perpetrated by both men and women and education and training is paramount in this space. Frontline workers such as police, ambulance, firefighters, agency workers, DCP, family law staff including lawyers and magistrates need to be given training to recognise family and domestic violence and how to respond; with the aim of keeping victim survivors (which includes children) safe.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

There is an inherent lack of understanding when it comes to the state that police will find the victim/survivor in when attending DV situations. The victim/survivor is, more often than not, highly traumatised... There is also a lack of understanding regarding the personality type of DV perpetrators. Often narcissistic, highly manipulative and extremely good at masking their violence and coercive control. The perp will often present as sane, friendly and cooperative...Police education surrounding what to expect when attending DV situations would be invaluable.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



There is an absolute absence of perpetrator programs for men that community services can refer to. In fact, there is a lack of clear evidence about what works to change perpetrator behaviour ...

[Services should not] place anyone in any position of power, be it police, health care or mental health services, lawyers, barristers or judges, unless they have conducted specialised and comprehensive trauma informed training on the topic of family, domestic and sexual violence.

Victim-survivor written submission

To prevent family and domestic violence SA should have more options in schools to help & protect us. To also teach parents.

Commissioner and Young Person Student Voice postcards

The family believes that all front-line officers such as those who attended on the night of [loved one's] passing, need better training in quickly recognising the need to involve a higher authority where physical or mental abuse, or in extreme cases death, has occurred. We recognise that legislation to criminalise coercive control will soon go before parliament, however for it to be effective, a massive change in the culture of SAPOL needs to be take place.

Supporter written submission

The Commission should consider mandating that every police response to a DFSV (and/or mental health) incident should be accompanied by a qualified mental health nurse or clinician and/or frontline DFSV worker, and that in the absence of any immediate risk of violence, that that other person assume joint or primary responsibility for managing the incident. Police also need better training in de-escalating tense and threatening incidents, and more accurately assessing actual threats to themselves, instead of resorting to unnecessary.

Victim-survivor written submission

While I've experienced positive/supportive responses from those in the mental health field and within SAPOL, I just believe I got lucky, the services and systems are in desperate need of more people in the position of power to undergo trauma informed training.

Victim-survivor written submission

SAPOL & ED departments need to be better educated themselves about what extra help/ supports are available so they can give better information to both victims and perpetrators about where to get on-going help.


Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

To prevent family and domestic violence SA should provide educational program[s] to young people, helping them to learn how to report domestic violence.

Commissioner and Young Person Student Voice postcards

My experience in accessing counselling has not been good... Counsellor was consistently late by more than half an hour, held me up and didn't really accomplish anything. When I returned to the relationship, I wanted phone counselling at work at specific times so that (my) partner did know about it. Counsellor called at wrong time putting me at risk and then when time rearranged didn't call. Never heard from them again.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



I must deserve it", "I must have done something wrong", " I'll just put up with it for now, and not tell anyone" "I'm too embarrassed to say that I'm living with a perpetrator" (this is especially true of professional women) Or the most horrible one is "They must love me, to be this passionate about changing me.

Victim-survivor written submission

Safe and effective help seeking and crisis response

Barriers to help seeking

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.

Victim-survivor written submission

Regional communities make it difficult particularly where both the perpetrator and victim are in professional roles - both have a reputation to uphold, both are well known throughout the community - this provides less certainty about reporting or seeking help services.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Personally, for me I didn't want to believe it was happening to me. I could see it clear as day happening to other people close to me, but I played a part in my own delusion that no way could it be me. I didn't want to be a victim; I didn't want my life to change - which I knew it would if I acknowledged the situation and it did change once I accepted it.

Victim-survivor written submission

Even though dowry is not recognised within Australia, it is still a curse for migrant Women. On separation none of the dowry monies are taken into account when finances are divided.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Despite progress, a significant stigma still surrounds being a victim of sexual violence. As a sole parent in my forties, I experienced feelings of shame, humiliation, and a sense of having let others down. I questioned how I could have found myself in such a situation. Working in a corporate environment, I faced further challenges when some of my peers advised me not to speak openly or publicly, warning that it could "ruin my career". Through extensive therapy, I have managed to come to terms with some of these emotions, but it still took immense courage to come forward. Unfortunately many others, for various reasons, do not, and continue to suffer in silence.

Victim-survivor written submission

The Police offered me a lift back home. I did not tell Police what had happened over the weekend because I was scared of repercussions from if I got him in trouble and I still had a small amount of hope that things would get better.

Victim-survivor and supporter written submission

My mother committed suicide as a result of on-going domestic violence. There needs to be more help for non-English speaking people, so they know where and who to talk to about getting appropriate help.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

These are the groups I really needed to know about. Narcotics anonymous also have a support group (meeting) for family and friends of drug abusers, unfortunately their meeting tend to be only in the evenings and are not child friendly so I cannot attend.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I live in the south of Adelaide and lived isolated for several months, so it was hard for me to reach for support, but it changed since I decided to reach out for help and guidance. I would say that the only problem I found for me is the distance between places (counting that I don't drive). I mentioned the distances only because I feel that there must be other people who do not drive like me or even teenagers.

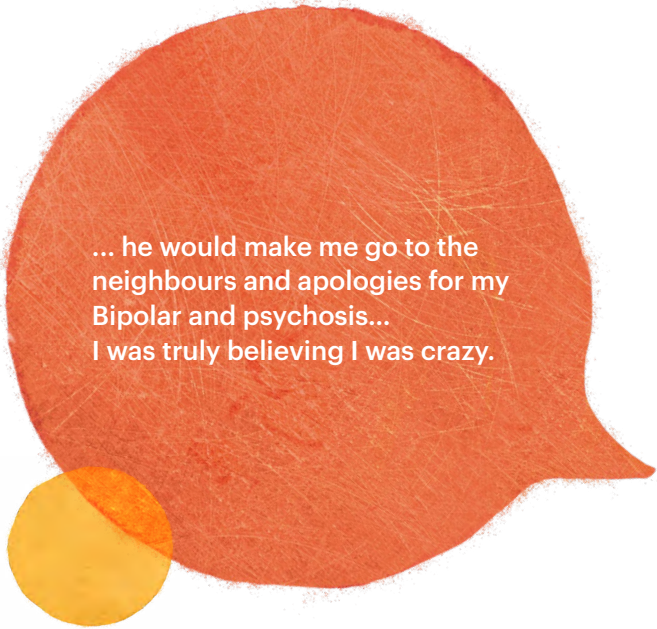
Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

The fear of not being able to do it on my own, or to afford anything I needed was a big barrier. It was a horrible place to be in and the financial and emotional state it left me in was completely ravished, desolate, traumatised and broken. As I mentioned above, I still have moments of traumatised grieving due to the loss.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

DV survivors should be eligible for more financial assistance to attend psychologists, I could not afford to continue to see mine, however, would benefit greatly from this. It is so important that you find a therapist who you feel comfortable with, and in my case the cheaper or free ones I saw through my work were not very relatable. My children also benefit greatly from their counselling, however at \$110 a session with no rebate, I am not able to let them attend as often as they need.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



... he would make me go to the neighbours and apologies for my Bipolar and psychosis...
I was truly believing I was crazy.

When people ask why I didn't I leave, it's because I felt like I was the problem, I was the "crazy" one and I felt lucky to be loved by someone so wonderful when I was such a mess. It was not to do with finances, children, or threats of physical violence ... I was an active participant in public screaming matches; It was entirely a psychological warfare on my own self-perception and my grasp on reality.

Victim-survivor written submission

My experience ...living rural, without family or friends, the closest hospital is 50km away, the closest resources for a domestic violence agency is 100kms away and their main office is 200kms away...I could have suicided and no one would have known unless there was a physical check, which was only conducted every 2-3 weeks, in accommodation on a farm located 10 kilometres out of town. There was no concern regarding my welfare but a reiteration that I was now safe.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

There is even less support available for people living in regional and rural Australia. Imagine living in an abusive relationship, on an isolated property, often with rifles readily available. I can't imagine the terror.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

I am now the full time Kinship Carer for a 4 year old. I have had to take early retirement as I could not get childcare that suited my working hours ... That has put pressure on me and I now worry if I'll have enough funds to raise & educate my grandson.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Pets need to be recognised as family. More people may leave unsafe situations if there was somewhere for their pets to go.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

My friend was in a same sex relationship and experienced horrific coercive control, emotional, verbal abuse as well as physical from the perspective of her wife throwing things at her... She got only weekly calls from her case manager when she was meant to get daily calls. Her case manager also made some homophobic comments towards her.

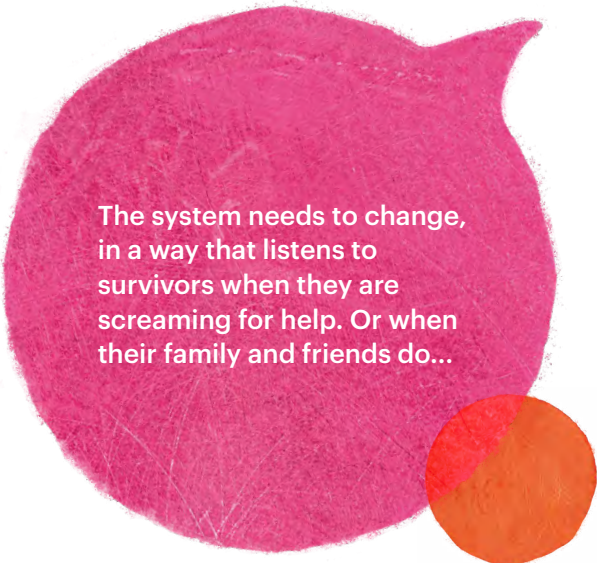
Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The good victim vs the bad victim: The system frames some women as passive victims who only fight back when they perceive their life in certain danger; at all other times, they do not retaliate. Women who defend themselves on a more regular basis are perceived as something other than 'victims' and find themselves at a significant legal disadvantage, as well as being framed as something other than the 'good' or deserving victim.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

Eligibility criteria, meant that when fleeing DV with my mother (14 years old at the time) that she was unable to access numerous resources. We were unable to access multiple resources due to the fact that my mother was not supported by a shelter. There was no recognition that someone could flee DV and not be in a shelter environment. We still required assistance finding a rental and furniture.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



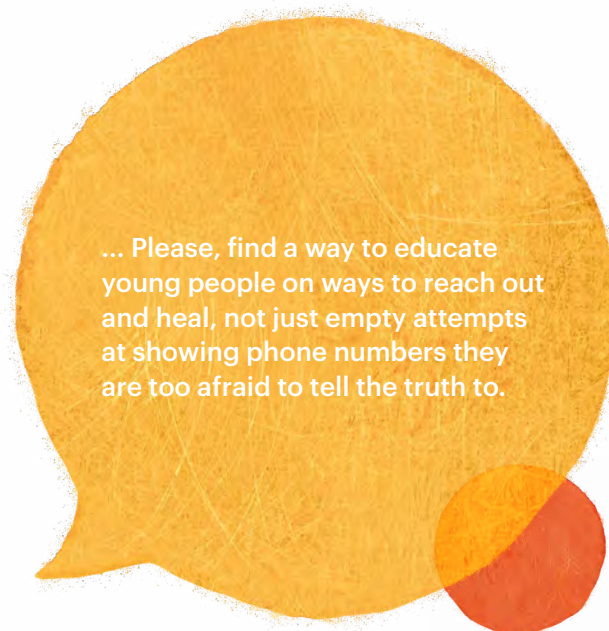
The system needs to change, in a way that listens to survivors when they are screaming for help. Or when their family and friends do...

