

**Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence**  
**Anonymous**  
**16 April 2015**

I am a [redacted] year old woman (who only looks [redacted]). I “was” an elder, a matriarch, a daughter, a friend, a valued family member, a godmother and a mother [redacted]  
[redacted]

Since early [redacted], my life got turned completely upside down. It turned on its axil for the not good of me or any of my family or friends. My ex-husband, who I divorced approximately [redacted] years prior to that, returned to my life. [redacted]  
[redacted]

[redacted] And to prove that he still had control of me, he gave me the flogging of my life. It put me in hospital overnight. [redacted]  
[redacted]

[redacted] That was “hello, I’m back” from my ex-husband. And “you are to do what you’re told, woman” was the comment that he made. He then left. He told me he’d be back the very next day and that he’d move in with me. [redacted]  
[redacted]

[redacted] I spoke to a friend of mine who was a Senior Sergeant in the police force. He came into my home in the [redacted]. He knew what had happened because he knew my ex-husband because he’d dealt with the violence in our relationship when I was married. He was the one who helped me get out of that marriage. We diverted a plan that he could hold my ex-husband for an 8-12 hour period without charging him while I packed up my house. The domestic violence ladies in [redacted] helped pack up my house with some of my family members. [redacted]  
[redacted]

That stuff was packed up and it was moved to a furniture storage place in [redacted]. The domestic violence people said they would keep it there for me until I settled. [redacted]  
[redacted] I moved [redacted] times in less than [redacted] months. When I finally got to [redacted] where my aunty was, in [redacted], I was going to settle with her because he never knew about her. I got all my stuff, I was settled, I was living again,

I was getting supported, and unfortunately he found me within a few months. I had only been there just shy of [REDACTED] weeks. And he found me because Centrelink gave him my address. So much for having a safe password with Centrelink. So then we had to move yet again. So the domestic violence ladies helped me pack up yet again, with my family members, again, and they put it in storage. They promised me they'd help move it to wherever I was. I had four hours to get the hell out and I had a police escort to the airport. I moved from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED]. I was there for [REDACTED] days. I got called into the office in the refuge and she told me I could stay for another [REDACTED] days and they would organise for me to go to [REDACTED] because I'd be better off in a big city. I then moved to [REDACTED]. I moved to two different refuges within a matter of [REDACTED] days. The first refuge was flat but you had to use stairs to get into the room, [REDACTED]. I was sleeping in the lounge until they could get me into another refuge. [REDACTED] (they had to get someone else to move, we did a swap). I was speaking to one of the workers in [REDACTED] and she told me I had [REDACTED] days. I couldn't go to [REDACTED], I couldn't go to [REDACTED], and she put me into a mindset that I had to leave [REDACTED]. But she said if I needed more time she could move me to another refuge in [REDACTED] for a few weeks while I made up my mind and I agreed to that. I was at [REDACTED] refuge, [REDACTED]. I spoke to a lady [REDACTED] days after moving in and was told I couldn't stay because they were expecting two clients. They could fit two clients in the room I was using. So I had to leave. She said I think you should move to [REDACTED] there's a good refuge in [REDACTED].

When I first moved to Victoria I got into an SRS (Supported Residential Service). There is no support service in any of them. I stayed at three of the worst ones that people have ever chosen for me. When I came here there was no help from anyone. It was "you're a nothing". The worker that I had from the Salvation Army knew that the SRS where I was staying was an ice house and a schiz house (by that I mean people who are psychiatrically unbalanced) and she didn't care. She had more than me to deal with. "Be thankful for a roof over your head", is what she repeated to me on a daily basis. The worst three SRSs that I have stayed at was [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. These places I wouldn't put a pet rat in. There's no support, no respite, no services period. The one in [REDACTED] was run by a bully and a thug. She'd been in the business for over 20 years. She kept on threatening us. When an inspector came, she had her favourite little "puppets" paraded out in front of these people. They said "Mum's so beautiful", "Mum does everything for us". All she did was promise them an extra drug, an extra Valium. And she she'd give them an ice cream at the end. [REDACTED]. Sometimes the urine on the floor was so bad it was like I was going in a swimming pool and it stank.

They'd go in your room when you weren't there and go through your things. I had jewellery stolen and no one believed me.

I want to move closer to my cousin's place (he is at [REDACTED] now). Department of Housing knew I wanted to be near my cousin. They threatened me that if I didn't sign the [REDACTED] contract I wouldn't get housing. This is a woman who has fled from domestic violence and I feel like I am being violated again by an organisation that should protect me.

My point is this: at least when I lived with my ex-husband, I sort of knew when the thumping was coming. Since living in [REDACTED], the thing that scares me the most is that I don't know when the thump's coming. It seems to me that even though I have reported it to police numerous times at the units, the police don't care. It's like they are on automatic pilot. They want to prove me wrong more than actually help me. And the Department of Housing, all they care about is covering each other's asses.

