



Episode 3: Alison Scott

Transcript

Alison Scott

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Female voiceover

Welcome to Voices Towards 2050: Ending Gender-Based Violence, the official podcast series of the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission. 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

I'm really pleased to welcome my guest on today's episode of the podcast. Alison, thanks for joining me for this conversation about the future.

Alison Scott

Thank you for having me.

Micaela Cronin

Firstly, I want to start by acknowledging that today I'm in the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation where I live, and pay my deep respects to their elders past and present for their care of these lands and for their graciousness, generosity and wisdom. My commitment is to work and live as an ally in this role as commissioner and always. Alyson, I've often heard you describe yourself as a proud Noongar woman from Boorloo, Perth. You're well known and recognised as a fiercely passionate advocate on domestic, family and sexual violence. You're my co-chair on the first ever National Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Lived Experience Advisory Council, and you've recently been inducted into WA's Women's Hall of Fame. Congratulations.

Alison Scott

Thank you very much. It's, um, very much a- an honour to be, um, the co-chair and on the, uh, Women's Hall of Fame for WA as well.

Micaela Cronin

Well, it's a recognition of the incredible commitment that you've made. You've spoken publicly about your own experiences and the homicide, the murder of your sister, Jessica, in 2019.

Alison Scott

Yes

Micaela Cronin

And in this podcast, which is about building a future, I'm so pleased to have a chance to talk to you about your vision for the future.

Alison Scott

Thank you. Yeah, it's always at the front of mind whenever I'm doing work, is that problem solving to get to where we want to go, not stuck in where we are because things absolutely need to change. And, and we can do that. We absolutely can. We can do much better than what we are right now.



Micaela Cronin

And, and look, that's what motivates me for this podcast too, is we really need to believe and have a vision for the future. So, tell me a bit about what motivates you to strive for a different future.

Alison Scott

Yeah. I, I was lucky enough to grow up in a safe home filled with love, um, people all around like, you know, many Aboriginal families. We always had family around, lots of cousins and aunties and uncles.

Micaela Cronin

Mm-hmm.

Alison Scott

Um, and our house was really a safe haven for people. There wasn't violence around me in the house, um, or with my parents. People knew not to bring that there. Um, I saw my parents protecting women and children and, and doing their part to create safe communities, not just our family but also kids out in the community being involved-

Micaela Cronin

Mm-hmm

Alison Scott

... with the football club or the netball club or, or other school friends an- and people that we came across. So I grew up thinking that, you know, this is important work and that it's everybody's part to play. It just felt natural to go into this space. I have seen families struggle and I've struggled myself and experienced family and domestic and sexual violence and, and I know the realities intimately. Um, and I was lucky enough to have the support to get out of those situations and, and to have the life that I live today. And I've got that intimate understanding of what helped me during those times and have been privileged to talk to so many other people along the way about what's helped them and trying to create safe, happy families for themselves a- and their children.

Micaela Cronin

Yeah.

Alison Scott

And we really need to, um, support people in that. So it always felt like something I've... I'm destined to do, and I think that's, that's in generations of my family as well. So it was kind of like it wasn't really a choice but a path already set.

Micaela Cronin

Well, and Alison, you've thrown yourself into that really wholeheartedly and with great, great wisdom and generosity, so we're lucky to have you as an advocate in this space. So, if our national commitment, we know that every government in this country has signed up to the national plan to end gender-based violence in one generation. If that plan is successful, what's your vision for what 2050 will be?

Alison Scott

For me, I think that, you know, when I'm listening to people in the community and, and looking at newspapers and social media and all of those things that influence schools, you know, our services, that everyone sees as... it is their role to keep people safe and have, have safe communities and healthy thriving communities. I think we really need to work towards that a- and, and I hope in 2050, that's what we see, is that it's everyone pulling together. That there's more investment in improving people's wellbeing, which means that people are getting the support that they need much earlier as well and not at the crisis time so that people when things go wrong... There's always going to be things that go wrong in life and people are going to have struggles, but that we've got the types of services that are gonna help people, they're ready to go, rather than having wait lists or, or financial barriers to people getting into things or not having the diversity of services we need. So, I hope in 2050, we have, you know, more innovation in that



space and people to be able to learn from the past. I think broadly in the community, you know, there's not, um, disrespect and there's not violence, physical or verbal or coercive control, uh, and that, that is, is walked past and just accepted as that's okay behaviour but that people really do not walk past what is not okay, or call the police or do things differently when these things are occurring. That there's not this turning a blind eye to things as well.