I wish the public services would have a better communication where explicit say the services are available to people that experience domestic and sexual violence. When I was trying to find a way to get support, most of the website said 'support to South Australians' experiencing domestic and sexual violence'. I am not a citizen and just by those words, I assumed the services were not there for people like me.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Persistent myths and language surrounding sexual violence continue to be significant barriers to reporting. There is widespread misunderstanding about what constitutes a rape, with the belief that it must be a violent attack in a dark alley to be considered rape. Questions such as whether the victim was intoxicated or whether they might be making a false allegation further contribute to this issue. The low reporting rates or often misinterpreted as low prevalence. Additionally, victim-blaming questions, such as why the victim did not fight back, are prevalent. The language and attitudes I encountered while at the DPP were deeply traumatising and hard to believe, had I not experienced it first hand. Despite perceived progress, these myths, harmful language and deeply ingrained beliefs continue to influence society, justice and the legal system.

Victim-survivor written submission



... Please, find a way to educate young people on ways to reach out and heal, not just empty attempts at showing phone numbers they are too afraid to tell the truth to.

Migrant Women with limited English and locally born and brought up women with limited economic freedom find it very difficult to leave the male perpetrator. The abuser is often the holder of money and comfort not only for the woman but also for the children that the victim cares for daily. ... Migrant regulations also place power in the hands of the perpetrator, the migrant victim has little opportunity to continue to stay in Australia if she does not have permanent residence status and where her child is Australian.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

People with disabilities need to stop being added as an extension to a partner. I am disabled and care for special needs children. We can't get out because we have nothing of our own.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The overwhelming sense of isolation and shame was one of the primary reasons I didn't report the violence earlier. I feared the loss of dignity and privacy that would come from asking for help, and I know many silent victims feel the same.

Victim-survivor written submission

Earlier this year I disclosed having suffered an incident of domestic physical violence, after a long period of my ex using coercive control tactics with my children against me. Weeks later I was being performance managed and essentially ignored by HR when I noted my recent experiences being protagonists for my slipping performance as well as a separate issue of bullying from my senior manager. I will never disclose such a thing to a workplace again, despite the laws and the policies micro aggression is rife and discrimination against people experiencing violence rampant in work places.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Crucially, when an individual is unable to take an animal with them or ensure their safety, concern for the animal's wellbeing may become a barrier to help seeking or leaving a violent partner. Indeed, concern for the wellbeing of an animal may contribute to a person's decision to return to a violent partner after a period of separation. Nobody should ever be compelled to make a choice between their own safety and the safety of animal family members. Further, women and children impacted by DFSV should not be expected to surrender animals to access support, such as accommodation services. When faced with a potential loss or separation from an animal, an individual can experience 'considerable distress'

Organisation written submission

Mum felt sorry for me for sure but told me, "I'm living with family, there's no room for you here, you have to go back." She told me it was likely I had caused him to hit me, that I shouldn't push him so far. My aunt told me that sometimes these things just happen. They said I should just go home and do everything right and maybe it won't happen again. So there was nothing she could do for me and nowhere else to go. So I went back. After all, I should just be lucky someone had married me. That's what I'd thought.

Victim-survivor written submission

Cyber safety needs to improve. I was stuck in a case of sextortion from early February until late October. No one knew and I do not plan on telling anyone. I want cyber safety to improve so that no other person has to go through the same as me.

Commissioner and Young Person Student Voice postcards

I live and work, and my children live and attend school, in a very small community. There is no locally based domestic violence specific police officer at our local police station, and the police officers who do work at the station I also work professionally with when policing and health care overlap. This meant that for many years I did not feel comfortable to go and report episodes of physical violence among people that I knew professionally, and in a small community where my husband is perceived publicly to be a good and decent man.

Victim-survivor written submission

I lived in a small community that thrived on small village ethos of gossip and blame. I had a reasonably high profile job at the time and was so ashamed that anyone would find out that I was a total failure. Still feel the shame. Did not know of any services that were available and would have been too ashamed to access them. In my experience there is no such thing as confidentiality amongst the so-called professionals in this town so would not have trusted the services had they been available. I was frightened for my life but that didn't seem to matter. Luckily I have survived however I would still not "trust" the services in this town. Too much talk between community workers.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Women like me are forced to remain in abusive relationships long after we decide we want to leave because we don't know how to plan and implement our escape. For some women, the financial hardships after they leave the relationship are so significant, they return to their abuser out of desperation due to lack of housing security, the welfare of their children etc. In these situations, abusers become more controlling and the ability to escape again is significantly reduced.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

Access to services should be fair no matter where you live - country and remote areas do not have equitable access. DFV should be a priority public health issue.

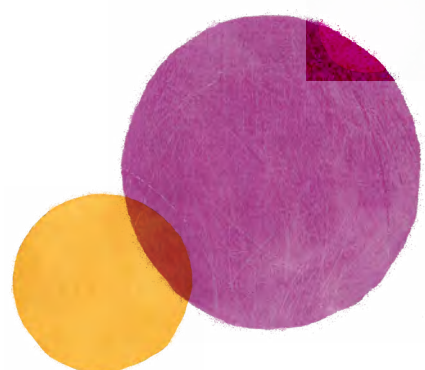
Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I think the most important issue is accessing services – the stigma of accessing services and the lack of supports – in regional SA. Living in a regional community, there is limited information and recognition. In our area it's like it doesn't exist, and people become offended if you talk about it, even local council had customers complain about certain information being shared in a public space.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

Even after undergoing a lot of domestic violence it took me time to move out since I was worried of my Visa cancellation. The violence was too much and later decided to leave and now in emergency accommodation. I have a baby and I am so stressed about the Visa since it will expire next year and am worried of going back home because of my safety since my (family) have been forcing me to stay in marriage. At the moment I have tried exploring different visa option and its even making me so stressful and mentally draining.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



Accessible safe and inclusive help seeking

There are many support services offered to women suffering from domestic violence, but none in Adelaide from 2015 to present day, offered to men, that have been abused by their partners...I called the victims of domestic violence support line in Adelaide in 2023 and told them what happened, the lady on the phone laughed and said, "this is a service for women only" and I asked where can I go? And she said, "she did not know, perhaps speak with your doctor?"

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

As a service provider, believing the individual has proven critical. There are many agencies and providers that show strength and skills with improved response strategies and working collaboratively. Historical incidences and errors are critical and remain relevant as it provides opportunities for improving the responses. Believing the victim is necessary and it is not something to be taken light-hearted. As a victim-survivor who has experienced a variety of forms of DV across their lifetime, there are multiple issues which are faced, and if a victim-survivor is able to build rapport and connection with a provider, who believes them will make a difference. There remain significant issues within the current police system and [proving] DV, with many victim-survivors gibing up, which can be life threatening. The responses received from these services have and will continue to impact the individual.

Victim-survivor written submission

If someone I knew needed help to be safe I would get help and be there for them, making sure that they are safe both mentally, emotionally and physically.

Commissioner and Young Person Student Voice postcards

Early intervention is critical in all circumstances of domestic and family violence, not all that are in the midst of experiencing DV have the knowledge or understanding of what they can/can't do to keep themselves safe from violent attracts. The severity of these acts of violence can continue to reoccur across their life especially when/if retriggered. The probability of a second opportunity to provide early intervention is unlikely, whether the person has been killed, or due to the mental health factors which follow. Suicide risk is high, as a victim-survivor, it is easier to give up and quit asking for help, because they see no hope or positive outcome or hope.

Victim-survivor written submission

As a male experiencing domestic violence from a female, my story is often disregarded, and I feel completely unheard. For many years, I was subjected to both mental and physical abuse by the mother of my daughter. After leaving her, she has relentlessly sought ways to inflict further harm on me and my family, primarily through parental alienation and financial abuse... When people ask how I missed the red flags early on, the blame shifts to me, even though I was manipulated from the very beginning.

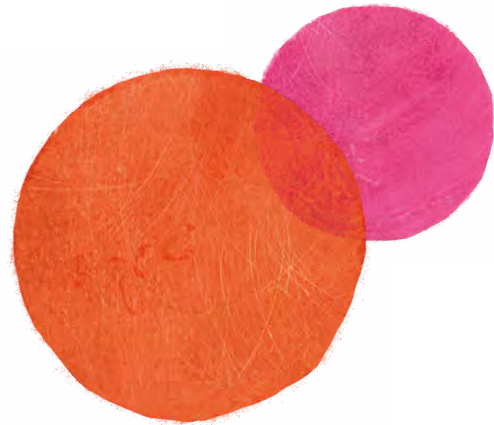
Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Members agreed that how victim-survivors are treated by different parts of the systems they engage with is the most significant factor in their lived experience of FDSV. How someone is treated by a law enforcement officer or healthcare professional will be part of their experience of FDSV, which means it can be continuation of the trauma or it can be a counterforce to that trauma. Every person who will interact with victim-survivors must be trained in trauma-informed practice or otherwise be considered a risk to exacerbating that trauma, even if it is in the days, weeks, months, years, and decades following that trauma.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

My experience with the DVCL was fantastic but the wait times were insane. Nearly 2 hour wait times for an emergency service is absolutely horrific, I sat there the entire time shaking and crying scared my partner would return and kill me ...The support services that I eventually accessed were very understanding and helped find me emergency accommodation.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



I believe that we need more walk in services, specifically for DV, in places where women would be able to attend without a great deal of notice e.g.: shopping centres, children's centres, community houses. Places where women would be attending without scrutiny from perpetrator.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I was not 13yrs when I was married to my now Ex Husband, father of my now adults 3 children in (country name)..My Ex abused me since I was 13... I did not know how Australian Law worked, I was new here. I was fearful for me and children safety.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

More accessibility and displayed services ... would be good. Instead of trying to find yourself quickly on the phone without being caught... It's all about the timing and I feel if it was advertised more ... people will see and remember that, and feel safer to make to leap...and knowing who to contact for such things.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Information and services for F&DV need to ensure their wording isn't focused on intimate partner violence as it excludes people/adults experiencing all forms of violence from others including female family members and friends, which is just as horrendous and damaging.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The Women's Legal Service do their best to try to offer good legal representation to women in South Australia, however staffing models can lead to impaired representation. If the staff they employ are young women at the start of their legal careers they can be intimidated by older, more established (and usually male) lawyers representing the perpetrator of domestic violence (i.e., men who have perpetrated coercive control and other offences, usually without consequence) who is using financial settlement processes to continue to be abusive to their ex-partner... Because of this, victims of domestic abuse may be pressured to accept less favorable outcomes in order to have their matters finalised.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The South Australian Government needs to ensure its departments and agencies act in accordance with Access and Equity Policies, so that its programs and services are accessible to all South Australians and responsive to their needs to deliver equitable outcomes for all, regardless of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Victim-survivor written submission

Limit on receiving victims of crime assistance. As a victim of sexual violence a lot of memories and feelings resurfaced with the birth of my children, years after the violence occurred. Now that I am ready to get a formal PTSD diagnosis and seek treatment it is too late to apply for financial help.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The first response is critical, and a failing on any level can and will likely result in impacting the individual from seeking support in the future. When a person first approached and asked for support, that person may not have another opportunity to ask for help. Should this not be met, the individual will be unlikely to request services and support again in the future. From the perspective of as victim-survivor and the perspective of a service provider, requesting support has been a barrier and is still one which is faced today, particularly as the complexities worsen, with introducing internet-based crimes, where it is increasingly difficult to prove.

