

Lisa Scheikowski - Fwd: Supplementary Questions

From: Lisa Scheikowski
Subject: Fwd: Supplementary Questions

>>> Robyn Cotterell-Jones <ceo@vocal.org.au> 4/20/2012 6:07 pm >>>

Hi Kate,

My supplementary questions should have been with you earlier today.

Question 1 – Intervention Programmes

Much material regarding the success of and the problems with perpetrator programs can be found either in the writing of American Lundy Bancroft, or at www.NTV.org.au, a Victorian men's help programme run by the excellent Michael Flood

My real concerns about perpetrator effectiveness is that whist ever sentences are based on a one-off event, often a crime that has been plea bargained and reduced, the perpetrator will never 'need' to address his actual offending behaviour

More work needs to be done to recognise sociopathy and psychopathy and other personality types where intervention is not going to work if it based on empathy or accepting responsibility and

The victims of people in perpetrator therapy (who have an ongoing relationship) are a crucial part of any therapy and need therapy themselves, and safety strategies

Question 2 – the court system

I previously explained a few of the issues I have with second class law and the absence of 'justice' for victims. I have looked at the Victorian model and see considerable improvements from the current NSW model (from what I can see, but that observation is not from reality testing outcomes for victims. Until a victim and an accused are each entitled to legal representation, it cannot be acceptable.

I also repeat my earlier observation that it really depends on who you identify as suffering from DV. Is it just women, or/ and their children – or is it all who are affected and at any stage.

The court system begins with police investigations and just today I have spoken with a woman (from Victoria) who reported DV and sexual assault and two years down the track the case is still 'under investigation'. She has met sexist attitudes including 'do you want your children to know your husband, their father is a rapist?' Is it better that he is a rapist and she just suffers, for everyone else? I really fear that until police have a special squad for DV and sex assaults (like Homicide/ drugs and bikies, we will

never resolve this dreadful judgement of blaming victims, especially of familial or relationship violence. I'd like to see a Government make it a worse crime to hurt a 'loved one'.

The Victorian model was unclear (in the time I had) about the linkages between victims of crime responses and DV responses.

I have had a bit of a browse through various DV related on-line government sites and find many gaps in definitions and what's offered. These gaps need to be addressed, the silos deconstructed and people treated like people not 'a type'. You will not give confidence to DV victims while we cannot get it right on the ground.

Question 3 Regional NSW

If the definitional stuff was sorted, and we had an all-of-government understanding of what DV is, who it affects, the impact on children and the vastly increased likelihood that an abusive man will also abuse his children; if we broke down the silos that exist to maintain funding, if police were highly trained to recognise DV and didn't take the easiest route and ignore evidence – leaving it to the courts, and the victims got referred for PROPER victim support – (not just a follow up call in ten days), if our on-line resources were better integrated and on-line counselling and support were available IF schools educated kids, TAFE's and Uni's educated students in DV, Trauma, and safe relationships, we'd start getting onto the same page. It wouldn't matter if a victim called police, doctor, hospital, neighbourhood centre – they would all have at least the basic core material. But you can't let the DV experts work out what to do alone – it has to be other experts too, experts (who are not academics, or program managers alone, but who have broad exposure to what then – what happens when a victim gets to the next point, and what then. Especially about the law, including Family Law as it is the state that sets the victims up to fail.

Then, reasonably, any entry point could have the same material. Perhaps instead of a zillion web-sites, we really need an essential government one, but one that tells people what to do if something goes wrong, not just assumptive material that everything will go right. Accessible anywhere, regional, remote.

The simplest/hardest and most resistant thing to alter is the law. Many would rather see law that supports violent offenders, rather than their female or child victims.

The ones I feel sorriest for are the women who have escaped the DV (often as demanded by DOCS) to protect their children, who are then ordered to live with the offender by the Family Court and prevented from access to their protective mothers. The state's processes must stop this appalling and dangerous 'leakage which is the direct result of poor state systems, a lack of consistency between departments and the failure to think 'what if'.

Robyn Cotterell - Jones

Executive Director

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Vocal with writing

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Lisa Scheikowski - Fwd: Last question. - follow on from prev email

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What recommendations would I like to see come out of the Inquiry?

A Victims of Crime Commissioner – there is a good model in South Australia, with oversight power to work systemically, and strategically. Senior to others in the bureaucratic system.

Oversight all **personal crime** types – DV, sex assault, homicide, fraud, home invasions etc fall under that jurisdiction. Located in Justice. Responsibility for complaints assessment, especially repetitive, systemic issues. Locate in Victims of Crime legislation.

Definitions to be determined.

Ratification of web-sites with a Central authority

Education. Begin the relationships education at pre-school.

Begin an assault on the law, which is sexist, unfair and out of balance. Nothing will really change if you do not.

Help us develop a strategy for VOCAL / Sydney and elsewhere, so that the gaps can continue to be addressed.

Make the DV committees better funded so they can do more locally.


Thank you so much for the opportunity to pass on my ideas.

The amendment to the transcript was posted tonight.

Robyn Cotterell - Jones

Executive Director

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