

To The Royal commission into family Violence

As a victim of domestic violence I would like to submit my experience and knowledge to the commission investigating the avenues we as Australia's should take to stem the flow.

1 When you apply for a restraining order against your spouse/partner you put your life in greater danger however compare the danger that you face at home it probably works out even so either is not a winning situation.

If I have finally appealed to the court to help protect me it means that I have exhausted all avenues available to me and now I am asking for help. What I have expected and what I desperately need is protection for myself and my children. When taking out this order the court needs to have a **duty of care** when issuing it. **I want my order to cover myself and my children not just myself because neither of us are safe. This is a gigantic step and one that needs to be made binding and with binding consequences not just a piece of paper that holds no value and I have risked my life to get it for nothing and in many many cases that's what has been done.** This option was not available to me when I was violently bashed many years ago with nowhere to turn and no roof over my head. To be doused in petrol and dead locked in a house with my unborn child and 2 children locked in their bedroom I begged for that match not to be lit for all I was worth. In those days this was not attempted murder this was domestic violence not really worth a visit from police.

My practical solution to violating a restraining order or just being attacked is the kind of alarm that old people use to alert someone to what is happening in the home. When someone is bashing down your door or bashing you one can hardly make a phone call but you can push an alert button. Maybe this would be a much cheaper alternative than an ankle bracelet.

2 Education in the schools not just this is not acceptable boys and you shouldn't take it girls but **self esteem classes** showing girls that this is not okay. Making sure that they understand that this is not a one off thing and they won't do it again because they will. If they hit you they will also hit your kids and if you allow someone to do this to your children who do not have a chance to fight back you are worse than them. In lower socio economic groups of young adults maybe free **self defence classes** so at least you will have a chance to get away. These people who attend these classes need to commit to saving their children and themselves.

3 This is also a racial and religious problem too.

Some races and religions think that however you treat your wife or children is how it should be. Men have been raised to believe that they own their wife she is their property and sub servant and that's the way it stays generation after generation. While some of this behaviour is can be covered with school you cannot cover it in schools where race or religion has control. There is no answer for this and maybe as some people become educated in the future I can see no way what so ever at fixing this particular side to domestic violence.

4 Housing requirements for these people are another avenue that needs so much thought.

When I left my husband the waiting list was not so long in those days so my priority housing was not going to make someone who has been on the waiting list for 10 lose their spot. Those people have loving caring families and have waited patiently paying for what they can ill afford and going without to pay private rent.

I did this for a year before someone told me to go to the community centre. These things were kept behind closed doors and not much information around unlike today but because this problem is ingrained in our rich and poor societies and in the richer houses that is mostly where it will stay. The stigma in the upper classes is so much worse. This is something you will never discuss with the girls over champers at the races. And here is the mind control and the cash control and you will never see a bruise on his wife. You are so controlled that maybe your allowance is so small you can't get away or the humiliation of anyone finding out. This too is a vicious cycle and no answers. Who would dare fight money and affluence in court no one in Toorak.

So where do we put them without causing ill feeling with any other lower income group needing accommodation

Well I don't have an answer for that the housing dept DHS pulls down houses and leaves the blocks empty or sells off the land and does not rebuild. The other problem is the ghetto type area where single mothers and children are all put in the one area will just cause more of the same problem with women moving from one relationship to another and being younger the loneliness and poverty in these areas is just a never ending cycle.

For women that have no family support or understanding or having been brought up in the same circumstances this to me is another unanswerable challenge.

While many people women children and men do not have the pride of selves, do not have the ability to want to save their children from living in a vicious circle of violence and death ,who do not put their children's lives above their own to get them away I can say for a fact that time if you have enough of it, that is the only thing that will make you fight to survive this may not happen after a **couple of times when you leave you just have to wait but if the law and action from the police can come in a timely fashion then you will walk away and never look back** it has taken me 40 years to even talk about what happen to me however even though I have suffered from panic attacks, and anxiety I know I saved myself and more importantly my children.

I have very little sympathy for anyone who stays in a violent situation. I know that it takes time to decide to leave with 3 kids and a bag to stay with friends who can only accommodate you for a short time, I know that there isn't really any answers out there to cover every situation but I do know that one hit isn't enough and that if he hits you he will hit your kids or worse still take them from you. I know what it's like to wish someone dead when they drive away drunk because when they come back you are going to get it and I

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know had I stayed any longer I would have gladly killed him while he slept because he couldn't have done anything to me and I would have gladly done jail time because my kids and I would be safe.

For forty years I know what it's like to be safe, even if we didn't have much, didn't eat much, and didn't have good clothes. We were safe never had to worry about going to sleep at night because someone threatened to burn the house down, never looked over our shoulders.

You have so many different aspects and no matter how hard I try I cannot think of a solution to cover everything and there is no answer. The problem is too diverse and too ingrained. My only suggestions an alert, self esteem lessons and self defence. After escaping teach your children it is not acceptable and maybe we can turn a few around. I did and I'm very proud.

With Regards
Lyn Martell