

Episode 6, samsn's STRONGER:

Losing My Religion / The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

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The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2013 - 2017) was established by the Commonwealth government to inquire into and report on responses by institutions (such as churches, schools, sporting groups and out-of-home care) to instances and allegations of child sexual abuse in Australia.

To be abused by someone who has authority over you causes unique impacts for men. A significant number of child sexual abuse survivors are abused outside the home by male authority figures working in trusted institutions, such as religious leaders, teachers or coaches. These figures were often role models. When survivors tried to disclose or report to authority figures they were often disbelieved, re-traumatised and sometimes re-abused. This abuse of power by perpetrators and institutions with authority has caused significant long-term harm, including fear, distrust, avoidance and sometimes hatred of authority that can lead to clashes with teachers, bosses and those in positions of power. This sets many men on a life course leading to denied opportunities, failure to achieve, and clashes with authority figures.

This episode shares some personal experiences of engagement with the Commission, as survivors spoke out to the community (often for the first time) about their abuse, their quest to be heard, and pursuit of justice and redress from the institution in which they were abused.

Featuring (in order of appearance): Lindsay G, Journalist Philippa McDonald, Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald AM, Professor Rita Shackel, Dr Judy Cashmore, Sheridan, Pete R.

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LINDSAY - Farewell (Instrumental)

AD / RIC HERBERT - Sebastian Kauderer: Two Big Reasons (Instrumental)

PHILIPPA - Centre of the Sea: Condolences (Instrumental)

PETE / FELICITY - Outland: Footprints (Instrumental)

PHILIPPA - Sebastian Kauderer: Saving Carl

CLOSING CREDITS - Seth Öphengon: A Safe Place (Instrumental)

SPEAKER	CONTENT
Rob Carlton	Welcome to SAMSN's 'Stronger', a podcast series featuring stories of resilience from male survivors of childhood sexual abuse, and their allies. In some parts it is heavy going, so if you're not in the space to listen right now, switch to something lighter. But do come back. We learn a great deal about surviving and growing stronger than your past from survivors.
Felicity Blake	If what you hear stirs up strong feelings, know that you can contact SAMSN at samsn.org.au , or on 1800 472 676, or give Lifeline a call on 13 11 14.
Lindsay G	In my mind, I believed that I had been responsible for all this. Had I been a better person, had I been a more compliant young man, had I been a better Catholic, these things wouldn't have happened to me, because I was really deserving of them because I was such a bad person.

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	<p>So that was dispelled a lot by the Royal Commission. They made me feel that sense of yes, I'm a human, and I am entitled to the dignity that goes with being a functional human being. So that was a very powerful thing.</p>
Felicity Blake	<p>You're listening to STRONGER, a podcast from SAMSNS (Survivors and Mates Support Network). In this series we're asking male survivors of childhood sexual abuse -- and their supporters -- what it takes to grow stronger than your past. We're your hosts; I'm Felicity Blake...</p>
Rob Carlton	<p>...and I'm Rob Carlton. This is episode six, called "Losing my Religion", and it's about the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.</p>
Felicity Blake	<p>The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse ran from 2013 to 2017. It was established by the Australian government to inquire into and report on responses by institutions to instances and allegations of Child Sexual Abuse in Australia.</p> <p>The establishment of the commission followed revelations of widespread cover-ups of child sexual abuse in the country's leading institutions. Worse: perpetrators were often protected by the institution, and enabled to continue offending for decades.</p> <p>There were also revelations that adults regularly failed to believe children, report the crime to authorities, and make the children safe.</p>
Rob Carlton	<p>In this context, "institution" means somewhere like a sporting organisation, a school, mission, orphanage, youth club, youth detention, the armed forces, in hospital, a church, or a religious establishment.</p> <p>Two thirds of the people who came forward to the commission were male, which was unexpected because the majority of survivors who'd previously reported child sexual abuse were female. For many of the male survivors, it was the first time they'd ever told anyone, and talked about the abuse. The average age of victims when first abused was 10.</p>
Felicity Blake	<p>Because of societal expectations around masculinity, being abused by someone who has authority over you causes unique impacts for men. The authority figures working in trusted institutions were often role models who had power over the children in their care. When survivors tried to disclose or report the abuse to other adults, they were often disbelieved, re-traumatised and sometimes re-abused.</p> <p>This perversion of power by perpetrators and institutions has caused significant long-term harm for many survivors. The impacts can include fear, distrust, avoidance, and sometimes a hatred of authority that can lead to clashes with teachers, bosses and people in positions of power. This sets many men on a life course leading to denied opportunities, conflict with employers, failure to achieve, homelessness, and - in some instances - prison. As a community, we need to ask</p>

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	<p>how the institutions which (either knowingly or unwittingly) allowed individual perpetrators to continue their abuse unimpeded should be held accountable.</p>
Rob Carlton	<p>This episode shares some personal experiences of engagement with the Commission. At the beginning, we heard from Lindsay, who, throughout this series, has shared his story of recovering from abuse at the hands of a Catholic priest. Later on, Lindsay will tell us what it was like to participate in the Royal Commission by putting his experience on record in a Private Session.</p> <p>To help us understand the social impact and significance of the Commission, we're now going to hear from a journalist whose coverage made an important contribution to the public record...</p>
Philippa McDonald	<p>My name is Philippa McDonald. For the past thirty years, I've been a reporter at the ABC, covering a lot of the biggest stories of our time. And the Royal Commission was one of the biggest stories I ever covered, over approximately five years. I started covering the Royal Commission, when it was called for by and announced by the Prime Minister the then Prime Minister Julia Gillard. I followed it through to the apology, and I covered the opening, the closing, and many days in between. I covered the segments involving the scouts, the YMCA, the Australian Defence Force, the Catholic Church, the release of the recommendations, and the government's response. And as I said, right through to the apology, and then I followed it up afterwards for a year as to what extent the recommendations of the Royal Commission, particularly the national redress scheme, were being followed.</p> <p>My response to the announcement of the Royal Commission was "This is monumental." This is going to be not just a moment, but a watershed in our history, because royal commissions have extraordinary powers to bring people to account. And what we knew when that announcement came was, it was going to be well-funded. It was going to be national, it was going to reach out to people who had never before had a voice. And it was going to hold the most powerful people in our nation to account. People in institutions who've never had to be transparent, or to be asked tough questions ever before.</p> <p>And the role of the media is to uncover the truth. And that was something we could do with the Royal Commission, we could bring it to a nation's attention, and also internationally. To give voice to the voiceless, to hold the powerful to account, to give people, the audience, the facts, to come to their own conclusions. To make people think and to make people feel and be engaged about something that had been hidden for so long. To expose conflicts, perception versus reality. To counter prevailing doctrine, when it's wrong, to encourage critical thinking, and solutions, whether it be in policy, whether it be law, and whether it results, and hopefully results, in change for the better.</p>
Rob Carlton	<p>Robert Fitzgerald was one of the six commissioners who oversaw the Royal Commission, chaired by the Honorable Justice Peter McClellan, AM.</p>