Victim-survivor written submission

Why is there a cut off period in relation to Victims of Crime Act? I have experienced physical, sexual and emotional abuse since 7yo till 17yo. It has affected my whole life and life of my family.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

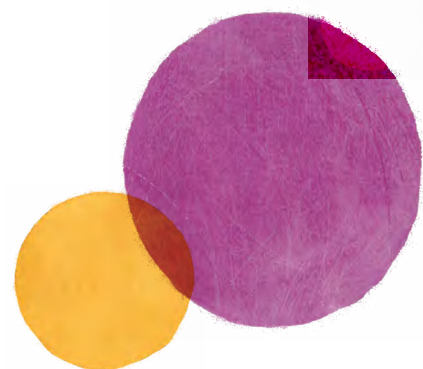
Firstly, for rural and remote areas there needs to be an option for reporting that enables safety for the person reporting the abuse. This would ideally mean that you could ring in to a service where your report would be believed, and then someone previously unknown to you and the perpetrator could then travel to you to take your statement. This would then ideally lead to an interim intervention order that was based on the needs of the victim, regardless of the perceived 'rights' of the perpetrator to continue to have full access to his former life, if this continued access would continue to contribute to control and distress for the victim.

Victim-survivor written submission

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.

Victim-survivor written submission

The retelling of events is something all victim-survivors would face, and I believe there is a solution to minimise this. I think victim-survivors would truly benefit from a universal system, where their case is uploaded on a system/portal for all relevant people involved to have access to, one that is managed or overseen by a case worker. I believe this will assist in the person not having to continuously share their story with different people (reliving the trauma) and it prevents services from 'gatekeeping' information from each other because a 'professional' might not deem a particular piece of information as being 'relevant or important' when in fact, it is/was. I think this method allows for the professionals to work as a team and not against each other. I also think a lot of time is wasted trying to 'chase up' information from people, because it should all be available on the system. The only need for chasing up would be for further context or clarification on a matter.

Victim-survivor written submission

Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme

There should be a public register for those with domestic violence convictions so that women can check and make informed decisions before entering into a relationship. The protection of perpetrators must end, and the focus must shift to safeguarding those who are most vulnerable. Victims deserve the opportunity to protect themselves, and transparency is essential to prevent further abuse.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The DV counsellor (who) connected to the SAPOL disclosure scheme was superior in all aspects ...I cannot speak about her skills more highly. There should be a whole multidisciplinary team supporting this role with multiple staff to prevent burnout.

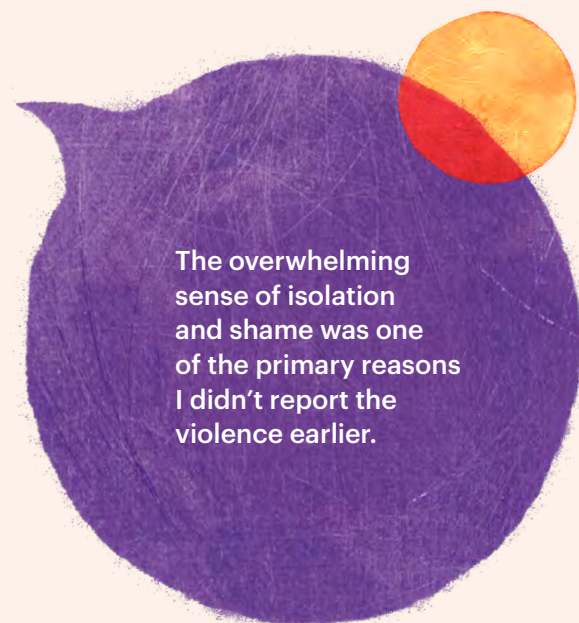
Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

There needs to be a public registry of people with DV charges/intervention orders. As it turns out, my ex already has an IVO out against him from another ex girlfriend. If this type of information were available to the public, it would prevent a lot of abusive relationships and would likely save lives.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I was (interstate) with my partner when the DV occurred and had to come back to SA for family support... Was very difficult to seek any services due to the fact that the offences happened in (interstate). I don't know why this matters at all but it needs to be addressed. Services should be able to be accessed nationally despite residential addresses at the current time of help or during the offence (s).

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



I really think that Domestic Violence offenders register is the way forward. We need to speak about this, we need to make sure that every person is aware of this, and it needs to be an easy process. I propose 2 strikes and you are on the register for life.

Victim-survivor written submission

Once the woman leaves the relationship, another women will present in a relationship with the same man displaying the same behaviours. Her leaving DV has taught him nothing, and he will continue to impact many victims... Locking him up does nothing as prison counselling is not mandated... There needs to be rehabilitation for perps. Or once they get let out the cycle will just continue.


Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

States need to talk to each other with specific databases that provide information about a perpetrator of DV or sexual assault even if there are no formal charges laid but reports of.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

He had convictions against other women in other states under that name but when he changed his name by deed poll 20yrs before those charges never carried over to the new name!! Bullshit right? We need that to change please.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



The courts have failed my children, they have failed me, not even the restraints from the Interim Orders were carried over, leaving [my perpetrator] 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.

Victim-survivor written submission

The use of violence

Perpetrator intervention programs

There is a concern amongst many women's advocates that if we do in fact better understand perpetrators, that they then cannot be held accountable because understanding them will mean recognising extenuating circumstances that reduce their responsibility for their own actions ... This concern is understandable, and it does raise a legitimate problem, but it should not be a question of not holding men accountable at all if they acted under influences beyond their control, but rather, of balancing just, appropriate and effective means of accountability with equally just, appropriate and effective responses to those extraneous influences. That would necessitate the abandonment of a purely punitive response, which tends to be what we have at present.

Victim-survivor written submission

There is a lot of research that shows about 80% of men respond to treatment. But if a man doesn't agree to treatment and respond to it, then he should be incarcerated. Because the alternative is that the woman and her children are incarcerated in the prison he builds around them.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

A far greater emphasis needs to be on mandatory and publicly understood programs for men. Women and the victims are not the issue the perpetrator rehabilitation is the issue. These need to be mandatory for all perpetrators when police do call outs to DV incidents. ALL men implicated in DV should have mandatory participation.

Victim-survivor written submission

We wonder whether "time out" temporary accommodation solutions for those men with anger management problems might help to diffuse some of the pressure cooker events.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

More men's DV programs available, men's counselling services and support so men can start addressing their behaviour.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Programs for perpetrators are difficult to find, many services state they are delivering domestic violence intervention however they are more catering for generalised anger management ... Victim services are essential however so are perpetrator services - without a high level of investment in such services and programs being readily available and accessible to perpetrators there is not really much hope for addressing the issue.

Supporter Share With Us survey response

There needs to be harsher punishments for men's violence against women. It's become a joke, "oh he only got *** years in prison for murdering his partner"...A joke that becomes more and more real and accurate.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

There is an absolute absence of perpetrator programs for men that community services can refer to. In fact, there is a lack of clear evidence about what works to change perpetrator behaviour, there needs to be investment in structured data capture to better understand factors that predict the use of DFSV and to evaluate the effectiveness of perpetrator programs at stopping DFSV.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The answer is education and clear consequence that doesn't leave the female with the burden of proof, relocation, psychosocial supports for self and kids and re-establishing financial means whilst gathering the 1000 cuts back into a semblance of self with no tools on how. We all default to victim blaming.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Persons who use violence with an intimate partner or children almost always have their own terrible and disturbing family violence history - of profound neglect, of physical abuse, of sexual abuse, of emotional abuse as a child ...If we really want to stop family violence, we need to work compassionately with parents who were themselves victims of serious child abuse and cruel neglect.... to put proportionate resources into skilful therapeutic based intensive family support services.

Supporter Share With Us survey response

The perpetrator hardly ever gets remanded in custody before they are sentenced. When the perpetrator is released from the cells they go straight to the house and take it out on the woman.... This is where a change is needed. If they offend more than once they should not be allowed out to go back time and time again.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

It's not just behavioural for perps, these issues are deeply rooted in self-worth, possibly being neglected as a child, child abuse, unworthiness, or being exposed to DV, not feeling wanted, loved, valued... it's important that we are educated around where these behaviours stem from, generational trauma is real, we need more supports around this because healthy humans don't become perps. It starts with the home you grow up in, the hand you have been dealt, and then your coping mechanisms you came up with to survive to get your needs.

Supporter Share With Us survey response

Crisis response is just that, a response, it's not preventative, it doesn't stop the perp from impacting future lives. Why not tackle the root cause which is his behaviour?

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

If we are expecting abusive people/men to change, then we need to be able to offer locally based specialist services which are responsive. We understand that there is some merit in the group approach where individuals here the stories of other perpetrator behaviour, its gravity, the triggers, and the stressors. We would endorse the comments of those who advocate for a more comprehensive understanding of the histories, motivations, intentions and underlying psychological make up of perpetrators. It may enable therapeutic and justice responses to be tailored for most reliable outcomes.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

I believe the focus equally needs to be on the perpetrator...There is funding for victims to access counselling I believe this should equally for the perpetrator, mandatory and ordered by the courts. If a person is arrested and denied court bail whilst on remand the perpetrator is ordered to complete intervention by way of intense therapy/ counselling relative to their circumstances i.e. drugs or alcohol, violence.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I feel the time for “raising awareness” has passed. We need action and it needs to happen now. Services that work with perpetrators of violence need to be developed, funded properly and widely available. In particular services/ programs like the Caring Dads that works with men who have perpetrated violence where children have been present. This group operates in other parts of Australia needs to be considered for SA. Services that support men to be accountable for the damage they choose to cause to women and children must be a priority.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Places like correctional services should have specific workers dedicated to providing perpetrator programs in community correctional settings, particularly in rural and regional settings where centralised metropolitan based programs are not feasible for people to access.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Behaviour change programs should be 12 months intensive and then follow up for 5 years- they should be mandatory for any police incident reported.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The call to provide mechanisms where perpetrators of abuse can be engaged in court directed and/or voluntary psychological and social interventions which help them to understand their behaviour and contributing factors is strongly supported. However, I think there will be some who will not be motivated by the carrot or the stick approach where monitoring and surveillance, separation and containment will be necessary. These will be the people who see no fault in their behaviour, no empathy for their prey and no inclination to behave differently, and a few who appear to have no or limited control over their inclinations.

Victim-survivor written submission



The current police laws do not go far enough and need to be upgraded urgently, at the moment most AVOs are a joke...

