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Abused cop shares her story

Kelly wants book to help others

25 April 2019 | Thomas Chamberlin
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A MIRIAM Vale police officer sexually abused as a child has overcome adversity and is helping other child victims come forward.

Senior Constable Kelly Humphries is a survivor.

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY: Kelly Humphries was abused as a child by her uncle and has written a book about her experience.

Sexually abused by a family member as a young child, her life could have been ruined forever. But after building up the courage to speak to a cousellor, her parents and police, she is helping others do the same.

Snr Const Humphries, who joined the police service in 2007, worked six years in school-based policing and was attached to Logan's Child Protection Investigation Unit.

Now based in general duties in Miriam Vale, she has written a book, Unscathed Beauty, about her harrowing experience in a bid to help other victims come forward.

She said she was sexually abused when going on fishing trips with Bob when aged between 7 and 15, before she finally confronted him.

"I learnt very early on that I needed to make a choice about how I was going to get through it," Snr Const Humphries said.

"I felt really gross and horrible and didn't really know what to do or what those feelings were."

Snr Const Humphries said abuse to children was "careful and calculated" and her abuser used "quality time" as an opportunity to offend against her.

It took her years to come forward and speak and a gentle approach from police officers was crucial in helping her write a statement when she was 19.

"The first thing he said to me when the offending started was 'I want to teach you what it's like to love'," she said.

"When I did tell the police it was very hard, it was the first time I had to go and describe what he did to me."

Snr Const Humphries said she wanted to help other victims and about seven years later became a police officer.

"I wanted to have the ability to follow up with people and didn't want to just spend five minutes with somebody and not know what happened to them after I left," she said of her role in school-based policing.

Children found it easier to talk to her. "I didn't share my story with them but I would often say I understand you might feel this way and this way.

"And they would say: 'I really feel that'.

"And that would make them realise that I understood what they were going through, that I wasn't just some person that they couldn't talk to.

"In some ways it was very hard because it was so similar to my situation."

Being a police officer gave her incredible insight.

"It has given me a level of confidence and strength that I potentially never would have had," she said.

"I am stronger because of my journey in the police.

"I will continue to be a voice for survivors because that's my passion and that's my heart."

One of the greatest problems with child sexual abuse was people spoke about "things behind closed doors", but the majority of abuse happened at home, Snr Const Humphries said.

"There are so many people sitting in these violent dark spaces that just don't ever think their story will be heard, that no one is going to come and save them, that no one is going to rescue them," she said.

"Parents should spend more time with their children and watch their body language. Abused children need reassurance that they are loved and cared for and what they say is important and valuable."

Children could be scared to come forward because they think they are going to break up their family.

"To parents I would suggest: get rid of your phones, make time to connect daily with your child and if you think something is happening just remind them that there is nothing that they could do that would make you feel ashamed of them, that they are loved... you wouldn't be mad at them or angry at them.

"Those are the kind of things that make kids silent."