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<p>Robert Fitzgerald</p>	<p>The Royal Commission was able to conduct 8,000 private sessions - they're face to face meetings and discussions with individual commissioners - and two thirds of those were male survivors and/or victims. So we had an extraordinary insight into the circumstances of abuse and the life prior to and after that abuse for men and women, but obviously for a great many men.</p> <p>And a point that we should raise that in the general society in relation to child sexual abuse, the majority of victims are, in fact, female. So this is quite unique within the institutions. In part, it's the nature of the institutions, boys' homes, boarding schools, you know, army corps, those sorts of things. But there is something unique in relation to the way in which institutions dealt with boys, young boys, and young men. In terms of the learnings out of all that, they were extraordinary. At one extreme end, we dealt with several hundred men who were currently in prison, and I did several hundred private sessions in prisons around Australia. And there we saw over and over again, the failure of our interactions with men, from the time of early childhood, right through to the time of recurring incarceration.</p> <p>We were able to see how domestic violence and family violence played a huge role in the lives of so many young boys, and indeed, young girls. We saw how many entered into out of home care systems, only to be abused, not only physically, but also sexually and emotionally. We saw how interactions with juvenile justice (and again, the vast majority of those in juvenile justice are in fact young boys or men). And we saw the, in the early entry into jails and how our lack of an appropriate care system in jail led to recidivism. So we've seen that sort of example. But the second thing we saw right across the whole scale, was the way in which this whole issue about gender, masculinity played out. In boarding schools, it was about boys being boys, you know, men being men in the Army Corps. It was about this terrible fear of being identified as being gay or homosexual, especially in an era when, in fact, it was still criminal in Australia. It was this confusion about sexuality that may have happened when a child was actually molested when they're 11, or 12, but stayed with them right through to their manhood, including when they're 40, or 50, still trying to deal with these sorts of issues. It also dealt with society's expectations that boys would get over it, it would just be an incident or several incidents, that, you know, everybody would just simply get on and get over it. And there was no expectation at all that this would be playing out in the lives of people when they were 60, 70, 80, you know, and our oldest private session participant was 92.</p> <p>So I think we learned a lot about the men who were victims and survivors of this abuse, but we also learned a lot about the way in which institutions expected men and boys to behave, and more importantly, how society treated men and boys as well. So I think we learned quite a lot.</p>
<p>Rob Carlton</p>	<p>This is Law Professor, Rita Shackel.</p>

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Rita Shackel	<p>I think it's quite clear that historically, there has been a lot more research that has been directed towards women, girls as victims of child sexual abuse. And so that was within a view that most cases of child sexual abuse involved are a male perpetrator and a female victim.</p> <p>As we've had the opportunity to conduct more research and speak to more victims and survivors, we now understand that isn't the case. And you know, recently with the Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse, we have added to that body of research and knowledge that clearly shows that many boys are sexually assaulted as well as girls. So that's a starting point to recognize that it isn't something that just impacts on girls.</p> <p>Then, from that we've been able to look at specific questions and challenges for boy victims, particularly around that issue that we were discussing earlier of disclosure, and understanding that the prevalence of child sexual abuse perpetrated against boys was for a very long time hidden, because there are particular difficulties that boys and men face in being able to talk about their abuse.</p>
Rob Carlton	<p>With her research partner Dr. Judy Cashmore (a developmental psychologist), Professor Shackel co-authored an important study called <i>Gender Differences in the Context and Consequences of Child Sexual Abuse</i>. Here's Judy Cashmore.</p>
Judy Cashmore	<p>And it's interesting that in fact, You know, what became very clear in the Royal Commission is that boys, men take a lot longer to disclose child sexual abuse than women do.</p> <p>One of the major problems in this area is that we actually don't have a true figure as to what the real incidence and prevalence of child sexual abuse is, particularly for boys. Because they, we know that they're more reluctant to disclose. And we know that there are many people out there, many boys, many men, who have never told anyone.</p> <p>There were some particular cases in the Royal Commission that really went home. I remember the judge talking about an 80 year old man, who'd never told anyone until he went to a, he was going to his private session the next day, and that's when he told his wife and his son. And we don't know how many people there are, like that out there. And who've been suffering in silence, covering it over, getting on, but also having it emerge and trigger problems for them at various times in their lives.</p> <p>So just speaking to some of what we know from the research about the long term consequences of childhood sexual abuse. The picture is very consistent, that there are clear mental health outcomes, that those who've been sexually abused in childhood, both girls and boys, are more likely to have alcohol and substance abuse problems. They're more likely to engage in risky behaviors, including risky sexual behaviors. So, unprotected sex, and so on. That depression, anxiety, post</p>