Every convicted and incarcerated perpetrator should have full access in prison to funded behaviour modification programmes and any other mental health care that they may need. They should be fully rehabilitated and prepared for re-integration back into the community upon release, and that should involve government ensuring that they have suitable employment upon release, housing and other assistance... Convicted perpetrators should not be released as long as they are assessed to pose any threat to former partners. Partners and former partners and anybody else affected by the crimes for which they were convicted should be informed of a perpetrator's pending release before that release, and not be placed at any risk due to lack of their being informed and, as necessary, having other protections in place. This should be a matter of course, but has not always been done, with sometimes fatal consequences.

Victim-survivor written submission

It should be mandatory to do an anger management course or a drug and alcohol directed by the Judge.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

(We need) a very powerful, intensive, comprehensive program to address men's ongoing poor behaviour to women (I understand women can be abusive but it is most often men, so I'm generalising.) As well, parenting needs to be addressed as these fathers can have a long term negative effect on the well-being of children.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Intervention orders

[My two friends experiencing DFV] were both shocked to discover that their protective intervention orders were immediately overturned by the Family Law Court. They realised that the Family Law Court did not value their safety at all, and was prepared to risk their lives and wellbeing and their children's safety and wellbeing in order to provide the abusive father with unsupervised access to their children.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

My concern is the breaches in Intervention Orders, with pictures, videos, text or emails are being ignored by SAPOL. Multiple charges of assault, sexual assault, kidnapping, stalking in intimate partner relationships are being reduced or ignored...I have 3 women I am currently working with who have escaped incredibly violent men who tried to kill them. All have intervention orders. All are being ignored when the men breach their orders (by SAPOL). My fear is that there are red flags, instances of wanting to commit harm that are being ignored, that these women will become statistics before they are heard.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

An ongoing intervention order between the victim/survivor and the perpetrator would support the victim/survivor to feel safe. This intervention order was denied by the courts after the perpetrators privately funded lawyer objected, as it was considered that it could have impacted the perpetrator's life. My daughter felt that because the perpetrator could afford a lawyer she was not going to be believed, this significantly impacted her unwillingness to make a statement about her second rape, even though the perpetrator had put in writing he was sorry for raping her. Her mistrust of the system is bigger than her desire to see a perpetrator convicted.

Supporter written submission

I have asked many times for help but have been denied. Specifically, I have applied to have the private intervention order revoked but was denied LSC funding to do so. They informed me that only women receive public assistance to deal with intervention orders. This is without an exemption to the discrimination laws.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

It is clear that there are significant difficulties with full monitoring and enforcement of AVOs and the serving of warrants. If the police force does not have the staff and resources to manage this workload, then the Commission should consider alternative options to that, as every woman, child, and man should have an equal right to personal safety, and that often depends upon policing.

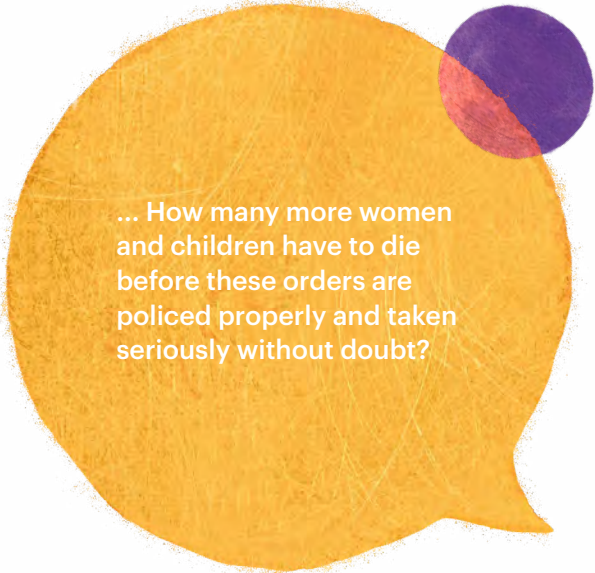
Victim-survivor written submission

The current police laws do not go far enough and need to be upgraded urgently, at the moment most AVOs are a joke. How many more women and children have to die before these orders are policed properly and taken seriously without doubt?

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

I don't believe the intervention order is sufficient. 1 hundred metres is definitely not enough distance between victim and the perpetrator. I used to see my son a lot where I lived because of this. I think it should be a standard 200 -300 metres, so the victim does not have to feel under any threat.

Victim-survivor written submission



... How many more women and children have to die before these orders are policed properly and taken seriously without doubt?

Given that many survivors must move around a lot in order to be safer or in some instances save their lives, sometimes interstate and that intervention orders are nationally recognised and therefore enforceable, in an ideal world, there would be a national hub/service/referral centre to provide appropriate linkage with supports as opposed to each state having different services and systems. Repeatedly having to tell your story is a further form of trauma.

Victim-survivor written submission

My observations and experience after the death of [loved one], is that the legal system focuses on the person using violence and there is little consideration given to the people on the receiving end. AVO is aimed at controlling the person using violence, clearly they are of little use for actually protecting the people experiencing violence if the person using violence has no regard for the law.

Supporter written submission

Intervention orders are state based, and woman are hearing stories of federal family court voiding the orders in relation to the parenting matter – this is complete injustice.

Supporter written submission

With intervention order issued I was repeatedly told to report every breach as soon as possible. When I went to report breaches I was treated like I was wasting their time. I was told to “try another station, we’re busy” after being told that, I stopped reporting breaches, and that would look like he had suddenly started behaving.


Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The magistrates also removed my children from the intervention order even though he had continually abused me in front of the children, assaulted the eldest child and the children being present when he last assaulted me and advised it to be referred to the family court.

Victim-survivor written submission

There needs to be a harsher penalty for breaching intervention orders, no matter how the severity of the breach. To the perpetrator it is just a piece of paper and it doesn’t stop them...If a perpetrator has a history of intervention orders against them, by multiple victims ... then they should not be allowed bail automatically.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



My account is always called into question or further scrutinised because I’m unable to be as articulate and come across as kind, likeable or empathetic due to a complex neurodivergent condition.

Systems abuse

Lawyers are officers of the court, they represent the court by assisting clients with their cases and interpreting the law however in family court this is not the case, they are profiting substantially from clients and victims and actively assisting clients to use the court system to abuse.

Victim-survivor written submission

I am still living in fear as are my children while waiting for legalities in family court so I can have my children added to my intervention order...With the department of Child protection stating my children are not considered being safe with access to their father, and the fact I cannot stop their father from picking them up and taking off with them is very worrying there needs to be a loophole for these types of situations so a parent can legally keep their children safe when there is evidence of domestic violence against the children.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The current legislation in the Family Courts allows perpetrators to consistently breach procedures with no consequence. The family court process allows victims/survivors of domestic abuse to be re-victimised through the use of the court systems - the very thing which is meant to protect them.

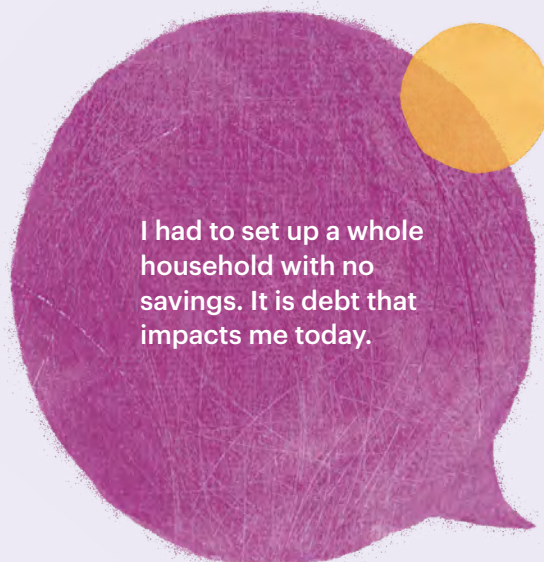
Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

There are law firms in South Australia that are notorious for being known to use the system to haemorrhage the other party's money to obtain the desirable outcome for their client as the other party runs out of money to continue proceeding or is emotionally destroyed by the continued harassment that it gets too much... Lawyers are [not] acting ethically when it benefits them more to extend proceedings to increase profit even though the outcome would remain the same at trial given the legislation.

Victim-survivor written submission

I never felt safe enough to push the child support issue, and as a result my income has always been assessed as having incorporated his contributions.

Victim-survivor written submission



I had to set up a whole household with no savings. It is debt that impacts me today.

My abusive ex-husband used it to continue the financial abuse of the relationship by refusing to provide the financial disclosure ordered by the Court...all whilst dissipating the assets of the marriage and our joint business in full view of the courts. The system had no penalties for this behaviour which shifted the onus unfairly back onto me to incur ever increasing massive legal costs in a futile attempt to uphold my rights!

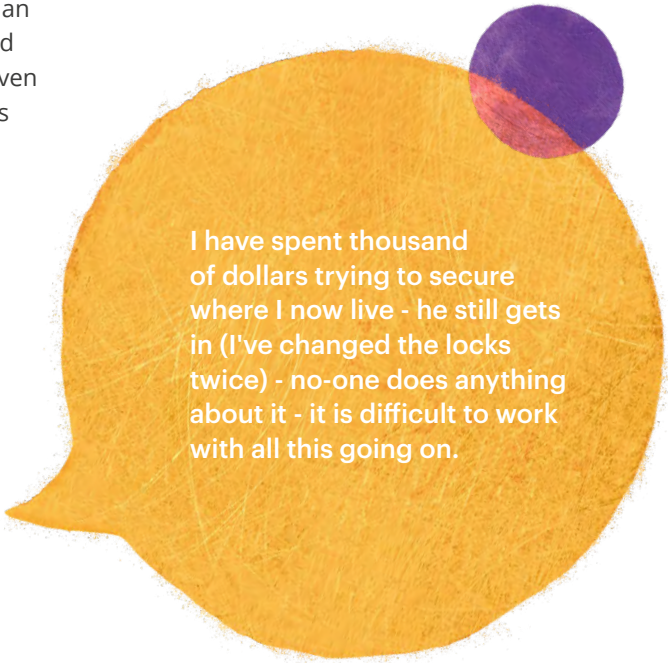
Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

He changed his sole trader business to a company and pays himself a lower wage to avoid paying the right amount of child support. He earns far more than what is declared to the relevant government agencies. Laws need to change in regards to making people financially accountable when purposely withholding financial information so they can avoid paying child support.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

My daughter was granted an ongoing (lifelong) intervention order but the courts have allowed him to apply to have it revoked even though he constantly breaches it ...(we have had) more than 120 hearings...which results in financial abuse as she has to defend the cases which all lack merit... she applied to the Attorney General for a vexatious litigant ruling and all she has had in that time is an email receipt for her enquiry. It is a hopeless and tormented situation where the perpetrator is given the benefit of doubt by the police and the courts and he thrives on that.

Supporter Share With Us survey response



I have spent thousand of dollars trying to secure where I now live - he still gets in (I've changed the locks twice) - no-one does anything about it - it is difficult to work with all this going on.

