

# Inquiry Into Family Violence Orders

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs

Response to the Terms of Reference by *Sisters In Law Project (SILP)*

August 2024

***Committee Secretary House of Representatives***

***Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs***

***Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600***

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## **Introduction – *about us***

Sisters in Law Project (SILP) are grateful for the opportunity to share *lived experience* of the family court system as it relates to this inquiry. We are volunteers at present, a non profit pro bono service that supports men, women and children nationally *in legal systems* that include primarily state personal protection orders and family law matters.

We are not lawyers but *lived experts* of legal systems. We provide case work support, using a process called ‘*Guided Advocacy*’ where we link those requesting help to services offered by formally qualified and experienced family law/legal practitioners and other support services. This includes Family Advocacy and Support Services (FASS), Relationships Australia, Legal Aid, Community legal and private practitioners who identify as capable at managing domestic and family violence matters. At present we are awaiting the results of a funding application to continue our active services to survivors in legal systems. We have provided ad hoc support to some survivors for over 7 years. Sadly some of this cohort are still in Family Court and experiencing what they describe as unsafe practices!

We also become involved in lobbying activities for policy development and change as well as reform where we have time to do so. We provided *lived expertise* to the NSW Coercive Control Inquiry in 2021 and worked with NSW State Parliament *Children and Young Persons*

*Committee*<sup>1</sup> to review the cross jurisdictional conflict with family law and state child protection. Our focus was the recognition and reform needed to assist protective mothers who lose custody in family court matters for following state child protection instructions and guidelines. This still occurs. It is a project we believe still needs significant and urgent reform. We believe there are human rights breaches occurring, where protective parents and the voices of children are silenced despite the rhetoric of court systems who state they are applying best practice.

Primarily our focus is on assisting survivors of domestic abuse, mostly women and children who are challenged by court processes. We specialise in sharing our lived expertise to help survivors who reach out, mostly informally, in a system that can be complex and daunting, especially to traumatised survivors of abuse.

### **Acknowledgment**

We acknowledge the indigenous custodians of the land we live and work on and ensure that our support embraces difference and those who from diverse communities.

We also wish to outline that this response will look at gaps and identifying flaws in the family law system risk processes but will not formally describe the good work of professionals in this space who do their best to ensure survivors are safe and their needs addressed. Sometimes this is not possible and heartbreaking for many involved. We thank them and are grateful for their dedication in the process of managing the wellbeing of the legally vulnerable, often impacting their own personal wellbeing with little or no support to manage vicarious trauma.

### **We would also like to acknowledge ...**

- 1) Vocal, Newcastle, for their unwavering support of victim survivors,
- 2) DVNSW and Independent Collective of Survivors (ICOS) who realise the importance of the survivor experience to catalyse change.
- 3) Doctors Against Violence Towards Women (DATV) Dr Anita Hutchison and Dr Karen Williams. and their exceptional work to improve safety of women having been involved in policy change and law reform. This includes Coercive Control laws in NSW and the development of the Trauma Recovery Centre in Wollongong.
- 4) Our extensive partners in research within Academia who have allowed us to freely share our experience to grow knowledge and make change.
- 5) The Safe and Together Institute for their groundbreaking education and methods of practice, in particular, Ruth and David Mandel. Safety in family law matters is an

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<sup>1</sup> SILP -Presentation to the committee transcript August 2022  
<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/ladocs/transcripts/2998/Transcript%20of%20evidence%20-%202012%20August%202022%20-%20Committee%20on%20Children%20and%20Young%20People.pdf>

international issue and requires innovation and transformation to ensure the wellbeing of all participants.

6) The families and friends of survivors who can provide unfaltering support to survivors of abuse in family law matters.

## Introduction

There are 4 terms of reference outlined.

### **1. The risk of an escalation in the aggressive and violent behaviour of the perpetrator and heightened risk to the partner and children during family court proceedings.**

We argue that escalation of aggressive behaviour is common, covert and overt, and pieces of paper, (Protection Orders), do not stop systems abuse or other subtle abuse for those who have the financial means. It is our experience that court proceedings of any type can lead to DARVO<sup>2</sup> and systemic perpetration. The impact on children in the process of custodial and financial settlement is often far greater than most survivors expect. Many think the 'system' will recognise the issues and protect them<sup>3</sup>. Sadly this is not the case in most of the matters we support. It is observed that Report Writers and Independent Children's Lawyers can fail to assist in protecting vulnerable litigants and children.

