

AUSTRALIAN LAW REFORM COMMISSION

JUSTICE RESPONSES TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE

QUESTION 1

When I realised that I had probably been raped in 2013, I went directly to the local police station. A police officer interviewed me briefly and said she would refer it to the SOCIT team of the area. A SOCIT detective called me and made an appointment to attend and speak to her. I did attend within the following two weeks. I had an initial interview where I gave the general details of the assault. I then made an appointment for a further interview to be had over several days to make a detailed report.

I had reported a sexual assault in 1994 and I was clear about the process of engaging with the SOCIT team. In this instance, it involved me attending the SOCIT office. The previous report of 1994 was made in my own home [REDACTED].

I do not remember being told of supports. I was seeing a psychologist at the time of the 2013 report. I found it hard to go to the SOCIT office. I was emotionally fragile and the office felt very formal. I felt under pressure to remember everything. My memory was triggered with a flashback whilst giving my evidence which was extremely emotional, painful and stressful. I was not encouraged to bring a support person with me. That would have made a difference.

QUESTION 2

I was not aware of any reforms in reporting practice.

QUESTION 3

I would have been easier for me to report the assault in my own home where I felt safe in a familiar environment. I would have preferred to speak to a detective on the phone at home to prepare for the interview. To be given the information of what the process is and how I can prepare.

QUESTION 4

The SOCIT team could send an information to prospective victims to prepare for the interview. A suggestion of a support person would have been helpful for me.

QUESTION 6

Not aware of any reforms.

QUESTION 7

It would have helped to be able to have breaks for walks and food. It may be difficult because you are constrained within the confines of the police premises. The police officer was reacting to my emotional distress and this at one time lead to confusing discussions. I had not fully taken in the seriousness of the assault (I almost lost my life) and was not understanding of this. Some of my comments were just fantasy. The incident was covered up by people who inially assisted me after the assault. I had not fully realised this at the time. This made me look like I was vacillating about whether an assault happened or not. I only really remembered the full assault seven years after the incident after months of mental disturbance. I only reported on in 2013 what I experienced then. I later sought to amend the 2013 report in 2020 with these memories but I was refused by the police. The report to police was never completed therefore never assessed for potential charges by the DPP.

QUESTION 8

I had no contact with the DPP. The SOCIT team assessed the 2013 report along with the "information" I gave in 2020 as to be insufficient evidence for charges to be laid.

QUESTION 52

I have applied for crimes compensation on three occasions, in 1999, 2015 and 2023. I found the experience to be emotionally demanding on one hand and yet, fulfilling on the other. The process of remembering the abuse triggered by telling the story and gathering evidence was difficult and disruptive to my day to day life. But, the act of speaking out about the assault and taking legal action was an act of self validation. It was fulfilling in my need to stand up and take action to receive some acknowledgement from the state of the suffering and be counted as a victim-survivor.

QUESTION 53

I found the process to be sufficient and accessible with most processes available online via the internet. I would prefer to have the whole legal action to take place in a shorter time frame of a few months and, not a year as it is currently . It is exhausting not knowing when the case will be heard.

