



Episode 2: Narelda Jacobs

Transcript

Narelda Jacobs

I hope that by 2050, both men, women, non-binary folks, you know, gender-fluid folks will see, uh, who the best person to do things are and just allow them to do it.

Female voiceover

Welcome to Voices Towards 2050: Ending Gender-Based Violence, the official podcast series of the Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence Commission. Hosted by Commissioner Micaela Cronin, the series brings together people from the frontline sector, advocates, people with their own lived experience, and other prominent voices who share their vision for a future free from violence. Please be aware that this podcast discusses topics related to domestic, family, and sexual violence, which may be distressing for some listeners. Support is available. If you need assistance, please contact 1800RESPECT or reach out to your local support services. Thank you for joining us.

Micaela Cronin

So, I want to welcome a very special guest on the podcast. Thanks for joining me, Narelda Jacobs.

Narelda Jacobs

Micaela Cronin, the tables have turned. [laughs]

Micaela Cronin

[laughs] It's fantastic to have a chance to be on the other end- other side of the table.

Narelda Jacobs

[laughs] I think, um... I mean, I'm on parental leave at the moment, but in my time at 10 Years First Lunchtime, you were the most... I think you were my most interviewed talent.

Micaela Cronin

Oh, really? That's-

Narelda Jacobs

Yes, which I'm very proud of. I'm so proud of that. Yeah.

Micaela Cronin

Oh, well, thank you. I'm very proud of it, and I- and I always felt very welcomed and relaxed speaking to you, so I appreciate it.

Narelda Jacobs

Oh, good. Oh, good. I mean, 'cause it's such a huge topic, isn't it? There's so many different elements and, um... Yes, so I'm hoping to get to some of those today with you.

Micaela Cronin

Excellent. Thank you. I'm looking forward to the conversation. I wanna start first by very joyfully acknowledging that I'm on the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation and pay my deep respects to the elders, past and present, for their care of these lands and incredible generosity in the face of great difficulty, r- racism, both individually and systemically, and the wisdom that all that we have to learn, um, from those communities. And my com- my personal commitment is both in this role and in my life to be an ally always. There are a number of reasons that I wanted to start with you, Narelda, as the first guest on the



podcast. Firstly, because you are experienced in how to do these things, and I'm- I'm leaning on you to help me-

Narelda Jacobs

[laughs]

Micaela Cronin

... with this conversation. And you have, as we've already alluded to, been a great friend to me in the commission since I started in the role. You're a smart, intelligent, and fierce advocate, both for First Nations people and communities and LGBTQA+ communities. You have spoken really powerfully about issues of domestic, family, and sexual violence, and you've been a really strong, well-informed, and clear voice in the media, which is so critical in this- in this space.

Narelda Jacobs

Oh, wow. Thank you so much. I appreciate that. It just seems obvious to me, the things that I've done. It just seems obvious to me, so it's I- it's nice to get that recognition. Thank you.

Micaela Cronin

Yeah. Well, I have always felt very relaxed speaking to you because I know they will be wise, well-informed questions and that you are trying to profile, um, issues in a way that is both educative for the community but also helps keep the profile and move the dial along. So, I-

Narelda Jacobs

Mm-hmm

Micaela Cronin

... I really appreciate the efforts you've made.

Narelda Jacobs

Thank you.

Micaela Cronin

One of the other really important reasons I wanted to talk to you, though, is the wonderful news that you and your wife, Karina-

Narelda Jacobs

[laughs] Yes

Micaela Cronin

... have had a baby this year. And in thinking about the future, right? So, you've had a baby in 2025. So-

Narelda Jacobs

Yeah

Micaela Cronin

... in 2025, Sana will be 25 in 2050, in one generation.

Narelda Jacobs

Yeah. Yeah.

Micaela Cronin

So- so that perspective, really, I want to bring to this conversation about what is it you want for both of your daughters and for all Australians in 2050.



Narelda Jacobs

Yeah. Look, I- I... You would just want everyone to be free to be themselves, you know, and- and whatever- whatever you're led to- to do in your life. You know, that's- that's surely what we should all want for each other, to be free to be ourselves. You know, I- I... If you look around at all the women that you know, we're- we're surrounded by natural leaders that might not necessarily be recognised as such or in leadership roles.

Micaela Cronin

Mm-hmm.

Narelda Jacobs

I mean, some of them will be in unpaid leadership roles in their home or in their sporting club, in their school community. And it's because a lot of the women around us have i- initiative. They see things that need doing, and they just get in there and do it.

Micaela Cronin

Mm-hmm.

Narelda Jacobs

Um, and they... And often they don't wait to be told to do it, they just do it. So, I- I would like to see, um, some of the obstacles that are in the way of women from being able to do that now removed by 2050, so they can just go and do it. They can just be free to be themselves.

Micaela Cronin

Yeah. That's really powerful, Narelda, and I- I absolutely agree. I think that not even seeing diversity as a thing, but that people are who they are, um, and that we treasure and value- value that is- is central. What- what do you... What is your vision for 2050? What do you think... If we've been successful, right? If the national commitment that we have to end gender-based violence in a generation has been successful- what does 2050 look like?