We acknowledge that there are some good news stories but overall it is our experience that there are difficulties with managing heightened emotions and risk in both state and federal jurisdictions. At the state level there are Police SAMS (Safety Action Meetings) to address risk and more access to safe rooms. This was outlined in the work of Dr Jane Wangman in 2021<sup>4</sup>. Information sharing between jurisdictions in the matters we support rarely see any meaningful change in the management of risk and safety. It should be noted we mainly assist problematic cases.

### **2. The current barriers for litigants in the family law system to obtain and enforce FVOs, including but not limited to:**

- a. the additional difficulty for victims of violence in the family law system to attend multiple courts for their family law order proceedings and an FVO**
- b. the intersection between FVOs and parenting orders, including that a family court parenting order may override an FVO**

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<sup>2</sup> Deny Attack Reverse Victim Offender. Dr Jennifer Freyd coined this term in 1997.

<https://dynamic.uoregon.edu/jjf/defineDARVO.html>

<sup>3</sup> See also the work of academic paper "Good Evidence Safe Outcomes in parenting matters involving domestic violence? Understanding the Family Report Writing Practice from the Perspective of Professionals Working in the Family Law System." Samantha Jeffries, Rachel Field, Helena Menh and Zoe Rathus. (2016)

<sup>4</sup> Anrows "No Straight Lines, Self-represented litigants in family law proceedings involving allegations about family violence" Dr Jane Wangman, Associate Professor Tracey Booth, Miranda Kerr  
<https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/no-straight-lines-self-represented-litigants-in-family-law-proceedings-involving-allegations-about-family-violence/>

**c. the availability of wrap-around support services and security for victims of violence.**

**Barriers in General – as experienced by lived experts**

1. What we observe as lived experts in this space is the difficulty of the family law jurisdiction to act on safety concerns in a timely and meaningful way. Project Lighthouse in s10V of the Family Law Act 1975 specifically denies the evidence of risk assessments completed during intake being presented to a judge. This needs to be reviewed.
2. Independent Children's Lawyers can be an impediment to safety as can Report Writers. In one recent anecdote by a survivor, the report writer claimed they had no formal training on Domestic Violence despite this matter having serious DFSV issues and the writer was not obliged to be formally trained stating there was no such course.<sup>5</sup>
3. Women are put at risk on a continual basis in the process of facilitating a relationship with a person who has a protection Order. It becomes 'set aside' for that process which can defeat the purpose of protection. Strangely, the family court can remove children from Protection Orders to ensure a relationship with a perpetrator is maintained. This too seems an anomaly if protection orders have been fully tested.<sup>6</sup>

It is often stated by survivors that the protection order serves little purpose if they can be easily varied or even set aside in Family Law matters. They are often directed to 'move on' regarding their concerns or risk being seen as an impediment to a relationship of a child with a perpetrator. Protective parents with psychological injury due to their PTSD caused by the perpetrator can have their mental health issues used to either threaten to remove or remove children from their care.

4. Even more alarming is where Reasons for Judgement in family law matters can state that the child/children need to be removed from the survivor parent with an active protection order because safe parent practices are seen as inappropriately influencing a child (with no direct evidence of this fact) when the child/children have been eye witnesses to the experience of the abuse.

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<sup>5</sup> We can provide direct explanation of this with a witness.

<sup>6</sup> The Work Of the Safe and Together Institute regard this as unprotective – See "*Stop Blaming Mothers and ignoring Fathers- How to transform the way we Keep Children Safe From Domestic Violence*" David Mandel 2023

It is suggested by members of SILP that *Realistic Estrangement* as positioned by Dr Simon<sup>7</sup> needs to be relied upon more as a realistic explanation for a child's reluctance to see a parent. Forcing children to spend time with a formally identified perpetrator does not align with contemporary research to be promoting the child's safety and wellbeing. We describe this conduct as 'Dickensian' in nature.

It is our observation that family violence anecdotally is largely disregarded in Family Court matters after a period of time and is given little of no weight. There are those in the court system who have explained to us that time heals all and that safety is ameliorated by Orders. Sadly this is not the experience for many survivors we work with.