[REDACTED]

It has taken over three years to get a [REDACTED] from Department of Human Services. It's a department, but they are far from human. And there is no services. They don't care about you – you're just a number. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Why does it take thousands in calls to get a person who cares? Because I can tell you, since I left the [REDACTED], the only person who has cared about me in Victoria is my advocate. Thank god I have a good advocate [REDACTED]. They give a damn. The only problem to that is there is not enough workers, and they don't have the bite. Why is Victoria so difficult? In that I mean, it's taken three years to get a [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It seems to me, in Victoria, [REDACTED] that even when you tell your story explaining you're a domestic violence survivor, no one gives a shit. Each step is more difficult. Or you see someone who doesn't care about you because they've got 40 other people on their "to do" list. They are often there temporarily, they don't care about you. You don't get anywhere. I have tried for over three years to talk to the government and [REDACTED], the women's minister and the Premier. [REDACTED] I paid for a private secretary to write to the Prime Minister and I didn't get a response. I met the Prime Minister on [REDACTED] at the [REDACTED] Festival. The PM Tony Abbott promised me he'd help me. That was before I got stabbed and set on fire and I'm still waiting for his help. All I've done is go from liaison officer to liaison officer in his Department. They don't care. They don't get back to you.

I spoke to the domestic violence service of Victoria and said my ex-husband is looking for me and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I spoke to a lady and told her my background. She never got back to me. I waited for four days. She never got back to me. I spoke to someone there. She didn't even put it on the system. They are supposed to look after people like me. So, what happens if he turns up at my door? She told me I'd just have to call the local police.

My ex-husband knows I'm in Victoria. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I am frightened. They don't have any security cameras in [REDACTED]. It's not secure. There's no point having security gates there to scan and swipe yourself in and out because everyone lets everyone else in, including the druggies and the male and female whores. I am petrified living there because I know he knows. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] And then what happens? I want to move to my cousin's area because I know he'll protect me. It's like living in a war zone in [REDACTED]. I'm petrified to step out of my unit. I'm scared to stay in my unit.

When I first moved to [REDACTED] I saw the police. There was a male Constable. I told them my story. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I knew he had friends. And the police man said and 'who'd want you?' So that comment proved to me just how much the police didn't care about me and how they weren't to be trusted.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] She came and saw me. I told her that I had furniture in [REDACTED] in a storage place and that I needed it down here. The domestic violence agency couldn't help me because they didn't have funding. The service in [REDACTED] only paid the first two months' rent on the storage place. I lost it all. The furniture removalists sold it. I was indebted to about \$4000. I didn't have any money.

A friend recently told me that I need to change my name again. Centrelink told me that I have to change it via Deed poll. But then he could find out. I can't go on the voting roll, because he could find me. I haven't voted in [REDACTED] years. I haven't rung my family in [REDACTED] years. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I haven't made a cake for any of my family's birthdays for years.

My father came to me every day and we'd talk about the farm. I'm a farmer's daughter. I'm not used to the city life. I'm used to the country. I'm used to peace and hearing beautiful birds. I'm used to people saying good morning. Here they just run over you. I'm used to the warmth. Since living in Victoria I have never known such a society that has dehumanised the person. Why do you have to make it so hard on someone, especially someone in a situation like mine? Why has it taken three years to get a [REDACTED]? Why has it taken so long to get the care I need? Not want, need.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I even told my independent worker from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] the other day. I think I just want to go home. I want to call my dad and say send me the ticket and let the bastard come and get me because I've had enough. I haven't known such a narrow minded society ever, and I've lived throughout the world.

And the reason my ex knew I was here in Victoria is because a doctor I wanted to see rang up [REDACTED] hospital for my background, without my permission. [REDACTED] hospital is full of gossips. [REDACTED]. It took my husband not even half an hour to know I was here. It takes one bastard doctor without my permission to call up [REDACTED] hospital and my husband found me.

I was trying to get lost and stay lost. When I rang the doctor, he didn't even care that he'd done it. He said 'that's not my problem'. It's not his right to give someone's privacy away. It's against the law to do that.

The state needs to change. You need to be protected. I've changed my name five times in [REDACTED] years. Privacy is a must, not a privilege. When you're in a domestic violence situation, when you tell someone I'm not signing a consent form for you to speak about me to a different department, they don't like it. DHS won't help you if you don't sign a consent form. And I need to stay lost. How do I know that I'm safe? Why should I sign a consent form for you to contact whoever? Something has to be done. It really does. I do not give information away easily. It's only two people who know where I am from. One is my advocate from [REDACTED]. The other one is my cousin. [REDACTED]. But I don't trust them because I don't know if what they're telling me is true.

I have had workers steal things from me, including paperwork, so that they can steal my identity. I sacked the lot of them. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

The agencies are often more of a hindrance than a help. They just care about their funding quota.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] I would like to see in place, one organisation where you can just make one phone call to get the help you need either to start up again like I have had to from scratch, but more importantly someone to support your physical and your mental wellbeing to make that transition and to make it not difficult for you. To make sure you are their priority and nothing else matters except your safety. Because in my experience, I haven't found that in any of the organisations in Victoria. I haven't been their priority and my safety does not matter. Nor does my mental wellness or my physical health. Or my safety regarding my housing.

It needs to be a smooth transition not complicated. And not to take forever to get the things you need to start again. To make it a quick, easy, smooth process/transition. And more importantly, the person needs to know that someone gives a shit about them. That someone really cares and will be there for them.

The thing I hate the most is, why do we as women of domestic violence/survivors, why do we have to leave our families and our homes because of them bastards. Why do we have to leave and run? Why do we have to leave everything we love because someone just can't let go. That's what I hate the most.