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	<p>traumatic stress responses, are more likely amongst those who have been sexually abused as children. And also suicidality, and suicide ideation.</p> <p>And in fact, we know that's one of the reasons that the Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse came into being: it was the patterning and the disclosure of what became very clear of the suicide of a number of men who'd been sexually abused within a church setting.</p>
Robert Fitzgerald	<p>I think this Royal Commission is the first time we've got a real insight into abuse of young boys, young men, and then how that impacted on their lives much later. In the Royal Commission, one of the most surprising learnings for us in the community, was the length of time between the first incidents of sexual abuse and disclosure, and the average length of time was, you know, you know, in the mid 20 - 20 years, you know, 25 years, 27 years. And really, nobody had understood that, everyone had assumed that most people that have been sexually abused, would disclose at a much closer point in time to the original occasion.</p> <p>The second thing is the reasons why people didn't disclose and particularly in relation to men. And again, there were a number of factors. Firstly, depending on the nature of the institution, it was fear of not being believed. And that fear of not being believed often also came with punishment if you were in a boys' home, if you were in a particular school or a boarding school, but also if you were in a very devout family, a religious family, quite often the disclosure that somebody, particularly a priest, or a brother, teacher was doing something to you: one, it wouldn't be believed, but secondly, they would punish you for actually besmirching the name of the church or the school, whatever it might be.</p> <p>The second thing, societal norms about boys not being affected by things that harm them. You know, if they get bashed, what would it matter, if they get picked on by older boys, if they were bullied in the army or in the cadets, you know, this would all be a transitory sort of arrangement, nobody should worry about it. It's actually the boy that's not strong enough.</p> <p>One of the things that we have in Australian society is we have a great love for institutions. Australians pretend that they are a sort of a vagabond nation, you know, a group of rogues, you know, we're the great people that don't like institutions. Nothing could be further from the truth. Australians, actually are very institutionalized. They like institutions, up until recently, and there was great trust in those institutions, the churches, the government, the military, organizations, charities, you know, charities could do no harm. And we believe that as a society.</p> <p>And so these institutions took on not only a trust of those that were deeply associated with them, so members of religious faiths for example, or, or people that sent their children to a prestigious school, but also society at large. And we saw over and over again, where the government failed to act, governments failed to act, because it was the Salvation Army, or it was the Catholic Church, or it was</p>

the Army or the military, what we saw is a real resistance. And it wasn't born out of the fact that, you know, we actually don't think the abuse is occurring. It was actually that these are trustworthy institutions, and we couldn't be seen to be questioning those sorts of institutions.

But at a very deep level what, what we had is the personification of, sort of, these organizations as being infallible by people within it. So very devout Christians would not believe, *would not believe* that members of those particular religions were capable of doing the sorts of wrongs. But even where they thought it was possible, they then placed the value of maintaining the church's reputation above even their own child. And that happens today, a number of the ethnic based religious, very Orthodox religions, very conservative religions, even today, a child is likely to be greeted by the following response, that, you know, even if I believe it happened, you mustn't tell anybody, because that will damage the family, it will damage the community, it will damage the church. And then they say, and he's a good man and he probably didn't do it anyway. Now that's happening today. It happened in the, in the Royal Commission, where we actually saw people that have only just recently been abused. And I remember a girl being abused within an Orthodox Church. And that was exactly the family's response. Even today, that response is likely. So going, so what we have to do is be working with those ethnic groups, working with those different faiths, working with those institutions. Because they're really where the Anglicans and the Catholics and others were 30 years ago. That's going to be a very big challenge, because in their own communities, they don't talk about sex, they don't talk about abuse. So today, to believe that child sexual abuse is a historic issue, it's not. It's very present. And dealing with it, trying to educate people is a current contemporary issue. And will always be so.

[PROMOTION]

In relation to the prioritization or the incentives that drive conduct and behavior, it's a complex issue. Let me just take one example which people wouldn't think about. We dealt with a number of professional athletes who had been abused as young teenagers. And some of them were training for the Olympics, particularly in swimming, tennis, and so on. Performing Arts is another example. And what we discovered there is a number of the people that came and spoke to us say that they couldn't disclose early, because of the damage that would do to their parents who had invested in their dream. The parent that gets up every morning, five o'clock for the last 10 years. The parent that makes money available, so the child can go and get professional dancing lessons, the parents that believe their son or daughter is going to be a great athlete, a great performer, a great singer. And many people said they couldn't disclose the abuse that had happened to them because of the damage it would do to their parents. Quite extraordinary.

In a similar way, we had people who were so invested in the wellbeing of the institution, particularly faith based institutions, but not only. You've only got to look

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	<p>at some of our prestigious schools where old boys and old girls can see no wrong in anything - same thing. Either intentionally or unintentionally, they would place the reputation and the interests of the institution ahead of the wellbeing of their child. Now, if you said that to a parent, they would deny it. But when we look back on it, it is true. What allows that to happen, I think is really complex. It is the seduction of institutions. And even today in our institutions, you only need to look at the response to negative comments and stories about the military. And watch some of the veterans come out in relation to that. You know, even though they'll acknowledge the wrongdoing, the whole story is about the, you know, how good the military was and how good we were, and it's terrible that these, these stories are being told about the military. We just go back and look at the church and it's the same responses. Now, it's not just the leadership of those organizations that says that, it's members of those particular bodies. I don't think they understand the harm they're doing.</p> <p>There are in each institution, however, a group that do understand the harm, and there are institutional players, leaders, who absolutely know the damage they're doing in that space. But my experience has been it's generally not parents fully understanding or comprehending the damage they do. Today, you couldn't use that as an excuse. No parent in Australia today could in fact, <i>not know</i> the harm or damage they're doing to their children, if they preference the institution over those children, because we are much more knowledgeable. Would they do it? Perhaps. Would they do it without knowledge and understanding? No, I don't think so. But don't underestimate the fact that in every institution there's a small group that understand the harm that has been done, and are unrepentant for that harm that has been done.</p>
Philippa McDonald	<p>What the Royal Commission achieved was, it shocked a nation. It completely undermined the faith millions of Australians had in our most trusted institutions. It gave voice to the experience of survivors, and support and in many cases, redress. It exposed the extent of child sexual abuse in the nation's institutions. The data and the evidence that had never been seen on this scale before. It actually challenged us, in that it demonstrated, the Royal Commission demonstrated, the practices, the beliefs, and the laws of our country don't always have the best interests of children. Often they don't.</p> <p>We were telling stories about sexual abuse, accompanied by bullying and brutality, this overwhelming tendency for children not to be believed, and indeed discredited by institutions for decades to come. The children were left so powerless that so often the outcomes, they were to suffer from their abuse meant that academically they'd falter, that there would be drugs and alcohol and crime. Often, people were giving their evidence from jail, that there would be mental illness, and sometimes, or often suicide. And we told stories of those internal struggles that prevented people even in long term relationships, from not telling their partners in cases, their siblings, and that it was the Royal Commission that prompted them to come out and tell their truth for the first time in their lives. And</p>

