

Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence**Anonymous****27 May 2015**

I was born in [REDACTED] and grew up there. I migrated to [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]

I survived childhood physical and sexual abuse. I thought I was a bad person. My self-esteem was bad, and I think that is one of the reasons I was vulnerable to men who control women.

I lost my Mum when I was [REDACTED]. As the eldest, I took on the role of the parent and my father expected me to look after my siblings.

One of my abusers was an authoritative person, [REDACTED]. My father was too occupied with his own life, I don't think he knew the abuse was happening.

I married my husband when I was [REDACTED]. Prior to the marriage, he was already violent, but I was too ashamed to tell anyone. One day, he said some guys had been looking at me when we went to the movies and he hit me.

After we married, my husband continued to hit me. My father called his lawyer, but my husband begged me to give him a second chance and said he would never touch me again. I gave him another chance.

In [REDACTED] we migrated to Australia. We had [REDACTED] young children. Part of me felt as though I didn't want to go to Australia, but I didn't want my children to grow up without a father so I moved to Australia. He promised he would look after us.

We lived in [REDACTED]. My husband blocked me calling overseas to talk to my father and cousins. He used to come home after work and pick a fight. If a book was out of place he would assault me. One day, in front of my children, he started to throttle me. The youngest started screaming and my eldest daughter took her and hid behind the couch, they were only [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] years old. I didn't know who to call. There was a newspaper called [REDACTED] Woman', and it contained a number for a counselling service at the [REDACTED] Family Centre.

I was too ashamed to talk to the [REDACTED] Family Centre about the violence. They tried to assist me with my [REDACTED], which I suffer from very badly. The [REDACTED] made me particularly vulnerable. He knew of the [REDACTED] before we married, and he said he'd take care of me.

I told my GP, who was of [REDACTED] background, that my husband punched me. And he said, "He's your husband, you mustn't give him reason to hit you."

When I was pregnant with my second daughter, he kicked me in the stomach.

Eventually we moved to a suburb in [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. The violence continued. One day, I had left a tray in the oven and he beat me. I went to the local doctor, but he didn't offer me help. I think he knew my husband was violent.

One day my husband punched me in the stomach. I went to the neighbour for help, and she said call the doctor. A nurse and doctor from the local clinic came to my house, and told me I had soft tissue damage.

One of my daughter's classmate's mother knew something was wrong. She said I don't mean to offend you, but I need to find out what's happening at home. I told her. She called a domestic violence service.

I was given a support worker and I was given a lot of support. If not for her, I don't think I would be alive. She helped me approach the police, and apply for an intervention order. It took two months, because there wasn't a local police station.

After I got the intervention order, the police removed him from the home that night. It was raining, and I asked the police to come back the next day so that they could take him the following morning. They said, no, let him pack a bag, he will find a place.

My children were about [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I had to go to the family court to get custody.

I was in fear of him. I hated myself because the children saw the violence. No child should have to see those things.

I am no longer the same vulnerable person.

Looking back, even in [REDACTED], the only place he would take me was the bank. And that was because I had inherited money from my mother, and he'd want me to withdraw it.

After the separation, he re-married and moved to [REDACTED]. One day I saw his new wife at the shops. She ran up to me and asked me why we divorced. I said I hope for your sake he's a changed man. I let her fill in the blanks. I didn't tell her about the violence. She asked me to meet for tea, and we became friends. She told me he hit her. I told her she could come to my place any time. I knew how she felt. It is not easy to share.

Once he hit my daughter when she was [REDACTED]. She was very teary. I had to tell the teacher what happened. I wish the school system was more aware of the issue of family violence. They cannot be the monitor, but in some situations, I think they should call the correct authorities.

We also need more temporary accommodation.

While it was good to be out of the violent situation, it was financially very difficult. I don't know what was worse, struggling with the bills or living with the violence.

He gave me the lowest possible child support. I struggled to maintain the house. When my oven broke, I couldn't fix it. I knew he was earning more than he declared, because he was living a lavish lifestyle.

I brought my children up to value life and everything around them.

I feel helpless at times. Every inheritance I had, I used on him in [REDACTED]. When we migrated, there was not a cent left. He spent the money the way he wanted.

My ex still sees my children. For my granddaughter's birthday we all got together. I am courteous towards him, but I don't think he's changed.

When we lived together, he would tell me I was mad. I called the psych hospital once and a doctor and a nurse came to the house from [REDACTED] Hospital. They didn't think I was ill.

His current wife admitted herself to a psych hospital. I know what is happening behind closed doors.

I tried to tell my sister but she didn't believe me. I think a lot of us women feel ashamed. Especially in my instance, when my own sister didn't believe me, and my ex-brother in law didn't believe me.

I would like to emphasise the importance of this Royal Commission. This Royal Commission is long overdue.