

VICTORIAN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Applicant.: Reece Storme Ferrara

Respondents.: Ambulance Victoria

Royal Flying Doctors Service

IMPACT STATEMENT OF MR REECE STORME FERRARA

1. My resignation from Ambulance Victoria was no one's fault but my own. I made ill choices in the context of two undiagnosed illnesses. The first was Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and later, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.
2. At that time, I accepted responsibility for my actions and gave up on myself as worthy enough to even mention the word Paramedic in connection with me. I endured the darkest time after my resignation where I experienced low self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness and flashbacks of traumatic events related to my work with ambulance Victoria of deceased individuals, triggers and reoccurring nightmares of my ex-wife tying my hands behind my back and repeatedly landing punches into my face with blood pouring out of it and I could not ever escape.
3. I slowly began the painful and shameful journey out of that darkness. I actively sought help from professionals undergoing therapy and researched additional evidence-based treatments.
4. In 2018 I finally experienced relief from these symptoms through sheer and unrelenting determination and grit, expelling the fear and rage of PTSD from within and letting go of the abuse inflicted by my ex-wife, I began to evolve. I started turning into a person who was dedicated to living the values of Courage, Honour, Respect, Perseverance and Compassion. Co-Parenting saw our son thrive again, and I looked up out of the dark hole and finally plotted a path back to some form of career and vowed to pay back the community for the shame I brought upon the Paramedic Profession.
5. I took a leap of faith and applied for Paramedic Registration in 2019. I disclosed everything and submitted an exhausting and emotionally draining explanation to AHPRA, never made an excuse or blaming anyone but myself.
6. I cried for about 3 hours straight when AHPRA gave me the gift of being a Paramedic again. After that, I began to feel like I was worthy enough to start walking a mere knee height in the mud of my own doing. I was building momentum and getting more resilient.
7. Knowing my impediments to employment and the inevitable rejection based on my mental illness I applied for a job with RFDS. I felt that to leave the past behind and never repeat it, I must own it and not hide it. Again, I cried tears of joy when I was an employee of RFDS. I felt like

- society was going to allow me to exist as an equal among it and in gratitude I would be nothing but exceptional in all endeavours in my personal and gifted professional life.
8. Ambulance Victoria's decision to reject my approval to work in non-emergency patient transport and RFDS decision to terminate my employment delt a crushing blow to my drive, motivation, and self-esteem. The weight of which made it hard to breathe and I fell back down into that darkness I came from. I felt like a loser. It hurt so bad because it was just so cruel. I had paid my debt to society and had worked hard to rebuild my mental health, but I guess I will always be eating with the dogs in the dirt, so what's the point of even trying anymore.
 9. This experience made me feel like I was being told **get back down in the mud where you belong and don't ever think you can get back out again.**
 10. I can't exactly remember how long I agreed with this and put on a brave face for my son. Waking up in the morning when my son was at his mums made me disappointed, I woke up at all. I struggled to get out of bed and sometimes did not eat. I was functional and dedicated to being a Dad but when he wasn't there the weight was crushing.
 11. Because I no longer have a job with RFDS and am worried that I will never be authorised by AV to work in the non-emergency transport sector, I have recently been forced to leave my son behind and accept any position available interstate. I do not know when I will see my son again or be able to hug him as COVID continues to change our world.
 12. On this day I believe I am worthy, and I am a successful father. I would like to tell Ambulance Victoria and the general Manager of RFDS that I must not concern myself nor judge my worth as a human being with their opinions of me, of what I had done in the past and suitability for being a Paramedic. I have earned my place in the profession again and if they refuse to explore possibilities that human beings can change and evolve or perhaps are too afraid to talk to me about the reasons why I believe their opinions are not correct, then I cannot change anyone nor can I convince anyone who is not interested in objective consideration of information. The only thing I can do is be a model citizen of society, give my all to my Paramedic profession and strive to continue to move forward and be successful for myself and my son.

This concludes my statement of impact.



Reece Storme Ferrara

23 September 2021