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	<p>to talk about the impact whether it might be, you know, stints in jail or never being able to love someone never being able to trust. And it would be my hope that as distressing as all of this is, that it would prompt other people to know that they will be believed, that they can come forward, be heard. And be supported. And bring about change and shine a light on the failure, neglect and dishonesty of institutions.</p> <p>So it was a game changer. And also, it was something that we had to stick at. It was unraveling, it was unraveling over 400 days. It was, it was a reveal, because you had to peel away the layers of power. And the layers of hierarchy. And you know, with the Catholic Church it went all the way to the Vatican. It was a very, very different story where it had the human face of extreme suffering, and power, and everything in between. And these stories couldn't be told simply, in many cases, they weren't black and white. And it was very challenging as journalists to tell that story.</p> <p>Well, in one case, it was of a guy who was a Vietnam veteran, he'd served his country, but as a young defence cadet, he'd been so terribly abused. And then that trauma came back to him decades later. And that man had given so much to his country, and he'd been so let down, and he was fighting for a disability pension for his PTSD. So those stories had to be told, but there were stories like no other, they were the human experience.</p>
Robert Fitzgerald	<p>But I might say the most shocking cases that we heard were men in their 50s and 60s, where their parents haven't believed them. And that lived with them all their lives. In fact, one private session I did, the man, he was in his 50s, he went to the deathbed of his mother in hospital. And she had point blank refused to believe his story that he was abused by a priest. On her deathbed, he asked her, would she now finally acknowledge that he might have been abused, and she said, "No, I won't." And she died. That's unresolvable, it is completely unresolvable. And we found that over and over again, that where the parents fail to believe, and then didn't later on, acknowledge that, that was shocking.</p> <p>Equally, it was shocking when they went to trusted people, you know, clergy, or teachers, or mentors, who didn't believe them. But profoundly problematic is if a parent didn't believe, and then would not in the face of mounting evidence, change their position. And many parents won't. Especially those that are totally loyal to the institution, church, or school, or whatever it might be. Similarly, in the army, in the military, you can't besmirch the military. Yeah. And so, so many people live with this sort of sense of complete rejection, almost betrayal. The good news is for many, it does get resolved at some point. But for many others, it just doesn't.</p>
Felicity Blake	<p>As over 8,000 stories of survival gradually accumulated, some patterns and trends started to emerge that indicated how child abuse is enabled in certain institutional environments.</p>

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<p>Robert Fitzgerald</p>	<p>Some institutions we saw had very little evidence of sexual abuse occurring, you'd have the occasional particular teacher or what have you, who would offend, and yet we saw other institutions, including schools, where there were clusters of offending over a period of time. It's quite interesting that there was a difference between state schools and private schools. State schools, there tended to be one-off incidents of sexual abuse by a small number of teachers with a very small number of victims or survivors. In the private schools we looked at it was more likely that there would have been a number of perpetrators within the school. Perhaps at the same time. The perpetrators tended to have larger numbers of victims or survivors. And there did seem to be a culture, which was not permissive of those matters being dealt with. We found in state schools that there was more likely that a teacher would report another teacher. In private schools we found it is less likely that a teacher would report another teacher. We found in some private schools, the dominance of old boys, moreso than old girls, embedded a culture of protecting the interests of the school above all else, even in the face of mounting evidence of problems. And we found that in some institutions, the leadership of the particular institution created a culture where they were not to be told anything bad about the school. And if you did, that would be bad for your career. That was much less likely to occur, say in a government run institution. Except in relation to the early boarding schools and juvenile justice centers. Juvenile justice centers and the old boys' homes were notoriously bad for the victimization of children by many people over a sustained period of time with multiple victims.</p>
<p>Philippa McDonald</p>	<p>At the Royal Commission, one of the biggest offenders against children were clergy in the Catholic Church. A powerful, pretty much exclusively men's club. Secretive, hierarchical, punitive. And how do you foster a culture in an organization which is hell bent on not letting women in? And of course, you have nuns in some cases, there were some nuns who were offenders. But often nuns were the whistleblowers. But you look at exclusive men's clubs, like bishops' conferences, and you can have 42 men at the table, who have the power to really change things. And I think we've seen very little of that change. So we have older men, very little experience of life, in these exclusive secretive, hierarchical organizations, where they're very rarely held to account, and that their power is so great that only a decade ago, we had a very senior member of the Catholic clergy having regular dinners with the Prime Minister. And we don't see great evidence of change in the Bishops, the Archbishops right up to the Cardinals, the Vatican. We're not seeing enough women in the tent in organizations, and a lot of the evidence was that organizations were different when they were more women.</p> <p>We had evidence from very eminent people, internationally and nationally, that you couldn't have these men's clubs, with ancient laws, still holding the seat of power in institutions.</p>
<p>Robert Fitzgerald</p>	<p>In relation to the common signs or the common elements, the more closed the institution is, the more likely it is bad things will occur. The less public scrutiny, the less transparency, and less accountability to an outside authority, the much more</p>

	<p>likelihood that there would be systemic abuse taking place in that particular institution. The more there was an attitude of permissive corporal punishment or violence to young people, the more likely is there would be sexual abuse, either associated with that violence or attendant to it. The more that an institution sort of engaged people of the same type of person, the more likely you were to, I think, have problems emerge, because dissident voices and different voices were excluded. And that was particularly true in some institutions where you ended up with a staff very similar, and anyone who didn't fit that mould was exited, because they would be seen as a troublemaker, or a danger or a threat to inclusion.</p> <p>And the last point, I think, is really the failure to be able to address issues honestly and openly. To be able to talk about issues like sex, like abuse, like other sorts of things. So particularly conservative institutions were more problematic, because there was no discourse around those sorts of issues. So I think there were sort of patterns and trends, and we actually did some very substantial research on that. And there are a couple of research papers around why certain institutions are like that, that are more likely to have abuse than others. But they mimic each other. And so churches, military, those sorts of institutions have very similar patterns. And very similar sort of features to them. But if you look at, if you look in Australia, where all the big abuses occurred, it's been in closed institutions: jails, juvenile justice centres, boys' and girls' homes, conservative churches, all of them have characteristics, and it's all been what we call a closed institution. So the more closed the institution is, the less likelihood, and the less scrutiny there is from public authorities and other people, the more abuse will occur. But that can also occur in aged care or any sorts of care facility, particularly residential services. Where there is a culture of closing down, of not being transparent or not allowing visitors in, such as mental health facilities used to be, bad things will happen.</p> <p>The more open it is, the more visitors there are, the more public accountability there will be, the less likely abuse is to occur. And it just makes sense. Because this sort of abuse takes place in the dark. It takes place, you know, when the sun doesn't shine, really. Now, that's not all abuse. I mean, there are, there are abuses of young people that are almost, you know, in the public light. Particularly abuse by teachers of teenage girls and boys. Often that's well known within the school, you know, where they're, you know, there's a sort of that abuse is really where they, where they they form these friendships and they have sexual relationships. And of course, a sexual relationship or a teacher with a child of any age is abuse. It doesn't matter whether it takes place in a party environment or a, you know, a drinking session or whatever it is. It's abuse. Everyone thinks abuse is you know, an older man taking a child into a dark corner. Some of the abuse we saw in schools and others was not of that character. It was much, it was a much different type of abuse. But abuse nevertheless.</p>
Felicity Blake	Law Professor Rita Shackel:

