Royal Commission into Family Violence PO Box 535, Flinders Lane, Victoria, 8009

29th of May, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is and, as a survivor of severe Domestic Violence, I am writing to you in order to make a submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

To begin with, I would like to give you a brief background history as it will help me to explain why it is that I am suggesting the things that I am. (Please note that although this particular relationship was a very long time ago, the information that I am going to give is very relevant today).

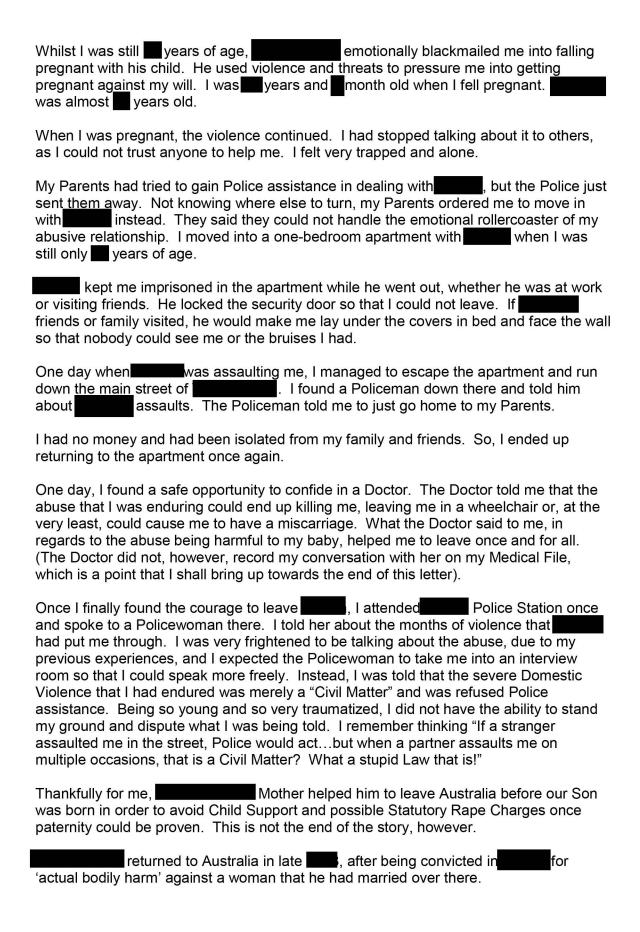
My first Domestic Violent Relationship started many years ago in second was only years of age and my partner, was years older than me at years of age.

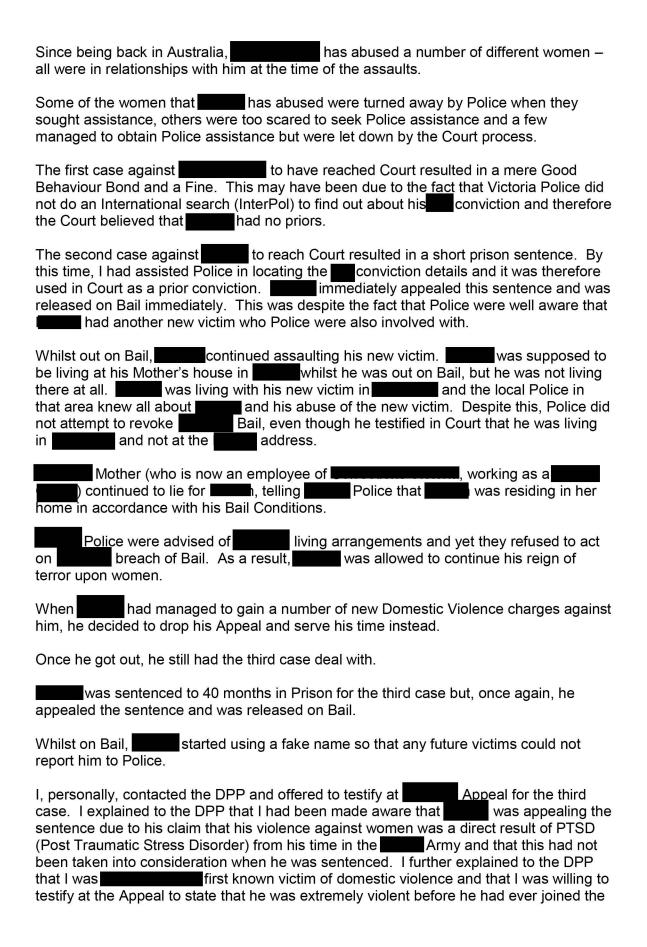
Like most violent partners, was very charming to begin with and there was absolutely no indication of his darker side.

