

## **Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence (VIC) 2015**

My family have been involved in a incidence whereby the violence was started with a 14 year old child alleging to have been interfered with by a male family member. We have just learned today that there was not enough evidence for the family member to be charged. This 14 year old child/person has caused mental anguish to all of our family along with the Department investigating the case and also the unprofessionalism and lack of compassion of CPS (Child Protection Services)/DHHS.

Some teenagers are using child/sexual abuse as a way of gaining attention from other family members and their peers. This is not the first case in our area, another incidence was where a lady had a new partner, and the then teenager accused the partner of interfering with her because she was jealous of the mother's partner. Again this was not true but the teenage cause so much heartache and anguish to the family that it defragmented the family unit.

If teenagers are going to cause harm to families then the laws need to be changed so that they too are accountable for their actions. If a teenager refuses to be checked by the hospital when they cry out about these allegations and put a family in emotional crisis, then we should be asking "what do they have to hide?"

My submission is also to alert the public and community that family violence is not just caused by men or in some cases women. The new trend is that some family members are causing violence and defragmentation of families by their sheer selfishness, wanting to pay back a family member because of lack of attention, wanting to cause harm to that family member because they do not speak to them, or purely because of jealousy. Family members are also tormenting elderly parents for their inheritance before the parent dies. They are causing the elderly parents to be isolated, not speaking with them, excluding them, degrading, and even threatening not to visit them, and bullying them to sign paperwork so that they can make a financial gain. This is all happening in the community and families are not reporting it because it is happening within their families.

CPS is another organisation that needs to be monitored and the negative culture that exists needs to be changed. Some staff are abusing and exploiting their power of position by victimising, prejudging the family, accusing them of being criminals before investigations have been investigated, placing unnecessary restrictions on family members, taking away their human and individual rights, not addressing the issues or caring about the impact that it has on the children, putting children in harm's way by threatening parents with advising violent members of the family to be involved, overloading grandparents and while showing no compassion or professionalism towards the family. Children have the right to be physically and emotionally safe at all times. How is causing this harm to the parents and grandparents helping the safety and well being of children? What are CPS/DHHS



trying to achieve by breaking up and fragmenting the family units, when they claim in their vision and mission statements that they will work alongside and with family and the community. When they get it wrong they get it wrong. And in the meantime have caused trauma and fracture to the families involved.

I am asking that before any judgement is passed on anyone, that there is professionalism, responsibility, accountability, compassion, empathy, and individualism given because every case is different and with more of the cultural and different types of family units, the needs are going to be different.

These so called practitioners are not counsellors or even understand what is required in helping a family unit. They read from a text book. Some don't even have experience in social work and are allowed to pass judgement. My family and I have just been involved in one of the most distressing, demeaning, traumatic and terrorising times of our lives.

It's about time all the services joined forces and case managed cases with dignity, are properly trained, professionalism, responsibility, accountability, compassion, empathy, and individualism. And work together so that the best outcome is made for families, children, and the whole community. After all it's about communities at the end of the day.

Thank you for allowing me to pass on my views. Good luck.