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Rita Shackel	<p>I think what the Royal Commission did was, first it provided a safe space for male survivors to share their experiences, and their stories of abuse. I think it also provided a shared space. And I think that was important. So it brought people together and enabled people to appreciate that these experiences didn't occur in isolation. And so I think there was a collective opportunity for people to share their stories jointly. And I think there was tremendous power in doing that. So a safe, shared space. And I think the other thing that the Royal Commission did was to provide a space that validated the experiences of survivors, and made survivors feel like they were believed. And that's, I think, really, really important.</p>
Felicity Blake	<p>For survivors willing to share their stories of abuse with the Commission, there were a number of ways they could engage. Some people started by writing a letter.</p> <p>This is Sheridan, whose dad is a survivor. We heard from her in episode three about how she's walked alongside her father in his journey of healing.</p>
Sheridan	<p>I can't remember a time where I first knew that my dad was a survivor of child sexual abuse. I think he told me bits and pieces as I was growing up, and then into adulthood, and I never really knew the severity of it, until I helped him write his Royal Commission letter. And before that, I kind of just knew snippets of physical abuse and emotional abuse, it wasn't really the sexual abuse until, until maybe, like 18, or 19. And, you know, there wasn't a time where he sat me down and said, Sheridan, you know, this is what's happened to me from start to finish. Because he wouldn't have been able to do that. It's, It wasn't an isolated incident. And it was ongoing and repeated abuse. And so there was just times where it kind of came up in conversation, but was never really explored until later in life.</p> <p>During the time when I helped dad do his royal commission letter, it was massive on both of us, and it was a huge turning point as well. That was the time where I remember sitting there and really delving into it and thinking, "Wow, I didn't, didn't realize that it was like that". So, yeah, it was it was a pretty big shock to me. And I mean, there's parts in there, that even still, he didn't really go completely into. But just looking at that, and helping him do that. It was so difficult.</p> <p>I mean, never really sat down and talked about it. And that wasn't just to me, that was to anyone. And so for him to that Royal Commission letter, especially to, for him to sit down and fully write down and express everything that happened to him, and how it's made him feel and how it's impacted on his life and his relationships and impacted on the way he is as a father as well. And it was honestly it was really heartbreaking to read and to talk about some of the things. But it helped him so much. Since that time, I've seen such a massive difference and improvement in his, you know, growth and self development. It's been amazing.</p> <p>He did talk about the the impact that the abuse had on his life a lot. And, I mean, the trauma just had such profound effects on so many things in his life. Especially</p>

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	<p>the way that influenced his identity. The way he manages his emotions, handles conflict, maintains his relationships and even the things that have happened throughout his life.</p> <p>I know he wants to help people, he wants to help everyone all the time, especially people who he's met who have gone through similar trauma. He has a big heart and cares about everyone. And the way that he's coped with what happened in the past may not have been, you know, the best type of coping mechanisms. But now in this present moment, after having talked about it, and receiving support, and being open, honest about what's going on for him.</p> <p>Even though I had already helped him do the Royal Commission letter, this was probably the turning point of him letting support in and letting people help him. And knowing that there were other people out there that had experienced abuse as well. And that were there and weren't ashamed to talk about it as well.</p>
Lindsay G	<p>My name is Lindsay. I am an older Australian. I am a grandfather of six grandchildren. I have a family that I love and I'm very proud of.</p> <p>I probably forgot to mention in one of the significant events was the advent of the Royal Commission. But the Royal Commission came along. And I was attached to a group in Newcastle, other survivors of clerical abuse, who were also interested in the Royal Commission. And I wrote to the Commission, I wrote and told and wrote my story. And then a couple of weeks later, I got a phone call from someone at the Commission saying "We'd like you to come in for an interview and talk". And I really tried to downplay it, I tried to say to the person talking to me, "Look, my needs are not as great as other people's, I'm not really a great candidate for you to be looking at. I don't think that I'm your appropriate person." And fortunately, the person I spoke to, didn't allow me to get away with all that. I was trying to minimize and say, "I'm not a good person", but the person kept saying to me, "No! You're the person we want to talk to."</p> <p>So when I got to the Royal Commission, I saw Commissioner Atkinson. It was a very, again, a very cathartic event for me. It was cathartic, because his attitude towards me was very powerful. He accepted me as I was, I was really conscious that here was a man of great status, who was prepared to listen to me, and to hear my story. And what he offered me was verification that what I was telling him was of importance. Whereas in my mind, it wasn't important. It was just something that happened to me, and as a good Catholic Boy, I should just suck it up and keep my mouth closed.</p> <p>But he actually created in me an awareness of what it was that I was doing. I was getting an awareness of what I was reaching out for. And what I was reaching out for was light! Light to come into my life to reveal the parts that I didn't really want to look at. And I thought his attitude towards me was extremely compassionate. It made me feel that I had a connectedness to justice, but justice is not the word. It's</p>

