

## John's main points for the redress committee

The issues I'd like to discuss with you today are;

Paying our counsellors each week.

Financial redress for survivors up to \$150,000 & the difficulties accessing this support.

Support to cover out of pocket medications not on the PBS.

PTSD or assistance dogs.

- Thank you for allowing me to talk to you all today. May i please start with?
- The amount your offering to pay our private psychiatrist is way below the minimum recommended rate by the AMA for psychiatrist & is unworkable for my consulting psychiatrist who i see weekly & is already giving me a huge discount. So we simply can't claim any support here at all. I'm fortunate that my counselling Dr who i see twice weekly kindly chooses to give me a huge discount as she knows otherwise I couldn't afford the counselling that i need.
- Have you considered our out of pocket expenses for multiple medications not yet on the PBS to help reduce the intensity of our nightmares for instance?
- Huge issues for other survivors (we have received some compensation from the Catholic Church) although we've been made to sign a non disclosure document preventing us from telling anyone what we received. Yet as my wife would tell you I haven't worked for 16yrs now & the amount we were paid didn't even equate to 3 yrs salary as an RN. So you can choose whether you think that's adequate or not? So we wouldn't be able to make this claim. However other survivors wanting to put in for financial redress face three questions to start with Who was the perpetrator: When did the offence occur & where did the offence occur. They shouldn't be expected to suffer being re traumatised when you should be able to obtain this information from other legal sources they most likely have already had to go through such as police statements. I ask can any of you recall an incident from your childhood where you've been bullied or traumatised & tell me the date: time; location Name of perpetrator? I put it to you any trauma trained counsellors will tell you a traumatic brain can't process complex answers to these sort of questions as they have to relive the trauma so our brain has major difficulties accessing this information.
- Have you considered the possibility of helping pay for assistance or PTSD dogs for us? My mobility specialist from guide dogs has looked into one that can also be trained as a guide dog for me & many companies would give me one tomorrow but the government won't recognise our form of PTSD & therefore we can't get the access government permits for the dog to go into hospital with us etc. Therefore we can't have a very valuable assistance dog to help us on a daily basis. I am so grateful to have the help i am receiving but of course would also greatly appreciate a little more that relates to & recognises my complex PTSD for up till now the government isn't giving us any support at all in relation to my PTSD it doesn't even recognise our PTSD as a disability yet recognises veterans PTSD. If you have the time please read more details from the statement I've tabled as hopefully it will give you a clearer picture of some of the difficulties we face day to day & more detail around these issues. It is a 2 page document.
- Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony & for all the assistance your trying to provide but we are as i said very complex people with very complex needs & i apologise if we may give you the impression we are ungrateful & don't appreciate that you are trying to help. So Thank you for all that we see you doing & all that we don't.
- I once told (my in hospital psychiatrist) PTSD is a bit like going for a continuous ride on a roller coaster. You enjoy the view on the way up when your moods are going OK & reasonably stable. Then you hold on & scream out to whoever will listen on the way down. We both had a little chuckle & she asked what was today up or down? All my Dr's have have been a huge help getting me through giving evidence to police & at the Royal Commission & at many other times when I'm in crisis. My GP has an interest in sexual & mental health so I'm also grateful for her support & understanding.
- I also get lots of support from Guide Dogs NSW & i can't thank them enough for the help & understanding they provide. Especially their social worker who really gets my PTSD & has to arrange only female support staff to work with me due to my constant fear of men. Especially when I'm highly vigilant or stressed. Even then at times we may have to go straight home as someone's voice in the community has reminded me of one of my perpetrators.
- I am grateful to many people who provide us with one form of support or another such as you people here today & Sharon Claydon for offering & supporting me when I'm not even a member of her constituency. Sharon told me she would support me due to my fear of men as my federal MP is male & as she is a member of the redress committee. I've tried to thank many others who give us much appreciated support in the document I've tabled before you so please take the time to note their commitment.