### **Cost of Appeal and transcripts are prohibitive**

To Appeal Orders that fail to consider Protection Orders in parenting matters is another barrier. The excessive costs of a Transcript which is compulsory<sup>8</sup> will stop many from addressing their concerns about errors of law and the non-compliance of Orders with s60CG of the Family Law Act 1975. One survivor was quoted \$19,000 for a transcript. Access to justice is impeded by this cost.

### **Issues with Legal Aid and 102na funded lawyers**

Lawyers, despite instructions, are described by survivors as leaving out important evidence. There are multiple complaints to SILP that some lawyers state that if the client under 102na doesn't follow their recommendations they will step down and their case will fall over. Some Legal Aid lawyers have been reported as threatening to remove themselves and, in some cases, they do, leaving victim survivors with no representation sometimes just 3 weeks before a trial. Other fail to respond to calls and requests regarding trial materials up to 2 days before a trial<sup>9</sup> having not communicated for months.

We have observed if a matter is deemed 'unwinnable' then there are often issues with representation even if there are protection orders.

### **a. the additional difficulty for victims of violence in the family law system to attend multiple courts for their family law order proceedings and an FVO**

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<sup>7</sup> *Parental Alienation in Family Court: Attacking Expert testimony*  
<https://lawpublications.barry.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1057&context=cflj> see page [95] J.E,B Myers and Jean Mercer 2022.

<sup>8</sup> While the court may state the need for transcripts are arbitrary, in all matters regarding Appeals that we support formally request a transcript as compulsory. When asked for some leniency there has been some support by the Eastern Registry to supply the transcript to self-represented litigants which has been greatly appreciated. In general the Appeals registries have been helpful to self-represented litigants. It would be good to see the same support in mainstream litigation.

<sup>9</sup> Please invite our lived experts to explain these issues.

It is our experience that family court undo state court orders and protection mechanisms. State courts have safe rooms. Not all family courts have safe rooms. I was advised by a mother we supported that the safe room at Wollongong Family Court was shut down. It is our view that the family court do not manage state legislation well as it relates to the safety and protection of victims. Even if there are multiple courts it is the view of some of our lived experts that state jurisdictions manage family violence better and they would not trust the family court to manage their safety.

**b. the intersection between FVOs and parenting orders, including that a family court parenting order may override an FVO**

**Example of an issue as it relates to this question**

In one matter that was Appealed in Brisbane a survivor mother had her Tender Bundle rejected by the judge at trial, initially requested by the court, and agreed to by all parties that provided probative and relevant evidence concerning certain factors of risk, including child protection materials that clearly outlined risk of the father. In this matter the judge stated the Protection Order should not have been granted in the first place, rejected it and switched custody where the evidence of the Protection Order was in the Tender Bundle and denied it's probative value. On Appeal it was deemed not the judges fault but that of the 102na legally appointed lawyers who failed to properly argue it's inclusion. The Orders were not changed.

**b. the availability of wrap-around support services and security for victims of violence.**

This was covered well in Dr Jane Wangman et al review of self represented litigants in 2021<sup>10</sup>. Survivors need continual wrap around support but this is rare. It is our experience that FASS and WDVCAS (in NSW)do their best but there are those who we have supported who find these services poor and limited to what they can do to help often very traumatised survivors who urgently need formal legal assistance which is unavailable.

**We state that that the first 60 days after first being served Family Court papers or up to the first hearing is a vulnerable time for survivors** . Survivors express to us that they feel vulnerable and compelled to 'do something' to respond to narrow time limits, no knowing what they can do with no legal support which can often take weeks if not months to obtain. Sometimes they cannot obtain assistance until after the scheduled court event as the other

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<sup>10</sup> Anrows " No Straight Lines, Self-represented litigants in family law proceedings involving allegations about family violence" Dr Jane Wangman, Associate Professor Tracey Booth, Miranda Kerr  
<https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/no-straight-lines-self-represented-litigants-in-family-law-proceedings-involving-allegations-about-family-violence/>

party marks the matter as 'urgent' and bypass mediation. The support that is available can be piecemeal, especially in regional areas where we receive many requests for help. Some perpetrators 'conflict out' lawyers in regional towns. Phone help becomes one of the only mechanisms of support, some of which is limited even with FASS and Legal Aid.