Narelda Jacobs

Well, I think we will see, um, more women in leadership roles. I mean, positions will be given still on merit. It will just so happen that women are the best for the job. [laughs] Uh, so, I- I truly believe that we'll have more women running things, you know, and that- that might be in partnership with, um, with men, um, or it might be, you know, being the boss of men. And I- I think men will be happy with that... they will accept that that's, that that's the best way forward and that is th- the best option available. Um, and I think that's probably going to be the biggest thing is that, um, I think we, we won't see gendered roles anymore-

Micaela Cronin

Yes.

Narelda Jacobs

... uh, and everyone will accept that because it's not just, um... You know, w- when we talk about a male fragile, a fragile male ego, it's, it's not just the male ego, it's how women see themselves as well. So, I hope that by 2050, both men, women, non-binary folks, you know, genderfluid folks will see who the best person to do things are and just allow them to do it. Yeah, I guess that's my hope. That's my real hope, is that, you know, women will just be, like I said, free to be themselves, um, and, and live into, you know, their pu- their full potential, uh, without obstacles.

Micaela Cronin

Yeah, and celebrated for that. I, I-

Narelda Jacobs

And celebrated. Mm-hmm.



Micaela Cronin

I absolutely agree. I think that's a fundamental change that needs to happen. We don't, we don't talk... The way we, the, talk about masculinity and femininity are not helping us at the moment. And having that valuing of as, as, of fluidity and, and diversity in leadership and in whatever role you play I think will be a critical factor for us achieving that vision.

Narelda Jacobs

Mm-hmm.

Micaela Cronin

If you, if you were able to travel to 2050-

Narelda Jacobs

Mm-hmm

Micaela Cronin

... if you were able to go and spend a few days there and... What, what would you wanna know? What would you wanna-

Narelda Jacobs

Oh

Micaela Cronin

... see that's different?

Narelda Jacobs

Oh, there's so many things I would like to know. I, I would like to know how does, ho- how does a friendship group, you know, when, when friends have gone out for the night, how... When, and when they say goodbye, you know, now we, we tell each other, "Text when you get home."

Micaela Cronin

Yeah.

Narelda Jacobs

Um, I would like to know how does it end. Like, do, are people still saying that to each other or is there just, um, the confidence that nothing will happen to them on their way home? What happens whe- on the very rare occasion... So in 2050, it's a very rare occasion that there is violence being witnessed by neighbors or people on the street, bystanders. What's the reaction?

Micaela Cronin

Mm-hmm.

Narelda Jacobs

Is, is the first reaction to call-

Micaela Cronin

Yeah

Narelda Jacobs

... police or is the first reaction to look the other way?

Micaela Cronin

Yeah.



Narelda Jacobs

Because at the moment, there's a lot of looking the other way.

Micaela Cronin

Yeah.

Narelda Jacobs

Yeah. The- there, I think that's the main things that I would love to see, that I, I would like observe because I, I would like to hope that if there is actual violence that it's treated with the seriousness that it needs and that when, uh, triple zero or a call to police is made, there are the best people at the other end, um, to handle it. Th- and that there will, there will be a police response. There, there will be a proportionate police response. I also, you know, if we did eliminate violence by 2050, there'd be so many more police resources available because [laughs]-

Micaela Cronin

Yes

Narelda Jacobs

... you know, we, we, we hear from, um, police commissioners around the country that 80% of police call-outs are domestic and family violence related.

Micaela Cronin

Mm-hmm.

Narelda Jacobs

Like, imagine if that is eliminated, how much money and resources are, are available to do other things.

Micaela Cronin

Mm-hmm.

Narelda Jacobs

Like, it's, it... Life is just going to have changed dramatically.

Micaela Cronin

Yes. So let's hope it is. So if we, if you had the power, if you had the ability to make any change to help us get to that, that vision, from your perspective, from what you've been talking about, what's the one thing you would do now to help us work towards achieving that Violence Free 2050?

Narelda Jacobs

Well, look, I, I'm, I'm a journo. Uh, I've, you know, worked in the industry for over 25 years now and we have not once been given any training on how to report on family and domestic violence, and sexual violence for that matter. It, it, all the training that we get is in a legal perspective, um, so that we don't get, you know, our networks into trouble, we don't identify people incorrectly and be, you know, um, in contempt of court and, and those sorts of things. But we don't, we're not trained with how... When you interview police about domestic and family violence, what's, what are the sort of questions that we should be asking? You know, because there are a lot of, uh, times that, a lot of cases that we see in, in the media, the answers that you get from police aren't enough. Like-

Micaela Cronin

Mm-hmm.