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	<p>about a righteousness, about the things that happened to me weren't right, that they shouldn't have happened. But they did. But here is my chance to talk about them, and put them to a place where they don't have to cause me any more pain.</p> <p>He made me feel that there was a sense of, it's okay to get on with your life, it's okay to deal with this stuff and move on. And that you can have a better life. So it was a very powerful experience, and to be accorded that respect at that level was really... I felt a little bit overwhelmed when I left that here was such an important person who was prepared to listen to me and accord me that respect. And I felt, I felt a sense of vindication. So for me, it was a great event. And there was a turning point. Because at that turning point too, I realized that there were many of us like this, and that if we had support, we could really lead better lives.</p> <p>In my life, dignity wasn't sort of a big issue because I didn't think I had any. So it wasn't it wasn't a problem. But I saw people who I admired with dignity. They had a way of acting, that dignified their responses. They were people who were trustworthy. They were people who you could depend upon. They were people who knew how to deal with adversity. They were the people that when, when the stress was on, they were the ones that always maintained that normal course. They weren't overwhelmed and drop their basket, if you'd like. They were people of high integrity. And that's what I admired, and I saw that in the Commission, and in the Commissioners. They were, to me, were great examples of dignity. But by having the connection with them, they communicated to us that we were also dignified people, and that we could talk about the things that happened to us, because we didn't cause them.</p>
Pete R	<p>Hi, my name is Pete. I'm 61. I'd like to give you a few thoughts about the Royal Commission into institutional response to child sexual abuse and my interactions with them. I'm gonna give you a few quotes during this little talk. First one is: the past is strapped to our backs. We do not have to see it. We can always feel it. Let me go through my experience with the Royal Commission that began in 2015. A local journalist, you may have heard of her, Joanne McCarthy, wrote an article about the school teacher from a Catholic religious school in the Newcastle Herald newspaper. This was the same teacher who sexually abused me in 1975.</p> <p>After phoning her, she said, "Have you heard of SAMSN?". My answer was no. And that's where the journey begins. After finding SAMSN's website, at the time, I remember reading one particular line. And that line was, "You've got this far". Those four words have never left me.</p> <p>With the support of the eight week group, that I've completed three times, I felt that I could travel to Sydney to have a private session with the Royal Commission. Both prior and after the meeting, I was provided with the opportunity debrief. With some nice pastries thrown in! Plus subsequent email and phone calls to see how I was going. I felt totally supported along the way.</p>

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	<p>At the private session, I was asked to consider giving evidence at one of the case studies. What, me? Me?! That that 12 year old boy who was too afraid to put his hand up in class, to give a wrong answer at school is being asked to give evidence at the Royal Commission? Here comes quote, number three: "People start to heal the moment they feel heard."</p>
Felicity Blake	<p>In addition to private sessions, the Commission held 57 public hearings, which explored particular "case studies" of institutional responses. Pete considered the invitation to participate...</p>
Pete R	<p>The one question I sought clarification for - repeatedly, I might add - was the intricacies of how going under a pseudonym worked. That is, no name. I was told I could read my statement from another room with or without a video link. With just an audio link. I could get a friend to read it or I could get a person from the court to read it. The possibilities were as endless as the varieties of ice cream. It was all up to me.</p> <p>But, and this is the but: I found I didn't need to make that decision. On day two, I decided I would take to the stand. Yep, in full view. And yep, under my real name. I took to the stand at the Royal Commission with the help of SAMSN.</p> <p>To this day, I really don't know where that decision came from. The only real understanding is due to SAMSN. That 12 year old frightened boy too scared to put his hand up in class had been transformed into a 57 year old man who was willing to talk about the sexual abuse he experienced at the hands of a teacher. SAMSN had given me the skills to speak out. And it continues to this day.</p> <p>Yep, I'm sorry, you're gonna have to put up with a final quote and this is the last one. "In an aircraft emergency, if you don't fit your own mask first, you are of no help to others."</p> <p>So in conclusion, with assistance, you'll know when it's time to speak up, talk up, to stand up. With help, and most importantly, looking at yourself along the way, helping yourself, putting that mask on, you'll look down - like I do on that 12 year old boy - and you'll be able to tell him he'll finally make it, and all will be OK.</p>
Felicity Blake	<p>Journalist, Philippa McDonald:</p>
Philippa McDonald	<p>Look, there were many occasions where you'd be outside the Royal Commission in Farrar Place, and you'd just have to put on your sunglasses because you'd shed a tear. And there was the 85 year old man, a father of a boy who endured shocking abuse. This man had taken his son, his youngest son to be looked after by some Catholic brothers. Because his wife, the little boy's mother was dying of cancer and they had a big family and he just couldn't cope. And those Catholic brothers who were later revealed to really be a pedophile ring, like almost half the brothers were child sexual abusers, criminals. The brothers promised they'd care</p>

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	<p>for him and love this little boy like their own. And that little boy, within the first fortnight of being in that boys' home that Catholic boys home, was repeatedly sexually abused. And decades later, he was in jail. And... and the grief of that man, and his sense of guilt about having put his little boy in the hands of Catholic brothers, and having faith that they would do the right thing and help the family. The grief was horrendous. And the impact on that man's life, that boy who became a man's life, and the hurt he suffered, and the hurt that he actually caused, in others, which resulted him going to jail was huge.</p> <p>And that 85 year old father could have been any of our fathers. And that boy, who was so let down, so betrayed, so hurt by the people who were supposed to love and care for him, was so huge. And that boy could have been our brother could have been our cousin. Could be anyone because what this Royal Commission exposed was, that it was someone's brother, it was someone's cousin. It was someone, it could have been you, so prevalent was the child sexual abuse in the nation's institutions.</p> <p>Another one that stayed with me was the distress and the vulnerability of a number of Vietnam veterans who gave evidence who had been defence cadets and who were sexually abused yet then had to fight for everything they got to compensate for the injuries they suffered.</p> <p>There was the YMCA case of a childcarer, 26, there'd never been any checks, to see whether there'd been a working with children check. That this childcarer had won the trust of single mothers and had looked after their children. And he'd gained the trust of those women. And he abused their children, these little, little boys. And and what we saw was, nothing was historic, there might have been something with the 85 year old father of the boy in the Hunter Valley, that might have been 50 years ago, Vietnam veterans 40 years ago, or 50 years ago, the YMCA case, six years ago. So no one can say that it's not still happening, that it's historic, or that was the past. This is the present. And we've got to face it.</p>
Felicity Blake	<p>Since 1902, Australia has had over a hundred Royal Commissions into lots of different issues. This particular one was number 131. They can sometimes be met with cynicism from the public because the recommendations based on their findings aren't always actioned by the government of the day. But this Royal Commission seems to be different: changes are happening.</p>
Philippa McDonald	<p>One of the things having covered Royal Commissions before, you worry that nothing will change. It'll be yet another thousands of pages of a report gathering dust on a shelf. And it was my great wish that the tenacity of the survivors, their grief, and the relief at telling their stories that they would not be let down again. And it's wonderful to know that so many of the recommendations are being followed up. That slowly people are getting justice, but in the courts and the justice system, we've got such a long way to go. And I'd like us never to talk about historic crimes, they're just crimes. And the punishment has to be handed out like those crimes were five years ago, not 30 years ago. And there's great legislative change that has to happen. And there is huge change that needs to</p>