It is our view that our model of *Guided Advocacy* is better as it is a one stop (personal and legal long term support) shop encapsulates working with suitably qualified lawyers, helping with the gathering of evidence under the guidance of legal professionals, which can assist to reduce trauma escalation<sup>11</sup>. Our case work experience has developed a process of creating Family Violence timelines along with relationship times lines that allows survivors to create one file of evidence in a simple table that outlines events and can minimise the trauma of repeating issues.

It is noted the Family Court Website could expand some explanations, in video- not writing, to help those who first enter the court. It is our experience that those impacted by trauma cognitively have trouble understanding written materials without assistance.

**3.How FVOs could be more accessible for victims of violence going through the family law system, including but not limited to:**

- a. making it easier to apply for and enforce an FVO**
- b. co-location arrangements that would allow an application or enforcement of an FVO to be heard in the same physical location as the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia**
- c. the legal and non-legal support services required to promote early identification of and response to family violence.**

It is our position that issues of safety and risk management should not be anchored just in the framework of protection orders, pieces of paper, that do not stop perpetration. Accountability processes are arduous, and we find Police are reluctant to act when orders are breached and the family law processes poor and addressing non-compliance even when presented in court. We observe the family law focus to be on co-parenting processes that can at time negate the effective management of risk.

We also observe that local courts close to the survivors home understand risk of that area in greater detail than a court hundreds of kilometres away. Police can action safety plans and survivors can link into local services.

We suggest on the whole, co location is **not** a good idea.

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<sup>11</sup> In 2023 SILP proposed to the UN CEDAW review with Dr Jocelyn Scut a process where Law students could assist in this space with the support of qualified professionals. Time is often a problem for direct legal help but this could be mitigated when supported by legal professionals working with students using a *Guided Advocacy* model.

#### **4. Any other reform that would make it safer and fairer for victims of violence in the family law system who need the protection of FVOs.**

We have 3 sections to this response

- a) Overview that impacts FVO's
- b) Anecdotal observations of the court system itself
- c) Issues of risk of the legally vulnerable

##### **Overview**

1. **Grateful to protective registrars:** We would like to add on a positive note that some Registrars actions have been in line with good, safe practice, and we commend this approach, especially when the first return (first hearing) is heard. This needs to be sustained.
2. **Need to look at Risk Wholistically:** While Protection Orders are the focus of the ToR we ask the committee to consider risk that can be experienced by survivors, end to end, in the court systems. Homelessness caused by DFSV, financial abuse, job loss due to DFSV, trauma, ICL's, Report Writers, legal representatives and supports all contribute to a the safety of survivors.

If we ***look at the end to end experience of survivors***, which must include children in their own right in the family law system and track this experience, we can create a more effective evaluative framework from which we can address risk/safety issues. It is our position that we have observed decisions that are not safe, or parents forced into making decisions that they know are not safe due to the diversity of issues that need to be addressed, many already mentioned in this and the countless other inquiries!

3. **Recent changes in legislation on May 6 appear to have not catalysed improvement/change in the way the court manages children's safety and wellbeing in our observation.** We note that the court has been of the view, in matters reported to us, that not having a relationship or a limited relationship with a perpetrator father is a psychological risk to the child and the child can be removed from the protective parent. Issues of coaching children by a mother to reject an identified perpetrator parent, without evidence, is often pitched in hearings, where the ICL can also recommend removal to the identified perpetrator.

A father who breached his Protection Order and is on bail has recently been deemed by the report writer, ICL and Judge as parent significantly impacted by the conduct of the mother, not the other way around! This view is supported at times by expensive legal teams of fathers versus time poor legally aided mothers.



4. **Judges not named on Reasons for Judgement Division 1.** It is also noted that Judges names in Division 1 matters are removed from publication which makes it hard to track the conduct of certain judicial decisions relating to DFSV.
5. **Data breaches – Unsafe Practice:** Parents are explaining to us that data on the Commonwealth Court portal, tracking access to their file have been removed from view. They have reported access by individuals who should not have access and the registries are not acting to protect their data on previous occasions.