Narelda Jacobs



... you know, if, if a woman's body was found in a shallow creek and yet she's an ironwoman – how? Like, that, that... The fact that she drowned and there's no suspicious circumstances, that's not an answer. That's not a s- that's not, that's not enough from police. Um, you know, so how do you interrogate the truth a little bit further than we have been doing? Um, you know, the, the media has a huge responsibility in forming our opinions about things. And the fact that the media's been reluctant to keep going with men's violence, keep pushing men's violence... um, because, you know, people have had enough or they switch off, then that, that's not enough either. And as a community and as a society, we need to demand more from, from our journalists and our media. So, I think that that's something that can be done now. Um, encourage our journos to keep pushing for the facts from police and, and prioritising, uh, men's violence and, and just, and not taking the answers as, uh, as necessarily as gospel because there are so many questions that aren't answered correctly, um, or aren't asked in the first place. So, that, that's my number one. Um, you know, and, and there's, there's so many other, uh, aspects as well. Like, you know, I was mentioning, you know, what happens after you make a 000 call? Who is handling that call?

Micaela Cronin

Mm-hmm.

Narelda Jacobs

Um, will there be proportionate response? But I think first of all, we need to make the 000 call.

Micaela Cronin

Yes.

Narelda Jacobs

A lot of us don't because of a whole heap of factors. We don't wanna get involved, you know, it's a private matter, it's the neighbors.

Micaela Cronin

Yeah.

Narelda Jacobs

They might come back on us. Um, we might have to be a witness. We might have to go to court. But-And the, the thing is if, if something happens, if, if, if there's a murder, if you're witnessing a murder, you're involved anyway, you know? And, and you'll be called to give evidence anyway because of the things you've heard. So wouldn't it clear your conscience to actually have made a call in the first place, rather than find out after the fact?

Micaela Cronin

Yeah. I th-

Narelda Jacobs

So, yeah. So there's, there's so many, there's so many things, but, um, uh, and, and I think, you know, that, what we can all do is use our influence to, to let people know, "Oh, look, I would call it in. I would definitely call it in."

Micaela Cronin

I think that they are such powerful things in terms of first steps. Partly, one, and one of the things that really gives me hope, Narelda, is that they're imminently doable, right? One of, one of my really clear messages in what I wanna have, you know, these conversations for this podcast, is that this is not an insurmountable problem.

Narelda Jacobs

Mm-hmm.



Micaela Cronin

This is something that, if all of us worked together to do the things that we identify as important, we can make this change in a generation.

Narelda Jacobs

Yeah. Yeah. Uh, I, I think, Micaela, your acknowledgement at the beginning was so, um, moving, um, because it wa- it came from, you know, a very personal, uh, perspective, and it was, it was really lovely to, to hear you give thanks to First Nations people. Because they're the ones that are most experienced in this. [laughs]

Micaela Cronin

Yes.

Narelda Jacobs

And, uh, they've been doing it for a long time. Um, when, when people have the misfortune of coming into terms with the legal system and police and women's legal centres and that sort of thing, you re- you realise what you are up against and, um, just the, the overwhelming volume of, of work that they all have. And yet, Aboriginal women have, th- they've known this all along. Uh, and they've not been believed.

Micaela Cronin

Yeah.

Narelda Jacobs

So it's u- it's ju- it's incredibly unfortunate that people only come, um, to that realisation when they themselves have, have become the, the, the victims or survivors of, of violence. And so in that regard, we should be listening to the voices of First Nations women more, and I know you centres those voices, you, you have done all along. Um, because the- they've been there and they've done that and they know what works and they know the solutions already. You know, you just have to look at people like Antoinette Braybrook who i- is an inc- exceptional leader in your state of Victoria.

Micaela Cronin

Yes.

Narelda Jacobs

And Shirleen Campbell in Alice Springs. And Shirleen puts it so beautifully, you know, when she says that there's a reason we call it men's violence a- and not, you know, violence against women.

Micaela Cronin

That's-

Narelda Jacobs

And it's because men, um, perpetrate violence against men, [laughs] as well as women.

Micaela Cronin

Yeah. That's right.

Narelda Jacobs

Um, yeah. And so, and so prevention has, uh, comes down to preventing, uh, men's violence.

Micaela Cronin

Men's violence against women, children, and as you say, other men. That's right.

Narelda Jacobs

That's right, yep. Yep.



Micaela Cronin

Yeah. And, and you're right. It's the wisdom of those women that will lead us through and will, will get the change that we need to see so that we do have that future for all of our daughters and, and everybody. Because, I mean, I think the other thing that really inspires me about thinking about 2050 is that it's also a better place for all the young men in our lives. And -

Narelda Jacobs

Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. I mean, oh, to- totally. [laughs]

Micaela Cronin

[laughs]

Narelda Jacobs

It, it's not that anyone's gonna be missing out, it's that everyone's gonna be living their best lives.

Micaela Cronin

That's right. Yeah, that's right. And we, and we are celebrating that. And, and it's safe to, as you also pointed out, there will be so many other things that we can do with our resources... if we're not losing so much, both individually and as a community, to this violence.

Narelda Jacobs

Yep, absolutely.

Micaela Cronin

Thank you so much for your time and wisdom, Narelda. It is always lovely to speak with you.

Narelda Jacobs

Thank you. Can't wait to listen to the rest of the pod.

Micaela Cronin

[laughs] Thanks, Narelda.

Female voiceover

Thank you for listening to Voices Towards 2050, Ending Gender-Based Violence. Subscribe and join us for future conversations as we work together to achieve a future free from domestic, family, and sexual violence.

Female voiceover

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