

## Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence

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I first experienced family violence when I was [redacted] when my mother married my step-father. That continued until the age of [redacted]. He was violent towards me and my mum. The neighbours used to call the police. I also called the police a couple of times. The police never took Mum away. This was around [redacted] years ago.

One night we packed the car up and my mother and sister and I left. We moved to [redacted] because he wouldn't let my Mum take my sister. We went to a refuge at first.

He found us in [redacted]. One day he banged through the door. It took him four months to find us. We moved back to [redacted]. We moved back into our old home. The violence continued. I was about [redacted].

When it came time to go to High School, we moved into town. He got a new girlfriend and left. He had custody of my younger sister on the weekends. He sexually abused her until she was a teenager.

I got with my children's father when I was [redacted]. He was [redacted] and was [redacted] years older than me. The domestic violence started when I was [redacted]. We had [redacted] children. They are [redacted].

I moved in with him and his parents when I was [redacted]. I was still going to school. He enrolled himself into school so that he could come along.

In that relationship, because of the cultural differences, I wasn't allowed to leave the house or wear short clothes. I couldn't go out on my own. I couldn't go to the supermarket unless I was with his sister or mother. If he came home and dinner wasn't ready, that's when I'd get a hiding.

I had my first baby when I was [redacted].

When he was violent I didn't know who to reach out to. He left me when I was [redacted]. He started seeing another [redacted] year old girl.

I met my [redacted]' Dad a couple of years after that. I fell pregnant and had [redacted]. Once he went to hit me, but he missed and he hit my [redacted]. He punched my [redacted] who was [redacted] months at the time. The neighbours called the police.

DHS came. I had to charge him in order to keep my children. DHS came.

The police asked me not to charge him because he was Aboriginal and had no charges. He was one of the only Aboriginals to finish school in that town and they didn't want me wrecking his life. They didn't want me to charge him.

I did. He got two weeks in jail for hitting both of us. After that, I went downhill. I started drinking and smoking ice. My mother in law looked after the kids. My life spun out of control. I got on the drugs.

I started seeing [redacted]. He would smash me up. Broken bones. [redacted]. The neighbours used to call the police. The police would come. They would never charge him on their own.

█ got me on to needles. I sold everything I had. I ended up in here.

I was even █

Even with all the abuse, the police never charged him on my behalf. I couldn't charge him because I was worried I'd be hurt. It would have helped if the police charged him.

I went to a domestic violence service in █. His sister worked there. She rang her father and the father told █

If you don't leave your partner, a lot of the services turn their back on you. I was too scared to leave. I tried to leave once and he broke █ One day he shot up the house.

The police know when you charge someone your name is on that bit of paper. The police know that girls in that situation can't charge their partner.