

To the Royal Commission into Domestic Violence.

I write to you to in relation to what both my step daughter and i have been through and witnessed over the past few years. All I want the chance to do is express the lesser discussed side of domestic violence which is the direct abuse upon children and the more challenging discussion of females being the perpetrators. My hope is to balance the ledger perhaps by just 1% in the difficulties a father has when a mother is the unrelenting antagonist to destroy the previous partner to gain both custody and financial gain.

I have read many stories in newspapers, television, and other forums in relation to the mental and physical abuse on women and children and with what I have personally witnessed in my time at court.

There are most certainly many evil men walking the streets and stalking the hallways and bedrooms of the family home but there is undoubtedly the scenario of the same with women.

You will see from some of the documentation I have provided the difficulties I have found being the custodian for my step daughter as well as the joint parent for my biological daughter.

From the very outset I have found mistreatment and an undeniable lack of support by Victorian Police, welfare groups and the stigma that being a male going through court is a completely one sided affair.

Please read my documentation and make your own mind up with the details and what a man, a father, and a former husband can do to create a fair balance for the security of my children, my aim is to have my story heard by the general population and finally have a voice that will be heard.

The documentation provided has been given to many sources with little acknowledgment or concern, with also what I have witnessed in court I am not alone in this type of struggle and that there are still many good men out there doing there best, only defeated by the dominant “the child should be with the mother” syndrome, I have little doubt that if roles were reversed I would have little, supervised or no contact with my children at all.

The suggested topics I raise firstly is “the woman who cried wolf” situation, this position as to where a woman can use the domestic violence cause (this may include alleged inappropriate behavior even molestation or rape) to gain custody of children, financial gain, and criminal charges.

How do we change the perception that men are guilty until somehow trying to disprove the charges when perhaps only small children or infants are the only ones can provide the truth but either forced by the mother to lie or they are just to young.

A complete discussion about naming domestic violence perpetrators in the public domain.

What safeguards are there of using intervention orders to gain the “upper hand” in custody battles.

To clarify is massive difference of a mutual agreement with an intervention order as a civil matter, with a huge immediate difference with an alleged breach then becoming a criminal matter.

The further understanding by both parties involved of the consequences of misleading the alleged perpetrator to suggest things against the order and the ramifications of them.

The creation of a female perpetrator based program (currently there are only mens behavior programs).

The re-introduction(or similar charge) of a criminal charge similar to aiding and abetting in domestic violence areas.

A more pro-active agenda and call centre designed for children in need, for children that have been witness to domestic violence by any family member.

I genuinely think that lifeline etc is not a thought in most children’s minds as seen by children as a suicide prevention contact.

Easier access through schools and a specified mentor at all schools for children to discuss the concerns of domestic violence.

The suggestion of a cost involved if an intervention order (is not) created by Police.

This is only a small amount of topic discussions that both myself and daughter would like to raise, we appreciate our chance to speak in advance.

I thank you for your time

James Waterhouse