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	<p>happen within some of the institutions, particularly the ancient institutions, and religious organizations that have been slow to come to grips and to acknowledge their failures and the hurt they've caused. So change is happening.</p> <p>The National working with children's check is absolutely fundamental. If the states and territories can't come together on something like this, particularly with the experience of COVID-19, then we've just got to throw our hands up and think what the hell. The impact of this is huge. I mean, we all know of child sexual abusers, taking refuge in another state and being employed. And to think that these basic loopholes have not been, have not been addressed. It's archaic. It's careless. It's reckless. And without addressing it, you stand to create further harm.</p> <p>It is one of the most successful Royal Commissions in terms of funding for support, in terms of measures being taken to make sure institutions dealing with children are better and more accountable, and more transparent. And it means that no one trusts without asking questions, no one trusts their children in people's care just because they believe in a particular religion, or it suits them. People are really looking at what safeguards there are to protect children. And, and I'm glad that the Royal Commission published so many of the accounts of survivors to show that they were heard, they had their day in court, albeit for a Royal Commission. They were heard, they were believed, and they've brought about change.</p> <p>It resulted in changes to policies to laws to procedures, that boosted services, and support for survivors. And I think it did change attitudes. Survivors were believed. And I do hope that it had some impact that it's not something to be shameful of. The apology from the Prime Minister on the floor of parliament was hugely powerful. That was a key recommendation of the Royal Commission. And I'll never forget thousands of people coming together. And that acknowledgement of their suffering. And those people, those survivors, those thousands of survivors were thanked. And that was really important, was monumental, because they dug deep, and it was the contribution of the thousands of survivors, if they had not come forward, this Royal Commission would never have been a success.</p>
Felicity Blake	<p>The Royal Commission recommended numerous changes to our criminal justice system. For example, it's often the case that a perpetrator with multiple victims can have separate trials for each victim. Each trial has a different jury that doesn't know about the other victims.</p> <p>Judy Cashmore:</p>
Judy Cashmore	<p>And also some of the issues that the Royal Commission has, is made recommendations about, separate trials, and so on, when you've got a number of victims, a number of survivors who've gone through the same experience, but they all have to tell their stories to separate juries to separate judges in separate trials, and it destroys the overall understanding of how this all came about. And it</p>

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	<p>means, it makes it, it's all segregated, it doesn't come together as a coherent story. And they can't see, the juror or the factfinder, can't see the overall pattern of what happened in the other cases, they know nothing about it. And you can't know about the previous convictions or other charges that are before, before the courts in other cases. So that makes it really difficult.</p>
Felicity Blake	<p>If you haven't yet listened to our episode on the criminal justice system, you can hear more about these issues in our two-part special, 'Better Get a Lawyer, Son'.</p>
Robert Fitzgerald	<p>I think the Royal Commission into sexual abuse in institutions, or, more accurately the response of institutions to sexual abuse has a number of unique features to it, which means that it not only isn't gathering dust, but will continue to be relevant for some time to come. We were really conscious during the Royal Commission that the only way we were going to get the buy-in of victims and survivors and the Australian community more generally, was if they saw action during the life of the Royal Commission. So right through those five years, we saw a number of significant changes taking place within institutions themselves, within certain sectors, such as the early childhood development sector, and by numerous state and territory governments. So right through the life of the Royal Commission, we were seeing change, legislative change, systemic change, organizational change. And we saw also the empowerment of advocacy groups and groups that were working with victims and survivors.</p> <p>The second thing is we put in place a number of key recommendations, which will ensure that in fact, institutions couldn't drift backwards. Now, they're not very well known. But reportable conduct regimes where incidents need to be reported is a way that you absolutely get an insight into organizations going forward. A number of the key recommendations around changes to civil and criminal laws are being enacted by state and territory governments. And most importantly, we are seeing the introduction of what we call minimum child safe standards. So it's an unusual Royal Commission. Because we've seen change, we've seen change, and we'll continue to see it.</p> <p>One's got to be very careful about trying to push change too quickly, the greatest challenge going forward, in relation to change, is going to be long lasting cultural change within institutions and society generally. So we are going to see legislative change. We are going to see changes in the way criminal matters are dealt with. We are going to see institutional change in the way in which minimum child safe standards are applied.</p> <p>But the biggest challenge for institutions, for organizations generally, but for the society, is a real change in attitudes. And largely, it's about the changing attitudes of men towards the issue of sexual abuse, more generally, not just in institutions, but generally, and secondly, a willingness by people to come forward when they see things that don't appear to be right. And those two things are quite difficult.</p>

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Rob Carlton	<p>A key element to supporting change and preventing future assaults is acknowledging that over 90% of the perpetrators of reported child sex assaults are males. This means that the community needs men to participate in the solution.</p>
Robert Fitzgerald	<p>Changing the way in which men relate to these sorts of issues, the way in which institutions encourage men to relate to these issues is going to be a long-term objective. And the other part about getting all of the society to be responsive when they see things that aren't quite right, is going to also be a long term endeavor. So those two things are going to take time.</p> <p>In relation to men's conduct, I think we can make one assumption, and that is that men fundamentally haven't changed over the last few decades. And we know that because of the high level of sexual assault that takes place within the home, in the family, we've made no inroads at all, no inroads at all, in reducing the level of sexual abuse of children in their own families and homes, and over 90% of all perpetrators are males.</p> <p>Conversely, in institutions, we've seen a reduction, we've seen a reduction in the incidence of, certainly reported, sexual assault in institutions. Now what's changed? My view is it's not men, men have not changed. And there are no less men out there that would perpetrate this abuse on children than they were 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 years ago.</p> <p>What's changed in institutions is the environment that changes behaviors. In other words, all of the work that we've done on trying to create child safe institutions has an effect, it reduces opportunity, it increases the risk of being reported. It encourages and empowers children to speak up. It encourages others to be more attentive to those sides in that institution.</p> <p>But when you come to the family, those sorts of things are not there. So in the family, we haven't actually changed attitudes. But more importantly, we haven't actually changed behaviors.</p> <p>And so the great challenge for Australia is going to be to say, how do we gradually start to change the way in which men think and perceive these sorts of issues as well as changing their behaviors? And that's the great challenge. And until we see a reduction in the level of child sexual abuse within the family home, we know that we won't have made a difference in terms of the overall attitude of potential perpetrators. And that's an enormous challenge for society.</p> <p>In relation to the raising of children today, I think parents and educators generally do understand that it's part of our role and their role, to try to build the resilience of children. To build, to build and empower children to be able to deal with the potential difficulties and risks. And so in a sense we are and we have started down that track a lot, in terms of trying to educate children. We start to talk about</p>

sex in a different way, we start to talk about inappropriate and appropriate behaviors, we start to encourage people to disclose. And children today are more likely to talk and discuss and disclose than they were in the past, but not all children. And in not all circumstances is it safe to do so.