A SIGNIFICANT OVER-HAUL OF EVERY JURISDICTION IN THE COUNTRY TO BAN ABUSE OR MAL-INTENT PRACTICES which have been traditionally used against victim-survivors. It is unconscionable that a legal practitioner makes a living from partaking in abuse, trauma inducing abuse against innocent victim survivors and going after innocent victim survivors like bull dogs in a dark alley, just for leaving because they no longer felt safe in their own home and decided to put a stop to the abuse...as was my experience.

Victim-survivor written submission

There's a huge gap in supplying help for people who have cyber issues. My partner loaded himself on my MyGov account as my carer. I've had difficulty getting him off that...the Internet is so insidious, and I felt so very much abandoned and lost with what to do...So there there's still a lot to go with... the cyber crime end of it. There's no laws. We just haven't caught up with that yet.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Keeping my children safe was my highest priority. Until I could guarantee that they were safe, I refused to report as I knew the Family Court would provide some level of custody to him and then I would not be able to protect them. I took advice of a private lawyer to document and wait out abuse until I had enough evidence to issue intervention orders to protect myself and my children. How do we have a system where I had to continue to expose my children to abuse for this?

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I would like the state of South Australia to recognise, by law, that freezing is just as valid a response as fight or flight when being assaulted and is actually designed by our nervous system to keep us safe in the moment". "Centrelink rules for victims to chase child support or risk losing their support payments. The perpetrators are then able to create ongoing anxiety to the victim by constantly changing their income... In essence the child support system enables perpetrators to continually mess with victims.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



The perpetrator's refusal to pay child support compounded our hardship. Financial abuse is often invisible, but it is a powerful tool used by perpetrators to maintain control and limit a survivor's independence. While child support systems exist, they lack the necessary enforcement to hold perpetrators accountable. In my case, the failure of the system left me struggling to provide for my children. Recently, under pressure from the perpetrator, I was coerced into waiving over \$8,000 in unpaid support. Although I agreed, I did so out of a desperate need for peace and safety, not because it was just. Now that he is detained, I am contesting this decision, but the lack of assistance from both Child Support and the AAT has been disheartening. Once again, I feel as though the system gave in to the perpetrator's manipulation, and my safety was compromised in the process.

Victim-survivor written submission

My situation still leaves me living in fear as my family court orders make me have contact with my ex even though (I've) got protection orders which are pointless...How am I protected when I'm forced to still have contact...my ex is still controlling me and still neglecting my son.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

For decades [he] paid less than \$34 a month in child support by lying about his income. While he lavished gifts on himself and the younger children, I struggle to put food on the table... Child support, or lack of, was just another way for [him] to continue to abuse us but this time with government sanctions.

Victim-survivor written submission

There has also never been any child support paid in 13 years. The child support agencies make no accountability, and this impacts families significantly.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

I, myself was subjected to financial abuse via him increasing our debts without my knowledge and coercing me to take out further loans. I tried to seek help from the banks who claim to support people experiencing financial abuse and offer funding to help people escape domestic violence, but all they did was make an amendment to our loans to prevent him redrawing from the loan without my authority, however, they subsequently allowed him to close a joint savings account we had without notifying me or obtaining my authority.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I don't get any child support as it's too tricky to sort out (emotionally and in terms of the paperwork). So I also don't get family tax benefits like dental care for my child and things like that. I think that family tax benefits should not be contingent on arranging child support payments.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

He has also undermined other medical treatments for the children, but we still have shared medical responsibility which he uses to control and undermine my attempts to keep our children healthy and safe. I believe the systems that are supposed to protect us and hold perpetrators accountable have actually enabled my abuser to continue his behaviour for 8 years.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Banks when providing couples with documents (legally binding) need to be able to meet and discuss with each signatory privately/separately to ensure each know 100% what they are getting into and understand all the terms and conditions so financial abuse stops. they need to ask direct questions about whether financial abuse is happening. So do schools. Banks need to take requests seriously with this regard. My experience with the bank has been appalling.


Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

There is opportunity for the perpetrator to put all joint finances in the names of his family members and reduce any payment that is likely to be made to the victim in case any separation eventuates. I'm aware of families where the man has sent all the money overseas to his family with no repercussion and limited transfer of old monies to the wife, the victim.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

For example I had lost everything yet had to pay for a psychologist for myself and a counsellor \$165 a week as well as my sons which came to \$330. The perpetrators should be forced to pay this, however instead they pay no child support, whilst the victims pays for housing, bills, food, medical, schooling and mental health support. Whilst the perpetrator pays for nothing.

Victim-survivor written submission



There has also never been any child support paid in 13 years.

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 \$150000 Lawyer 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.

Supporter written submission

Centrelink requires internal staff who are trained in domestic violence, financial abuse, and investigation into company fraud, linked back to ATO. The power to act for someone like myself with ATO and to investigate fraud against me. I have no power whatsoever to defend myself or act for myself as a result of fraud against me by my former husband. I have heard this story time and time again by women in the same situation as me.


Victim-survivor written submission

The only debts now [she] has is with the Commonwealth Government; ATO and Centrelink, we have tried to have them waived to no avail, both debts are related [to my daughter] being forced to make false claims with both agencies. She has accepted that they are her debts, I disagree. He made her do that through his coercive control, she was working, she has always worked to earn money, he is the one that manipulated and falsely made claims, when this worked for him he made her also make false claims (I have reported his fraud to Centrelink). She is unable to afford to live, she pays board and purchases items for the children, but is unable to pay for childcare/OSHC or swimming lessons, I do that. If the Commonwealth Government was understanding around the financial abuse she was subjected to she would be able to pay those costs associated with the children, the payments equate \$150 a fortnight.

Supporter written submission

After my daughter's death the press 'story bombed' the media with falsifications. When I took this up with the police, I was told they were trying to 'flush the family out' in order that they could get a story. One TV station managed to get my number and phoned and asked for an interview, when I declined they said to me 'you'd better not be giving an interview to another station'. This was within days of her death. Some restrictions around the media's reporting and approaching families would be welcome.

Supporter written submission



You just get so tired of fighting
and are so emotionally drained,
it's sometimes hard to do the
basics of getting up, making
meals, looking after kids, working,
keeping up with finances etc.

Share With Us survey response

Supporting victim-survivors

What I would like to see improved is the help and support given to woman trying to escape abusive men, regardless of your income or circumstances, and for that support to be easier.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

If someone I knew needed help to be safe I would have a conversation with them about how they need help to be safe and try to help and support them as much as I can.

Commissioner and Young Person Student Voice postcards

Please help women like me from overseas. We almost know nothing especially where to seek help. There are lots of women out there are suffering from DV but cannot escape the trap.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

There needs to be specific services for the elderly women subjected to domestic violence. This is a massive gap in my view. It is also an incredibly complex area that requires specialist counsellors and dedicated offerings to assist victims. I wish more than anything to see this become a reality.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I was also transferred from my DV case worker (interstate) to one in South Australia, and the services in both states have been amazing. I wouldn't be where I am now without them.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I had a client who was trying to flee DV, very complex women who had multiple psychosocial factors... This woman was ineligible for DV services due to her own criminal offending which was disempowering. There needs to be more flexibility for women with complex backgrounds ... And the power of change is in the approach by services, eg trauma informed. If women have a good experience and feel empowered, they will continue to seek help and not feel ashamed.

Supporter Share With Us survey response

There is a need to do more education on DV with CALD communities by using bilingual bicultural workers, community leaders or people with lived experiences and or provide funding to CALD Associations, organizations to deliver this information and programs with CALD communities.

Supporter Share With Us survey response

Major reforms need to happen in protecting both male and female victims of Domestic and Family Violence. Currently I see some horrific victims who are male and not receiving any assistance in their matter. There is greater isolation in these members, and the stigmatism that only men can perpetrate against women is quickly becoming a thing of the past. Although I am a female who experienced DV myself, I see in my work now a lot of DV victims (are) from all walks of life, there are huge gaps in the system and they need to be addressed.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Fairwork aren't able to enforce the employer to allow the FDV leave be taken and it's up to the victim to have to fight against their employer if they want to take it further. This can mean the employer then targets the individual in future as a 'trouble maker' or performance manages them out of the business, when they likely really need their job to support themselves financially, especially if they have huge legal fees like myself. You just get so tired of fighting and are so emotionally drained, it's sometimes hard to do the basics of getting up, making meals, looking after kids, working, keeping up with finances etc.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The Escaping Violence Payment was delayed significantly, something went wrong, I needed to call an executive to intervene and make that happen, the thing really needed was a car, she was informed she could not spend the EVP to purchase a car, her work was now a 2 hour public transport ride, this meant she was now spending money on share rides or spending a long time on busses, or we were picking her up, and I needed to transport the children to school and childcare. We could not convince them to be flexible, I and her father leant her the money for a car, she is paying us back every week. She could not purchase a car but she was allowed to pay ATO [to recompense her debt with the payment].

Supporter written submission

"The *systems we implement* do not intertwine enough to actually assist. Therefore, further barriers are applied, these are backed by privacy laws that our people have faith in, as it very much is important... this is only helpful to the level that each individual agency & departments are lawfully able to assist.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Most of the time, I had to navigate the system by myself and was often rejected by services that said the best option was to return to my home country, as I wouldn't be able to get help here. This was incredibly disappointing, especially after living in Australia for six years and having a baby born here. I truly hope the system changes, that shelter becomes accessible even for international students, and that trauma-informed practices are more widely implemented.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I would feel safer if I wasn't around alcohol or drugs.

Commissioner and Young Person Student Voice postcards

Services for people who identify as LGBTIQ+ need to be easily accessible and meet their needs. My brother is currently accessing counselling at (service name) which was the only service we could find that was inclusive. The waiting time for counselling with them was more than 6 weeks. I was providing him with emotional support in the meantime. He is also living with me...since leaving his abuser ... There wasn't any suitable emergency or post emergency accommodation for him as a victim on DFV - didn't meet the criteria.

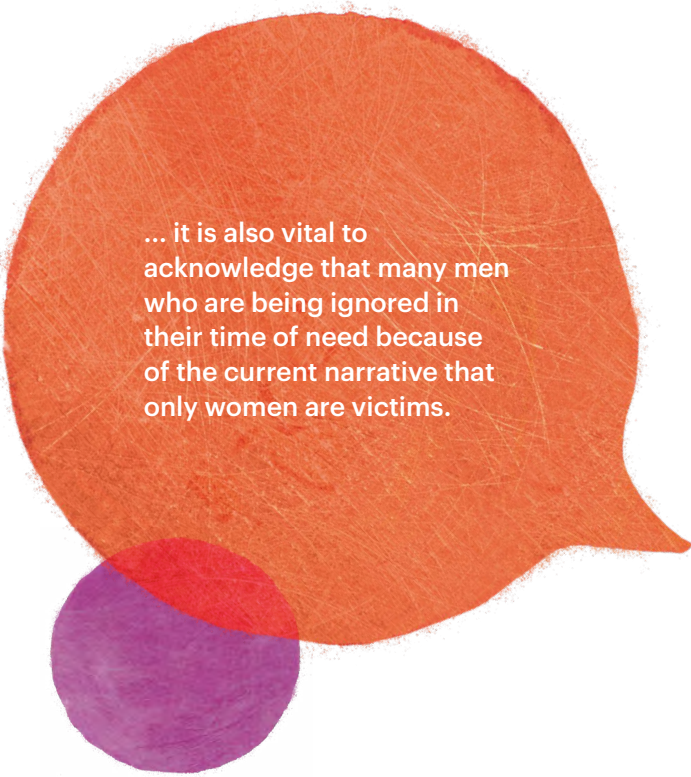
Supporter Share With Us survey response

WDVCAS saved our lives. They fought for us and taught us to believe in ourselves. They are the reason that my daughter and I are alive today. They are the reason that my daughter has a chance at life.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Targeting the audience of autistic women with bespoke information about what emotional abuse is and where to find neurodiversity affirming domestic violence services, would be incredibly helpful in supporting their ability to identify domestic violence and seek support.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



... it is also vital to acknowledge that many men who are being ignored in their time of need because of the current narrative that only women are victims.

