

To whom it may concern

I am writing to provide a formal submission to Royal Commission into Family Violence.

While I have previously been a victim of Family violence I consider myself fortunate that in my case my Partner sought help and has conscientiously changed his behaviour in the many years since. My purpose in writing to you is put forward my thoughts on the implication of my role as friend to a woman who in the ■ years we have been close, has continued to suffer greatly in a violent marriage of some ■ years. Both my Partner and I are also God parents to her youngest child.

Over that ■ year period of our friendship we have provided safe refuge on numerous occasions, provided financial support, provided respite care for her children and remained what I hope has been good listeners. Despite this I remain at a loss as to what I, as a friend, can do better or differently to support her and to some extent her husband, to be safer and happier and resolve what have now become long standing and complex issues

On several occasions I have anonymously contacted often overloaded support services in the hope that they could give better guidance and at times to direct me to ways that I could better manage my own response to her suffering and to support her more effectively

In my view many women and children experiencing violence have someone in their lives either family or friends who feel equally impotent in how to support, guide, and remain respectful of abused women's circumstances, concerns and limitations.

In considering the full scope of evidence before the commission I would ask that the role friends and in some cases family can play to be a more effective part of the solution be considered. As a society we have begun to publically explore the role that other men can play in discouraging violence towards women and it would be of great value to women who are supporting an abused woman to also have clearer, action based and widely publicised advice.

Both my experiences and those of my friend have taught me that leaving violence is extraordinarily difficult. Repeatedly explaining to her husband that his behaviour is not ok and can never be justified has at all times fallen on deaf ears and in some instances has increased the danger to her. "Saying No to violence against women" while being a good start, just isn't enough and as communities' families and friends we need more constructive and instructive public advice and publicity campaigns.

Yours sincerely

■■■■■■■■■■ (name to be withheld)