**Summary of other issues - SILP make the following observations**

- I. That the Federal Family Court – (FCFCOA) Division 1 and 2, despite it's many initiatives to address safety as it relates to family violence, still fails women and children to provide safety. Some 'Evatt' identified matters<sup>12</sup> under the Lighthouse Project do not obtain support<sup>13</sup>. The reasons for this need to be identified and formally tracked, reported and released to the public.<sup>14</sup> FCFCOA themselves, despite the opportunity in the accrued Jurisdiction say that managing protection orders is too much<sup>15</sup>. It is also our opinion with these anomalies the court is not able to manage safety and it is 'too much' for the court.
- II. From the lived experience of the family law jurisdiction, due to the lack of investigatory powers and previous poor history of managing safety of DFV survivors<sup>16</sup> there is room for improving how survivors are protected.
- III. It is our experience that Federal Family Court can come from the position of disbelief or minimisation of abuse in the many of DFSV cases we support. Some survivor parents are described as 'enmeshed' with no formal assessment, yet children are removed as a psychological risk under such assessment.
- IV. We find lawyers are still advising 'don't mention the war' approach to family violence as it is seen as an impediment to promoting a relationship with both parents. Trauma in parties (including children) can also be seen as an impediment to facilitating a relationship and the perpetrators historic past actions are rarely identified as causing mental health issues or resistance to contact.
- V. We have observed in lived experience that if family violence occurred more than 3 years prior to hearing or some time has passed and the current issues are deemed minimal, then the protective parent concerns are given little weight. These valid concerns of those impacted by abuse can be deemed an impediment to the

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<sup>12</sup> Evatt identified matters are the most at risk

<sup>13</sup> We have a lived expert who can explain this should the committee require more detail

<sup>14</sup> To the best of knowledge, the full report of the Lighthouse Project FCFCOA has not been released to the public and as such cannot be fully assessed independently.

<sup>15</sup> Submission 54 page 4

<sup>16</sup> See John, Jennifer and Jack Edwards Inquest

[https://coroners.nsw.gov.au/documents/findings/2021/Inquest into the deaths of John Jack and Jennifer Edwards - findings of State Coroner dated 7 April 2021.pdf](https://coroners.nsw.gov.au/documents/findings/2021/Inquest%20into%20the%20deaths%20of%20John%20Jack%20and%20Jennifer%20Edwards%20-%20findings%20of%20State%20Coroner%20dated%207%20April%202021.pdf)

relationship with the abusive parent. We see cases where moratoriums are ordered and children moved away from the safe parent causing serious long term damage to the psychological wellbeing of children.

- VI. Despite child protection reports being subpoenaed it is observed that they are often ignored and the evidence given little or no weight.<sup>17</sup>
- VII. Magellan matters (*where there are allegations of child sex abuse*) are managed badly, mostly seeing protective mothers with protection orders receive reduced custody or a custody switch even when they follow state child protection directions to withhold contact. It is our observation the family court sees this as obstructing a relationship. We see the Family Court as an inappropriate jurisdiction to manage serious child abuse matters. It is our observation where there are substantiations of child abuse by state authorities risk of harm has been determined they are routinely ignored and given no weight. This was also the findings in NSW Children and Young Persons Committee in 2021<sup>18</sup>.
- VIII. Issues of obvious domestic and family violence, where there are potential criminal convictions either pending or actual can be poorly managed. One of our lived experts has an perpetrator ex husband who has breached his protection order, is on bail but he is explained/appears exonerated and excused by the Federal Family Court as the mother made him do it!
- IX. It is our position, where there is serious issues of safety that should not be an issue of a marital cause but a criminal case that should be about protection and safety- not how a federal court can create pathways to access children terrified by the conduct of the other party. Systems in family law exonerate perpetrators who can become emboldened by the lack of restraint court systems place on their behaviour. It is important to note that Convicted child sex offenders have been able to secure custody in this jurisdiction<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Please invite our lived experts to discuss this 'in camera.'

<sup>18</sup> This report identifies serious misalignments between State child protection NSW and the Federal Family Court Report 6/57 – December 2022 [Report Children and Young Person Committee](#)

<sup>19</sup> Child sex abuse if poorly managed and the 2006 report by Darryl Higgins on Magellan ( *Cooperation and coordination: an evaluation of the Family Court of Australia's Magellan case-management model* 26 Oct 2007 )and Nola Webb, identify flaws in this process. *Allegations of Child Sex Abuse: An empirical analysis of published judgements from the Family Court of Australia 2012–2019* <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ajs4.171>