What then started as several insecure comments, however, soon turned into absolute outrage (on part), where by he subjected me to severe physical assaults as well as verbal, emotional and psychological abuse.

The abuse and mind games were so bad that I attempted suicide. I was rushed to Hospital for treatment. One of the head nurses at the hospital treated me very badly. She told the other staff members to stick needles into me where ever they would hurt the most. After I tried to confide in hospital staff about the ongoing abuse which led to my suicide attempt turned up at the hospital. The head nurse growled at me, in front of "Why would you want to see him? According to you, he is the reason you did this in the first place!" In doing this, was made aware that I had spoken out about the abuse and therefore the abuse got worse.

I tried to explain the abuse to my Mother, but this only resulted in her confronting about it, which, of course, he denied. went out of his way to convince others that I was a trouble making attention seeker who was making things up about him in order to gain attention. Meanwhile, his abuse of me worsened every time he found out that I had tried to seek help.





Army. This testimony would have proven claims to be false as he joined the Army after our relationship had ended and he had fled Australia. To my absolute dismay, the DPP told me that they would not be needing my testimony.
I attended the Appeal anyway, in case the DPP changed their mind, and I was in the Courtroom to witness all that transpired.
Defense Team had organized for to meet with a Psychiatrist for only one 1 hour appointment. By the end of that one 1 hour appointment, had convinced the Psychiatrist that he was suffering from PTSD from his time in the Army and that it was the cause for his violence against women. Darran failed to tell this Psychiatrist that he was violent during our relationship, which preceded his joining the Army, because it did not suit his cause to do so.
I sat in the Court and listened to this Psychiatrist claim that in order to change his PTSD from the Army diagnosis, he would have to speak to one of victims who had been in a relationship with prior to him joining the Army. I was sat there, willing and able, but the DPP had silenced me.
As a result, prison sentence for the third case was reduced from 40 months to 30 months.
Due to time limitations, I have had to keep this version of events to a bare minimum, so although this is a very brief outline of what has transpired, I sincerely hope that you can see the issues involved in all of this.

The issues that come to mind for me are as follows:-

- Police not only refused to assist me when I went to them in they also failed to take an official Statement in regards to the abuse. This failure to take a Statement not only intensified my grief and trauma, stunted my recovery and thwarted my chance of gaining some Justice for myself, but has also assisted to use false diagnosis and claims in order to benefit himself in all future cases against him.
- Due to the risks that I encountered when seeking help from Family and the Hospital, by way of their reaction in confronting my abuser and making my situation worse...I believe that there needs to be a safe avenue to report and keep note of all incidents that take place before a victim finds the ability to leave the violent relationship. I believe that a website with a secure online form for victims to fill out is an idea worth thinking about. This way, a victim of Domestic Violence can write down what is happening to them so that it is documented and stored for when they are ready to leave and take possible Police action. The submissions could serve as diary entries of the abuse without there being any risk of the entries being found by the abuser, who could then destroy them and abuse the victim further. Victims are very unlikely to go to Police until they are certain that they are ready to leave and, by then, may have forgotten a lot of the finer dates and details. An online record of Statements could help to serve as evidence.