Please take the time at your convenience to read the following document that affirms my statement today? I've also included a supporting letter from my consulting psychiatrist (Dr L ) who has given me this letter that I can use at anytime where I feel the need to explain my PTSD. It is written to Dr R however Dr L said I can use this letter till she has time to write me a general letter. It gives you the point of view from a professional sexual health trauma psychiatrist who has spent 6 yrs getting to know me.

- Thank you for allowing me to talk to you all today & setting aside the time to listen to my testimony.
- The following are some issues of concern for myself that relate to myself & my fellow survivors.
- Payment for counselling is far too inadequate to cover our psychiatrist fees which in my case are already far below the recommended fees set by the AMA & Dr L doesn't charge me for any supporting letters I need from her. So we pay \$350 depending on how much time Dr L has to spend with me each week. Dr L is very kind & generous with the time she spends with me.
- Initially only part of this payment is covered by Medicare till we reach the threshold. Once we reach the threshold we are still significantly out of pocket each week. Before the threshold we're out of pocket \$193.85 each week until I hit the Medicare limit & \$26 per week with Dr J till we reach the Medicare limit.
- My out of pocket expenses with Dr L for the year amount to \$1683.
- Dr J (who I see twice weekly) has told me she only charges me one of each note to make it easier to find in my wallet with low vision & as Dr J has said to me "I only charge \$85 as she knows otherwise I couldn't afford the counselling that in her medical opinion I seriously need. Again we're out of pocket at the beginning of the year until we reach the threshold & I'm so grateful to have great supporting Dr's on board. My GP has to constantly find female specialist with female Anaesthetist when requiring any medical assistance from a surgeon as I get older (which we're all doing). Fortunately so far I've been again lucky to have great understanding people on board such as my orthopaedic specialist who was all over my PTSD when I had my knee replacement in April & my female Dr who helps when I need my neck surgery every 9 months. You may say it's a huge ask for the government to cover Dr L's payment each week & yes it's also a huge amount for a family to find when my wife works part time & I'm on disability pension. Not to mention this was a recommendation of the Royal Commission & I believe I heard both Scott Morrison & Bill Shorton say during the apology reading that 'we can't put a cap on this we need to cover whatever it costs.' Even if you feel the government can't afford to pay \$385 each week then perhaps you could look at least covering our out of pocket expenses each week & leave the rest to Medicare which I recognise is still government but comes out of a different bucket of money. Being a retired social worker & RN not to mention NDIS recipient I'm reasonably acquainted with how you can take money from one bucket but not from another that is funded differently.
- I'm just wondering have you people from the redress committee looked into our out of pocket expenses for expensive medications not on the PBS of which some of us are on many? \$130/mth - \$230/mth
- In regards to applying for financial redress when I went on line to apply I read the 1st three questions then instantly had lots of pieces of jigsaw puzzles flying at me & believe me these weren't by any means pretty jigsaw pieces at all so I broke down in tears I gave up till I saw Dr L & told her I can't fill in this form. They won't know The Name of the Perpetrator, The date of the offence & Where did the offence occur. Then I found out we're not entitled to this part of the redress scheme.
- In support of other survivors I'd still like to make the point. Like many other survivors I've had multiple perpetrators from age 9 over two decades in many locations at many times of the day so how is any survivor suppose to fill this in with pieces of lots of jigsaw puzzles going through their head like a freight train? I ask you can you recall the day time & location when you may have been bullied, or suffered some form of trauma in life yourself as a child? I ask you rather than re-traumatising us if we've had court hearings, convictions via either the courts, Civil action via the courts or ombudsman inquiries where police & many other forms of evidence has been taken why not ask us to sign a permission note to attain your evidence from one of these sources rather than put us through more trauma trying to think back 30 - 40 or more years & give you specific dates, times & locations that are near impossible to give?
- I'm aware this isn't related to the redress scheme however as government officials I'd like you to be aware how frustrating it is for my wife & I when we're getting no government assistance from any government service in relation to my PTSD from childhood sexual assault by multiple perpetrators. We've also received nothing from victims of crime compensation. Which we were of the understanding by our solicitors & Detective & our counsellors we would be entitled to the full original \$50,000. Sharon is trying to help here but so far with no results.
- Has anyone asked you the question yet about us being entitled to a PTSD or assistance dog? My Mobility Specialist from guide dogs looked into getting one for me that could have further training to work as a guide dog as my vision deteriorates. B told me there were plenty of services that train these dogs

