Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the management and minimisation of bullying and violence in ACT schools

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Dear committee members

A wish for my details to remain anonymous at all times.

I would like to refer to my experience at high school during 1999 to 2002. I arrived at this high school without knowing anyone since I was living in Cairns prior to this.

During my time at the high school I dealt with many challenges and to this day has impacted me. I was suffering from continual headaches and sickness but also I was bullied during this time. The headaches and sickness to this day I believe was related to the stress of school. In many occasions I avoided school due to bullying and this impacted on my learning. As a pre-service teacher I can see very clearly the gaps in my education due to the bullying.

Some examples I can provide:
I was thrown to a metal frame and all the teacher did was say to the student that did this to me "don't do that again". The students laughed that the teacher did nothing about it.

Bullies used to laugh that the teachers did not punish them. I felt on many occasions that bullies did not care if they got told off. I was continually called Rabbit and other names and teachers did next to nothing about it. I had my hat stolen and projects stolen on some occasions.

In one case I was left crying because someone pushed me against a wall. The classroom teacher ignored me completely and left me crying. A student had to come to my aid and at least give me a tissue and talk to me to calm me down. The teacher did nothing and I still remember that moment very clearly. When my parents approached the school about it, the school said "[redacted] needs to learn to defend himself".

I was faced with a situation that the whole year nine and ten were out looking for me because someone was annoyed that I spoke to his girlfriend. The person involved in organising this was not punished at all.

In 2014 I was approached by my former high school teacher. The teacher apologized to me for not stepping in when students were bullying me. She explained she was a new teacher and did not have the confidence to step up and stop bullying.

As a result of the bullying and the impacts now:
My maths skills have been weak which has impacted my teaching degree
My confidence levels in myself suffered since high school.
My confidence levels in meeting and making new friends has been impacted.
I did not go to my year 10 high school reunion due to fear of bullying happening again.
I still question what policies and procedures were taking place back in the early 2000s to prevent bullying.

I had a very supportive family and I was okay at the end but the scars are still present.

The past is the past, and the bullies from that time are not the adults of today however the scars are still there. It was a pity I felt too scared to go and relive high school at my high school reunion.

As someone that is entering into the teaching profession, I want to do what it takes to ensure what happened to me does not happen to anyone else.

Please contact me via email or phone if you need any more details.

Kind regards,