

Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence

Anonymous ([REDACTED])

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I've had three violent relationships – one when I was 16-18, that was just a few fights, few black eyes and stuff like that.

From [REDACTED] I went out with a really violent bloke who was [REDACTED] years older than me. We were on drugs. When he's come down from the drugs he was very violent – I suffered a lot of black eyes and bruising. He put guns to my head. It was really full on. There was another one after this one, until I was [REDACTED].

The one I had from [REDACTED] – he was a drug dealer. That's when I started full on taking drugs. Was taking them all the time with him. When I broke up with him I got a criminal record because I had to source my own drugs. Nearly every night I dream and I go back to that time of my life. He introduced me to drugs – speed.

I've done *Out of the Dark* (family violence prison program) – thought that was really good. They gave us a kit of places where you could seek help.

Neighbours called the police and I called them a couple of times too (in third relationship). Nothing happened when police came. They suggested an intervention order. I didn't get one. Back then there was really nothing. I know things are a lot different now. Especially with Rosie Batty. She's got it going on. She's a good woman. But a lot of women wouldn't do anything now because they're scared.

Out of the Dark was good – it pointed out all different sorts of abuse.

I've got a good relationship now ([REDACTED] years). Good guy. I've got two kids to the third guy, and one to the current guy.

I did find that with the drugs, I ended up being a bit violent with the guy I'm with now. I was the perpetrator. I never thought I would see the day when I would be like that. Drugs didn't help. It's not always the women that are victims. I found myself doing what had been done to me.

He (the very violent one) did it again after me – he had a woman after me. She had three children to him. He got custody – buggers me how he did that. He was a manipulator. He destroyed her self-esteem. He was really horrible to her. She ended up drinking a bit.

For [REDACTED] years I was heavy using drugs (during the very violent relationship) – I've been battling my addiction ever since. I've always wondered what my life would have been like if I'd gone for a different sort of fellow. I used to suffer a lot of depression – the drugs made me feel better. We used

to have really bad fights, then I'd leave him and then I'd go back – when I was coming down from the drugs.

I've got another 3.5 years, if I get parole. I was 18 months at [REDACTED]. My youngest one comes in and stays for a couple of nights in school holidays. Because my partner lives so far away we meet half way – get day leave. We're meeting at the museum next week. At [REDACTED] there was nothing to look forward to – you didn't even look forward to visits.

I learnt a lot from *Out of the Dark*. We need places to be accessible for when women need them. It should be put out there more, where women can get help. Maybe even out on TV – like Lifeline. If women know they can ask for help and get it straight away – not have to wait for three weeks.

I don't know how they're going to control things with this ice. Things will get worse and worse. A good percentage (of violence) would be ice-related. It turned me psycho. I'm not a violent person at all. I was turning to baseball bats or anything I could get my hands on. When someone wants to go to rehab they need to get a bed straight away.

Back in the day, when I was younger, you went to someone's house and they'd be having a bong (heroin use was hidden). Now sucking on an ice pipe is social; and it's accepted more. It's the norm to some people. Some people can be casual with everything, including drug use – they're lucky. Others can't.

Need to have a phone number locked in people's heads – like 999, or Lifeline. It needs to be out there like that. If I got belted I wouldn't know where to ring.