### General Issues of Risk of the legally vulnerable that can impact FVO's

Issue	Explanation	Suggestion
Lack of Family Violence Experts utilised in Court matters	The court does not have family Violence Experts working in the court.	Create a team of DFSV experts and <b><u>consider the work the UK of the J12 Practice Direction<sup>20</sup></u></b> .
Orders can be made stopping protective parents from reporting abuse to authorities despite substantiations and breaches of Protection Orders	We have observed 2 matters in recent years where orders were made prohibiting legitimate abuse concerns to authorities- Orders by the Federal Family Court made stopping the reporting of breaches to state authorities. <sup>21</sup>	Court to cease making such orders in cases where there is substantiations of risk by Child Protection and safety concerns by the survivor and/ or deemed safe parent.
Compulsory 102na legal support for survivors of DFV should be made by Consent	This should not be mandatory and some survivors describe being forced into legal scenarios with no choice or lose their case as a lawyer MUST represent them.	Change the law that 102na representation is by Consent
102NA Cross Examination funding Legal support is inadequate for both Legal Practitioners and survivors	It is observed that this type of representation can be of poor quality and not enough time to prepare. It can be used as a tool to shut down self-represented litigants legal arguments.	Give lawyers more time and pay for more this type of representation. 22 hours can be insufficient. This is complex work and requires attention to detail. Legal representatives need debriefing and mental health support to manage vicarious trauma. We are not looking after our professionals in this space.
Ideas of 'Harm' appear not to give adequate weight to the emotionally safe bond of a child with safe parent.	Sadly we see Orders that include moratoriums imposed on protective parents and processes that break the safe primary attachment	Psychological harm assessment should formally include the impact of a change in residence from the primary attachment.

<sup>20</sup>See link attached regarding United Kingdom J12 practice direction in the management of DFSV and children  
[Paper on the J12 practice direction](#)

<sup>21</sup> We have lived expertise that can appear 'in camera' in this area to directly explain this issue.

Judicial officers, ICL's, family Report Writers can fail to apply 60CG of the Family Law Act 1975	This is common and astounds survivors we work with who think the family law system will keep them safe!	Greater compliance with fully tested protection orders. FVO's should not be changed to facilitate a relationship when they are deemed and tested as 'unsafe'. Safe processes must be applied.
Displaced perception that children make up stories of DFV	Refer to the Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse Royal Commission Report in this area.	Greater weight given to the child's views, realistic estrangement, fears and experiences. This will lead to safer decisions in our opinion.
'Safety' is not defined in the Family Law Act		Greater definition
Systems abuse and DARVO	Protective and traumatised parents can be blindsided by reversing victim offender	Safe and together training on this subject covers this issue well.
Legal practitioner issues	There can be a failure to fully inform a client of Commonwealth Courts Portal, court system processes so that they can properly instruct, know about upcoming court events and participate fully. There can be a failure to include important evidence despite requests from client. Excessive billing and costs <sup>22</sup> . Practitioners are rarely held to account as it is observed the legal services commissioner is poor in managing complaints.	Video on how to instruct legal practitioners Better responses to manage the conduct of legal practitioner by the Legals Services Commission. More oversight re fees and charges.
Children who are covered under protection orders can be ordered by the court not to see medical practitioners/ mental health practitioners without the consent of the perpetrator.	Perpetrators can stop medical supports. Judges can stop can also access to medical supports These decisions can be catastrophic for traumatised children.	Ceasing access to medical care should be the decision of a medically trained practitioners.

<sup>22</sup> We have an lived expert who was threatened by a legal representative if the parties did not provide \$30,000 to the lawyers Trust they would remove themselves from the case, 3 weeks before a final trial. This lived expert states they had already spent over \$200,000.

**The voices of experience can provide scenario based understanding of safety issues.**

We have 4 lived experts who are present *in camera* to the committee to express the authenticity of their experience. I have permission of survivors to provide an explanation of some experiences mentioned above. This paper that complies with s 114Q/ 114R of the Family Law Act 1975.

I also suggest the committee would benefit from the evidence of Dr Karen Williams or Dr Anita Hutchison from Doctors Against Violence Towards Women. Dr Williams is heavily involved in the mental health needs of women in the family law environment and the safety issues they face. Her contribution has been internationally recognised.

We believe there is benefit in mapping the experiences of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFV) in the Family Law and other related legal system, end to end. *What does it look like for a survivor to move through the family law system and how are we realistically mitigating risk and harm?* Our lived experts would like to share the specifics around some of the core issues of the application of family violence orders and the overarching issues relating to how risk is managed.