It is also fair to say that on top of this, the ability to access financial support from services...my constant experience was to be turned away from Centrelink because I was earning a wage, no one listened about the complex details. We will now never recover financially due to the legal proceedings that were stretched over years.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I have never felt safe to speak about the abuse that I have endured throughout my life as a First Nations person who is also queer. I still feel ashamed to be a victim, and it causes me a lot of pain in my day-to-day life. I doubt anyone will ever be able to support me, because I fear I'll never be truly understood. I am a lost cause, and more often than not, I feel hopeless about my situation.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I ...had to take my boss to the commissioner to fight to retain flexible working hours to assist me to have a full-time income to care for my children, re home my family and fight my ex in court.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Feeling like I need to manage the steps to my healing is difficult when trying to just gather my thoughts alone feels so mentally exhausting. There were times I didn't know how to communicate what I needed, because I didn't know what I needed, all I knew was that I wanted someone to do it for me so all I had to do was show up.

Victim-survivor written submission

(She) got her own lawyer to deal with the divorce and settlement. Her partner said it was her decision to break up and that he would not pay for a lawyer. He nit picked and questioned every document and correspondence from her lawyer which ended up drawing out the process and costing her more money. In the end, she spent \$20 000 for consent orders. He spent nothing on legal fees.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Her workplace was not supportive of her situation involving extreme violence insofar as when her contract was coming to an end it was not extended to allow her the time to settle court matters before having to look for another job contract. I think that more employment supports need to be considered in the public sector especially, but I am sure that this would extend to the private sector as well. Supports like contracts should be extended (not at the discretion of the employer) if someone is currently experiencing or dealing with domestic violence situations.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

As an immigrant, it was extremely difficult to leave a domestic violence relationship with my non-Australian partner. I often received no answers or was told “no” due to my visa status. It took me two years and a lot of violence before I was finally able to flee. I sought help from various organizations—but it wasn’t until I found someone willing to think outside the box, despite my non-Australian status, that I finally received assistance, including shelter. However, legal advice was a disaster: the staff were unprepared, and there was no one truly available to help.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The consequences of us breaking up was that I was in a significant amount of debt and had two children to raise and full time work and no support from him.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Please do something to help victims of financial abuse (that in many cases continues well after other forms of abuse end). I am not very financially literate. He used to do all the finances and I would trustingly sign where he wanted me to.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

It is clear that there are vulnerable/high risk individuals that include women, children, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and LGBTI+ communities who require nuanced support but it is also vital to acknowledge that many men who are being ignored in their time of need because of the current narrative that only women are victims.

Victim-survivor written submission

Counselling doesn’t seem to be available for victims with intellectual disability...Easy Read resources need to be available and when listing support services, it needs to be clear what they can do...Police, courts and FDSV providers should participate in disability inclusive training. When reporting, the first person (who took the report) or someone who can communicate with a person with intellectual disability should respond within 24 hours not 3+ days.

Supporter Share With Us survey response

Criminalised women face unique and compounded challenges in relation to family, domestic and sexual violence. Services and legal responses are not developed to respond to the specific needs of our community, nor are there clear pathways to appropriate support.

Organisation and Lived Experience combined written submission

Fund, specialized services- sexual orientation, cultural need (first nations; disability) Services that are culturally-responsive embed a cultural and holistic perspective into their practice.

Victim-survivor written submission

10 years ago I left a...lesbian relationship. There was no specialised counselling then and there is still no Lesbian DV counsellors in S.A. There is a booklet (called) Towards a Safe Place LGBTIQ+ DV through Catalyst Foundation Website and has training to go with it. I personally feel all DV services need this training which you can book through Catalyst Foundation. This is all we have for LGBTIQ+ Domestic Violence and DV in is rampant in the community and it needs to be looked at more seriously.

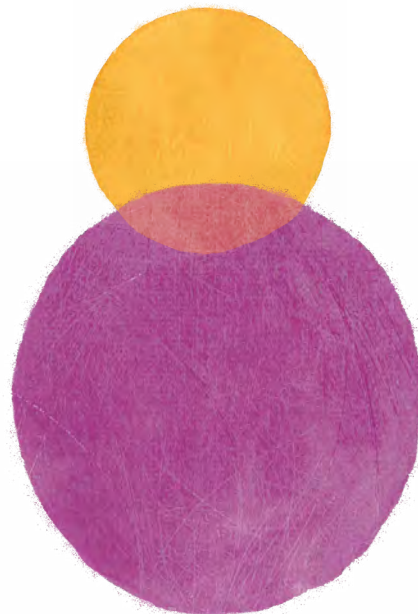
Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

There needs to be a place for women to be able to find refuge, have medical help, police help and lawyers to speak with etc. All in one spot, a compound a building that's secretly located. It needs to be less complicated.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Services should adopt a more compassionate, respectful approach, recognizing the emotional toll of leaving an abusive relationship. A survivor's journey is deeply personal, and the system should be designed to empower them with dignity and autonomy.

Victim-survivor written submission



Meeting the needs of victim-survivors

Victim-survivors, especially those fleeing domestic violence, need a crisis response that goes beyond immediate safety and addresses long-term financial security. A more empathetic, understanding approach is essential.

Victim-survivor written submission

There's such a huge lack of options for women like my friend who has gone through dv but is now viewed as 'safe'. DV doesn't just end because a person has left. My friend will deal with the trauma and memories of her horrific experience as well as the loneliness and pain she felt once she actually reached out for help. And she has not been able to heal because she didn't get support for long enough. She has told me that she feels like she was dumped as soon as she (had a) 'housing option'.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Most services have a set time frame that they are allowed to work with survivors, usually 14 sessions per client. The problem is it takes 14 weeks to build a relationship with a professional and my trauma has taken much longer than 14 weeks. Services need to have a lot more time to be able to work with survivors.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I believe there needs to be a larger injection of funding into family Law to enable a model where both parties are afforded the same level of legal representation and counselling attached to a court claim whether that be children's matters or financial, that all families should have independent child representatives and that the court appointed adult and child representatives should assist the family to work towards fair and equitable outcomes... this process should take no more than 12 - 18 months.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I would also suggest offering free counselling for all victims of abuse.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I finally left him 4 years ago and now I am the one that is suffering knowing that he has gotten away with the abuse...I wish that I could make a formal statement so that he is made aware that he has not gotten away with his actions towards me and my children freely and...(is) made accountable. But the law states that I only had 3 years to make a statement after leaving him, and I was not strong or mentally stable at that time, but I am now & wish that I could still report him.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Expanding and improving support services for women is critical. There needs to be more safe houses where women can go for respite... Fund women so they can leave the relationship. Give them the freedom they rightly deserve and give them options...Make it clearer what women's options are.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I wish I had one DV police officer to handle my situation as it would help having someone who knows what my ex is capable of... I know that one day my ex will find us and hurt us and am sad that we have to live our lives in fear. The police advise was to take a different route home and make sure no one is following you. That's all the support I can get at this time.


Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I have followed the advice of the system to seek counselling to help me heal from the trauma resulting from the domestic violence, but the trauma has been exacerbated by a system that does not support men and boys and sees men as perpetrators only.

Victim-survivor written submission

My brother is an addict and he struggles with daily life due to what we witnessed (family violence).

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



When children speak up about abuse, their voices must be taken seriously.....I urge the Commission to ensure children's voices are prioritised in domestic violence cases...

There is an initiative in Burke where the police check in on the woman and the perpetrator when separation has occurred. This is one of, I'm sure many effective programs out there which if all collated and implemented would make a significant difference.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Support post moving out, a mentor, lived experienced counsellor or mental health practitioner to support the women and children separately to 'stay strong' in their decision but to also help them navigate the many next steps that are still ahead. This is why so many women return - they have often been isolated for so long that they do not turn to others easily so having someone walk alongside of them is really important.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I feel for myself having to try co-parent with my abuser after finally being able to leave is the hardest thing to do.. I feel better resources need to be put in place to protect and give peace of mind to victims...the ongoing harassment ...is overlooked by police due to the family court order needs to be resolved. Police need to be able to step in and place orders and have safety issues resolved without referring victims back to family court.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Accessible legal support and clear guidance are critical in domestic violence cases. Had I received this, I could have been more empowered to make safe choices for myself and my daughter.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Law/Courts having greater recognition that parental rights are not an entitlement by genetic default...Perpetrators should not be allowed rights to a child/children as the long term impact of the reoffending and trauma and being separated from the parent victim has long lasting negative impacts. Greater power for police and courts to use evidence... that aligns with the incidents of abuse and violence by the perpetrator ... would make the perpetrator accountable.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I used all my savings paying for air b'n'b and caravan parks trying to find somewhere stable we could stay so my children could keep going to school and I to work. I got the EVP payment. I wasn't eligible for anything else and have no family left for support either.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Mental health support is prohibitively expensive. Recovery shouldn't depend on your bank balance but it feels like that is the deciding factor in your quality of life after experiencing sexual violence.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Recovery needs will also come with potential additional issues, including but not limited to healthy and/or unhealthy coping strategies. And the victims may not know what they need at the time, or how to ask for their supports. Recovery and healing is not a single stepped approach, and will likely be lifelong, with no potential recovery in sight.

Victim-survivor written submission

I can chat to other mums going through this as it's affected my work, their normal ever day lives, school, friends and family. I feel extremely isolated and have considered returning is easier than coming doing it all alone.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Child sexual violence in particular feels under-serviced. As an adult survivor, there are little supports available for the ongoing impacts, especially for those who did not report to police so don't have the opportunity to apply for VOC compensation... There is no acknowledgement of the ongoing impacts of trauma and all the services have such specific eligibility that many of us fall through the cracks.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

To obtain legal help, support and guidance especially when children involved in a DV case was well over 12 months wait. The legal side for a parent shouldn't be hard (and) not always targeted at people that have low incomes.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

There needs to be provisions for easier access and more legal aid for victims of domestic abuse, given the high incidents of financial abuse and isolation. This service also needs to be able to be accessed out of business hours.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Victim/survivors need to be supported to meet their full potential. Sexual violence particularly perpetrated against a developing adolescent brain causes a trauma, which can limit the victim/survivors ability to meet their full potential. With a physical disability there is an annual review of the requirements for the disabled person to meet their goal for that year, there are therapists and support structure in place including a change of circumstances, this level of support, while I appreciate the financial burden is not afforded to victim/survivors of sexual abuse whose lives are irreparably damaged.

