

Royal Commission into Family Violence – Victoria

Submission – by [REDACTED]

1. Are there other goals the Royal Commission should consider?

The Royal Commission should assist in creating a “one stop” communication strategy for victims.

- Advice victim when the interim IVO is issued
- When the final IVO is issued
- When the police catch up with the offender if a breach is made, and again the next time, and the next time. What his reaction is and is he ever going to stop. It would be good to know how the conversation pans out with the offender and police.
- When the court date is. How the court process works, one hearing, another hearing and so on.
- If you are not at court, a phone call telling you what happened, the outcome, what happens next, why etc.
- What is involved with a mental health assessment if one is ordered by the Magistrate.
- Who is the Police Prosecutor looking after your case and he/she be available to you should you wish to speak to them.

Currently everyone is really too busy and under resourced to call you and inform you about what is happening and what happens next. The system is far from ideal.

8. Tell us about any gaps or deficiencies in current responses to family violence, including legal responses. Tell us about what improvements you would make to overcome these gaps and deficiencies, or otherwise improve current responses.

My situation involves an intervention order with my ex partner and includes [REDACTED] who is [REDACTED] years old. We were granted an IVO for [REDACTED] years a year ago now.

- It would be good to find out when the IVO is served. For me, I had to ring the police 5/6 times to find out this information and was told I would be called when it had been served. I wasn't called.
- from the moment you make a statement in relation to a breach of the IVO, you need to know what happens next.
- Knowing the police are busy and under increased pressure, I felt really bad by calling them and 'harassing' them for information about your situation.
- Do they try to find the offender, how often do they try to find him or is it just another list of tiring jobs for the police
- what happens from here? Do you get a call when the police have caught up with the offender? (answer no), do you get told if the offender has to go to court (answer no).
- Unless you call the police to follow up, you really don't get any information.
- Finally when it does go to court, it's the first of many hearings.
- Does anyone call you after the hearing, answer no.
- My partner was arrested in [REDACTED] after [REDACTED] separate breaches of the IVO and 3 calls to 000..The court case has now been adjourned [REDACTED] times and [REDACTED] is on bail. I understand the reasons why but no one calls me from the Police Prosecutors office after each hearing and you have a different police prosecutor every time. I understand the demands and the budgets and that the courts are behind but this has to change.
- I was allocated a Police Officer from the [REDACTED] ' Family Violence Investigation Unit'. I was told that as she wasn't at court (I called her after one of the briefings), she couldn't tell me what happened that day and as she doesn't work for in the prosecutors office, she didn't

know how they ran their office and therefore could not assist me. I was told to call her any time about anything at all but every time I did call, I felt I was a nuisance.

- I must say, every one I have called and spoken to has been very lovely but I still find it hard to get the information I require. I was told that the computer system at the courts are not linked to the Prosecutors office and that it would take weeks to input the information into the system.
- Essentially, if you don't attend court it is extremely hard to find out what is going on.
- I STILL don't know what all the charges are against [REDACTED] (my ex Partner) but I am told there are [REDACTED]. I know only know [REDACTED] of them despite having asked several times.
- The police do call me now (I have now made 8 separate statements to police) but the communication process is currently very flawed.
- Every time one particular police officer calls me, he asks for my new mobile phone number and asks if I have changed my number. Every time I tell him, as politely as possible, that I changed my number on advice from his colleague and that I had never given him my old number. He has always had my new number and that I have had it for 8 months now.

Everyone is very 'helpful' and 'polite' and makes you feel that you are not wasting their time when you speak to them however I feel that a cohesive communication system is absolutely vital. The timing of court hearings also needs to be speedy as the current waiting time is too lengthy and adds this adds increased pressure on victims.

I would like to see more administrative staff to input the days court proceedings and outcomes into an updated computer system. Ideally this should be completed within 24 hours. This would take many hours, weeks, months and possibly years to implement but this is, in my opinion, vital.

I would like a phone call that very day from the actual person who represented me to explain what happened in court that day. I didn't even know that you don't have the same police prosecutor each time.

I would like the police computers to be linked to the prosecutors' computers.

I would like to know if the Magistrate is even in the building so you don't have to wait until 3.30pm (being there at 9.30) to find out that the Magistrate is in fact not in court that morning. I think court movements need to be clear. It's not clear at the moment and court rooms seem to move without notification.

I would like a quicker time frame for hearings. [REDACTED]'s first hearing was scheduled 9 months after I made my first statement to police. No one called me to tell me that, I ended up 'googling Court Listings' and found out that way.

I had made another 3 statements for breaches of the IVO before [REDACTED]'s case was first heard but those additional breaches were not yet scheduled to appear in the court system. This seems to be a waste of time and taxpayers' money. It would seem logical to hear all breaches at the one time.

My situation is closely linked (in my opinion) with an undiagnosed mental health problem. In [REDACTED], my ex partner was reported missing [REDACTED] by his mother and she tried to have him hospitalised on several occasions yet he didn't think he had a problem (and still doesn't). He has shown delusional and paranoid behaviour yet he can still present as a "functioning" human being when he needs to.

There is a gap in the system with regards to mental health. If [REDACTED] was assessed in a 360 degree environment, he would likely be diagnosed with some condition by now and might be able to get the help he requires. By 360 degree, maybe his parents, siblings, ex partner/s could talk to his assessor.

I realise my submission is very brief however I would be happy to make myself available to the Commission should you wish to speak to me further.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the sender's name and signature.