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The Royal Commission
into Family Violence

PO Box 535

Flinders Home -

Vic 3009.

27 May '15

Dear Sir/Madam

About [redacted] years ago I ran away from my
now exhusband with our [redacted] children aged
[redacted]. I was lucky to have wonderful
friends in [redacted] who supported us +
gave us a place to live until the divorce
went through nearly [redacted] years later because
the people in [redacted], including my family, ^{family doctor} it
did not (I enclose copies of affidavits from
my mother, sister + exhusband) I believe my
family's response shows how dysfunctional

our family is, riven² with unacknowledged jealousies & spite while putting on a very different face in public.

The only people who supported me locally were the girls who worked for me & a friend who helped me leave - plus one couple who are now great friends with my ex husband.

As well I was quite unimpressed by the Family Court and their lack of care for our safety.

Recently [REDACTED] a girl I know left her violent manipulative husband. The police & domestic violence unit were wonderful but the reaction of the community & her family (i.e. her siblings & their spouses & her children) is almost identical to what I experienced.

She found it very difficult in those early days as she had virtually no money.

no transport (this is vital in the country)
 & abandoned by her family. She was lucky
 she had the use of a horse for a short
 time but still had to pay the associated
 bills. Fortunately she is now eligible for
 the age pension so her financial position
 is somewhat improved.

It seems to me that although some of
 the services offered to victims of domestic
 violence have improved other lack of
 services eg lack of money, a place to live
 where they feel safe & could lead them
 to decide to return.

The thing that stands out most of all
 for me is for all the talk of Domestic
 Violence, white ribbon days etc- the
 community attitudes (and that includes family)
 have not changed over [REDACTED] years.

It's easy to wear a white ribbon &
 put up signs about being against Domestic

Violence etc but when ⁴ the violence affects people you know most people just look the other way (perhaps they see elements that reflect their own relationships) or still think he must have done something to "ask for it" eg- being a "ragging" & irritating wife.

Apart from addressing community attitudes, which is a huge task, the following need to be addressed.

- 1/ Improved support available for victims when they first leave, a most vulnerable & stressful time. This includes emotional financial & housing.
- 2/ I believe we ^{need} support groups for survivors of domestic violence on an ongoing basis as it takes many years, if ever, for survivors to make some recovery from the trauma suffered. Other survivors can be very helpful here & will understand better

Now most. what they have been through.

They also need to be heard + they won't be in the community.

I believe we need short term + long term goals.

Short term needs to look at improving help needed by victims when they first leave i.e. financial, safety, emotional + housing (Emotional needs to be ongoing)

longer term

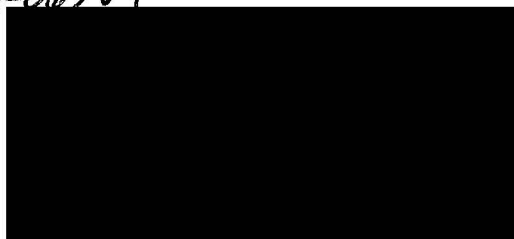
1/ Dealing with community attitudes which I suspect are more entrenched in the country areas

2/ Education + training for women so that they have the capacity to earn a good income independent of their partners/husbands.

In my experience I have found

quite remarkable how my ex husband's behaviour has changed towards me over time from OK when I was the main bread winner to appalling when I had  small children i.e. I was a "lazy slut" who dished up "heaps of slime" for his dinner ^{etc + worse} (we were in the   so it couldn't have been that bad) & now, I am now a wonderful cook & overhard working. I'd all ties in with my financial independence or dependence as perceived by him.

- Lastly I would like to ask:
1. Is domestic violence more prevalent in the country?
 2. How effective are restraining orders?

I am very pleased this Royal Commission is taking place -
Yours faithfully


P.S. I feel I should make special mention of the local G.P.s. If their attitudes have not changed they need to be specifically targeted re awareness of the problem.

My doctor at the time, who was also a personal friend, dumped me after I ran away & became great friends with my sister. I believe his actions were motivated by his own personal experiences (his first wife had left him because of his difficult behaviour) however we would hope our doctor's behaviour not be motivated by their own fears & prejudices.

Another local G.P. told me I should come back to Emsay, make it up with my mother, get a housing commission house (which happened to be in the worst area of the town) & get a job as an O.T. at the old people's home working with my sister. I was not impressed!