

Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence

As victims

Commenced [REDACTED]
 Myself ([REDACTED] years), husband ([REDACTED] years) and three children [REDACTED] years, [REDACTED] years and [REDACTED] years
 My mother ([REDACTED] years)
 My brother ([REDACTED] years) his wife ([REDACTED] years) and three children aged [REDACTED] years, [REDACTED] years and [REDACTED] years

My sister ([REDACTED] years), single, unemployed and evicted from rental property at the end of [REDACTED] last year befriended a male person.

My sister had a falling out with the family in [REDACTED] and from then on this male person began make death threats including torture over the phone to all of the above people listed in my immediate and extended family. It is unknown whether my sister gave our contact details including home address to this person willingly or coerced.

Statements were made to police both in regional Victoria and metropolitan Victoria. Voice recordings of the threats were played to the police.
 All of the encounters with the police in Victoria were excellent.

On advice from the police we changed our phone numbers. Telstra responded to this request easily and with respect and within 4 hours of requesting this service our numbers were changed. My husband was unable to change his mobile due to work commitments and continued to receive death threats.

My sister refused offers of help from my brother and I. Contact was lost from [REDACTED]. During this time there were police efforts to locate my sister and this person. Goods were stolen from the family farm where no one was living at the time.

At the end of [REDACTED] the metropolitan police contacted me late at night by coming to my home to inform me that my sister was in [REDACTED] Hospital.

Between [REDACTED] and end of [REDACTED] my sister and this male person had travelled in my sister's car with [REDACTED] dogs. Sometimes sleeping outside and occasionally having enough money to stay in a hotel. During this period this person physically and emotionally abused my sister. At this stage she still denies any sexual abuse.

She had already been in [REDACTED] Hospital a week before she asked the police to contact me. She was transferred to [REDACTED] Hospital after being taken to [REDACTED] hospital with multiple injuries including [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This person had also [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] Over this period she had lost at least [REDACTED]

kg of weight. Her dog was in a temporary animal accommodation on the outskirts of [REDACTED].

The male person who perpetrated all of this injury had come to see my sister in [REDACTED] hospital during the first week and threatened the staff. The hospital increased security. The Federal Police put him in “lock up” for 24 hours for being a public nuisance.

My brother and I travelled to [REDACTED] within 24 hours of hearing she was in [REDACTED] Hospital. The hospital staff was respectful and worked with us to support my sister. We liaised with doctors, nurses, family violence workers and social workers. The Detectives travelled from [REDACTED] to interview my sister and speak to us. The Detectives stated that my sister’s injuries were some of the worst they had ever seen. My sister chose not to make a statement and due to her injuries her memory of events was not clear.

GAPS:

- The [REDACTED] NSW Detectives were unable to use or look into any of the evidence that had been collected by the Victoria police about this person previously.
- The Federal police in ACT were unable to collect any of the evidence that was with the NSW or Victoria police.
- **There needs to be a method of being able to communicate efficiently across jurisdictions when it comes to family violence**
- This person was able to freely travel around [REDACTED] even though there was warrant out for his arrest in NSW and Victoria.

I drove my sister back to [REDACTED] within 36 hours of arriving in [REDACTED] with the belief that this person knew she was being discharged. The only protection we received was in the [REDACTED] Hospital. Picking up my sister’s dog from the temporary housing was tricky and we received no support from the Federal police.

The Women’s Domestic Violence Crisis Service was excellent and arranged for emergency housing for my sister. They arranged for a taxi to meet us at a metropolitan police station once we arrived back into [REDACTED] from [REDACTED]. There was also emergency housing for my sister’s dog – a special arrangement for pets from domestic violence situations.

She is now in her fourth lot of housing. It is with [REDACTED] Services and we are incredibly grateful for that being available. She has been left with permanent [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and most of all [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

The family members that received the death threats by phone still live with some fear that this person knows where we all live. Especially, as we have an elderly mother living on her own in regional Victoria and our own families with young children. It has affected the relationship of trust with my sister permanently with many of the family members.

As a [REDACTED] working in Victoria

I have worked as a [REDACTED] since [REDACTED]

Since [REDACTED] I have been using the Common Risk Assessment Framework (Swinburne) as a tool for screening mothers (mostly) for family violence.

Initially asking these questions was challenging but now it is very much part of my practice.

Increasingly, mothers and more recently a father have disclosed family violence concerns to me as an [REDACTED]

There are resources available but “working with that mother” to make contact to these organisations can be precarious.

I am increasingly making both Child protection and Child First notifications.

GAPS:

- Communication between Child Protection and Child First with Maternal and Child Health services.
- Care/safety of the Maternal and Child Health Nurse as [REDACTED] increasingly hear of family violence disclosures and often work in isolated buildings.
- The resources available to help children recover from experiences of family violence