

Submission

I have worked in family violence for 10 years, specifically with Aboriginal women. In this time I have seen some great workers but I have also the workers who are no better than the man the woman is getting away from. My knowledge is strong in the family violence area and as I am on the ground I have a strong understanding of the issues women face. I am sure there are plenty more than I have listed below. I would like to attend the Royal Commission in person to be able to speak about the issues women face. I am hoping the commission will provide many recommendations that will be followed and things will change in the family violence area. At the present time I feel people are accepting violence as a part of life and many think it is ok, we need to change this attitude.

Below are areas I feel need to be worked on in the family violence arena;

- Refuges who will not ring the women, they want the women to ring them. What about no credit on their phones.
- Some White Ribbon ambassadors are not the right men to have in these positions. I complained about a white ribbon ambassador, who is a sexist pig, they told me they rang him and he told them different to what I had said. Men who are violence seem to be the greatest blokes to all others they have contact with – is it not the same with the men who are White Ribbon Ambassadors
- A women rang the refuge she was in to say her partner had found her and was near her, the refuge worker told her to hang up and ring the police. To me the safest thing to do here would be for the refuge worker to keep the woman on the line and find out where she is while another worker rings the police
- No caller id – many people will not answer their phones
- Aboriginal women leaving places like Mildura and moving to Wodonga due to family violence and no refuge will help them as “they are no longer in danger from family violence they are just homeless” These women end up going back to the violence due to being homeless
- One of the male police lawyers (prosecutors) at the Melbourne Magistrates court is shocking, he is rude always says “whateva to the women. He treats women and workers like he could not care less. He has also been heard to collude with the respondents
- Many refuges treat women worse that their partners. Giving them curfews etc. We need to empower women not treat them like men have previously

- VOCAT – the lawyers need to ring the women’s ex partner – **Why** – as if he man is going to say he committed family violence
- Women have given up their children due to being homeless
- Workers aren’t/cant be honest with the women
- Seen women go to court to get an extension on an intervention order, the Magistrate has asked them what has happened while the order has been in place and the woman says nothing so the order is not extended. The day the order runs out the bloke is back causing problems for the women. Women know how unsafe they are, they need to be listened to
- No childcare for women coming to court – there are people who say the women should not bring their children, but for many they do not have any one to look after their children. We need to make the courts more accessible for these women
- The courts aren’t safe – but what do we do about that.
- Family violence workers in the courts are not allowed to meet with women outside the court. Women hate coming to court on the day they have to let alone coming in to meet with a worker. I don’t see anything wrong with meeting in a café or McDonalds. Going to the woman’s home could be very unsafe
- Services working in silos. Workers thinking they own a client. Both are wrong
- So many young women are victims – we need to teach positive relationships from a very young age
- Young people fighting , people videoing this and putting it on the internet – violence is so accepted in our society
- Rosie Batty spoke about the 24 hour number women can ring and how good the service is. I had a woman who had contact with the 24 hour service, they told her they would ring her back and two days later she had not been contacted. (and this was only a month ago) I feel it is bad when you have someone like Rosie Batty saying this is a great service and women are not being treated right by this service.
- Sporting clubs inducting men into their hall of fame. A sporting team played in the domestic violence game and then inducted a player who was a perpetrator of domestic violence into the hall of fame. This is a joke it would be like letting Rolf Harris keep all his awards.
- Footy clubs are one of the worse for hiding domestic violence perpetrated by their players – it needs to stop
- Police not attending when called as they have been to house so many times before and the family violence just keeps happening – the one time they don’t attend could be the time the woman is murdered
- Funding to programs that assist women being cut
- We need to educate everyone, education usually goes to the people who already know we need to get into playgroups etc so we are getting the message out
- Men need to stop saying things like “he is under the thumb” because a guy goes to pick up his children

- Many refuges treat women worse than the men
- Women in family violence are treated better when there is a worker with them – everybody should be treated the same
- Lawyer for the respondent got abusive with an applicant at court – womens health and the applicant support worker heard this. The women put in a complaint to the legal board and nothing happened
- Women and children are asked to move from their networks – this is so wrong (unless the women chooses to do this) Working in a refuge I have seen women taken 400 kilometres away from their home only to return in a couple of days
- Women are not to blame but we keep treating them as if they are. It is fine for workers to say this but we need to put the words into action
- What about women with drug and alcohol issues (they are not allowed into most refuges) yet the drug and alcohol issues may have come from the family violence
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