Victim-survivor written submission

Support needs to be more easily obtainable or referral from GP and more first line health, educational institution, religious groups, lawyers... More in-depth longer support to help you and the family recover. Support needs to be more frequent in the beginning with tapering off over a period of time.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Survivor family/community engagement: my mother was able to play an active and productive life role in her families strengthened by her greater freedom. She felt useful and engaged and this was part of a healing process allowing her to live her last decade of life with dignity.

Victim-survivor written submission

I just feel that there needs to be more action (with) on going help for victims. It appears that...at the point of leaving the relationship is the only time there is help...But 12 years on with there being an ongoing threat from the perp- it's difficult to obtain productive support. Every action I have taken has been off my own research.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

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.

Victim-survivor written submission

Victim/survivor and their families need a safe space to have therapeutic support to rebuild the broken relationships that are fractured from sexual violence.

Supporter written submission

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.

Victim-survivor written submission

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.


Victim-survivor written submission

With no personal access to finances due to my husband handling the finances and my money being placed straight into this account I was unable to afford to gain advice. I was told I didn't qualify for legal aid, leaving me without direction or support.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

(My finances) were tied up in... a trust that he controlled, and then, once I thought I had that sorted out, I was told I would be over the asset limit because when I left the family home...that would become my asset. (Due to this I was unable to qualify) for legal aid... I was trapped in the relationship for another 4 years.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



I have never felt safe to speak about the abuse that I have endured throughout my life as a First Nations person who is also queer. I still feel ashamed to be a victim ...

Victim/survivor families need to have employment flexibility to meet the needs of their child. I was fortunate to have Long Service leave which I used to take time at home with my daughter. My husband and I both exhausted our entitlements, and he took time without pay so we could keep her safe and maintain our financial obligations.

Supporter written submission

Monetary help for those that have assets over the threshold but don't have ready cash as they are in financial abuse.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I eventually saved enough to start a legal process. my lawyer was great however not equipped to manage DV and power and control dynamics... my lawyer felt as if her hands were tied in how she could respond to DV, however she was very supportive at holding the financial strain with pay as you go or at settlement.


Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Counselling and mental health services to begin healing – Reflecting on the financial and emotional investment required for my own healing journey, it's appalling to recall the invasive questions I've faced at certain GP visits just to obtain a mental health care plan, because my regular GP was unavailable. Moreover, the costs associated with seeing a psychologist or psychiatrist are exorbitant, making it seem as though mental health services are only accessible to the wealthy, even with the Medicare rebate. While I acknowledge that we're better off than many other countries, such as the U.S., the focus here is on Australia. It's deeply concerning that those who need mental health support the most—often individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds—are the ones who face the greatest barriers to access.

Victim-survivor written submission

I hope that what you are doing includes the desperate needs of women like me who have worked hard all their lives, achieved homes and financial stability only to lose it all through the broken systems. Not being able to buy a house now and struggling to find a secure home...living pay check to pay check on a low paying job working 6 days a week...at the age of 64.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



I think support groups or something I could attend with kids so they can play safe. I can chat to other mums going through this ...

Currently, the main way to access mental health support is in person or over the phone...None of the support services provide mental health support via webchat. If you have a disability, are in a share house (which young people often are), living with the perpetrator, or working full time, then these mental health services are often inaccessible. For example, after I reached out to a sexual violence webchat and indicated that I would have trouble speaking with someone over the phone or in person, the response I received was that 'that sounds difficult' then 'I'm going to end the chat now, please call as soon as you can'.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I really wish there were any places I could support my friend with linking in that understand the dv experience and maybe have groups for women where they can feel less alone and feel heard and understood. We as her friends try and support her but there's only so much that she takes on board from us.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

FREE counselling after abuse (not \$100 a session after Mental Health care plan)

Victim-survivor written submission

There have been times I have wished for Peer Support/ lived experience and knowledge of those who have had similar experiences or navigated the same systems. I have been lucky again to find these and they have offered the most valuable knowledge and support. Peer Support/ lived experience and knowledge is the most valuable knowledge, it needs to be supported more.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Please massively increase the resourcing of intensive therapeutic support (not necessarily delivered by psychologists, but by persons trained in trauma therapy in the face of complexity) for troubled families and disturbed infants and children - to embark in a path of healing. The payoff for children partners, families, society and the economy would be huge.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Removal of children by Child Protection Services is not the answer. Intervention and intensive support is what is needed. Royal Commission recommendations needs to highlight that funding needs to be put towards early intervention services, that go into ACTIVE DFV situations, by skilled partitioners.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Children and young people

When children speak up about abuse, their voices must be taken seriously.....I urge the Commission to ensure children's voices are prioritised in domestic violence cases and that police reports are mandatorily reviewed before the court makes any decisions to send a child back so that children's safety and wellbeing are considered as the utmost importance.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Children should be advised in age-appropriate manners about the ways in which they can be supported following abuse.

Victim-survivor written submission

Please consider carefully responses for children, particularly where supports are working with their parents and DFSV is active in the home. Most therapeutic/trauma services will only engage children once survivors have left the relationship and child survivors are deemed "safe". This limited service model offers nothing to support children in homes where they reside and violence continues.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I would advocate for DFSV services to be available in the youth sector - there are often young people under the age of 18 if DFSV relationships with partners (often young themselves) and there are minimal SAPOL responses to these concerns, rarely a child protection response and young people are experiencing significant injuries and coercion. I also view supporting young people in DFSV relationships (both survivors and perpetrators) as a key opportunity for early intervention and to change trajectories.

Supporter Share With Us survey response

We couldn't have got my daughter and children out without their help and advice. (The workers) were excellent and are still a great source of support in these early stages of DV escape... in the past we struggled to know which way to turn.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

You will not change anything if you don't seek the voice of children who have experienced DFV by being in a household or in an environment that was beyond their control. Children are victims in their own right! You need to acknowledge this in the Royal Commission recommendations.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

More programs to keep the young actively engaged where they can see good role models both men and women will be helpful. Kindergartens primary schools and high schools should all play a role before men enter the workforce.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Provide additional support services for children who have been exposed to domestic violence. These kids need our help, particularly those who have known nothing else. Support services like this, 40 years ago may have helped my sister and her life could have been dramatically different. I reflect on this often and wish that there was something more that could be done in that space.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

It took 9 months for us to secure a counselling service for [my] primary school aged [grandchild]. This is not good enough, he still blames mum for the violence and the family splitting up, he has now had 6 sessions... he has not opened up- he has had a life time of keeping secrets. We are so fear full for these boys that they do not grow up to be abusers, we work real hard in our house, but the disrespect for women creeps in all the time. We keep giving the same messages, "we don't keep secrets" "we love you no matter what happens or what you do" "we take responsibility for our actions and behaviour" "we say sorry when we hurt someone" my husband and sons are working hard at spending quality time with both boys to role model respectful behaviours.

Supporter written submission

Please look into how many perpetrators of Domestic Abuse were victims of abuse as children, I believe a large number of offenders of Domestic Abuse are victims of some form childhood trauma or abuse. I strongly believe if you want to reduce Domestic Abuse you need to assist children with trauma and positive coping skills and strategies so that anger and rage doesn't become a coping mechanism for them in their future, at point which they act in violent/ sexualised abusive mannerisms.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Compulsory education programs in schools for both males and females should happen nationally, as well as more public education programs...It's still not spoken about enough and there are too many myths surrounding domestic violence.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I remember being asked the question of whether I was having any trouble at school but never if I was having trouble at home. I doubt I would have been able to answer that question with a parent present anyway. There was no follow up from FACS [Department for Family and Community Services] and I remained in a toxic, highly stressful environment until I left home just after I turned 17. My teachers and counsellors at the high school I attended were instrumental in my survival. I'm assuming the teachers (who also acted as counsellors) spoke to each other about my situation as I was given a lot of support and recognition by them. I will never forget and be forever grateful to the counsellor who stood up to my mother after the assault on me was reported to authorities.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

A child that is exposed to domestic and family violence will also require the same supports as the parent, including flexibility to re-engage with education. There is a potential these vulnerable children will also need additional understanding, as the trauma of what they have repeatedly been exposed to, will likely result in a number of learned toxic behaviours, with them perpetrating violent and aggressive behaviours towards their parent/guardian/caregiver. The children will require specialist supports to additionally encourage their own recovery as a third party to the abuse.

Victim-survivor written submission



Not enough help for children raised in domestic violence homes. They get given into the care of violent parents as if those abusive partners are going to become model parents...the children grow and start showing signs of being manipulative and abusive towards the main care giving parent. That parent seeks counselling help. That parent is now being abused by the child and there is no help for the parent or the child... So my child is going to grow into an abuser like their father (because) no one will help me while they're still young... That's not going to be on me.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I am concerned about the long term effects of children who have witnessed and been involved in abusive relationships. Many of these children need ongoing psychological help to be able to recognise the perpetrator's damaging behaviour, to maintain good mental health and so that they don't continue the cycle of abuse. Unfortunately child psychologists are in short supply and so often the children cannot get the help they so desperately need.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Also I think children who have witnessed ongoing violence should have counselling and training where they are taught the difference between kind and peaceful parenting and violent aggressive parenting to help prevent history being repeated. Without spelling out what is wrong, many children will grow up doing what they witnessed.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Both children clearly spoke how neither wanted to have anything to do with their father, just as the older children had said. The psychologist recommend that it would be best for my son to face his father and tell him direct. It would lessen his fear of his father. He did so, placing adult responsibilities onto the child victim. He ran from the building in fear afterwards almost into traffic.

Victim-survivor written submission

Those who had children referred to the impact of abusive environments on them and their future psychological wellbeing, reporting adult anger management problems, drug, and alcohol abuse, estranged or strained relationships and repetition of abuse in the next generation. Young children were traumatised and became involved in the protection of their mother or were sometimes forced to take sides with one party or the other. This can carry on into adult relationships. One woman noted that, since she left her marriage, her daughter talks more to her former husband to this day.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

I work supporting clients within the youth justice and homelessness space. It is common for us to have difficulties accessing support services for our clients when they are under the age of 18 as services often default to DCP support rather than DV support. It has been our experience that, despite incredible cases of life threatening DV, that clients are advised there is nothing that can be done due to not being 18.

Supporter Share With Us survey response

I used the services of the Northern Domestic Violence Services... I do feel like the service they offered me was great however as I look back now, I realise...there was no offer of assistance to my children.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Schools are well placed to identify families at risk and to participate in multi - agency intervention with high-risk families. They may provide a venue for and possibly a role in respectful relationship training for parents -a whole of family strategy might be worth consideration.

Organisation and victim-survivor combined written submission

I would feel safer if there was no mean kids. If I never had to hear about my mother and stepfather again.

Commissioner and Young Person Student Voice postcards

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.


Victim-survivor written submission

Schools should provide 'drop in' homelessness workers and financial counselling for students who are living independently.


