

Dear Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse,

Last year I made a submission to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. A week before Australia Day, Rosie Batty asked if I was aware of this Royal Commission and asked if I would provide a written contribution, even offering to help. Given how busy she has been, I decided to simply reword the previous one and provide two attachments as support.

As I said in last year's submission, I can only hope my contribution reveals (and provides supporting evidence of) the culture of corruption within the agencies dealing with child abuse, and the problems this inflicts upon victims. I also contest, most emphatically, that the excuse of there being "no sexual component" involved in physical, emotional and psychological abuse inflicted on children (and which often continues into adulthood) is no excuse to dismiss these crimes and those who seek justice by coming forward in an effort to report it. The letter I sent last year was dismissed for this very reason, only proving my point.

To that end, I have provided a (sterilised) copy (the names have been removed) of a letter I sent to the former Victorian Police Chief Commissioner Ken Lay, and Victorian Minister for Police Mr Noonan – neither of whom have responded – detailing the personal experiences of someone attempting to make a report and get positive action.

The letter also demonstrates the hardships such victims face and how official responses conceal and enabled predators. I can only hope that it might encourage you to make changes improve the way victims are treated but, given the response last year from the Royal Commission only served to add further evidence of this vile, disgraceful culture of corruption, I doubt it will happen.

Nevertheless, I shall make this submission. I am simply a victim that has spent the last thirty years (unsuccessfully) trying to simply report what happened to me and so many of my relatives in the hope that, God willing, somebody actually investigates my 'allegations' and charges those at fault. I urge you to read that letter and ask the same questions I have asked for three decades, including why I was silenced and why there has been no Statement recorded or investigation made.

To date, my efforts have only resulted in frustration. The task of simply making a report, let alone an official statement (which has never been an option), is Herculean. Not only must one negotiate the self-perpetuating, cyclical and unnavigable bureaucracy to find the right people to speak with, but a victim must repeat what are branded "allegations" or "stories" and be treated as if they are a liar. If only victims received the same legal aid and presumption of innocence as those who violated them.

Perhaps this explains why victims who come forward are treated with such contempt. After you have made the very difficult decision to speak-up, you must repeat, in humiliating detail, what was done over and over again as you are referred to someone else, or simply subjected to the vile culture of corruption that infects almost every level of the public service and other agencies tasked with the responsibility of dealing with illegal and criminal acts.

I have spent many years battling depression and even suicidal thoughts. I am an Australian citizen. I'm male and now forty-two. Even soldiers – who are trained to deal with violent situations – suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress and I have not received such training. God help the women and children faced with the same culture of corruption inflicted by the public service after struggling to deal with abuse and find the courage to speak to someone about it.

I was shocked by the incompetence, negligence, indifference and idleness with which my report was received and dealt, more so by the insensitivity, apathy, insults, mockery, unfounded accusations, defamatory comments, insincerity and intimidation metered out by people who should never have been given such positions in a society where meritocracy is supposed to ensure the best people for the right jobs. Added to this misery is the fact that failures within the public service are concealed by the process of "internal investigation" often "at level", whereby this conflict of interest ensures that those at fault or their friends find that they have done nothing wrong and avoid accountability.

The outcome is always the same. Decades of inaction. The true horror is that I am not alone in this situation. The Royal Commission has uncovered hundreds, if not thousands, of victims of this vile culture of corruption. A recent news report stated that in NSW alone, seventy-five thousand reports of child abuse had not been investigated. This failure within the system has enabled predators to inflict their sociopathic behaviour upon countless thousands of victims, many of whom remain unknown because those whose duty is to investigate allegations refuse to do so and even force them to remain silent. If those who remain silent are said to condone, then those who force others to remain silent are complicit.

To ensure that you fully appreciate the repercussions of inaction, I have provided a copy of that letter I sent to Ken Lay and then Mr Noonan. I have also include a response from a Victorian Police officer in regards to the content of that letter and this demonstrates how victims of child abuse are railroaded into the Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team and then dismissed out of hand because they were not sexually abused. Indeed, all of the crimes detailed in that account are dismissed due to this attitude. These attachments demonstrate what becomes of so many victims and how crimes (and perpetrators) concealed allow those at fault to escalate and inflict themselves on multiple victims over several decades.

The letter is very similar to one I sent to Attorney General George Brandis, which in turn is similar to those I have sent to several politicians, Child Safety Services, Legal Aid, The Salvation Army, the Catholic Church, the Queensland and Victorian Police, Civil Liberties Australia and many others. Most of those I contact simply fail to respond, but others provide ample evidence of the culture of corruption I have detailed (one present in every government department I have so-far encountered), responses of a nature for which the Churches and Salvation Army have been (quite rightly) chastised and forced to adopt change in response, but not the public service. Why is that?

The only way to change a culture is to expose it to the public and hope they are so horrified that they demand action from the politicians who are so insulated from reality they only respond when under threat of losing office. Their empathy is insincere. Empathy is something you can only develop through shared experience, so I urge you to read what I have written and consider how you would feel if you were in my position, and then consider that I am but one of too many thousands.

No child should ever have to suffer for the sins of their parents or the failures of the government. The sins of the parents and culture of a society are the shackles worn by their children. The strict, unbending application of mindless bureaucracy and policy that silences victims and inflicts further injustice only conceals and enables the worst behaviour of sociopaths and will break that society's children to the point that they adopt and inflict the same or worse upon future generations.

The problem is not just the corruption of the public service but the lack of a Justice System and rigid adherence to a Legal System that protects the rights of those at fault, denies basic human rights and dignity to victims, and reduces legal outcomes to commodities sold to the highest bidder. Our laws are founded on the second half of the Ten Commandments written in the same Holy Bible upon which one must swear to speak truthfully when providing evidence and testimony, and yet our laws have evolved to include those that circumvent the intent (and justice) of those five first laws.

Perhaps our society would be better off if we considered the wisdom of Mark 4: 21-5 (among other passages) in regards to dealing with crime and the victims. I once spoke with a Presbyterian Minister concerning the hypocrisy in the Church where theft, fraud, sexual misconduct, defamation, slander and similar corruption in the Ministry was rife. I was then accused of “maligning” the Ministry and instructed to remain silent and publicly confess my ‘lies’ – on my knees – and beg forgiveness.

This so shocked me that I left that Church. I have witnessed the same and worse in Australian society but cannot leave. I will not leave. The experiences of people like me must not be silenced. No victim must be silenced. They are an opportunity to shock people of moral integrity to address problems caused by those who are morally bankrupt. I repeat: those who remain silent are said to condone, but those who force them to remain silent are complicit.

If people such as myself are forced to remain silent, those who inflict and enable evil will not only continue to do so, but escalate. Perhaps the most disturbing outcome of this failure of justice are the words from the book on which people must swear to speak truthfully (words even more apt given that most horrific ways in which the bright lights of Luke Batty, Chloe Valentine and too many others have been extinguished) and which follow such a similar response to the one that Minister of the Presbyterian Church spat at me.

*“Jesus replied, “And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them.””* (Luke 11: 46).

You are experts in the law. I am not going to argue semantics with you concerning what is meant by ‘law’ for that would only further demonstrate and excuse the influence of the culture of corruption. You have an opportunity, two-thousand years after those words were spoken, to correct injustice.

Empty, politically motivated, policy driven platitudes and apologies are of no value or comfort when they are followed by a “but” and excuses that result in no action and further injustice that continues to silence victims and conceals and enables acts of evil. May the Lord bless those who inflict misery and hypocrisy upon others with an abundance of opportunity to learn empathy and humility.

James