

Question One

Are there other goals the Royal Commission should consider?

These seem far ranging and inclusive. In my own case my ex-husband does not consider this applies to him at all, he cannot/will not understand that he was a perpetrator of family violence. So the most important ones for me are

- support adults and children who have been affected by family violence
- hold those who have been violent accountable for their actions
- help people who use or may use family violence to change their behaviour

Question Two

The Royal Commission wants to hear about the extent to which recent reforms and developments have improved responses to family violence, and where they need to be expanded or altered.

It is important that police no longer dismiss family violence as 'just a domestic'. It is important to have female officers and staff to talk to, because when I had to tell my story over and over to males I kept thinking 'is it you, do you do this, is it you too?'

Question Three

Which of the reforms to the family violence system introduced in the last ten years do you consider most effective? Why? How could they be improved?

I was involved in White Ribbon events where I worked [REDACTED]. It was extremely stressful for me to see the videos, so much so I had to leave the room. [REDACTED] came one year to talk about his sister, but he seemed to suggest blokes punch out the abusers as that is the only language they understand - begetting more violence. I was never able to identify myself publicly as a victim of family violence through these events. I took the literature but was never able to send it to my ex-partner and say this is you, this is me they are talking about.

Despite my personal difficulty, White Ribbon and similar programs are crucial in raising awareness, it may help women recognise abusive relationships and leave them. Maybe some men will recognise themselves in the behaviours portrayed but I doubt it, because they think their actions are right.

My information

Rosie Batty is right, it doesn't matter how nice your house is, family violence pervades our society.

I was in an abusive relationship for [REDACTED] years, from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED].

My ex-husband was a well known [REDACTED]. I was a [REDACTED]

The last time, we were in the bathroom when he hit me. I felt my hair brush the edge of the bath as I fell. In that instant I knew that if I was any closer to the bath it would be a king hit, or now appropriately called 'a cowards punch'. If the back of my head had hit the edge of the cast iron bath I would have died that night.

For the first time I told someone else - a wonderful female doctor. She used the right words to snap me out of all those years of denial when she said about the compressed fracture of

██████████ - this is criminal violence, if a stranger did this to you, you would tell the police and have them charged. I told her about the descending spiral of violence and always the making up, the apologies, the flowers, the gifts, the promises it would never happen again. How the time between the episodes of violence had become shorter and the abuse more frequent and more severe.

I left our marriage. The journey out was just as hard as staying in the marriage had been. Another story for another time.

What I wanted to say was how much ongoing medical costs I now have all these years later. When a right-handed man repeatedly strikes you over many years you bear the damage on the left side. Your head snaps to the right. Again and again. Your spine tells the story.

The ██████████ left eye and I have had laser surgery. I have tinnitus in my left ear. I have lost a ██████████ my left eye. I have a ██████████ left eye, to be operated on next year. In ongoing physiological terms I have a worsening ██████████ over the whole left side of my face that requires bi-monthly neurological intervention and caused me to take early retirement from my profession in ██████████ to bear all day in public.

He knows nothing of this. I bear the pain, the disability, the loss of my profession and the medical costs myself.

It has taken me all this intervening time to feel able to begin to tell my story.

I am a survivor.

A final thought:

Please look after Rosie Batty. In my last professional position I worked with survivors of the Black Saturday bushfires building resilience through ██████████ to very damaged souls. I had a team of project workers. Unknowingly, we took on what we learned from the wonderful and compassionate Dr ██████████ was 'vicarious trauma'. We had to look out for each other, and have regular breaks from the work, no matter how urgent we knew it to be. I am concerned about Rosie taking on all our trauma without adequate training and support. I would like to know who is looking out for her and how. And I am concerned that the Government will use her for their own purposes, then abandon her when they have what they need. As if she hasn't suffered enough.