- Medical Staff (such as Doctors, Nurses, etc) should record all allegations of Domestic Violence so that there is a trail of evidence if the victim ever decides to leave and seek Police assistance. In many, if not most, instances of Domestic Violence, the victim is left isolated and unable scared to speak up. This means that by the time the victim does finally speak up about the abuse that they have been made to endure, they are doing so at the end of their relationship, which leaves them open to the allegation that they are only making it up now to seek revenge or to win in custody battles. Victims of Domestic Violence need as much proof, that there was indeed a history of violence, as possible.
- I would like all Police to be directed to take Statements from victims of Domestic Violence whenever the victims present themselves to Police. If, after reading the Statement, Police believe that there is not enough evidence to proceed, the Statement should be kept on file anyway and be attached to the alleged perpetrator's name. If, at any time in the future, that victim returns or a new victim emerges, the older Statements are still there for investigating officers to refer to. Sometimes, it may just be that where a single victim may not be able to proceed through Court alone, joining their Statements up with any and all future victims may, in fact, lead to a joint case and successful conviction.
- Police should always submit an InterPol search on a perpetrator, especially when they know that the perpetrator has lived overseas at any time, in order to see if there are any prior charges and convictions for the same crime elsewhere.
- Different Police Stations need to be in contact with one another and have better lines of communication. If a perpetrator is out on Bail under the supervision of Police, then they should be made aware by, let's say, Police if the perpetrator is up on new charges and is breaching their Bail Conditions. As it is currently, the left hand does not know what they right hand is doing when it comes to different Police Stations, even if they are dealing with a common perpetrator.
- Psychologists, Psychiatrists or any other "specialists" that are brought in by the perpetrator's lawyers should be made to sit down with the victim of the case (or even previous victims, if necessary), in order to get a clear picture of the perpetrator that they are assessing, rather than just going by whatever it is that the perpetrator is saying. It is all too common for perpetrators to lie to these "specialists" in order to gain the diagnosis that they are wanting and needing for their Court Case. Unfortunately, this has been working for them for a very long time and it needs to stop. The victims are continuously victimized by the Court process, whilst their abusers make a complete circus out of the proceedings.
- Victims of Domestic Violence should not have to face their abuser in Court at any stage, nor for any reason. Alternative arrangements must be made for victims to give evidence to the Court, so that their abuser does not have the opportunity to know their movements at any time. The murder of Fiona Warzywoda (in Sunshine, Victoria), after her Intervention Order Hearing is a prime example of why this is not safe for the victim.
- The DPP must do more to prepare for their cases. If they are overloaded and don't have time to prepare fully, then there needs to be more Prosecutors brought in to share the workload. I have seen Prosecutors who clearly do not know their case, who have forgotten the Brief and therefore needed an adjournment, or who refused a willing

and able witness who could have helped win their case and therefore lost the case instead.

- A full list of prior victims (whether convicted in a Court or not) should be attached to the relevant perpetrator's Police file as possible witnesses to all future Court Cases against that perpetrator.
- Police need to be better trained and be accountable for any refusal to act.
- Victims should have access to Crimes Compensation and as much counseling as is necessary in order to get on with their lives.
- Family Court Lawyers need to stop telling their clients that they do not want to mention Domestic Violence in their Court Papers because it "muddies the waters", etc... Judges MUST know where there has been domestic violence and victims must have access to support.
- The Australian Government needs to stop supporting White Ribbon as the main Domestic Violence organization, unless White Ribbon stops making their organization about men only. Female survivors of Domestic Violence must be encouraged to speak up and must be listened to. I believed that White Ribbon sends a message that only men can do something about this epidemic and that is simply not true nor healthy. As a survivor of Domestic Violence, I am offended by White Ribbon.

I am certain that I could come up with a lot more in regards to what is needed to move forward, but I am unfortunately out of time.

I did not see much by way of advertising this Royal Commission and by the time I looked into it, I found that it was the day before submissions closed.

I hope that you find something useful in what I have to say and I sincerely hope that some positive changes come out of this.

Kind regards;