Victim-survivor written submission

Support also for children (is)... needed as the impact continues to affect them. (The) oldest of my children (is still affected) years later significantly, expressed in her inability to form and maintain relationships with others or to stand up to workplace bullying. The impact on children as well as victims can be long term and may not be evident for years after the violence ceases. Thus long term support or counselling being available for victims is also a need.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



Children are victims in their own right! You need to acknowledge this...



I recognise that my childhood family experiences made me vulnerable, susceptible to similar relationship problems in adult life... To me, ongoing nonthreatening family guidance, education, support that is accessible and relevant to all in our multicultural community is crucial!

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Prevention

Our communities really need to understand that DFSV is not a “women’s issue” – it is a “whole of community issue”. People who choose to use violence can also choose NOT to use violence. Education in schools, sporting clubs, workplaces and other community settings where diverse groups of folks gather are so important to help get that message out to the wider community. This will also help break down the shame and stigma which still exists for victims and victim survivors of DFV and in doing so, provide opportunities for disclosure, discussion, meaningful support and change.

Victim-survivor written submission

We also need to bring men on this journey in a way that allows them to celebrate and be proud of who they are and can be.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

I can say that - within the intergenerational context - healing and recovery is prevention. We therefore need much better informed mental health models and interventions for survivors of DFV. Over the years, I encountered an abysmally deficient level of insight amongst the psychologists and the psychiatrist I consulted for my PTSD.

Victim-survivor written submission

The causes are complex but I think they are learned behaviour and from my experience his father had violent tendencies a fact that I only found out in my 40’s. I think that men’s roles have changed since women entered the workforce and they feel usurped in their role as the breadwinner...think that they exert force to maintain control as they are the one’s that lack confidence and replace that with bad behaviour, toxic masculinity.

Victim-survivor written submission

What causes domestic, family and sexual violence? Patriarchy & Misogyny - this is reinforced not only by societal beliefs and underlying gender stereotypes but also deeply embedded within the legal system. My experience of victim-blaming is a clear reflection of this pervasive patriarchy and misogyny.

Victim-survivor written submission

As a daughter of immigrant parents who both were children of violent wars and difficult upbringings, an environment that was emotionally unstable was the norm for all of us. Growing up we were taught that ‘Fathers are the head of the house’ and to always follow the teachings of the Bible and Church. As I entered my teenage years my world remained just as small. My father chose to remove me from any sexual health education classes as he believed the Bible would provide all the required teaching. There were no conversations at home around sexual health or education and nothing around consent. I never knew or imagined that sex could be weaponized.

Victim-survivor written submission

Perpetrators have clear views on gender roles, of how women/girls are to act, speak, do, and present themselves... that does not intimidate their inferiority... The behaviour is then escalated through social groups, courts and legal proceeding that further entrench this idea of entitlement, by providing abusive fathers with mostly guaranteed mandatory access due to their fathers’ rights, of which trumps children’s/women’s safety and welfare.

Young Person victim-survivor written submission

Equality for women needs to be a legal right ...not just in public but behind closed doors...currently our laws and culture do not enforce or promote that a woman is equal always...whether she is at home in any family or in the workplace.

Victim-survivor written submission

Sport and entertainment glorify various forms of violence.

Supporter written submission

The patriarchy of the past - its ideology, beliefs, and consciousness - is passed on intergenerationally. It has been said that, 'The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living'. We are all raised and socialised with this nightmare from the past. This insidious patriarchy not only controls women and children, it also controls respectful men. It not only blinds men to the abuse, it makes it difficult to stand up against peers. A colleague and co-facilitator of the Men Stopping Violence Group once said, "It is so hard to be a respectful man, because every morning when I wake up I remember that I have to be different".


Organisation and victim-survivor Joint written submission

A huge emphasis needs to be placed on early education of young men about consent and what is acceptable behaviour. A thousand no's followed by a reluctant yes or silence does not equal consent, even if you are in a relationship with someone.

Supporter Share With Us survey response

Education campaigns and prevention campaigns need to be (led) by prominent male figures, sportsman, actors etc. This needs to extend to local sporting clubs, which in my view, are still a mecca for misogyny and disrespect towards women. Men need to call it out. I feel women are tired, angry and frustrated at the lack of men speaking out against violence towards women.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



A thousand no's followed by a reluctant yes or silence does not equal consent, even if you are in a relationship with someone.

Undertake a confronting and guerilla like awareness campaign. Blanket social media/ digital and free to air tv. I think something akin to the Grim Reaper anti HIV campaign is the scale that we need.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The messaging in our communities about what it is to be a man are completely wrong and the standard of behaviour is generally so low that we've come to expect very little from them.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Men need to challenge other men on their behaviour. There's still a lot of men who won't get involved or who just back up their mates rather than believing the woman. When you have your female friends and family cut out in a DV relationship, sometimes the only people you see are your partner's male friends and if they turn a blind eye, then it just keeps happening.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

If someone I knew needed help to be safe I would do my best to help them and try to prevent it from happening again because I know what it's like to need help and not feel safe.

Commissioner and Young Person Student Voice postcards

If we stopped assuming that this behaviour is necessarily or overwhelmingly motivated by misogynistic and patriarchal attitudes and began to recognise what decades of international research suggest, namely, that it can be and often is caused by problems such as childhood abuse and trauma and socio-economic stressors, we should then also accept that women are equally affected by those causes and therefore in principle equally at risk of perpetrating these behaviours. The question is, why we refuse to recognise this? Why do we appeal to the principle of things being 'evidence based', but then ignore relevant evidence?

Victim-survivor written submission

The single greatest cause of the reported spike in incidence of DFSV during the lockdowns, and also during the 2008/9 GFC, was financial stress and employment insecurity and anxiety. It was not specifically patriarchal or misogynistic, but socio-economic. We acknowledge, theoretically, that excessive stress causes mental and medical health problems and other social problems, but we do not reduce those stressors as a society – we are continuously increasing them.

Victim-survivor written submission

But what I do think could have the biggest impact is if we move our focus from being reactive to the issue and begin to be proactive... Protecting young people from harm and breaking the cycle of abuse. If we are looking to reduce the amount of women dying from domestic violence each year then we need to start turning to the men who display the high risk behaviours and understanding what they need.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

The next generation of abusers are modelling themselves on unlimited exposure to violence, sexual assaults, objectification of women, misogyny etc. because unlike tv or movies there is zero regulation controlling what is published.

Victim-survivor written submission

In conclusion, DV, is hardly surprising when so many forms of violence are endemic, even normalised, in our society. The cultural change required will be difficult. The law will have a major part to play but education and an open honest conversation about the social values which determine coherence or breakdown must be encouraged. When it comes to understanding DV, context is everything, whether it be the context of the home or the wider social context. And these two are not mutually exclusive.

Victim-survivor written submission

In schools I have not seen any education on DV. I have been part of consent and sexual violence education in schools and that is working, especially the consent. BUT I came across an incident in my school this year where boys on insta or snapchat playing the "rape or nah game". Nothing was reported to the police no phones were taken and no carl report. Senior management wanted to keep it in house to avoid giving the school a bad name. Independent school, I was appalled.

Victim-survivor written submission

Dedicated, ongoing funding to deliver education programs in all South Australian schools (regardless of public or private) to teach young people about respect and acceptable sexual behaviours.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

To prevent family and domestic violence SA should have conversations with parents about how violence could affect their kid's health and life.

Commissioner and Young Person Student Voice postcards

The topic should be addressed from early on, as part of curriculum in schools. Education should be provided on what healthy relationships look like, what those that don't look like, and what to do if you think your loved one/you are in a dangerous situation and what can be done about it...

I believe this will have a positive impact towards reducing family and domestic violence and assist generations of parents that teach their children (regardless of gender) that all people should be treated equally, that there should be no power imbalance in relationships, and that it's safe and ok to speak up and move on from a relationship that is unsafe.

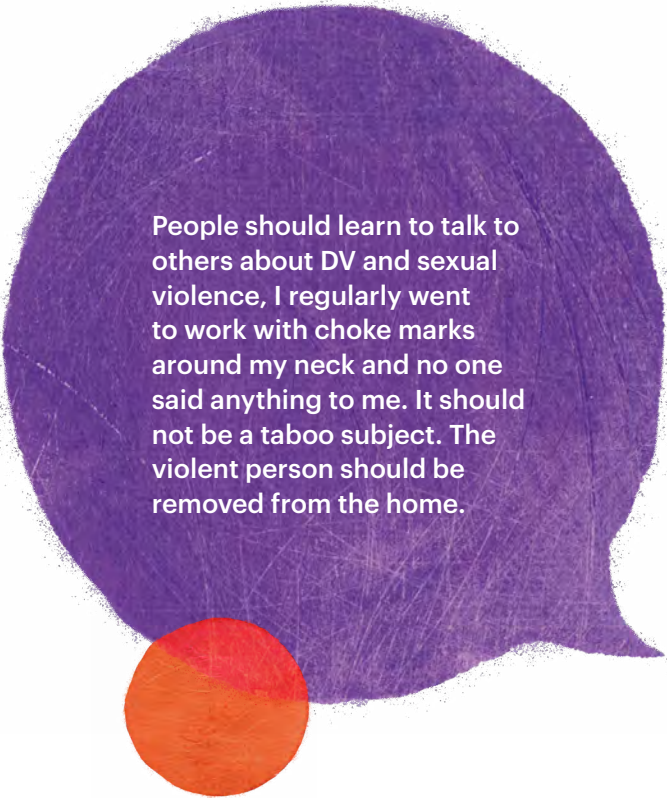
Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Relationship education ought to be taught in schools also because children don't know that their family experience is any different to others and in my experience, we were bullied into secrecy.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response

Greater emphasis on healthy relationships in our education systems is needed to broaden awareness of how damaging controlling behaviour (by both men and women) can be to developing safe, respectful relationships.

Victim-survivor Share With Us survey response



People should learn to talk to others about DV and sexual violence, I regularly went to work with choke marks around my neck and no one said anything to me. It should not be a taboo subject. The violent person should be removed from the home.

In relation to changing societal attitudes, I think we, once again, need to rely on the school system. It is not enough to allow teachers to make the call on how to teach gender equality as everyone has their own bias. A set program that has gender equal resources, allows sharing of achievements equally and promotes understanding between people should be developed. This will assist with more than just Domestic Violence.

Supporter written submission

I'm a firm believer in early intervention and recognising the signs of abuse early on. Educating our children on what safe behaviours are and what things they should look out for is important. I think being capable of identifying emotions is critical to be taught to young children. We now teach children about 'tricky people' instead of 'stranger danger' because research has shown us that abuse is more likely to be perpetrated by people we know and not strangers

Victim-survivor written submission

Along with that I think we should be teaching children how to identify emotional and to understand what their feeling. Some children can't explain how they feel they're in danger or being harmed because they can't identify the emotions they're feeling, yet they may be showing symptoms of abuse without understanding the reasons behind it, so when questioned about their emotions, they can't put two and two together and neither can the person doing the questioning because they need to rely on what the child said even if the symptoms don't correlate.

Victim-survivor written submission



ROYAL COMMISSION
INTO DOMESTIC, FAMILY
AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE