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Submitted to OWN NSW by email

I am currently reading Anne Summers report into domestic violence and poverty and realise how many of the boxes I can tick.

I was a professional women, with a degree (actually 3) working in a corporate role. In my 30s I got married. The domestic violence started straight after the wedding, and the marriage lasted just 2 years. I made what seemed a simple decision to leave a relationship that was not what I imagined marriage to be. Since then he has been charged and found guilty of 3 assaults and AVOs have been in place, for myself and my children's safety. I have been in family court for 15 years.

The real problem is that the Police refuse to charge breaches of AVOs and the family court allow legal emotional and financial abuse to continue.

So how does that relate to older women and homelessness. Well moving house every time there is an assault, another AVO but AVOs put your address on the paperwork. I moved from Sydney to the Central Coast to ensure some safety in distance. This worked for a while. I was forced to pay the mortgage for my home and rent to stay safe. Then he prevented the mortgage payments being applied to the mortgage. They sat in an offset account. A court order was required to apply my mortgage payments to the loan. He told the strata he refused to pay the fees. He never did, I had. Still that was another \$30k in strata fee court costs. The court found I was ahead in my strata costs. Then he managed to get a real estate to sell the house, without my agreement. The office of Legal services found the solicitor had acted in breach of professional duties, and handed the case to the Law Society. The solicitor kept the sale funds, even denying a family court order. 7 years later I still do not have a home, my possessions are in storage, as I await a legal outcome. In Jan this year, I received a letter from the law society, that my claim was out of time. I was waiting for them to do their job, and they sat on it and did nothing. The legal system protects its own.

Then lets talk about child support. I didnt work after the last assault. Child support raised my income by \$50,000 and garnished my bank for the money. My ex had withheld our daughter, had been charged for a criminal offence of assault, then a contravention in family court, but he was financially rewarded for doing this.

The cost to me, was my rental home. With the money in the bank garnished, I was unable to continue to pay rent.

I am now homeless, I am not eligible for Centrelink rental assistance, because I dont have a home, and so I live in a camp trailer. The ladies at the refuge, where I was taken after a court case, told me not to even bother applying for housing help. The list was too long.

I have recently returned to work, but not in my usual capacity. I dont think I could go back to corporate life after the bullying and trying to balance working and life for so long. To hide what is going on in your private life, and turn up to work like it is a

normal day. When I dont even have a shower let alone electricity. Most people could not understand.

I now work as a Councillor, elected to my Local Government. I have taken that on, to address the issues of women like me. To help shine a light on domestic violence, homelessness and womens issues. I am sure noone in my town would know I fall into the homeless category, other than a few trusted friends. The system truly is broken. I was a professional, am able to help my community, but have been let down with a legal and Police justice system that allows coercice control, emotional, financial and legal abuse for years after the end of a relationship. And I am one of many.