Our education system is very much geared to age-appropriate education of children in a way that didn't exist in my day at all. And it's important to build resistance within the child, because the very last line of defense against an attack is in fact, the child. You know, a person that's going to perpetrate has to overcome a number of barriers. They have to overcome their own moral conceptions that this is wrong. They have to overcome the opportunistic barriers, how am I going to do this? How am I going to find a spot where I can do this? They've actually got to overcome the child's resistance to it, at the end. And so it's not the child's fault that they get abused. But if you can build that resistance, you give their child a little bit of armor, a little bit of ammunition.

The second thing is, and it's absolutely critical now, is parents believe their children. So when the children say that something's not quite right, the guy down the road is a bit weird. You've probably got to be attentive to it. Does that mean, you rush off and report it to the police, or to the child protection authorities? No, not necessarily. But you have to, the first thing is to believe what the children are saying. And if there starts to be a pattern in those statements, or a genuine concern, or a change in the way in which the child's behaving, then you've got to go and seek assistance. Ring up the line, the child protection line, talk to people about this issue, you don't have to be certain that something's happening, you don't have to jump to the conclusion that yes, your child is, has been abused or is at risk of abuse. But if you're in doubt, talk to people that know. And that's critically important. Now, previously, nobody would talk to anybody. I would think today, most parents are willing to have those conversations.

The danger is that some parents are jumping to extraordinary conclusions, particularly in relation to early childhood development, childcare centers, you know, you keep hearing another five year old sexually abused my son, that is very unlikely to have occurred, but something might be going wrong. We've got others that, you know, are too quick, to make judgments about certain types of men, you know, if they're a cleric, or they're this then they've got a propensity to abuse, that's not true. So we've got to avoid jumping to conclusions. But all that aside, I'd rather you jump to a conclusion and act, than to be indifferent to what a child or a young person is saying. Because that's the worst. So even if you get it wrong, it's better to have at least acted.

The other thing too, I think long term, is I look back on the people that I've spoken to, they respect and value what their parents did. They look back and say at least Mum cared, at least Dad did something, you know, he went up to the school when he said something. And that is important. You've got to look back and say these people who cared for me and loved me actually did something. They might have

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	<p>got it wrong. But you know, that matters, that matters. And I had a couple of private sessions where the whole family was there. There was a private session with the husband and wife, the two children had been abused in primary school by the primary school principal. In the room, the boy, one boy was 15 and one boy was 12. So these were very recent events. So, you know, we saw how families interact in relation to this. So my view is listen, and be prepared to believe. I think that's a big step in Australian parenthood, as we go forward. It's a big change, big change.</p>
Felicity Blake	<p>One of the most significant outcomes arising from the Royal Commission's recommendations was the National Redress Scheme. The scheme acknowledges that many children were sexually abused in Australian institutions; holds institutions accountable for this abuse; and helps people who experienced institutional child sexual abuse gain access to three main outcomes: counselling and psychological services, a direct personal response from the institution at fault, and a monetary redress payment. We'll explore the National Redress Scheme, and how it's accessed, in Episode 7.</p> <p>In closing, here's journalist Philippa McDonald:</p>
Philippa McDonald	<p>One of the big achievements was giving voice to thousands of people who had never been heard. And really showing how people in authority who could have made a difference, were intent on holding on to power and protecting their reputation and that of their institutions that they failed children.</p> <p>So the Royal Commission was five years of my life. And it was huge. And as journalists, we felt the weight of that responsibility.</p> <p>On the final day of the hearing, there was a significant gathering outside the Royal Commission building. And I think that building was a strong statement, too. It was the big end of town, you're coming to the big end of town, the government and financial heart of Sydney, and you're telling your story there. And that was important. But as hundreds gathered, there was that incredible mixture of grief and relief. And people were kind of joyous and they were crying that the Royal Commission had happened. And it had ended in a ceremonious way, ceremonial way, and that they were awaiting the recommendation. And they put so much hope that things would change for the better. And I was struck by that emotion and actually felt a sense of quiet desperation that it took until recently for a Royal Commission to expose the extent and scale of the crimes against children. And that I as a journalist over, you know, at that time 25 years, I tried to tell some of those stories 20 years beforehand, I'd always been fobbed off. And I felt that I'd been naive. And, and that so had the nation. And then, of course, people had been criminal in hiding these crimes, and making sure that reputations of institutions were protected. And that children were not given the same value, respect and love that they should have been.</p> <p>I think that the Royal Commission showed the impact on every aspect of society. And whether it be in the health system, schools, organizations dealing with</p>

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	<p>children. And while we've got a long way to go, I think it was a huge watershed. And it meant a lot to hundreds of thousands of people. And it changed, it gave us a healthy, healthy disrespect for the leaders of our institutions. And huge admiration for the survivors who came forward to tell the truth of what happened to them in the hope and the belief that the world might change. And I think Australia is a better place for that Royal Commission.</p>
Closing Credits	
Rob Carlton	<p>SAMSN is the only specialist charity in Australia dedicated to helping all male survivors of child sexual abuse and their families.</p> <p>Each year, SAMSN provides free services to hundreds of male survivors and their supporters.</p> <p>SAMSN believes that male survivors of child sexual abuse can recover and thrive.</p> <p>Help him believe.</p> <p>Donate today. Visit: samsn.org.au (that's s-a-m-s-n).org.au</p> <p>Remember to rate and share this online, because it helps others - especially survivors - to find it.</p>
Felicity Blake	<p>STRONGER was created for Survivors and Mates Support Network entirely remotely during the pandemic of 2020 and 21. It was produced and directed by me, Felicity Blake of The Dove Media, with Julie Blyth of SAMSN. Our Executive Producer is Craig Hughes-Cashmore. Interview help from Les Spencer and Shane Greentree. Audio editing by Dion Brooks. Transcript assistance from Dr Anna Kamaralli and Melanie Teychenne-King. A big "thank you" to our co-host and SAMSN Ambassador, Rob Carlton.</p> <p>Very special thanks to all 32 of our participants; your insights make others STRONGER.</p>
ENDS	