

Question Eight

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.

Following an emergency intervention order enacted on a Friday night, I sought an intervention order through the court in the [REDACTED] on a Monday morning in [REDACTED]. The court was busy and I was there from when it opened until 4.30pm. While waiting for the case to be seen the accused perpetrator continued to stalk me within the waiting room. He sat opposite me and followed me when I moved.

I approached an official (security guard or a police officer - I can't remember which) to discuss the situation. They said it was a common occurrence but unfortunately they couldn't really do anything. They kindly lead me to a seat around a corner. The perpetrator could still see me from the waiting room but he had to walk past the officer to approach me.

While I felt that police or security would intervene if he attacked me physically, I felt I could not safely leave the waiting room to get a refreshment, use the bathroom or for any other reason. When I was interviewed prior to my case being heard, I raised these concerns and they organised for me to race down to the café downstairs to get some lunch while the perpetrator was interviewed. I don't smoke but I have no idea how other people coped with needing to leave for that or any other reason.

I really feel that it would be helpful to have separate waiting rooms and a clear way to go to the bathroom or get refreshments without jeopardising safety.

Around 4.30pm the case was heard and a continuing order was put in place. The officer who dealt with my case ensured that the perpetrator was delayed in leaving the court. Unfortunately the delay was not very long and within one block of me leaving the court he had caught up to me and set out to approach me. I got in a taxi and got away but the situation was very unsafe.

If this process was more thought out, I could have requested a taxi pick me up from the courthouse, a friend to meet me following the hearing, or if he could have been held back longer, I would have had a real chance to get out of sight of the court.