



Laverne's story

Disclaimer: This is the story of a person who shared their personal experience with the Commission of Inquiry through a submission or interview. The names in this story are pseudonyms and identifying details have been removed. The person who shared this experience may not have been a witness and their account is not evidence. They did not take an oath or affirmation before providing the story.

Nothing in this story constitutes a finding of fact by the Commission of Inquiry. Instead, these stories have been published to show how people are experiencing the current child safety system in Queensland. Any views expressed are those of the person who shared their experience, not of the Commission of Inquiry.

Content warning: Some material may be distressing. These statements may include references to violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, suicide, or self-harming behaviours, and may contain strong or confronting language. Some narratives may be about First Nations people who have passed away. Readers are encouraged to engage with this material in a way that supports their wellbeing.

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Good afternoon,

At 16, I reported sexual abuse by my stepfather, but police and Child Safety refused to protect me. I was told I couldn't apply for a protection order myself, leaving me completely alone while my younger siblings remained in the household, exposed to ongoing risk. Now 19, I am speaking out about this systemic failure that left a young person unprotected while those accused were still legally allowed to work with children.

My name is Laverne, and I am speaking out about what I believe is a serious gap in Queensland's child protection and legal system.

I reported sexual abuse by my stepfather and sought help through police and Child Safety. Despite this, the police finalised the matter without proceeding, and Child Safety did not take action to ensure my safety or the safety of my younger siblings.

I was told that if I wanted protection, I would need to apply for a Domestic Violence Order. I attended the Courthouse alone, only to be told that, as a minor, I could not apply for an order against a parent or step-parent and that only police or Child Safety could do so on my behalf. Both had already declined.

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At that point, I had followed every process I was directed to, yet I was left without legal protection, without safe housing, and completely alone. During my life I face abuse from both of my guardians, while my younger siblings were still living in the same household, exposed to ongoing risk.

My younger brother told the family that he was sexually assaulted by one of my stepfather's other children. No protective action had been taken by the system to prevent this harm.

What raises further concern is that, at the time, both my stepfather and my mother held Blue Cards, allowing them to work with children, while I had reported abuse and no protective action had been taken.

I am now 19 and speaking out because I believe this reflects a serious systemic failure — where a young person can report abuse and still be left without any pathway to safety, while those accused or associated remain able to work with children.

I have documentation relating to my reports, court attendance, and agency responses, and I am willing to provide this where appropriate.

I am willing to speak on the record and share further details of my experience.

Thank you for your time and consideration.