who would give me a dog tomorrow after B explained my PTSD to them. The problem is our government doesn't recognise our complex PTSD & won't provide the training, on going costs & permits for the dogs to go into hospital when were there for weeks on end or restaurants, national parks etc. We therefore can't accept a dog without these government issued permits as when these dogs are trained to live with us they literally have to live with us every day of our lives. If we left the dog behind the dog feels as though it has failed & doesn't understand it's done nothing wrong either. So who takes care of the dog & how do I cope when I'm admitted for weeks on end in Lake Side Clinic (psych unit)? I have severe nightmares every night throughout the night & end up most nights 'sleeping on the couch down stairs with all the lights on to help reduce my anxiety as otherwise my wife wouldn't get any sleep either. When i wake up several times during the night I'm frightened I've left the front door open & one of my monsters is in the house. The Dog is trained to sleep beside you & recognises when we have nightmares or low moods we give of different hormones that the dog can pick up on then will stay by your side or grab it's lead to suggest we go for a walk & when where frightened we can simply say "search" & the dog will search the house for anyone not meant to be there so we can at least feel a little safer & perhaps get a little more sleep. These are just a couple of examples of how the dogs can be trained. In my case they can train the dog to stand or walk between myself & any males nearby so protecting my personal space & perhaps reducing some of my anxiety.

- Again my PTSD isn't a recognised disability through NDIS or by this government. It's great the government recognise the need for PTSD dogs for veterans who trainers have told me are more urgently in need as 'they have served their country & have a high suicide rate & partly as they have many means to their disposal for taking their own lives'. While i don't mean to diminish what Veterans have gone through however we didn't volunteer to be raped as children. Survivors have one of the highest suicide rates in the world. As a retired RN i too have many means at my disposal for taking my own life.
- Again I'm aware this isn't redress related but still another government stuff up for us. Even recently the Catholic Church was put in charge of managing my NDIS plan which has now been sorted, i think? a plan for which I'm very grateful to have or i wouldn't be able to continue putting on music concerts for the residents in the retirement village where i play a number of different instruments for them over a couple of hours of music therapy. Or I'd be spending 7 hrs each time on buses to travel to & from my psychiatrist & Dr J my counselling Dr 3 times per week.
- I can't feel safe catching taxis as i was regularly molested by a taxi driver who drove me home from the special school i went to in primary & secondary school. As it so happens Detective & team have charged another one of my monsters this year. I will be forever grateful also to her team who have & continue to support me. Another court case for me in the back of my mind.
- Of course while we're handing out accolades I'll also be eternally grateful to Julia Gillard, Joanne McCarthy & now Sharon Claydon for taking me on board. Not to mention our late friend Helen Keavers (who gave up her job to protect me when told her to destroy documents relating to me & ), Of course Maureen O'Hearn & her team who continue to follow in Helen's foot steps. (a social worker who continued to provide support to me twice weekly for years which was way beyond her duties), & their team from CAN who work tirelessly providing many years of ongoing support. Some of the few men I've learnt to trust over the years, (mostly because they are respectful around my PTSD touching issues & of course fully understand my PTSD) & of course my wife who lives it all everyday, day after day who without her I wouldn't be here. Also for my many other friends who support me.
- I would also like to thank Guide Dogs NSW for all the help they provide almost daily. Their staff are all awesome. I can't thank them enough. Dolliena who provide staff for various supports each week through NDIS. Their staff have been so helpful each week.
- We go through hell every day & will continue to do so for the rest of our lives, often suicidal.
- I once told Dr P (my in hospital psychiatrist) PTSD is a bit like going for a continuous ride on a roller coaster. You enjoy the view on the way up when your moods are going OK & reasonably stable .Then you hold on & scream out to whoever will listen on the way down. We both had a little chuckle & she asked,' what was today up or down?'
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