Micaela Cronin

Yeah.

Alison Scott

Um, and that we're really not treating the symptoms, but we actually get down and treat the root causes. So there's... Especially for Aboriginal people, there's intergenerational harm that's happened and there's intergenerational trauma and we really need to get in there and deal with that complex stuff in order to, um, not have the issues that we have today. So, I really hope that there's healing and recovery are prioritised for people. And at the end of the day that I hope that there's many more safe, happy families. And for those that do experience abuse, to be given every opportunity to thrive, not just survive.

Micaela Cronin

I think that's a really powerful... vision, Alison. And I think that point that you made about getting in early and when... That we will always have trouble. I think when people talk about ending violence in a generation, there's this view that, you know, that's a Pollyanna vision because we're never gonna have society in which we don't have trouble. But your comments about, yes, we will have trouble. People will... Yes, there is intergenerational trauma, but we will be healing from that. Um, and we-

Alison Scott

Yes

Micaela Cronin

... will be giving people the services that they need when they do hit those points in their life when they're in trouble.

Alison Scott

That's right. It's so much harder to deal with something when it's been, you know, going on for five, 10, 15, 20 years. If we can get in much earlier and have those conversations about, "Hey, things aren't running okay at the moment. I'm really struggling," or, you know, "I'm doing behaviours that I really don't want-" Hmm ... "want to do. I really want help-" Hmm "... to change this," it's much easier. And, and we know that lots of families want to stay together. They don't want to split up. So, let's give them the support to do that so that they can do that in the best way possible.

Micaela Cronin

Hmm. Absolutely. If you could, if you could travel through time to this vision of yours of what 2050 looks like and spend a few days there, what would you wanna know? What would you go looking for? What would be different? What would you see? What questions would you have?

Alison Scott

I'd like to see what it's like for people, um, who are more vulnerable and experience higher rates of family domestic and sexual violence today. So, what is it like for Aboriginal men, women, and children? And, and see how they're actually feeling about things. You know, are there safe places? What are their safe places? Uh, do they feel more respected in community? Do men... Are they able to s- talk about their emotions and struggles in relationships and the things that they struggle with in life more and get help with those? And children as well. Do we see children as their own individual self and needing specialist services- Hmm ... and support? Or just seeing not even services, just community people, family members seeing that child, really seeing that child a- and what they need to go on to be their best selves. And people like, uh, migrant communities and, and refugees that come here and LGBTIQ+ communities, uh, and people with disabilities. Like, is their life much easier in many respects? Have we taken down some of those barriers?



Are we reaching into them rather than them have to reach out to us all the time in, in times of, of struggle? Do people feel safe in their homes? And if they don't, what can they do about that? Uh, are there services that meet their needs? And can they actually access them? So, there's many, many different ways of healing and recovery. And currently, we have very, very few, especially for, for Aboriginal people or, or people of different cultural backgrounds. And that's, I think, critical to being able to deal with the harm that's happened. I- it's not all psychology, uh, and, um, medication.. and the kind of talk therapy that p- I think people naturally think about when they talk about healing. But going on country and spiritual connection and, and connection to family and kin, all those kinds of things, I think I'd like to see that embedded in our community in a much better way than it is today and that it's a holistic approach to community, uh, and not so siloed.

Micaela Cronin

And we're all so committed to getting there, right? That's, that's the vision. That's such a powerful description of what the vision is. I think you've captured it really well, Alison, and the breadth of, the breadth of diversity that we need to be thinking about.

Alison Scott

Mm. And there's so much, uh, I mean, in my work that I'm always talking to people about, "Please don't just look at my work when I'm developing a tool or a program or providing advice on a, a particular topic. Please don't just look at that for Aboriginal people. Look at it beyond as well." Because we've all got all different people, all different walks of life have much to offer other people as well. And we need to, again, stop thinking in those silos. For instance, wellbeing. Uh, being... An holistic approach to wellbeing works incredibly well for Aboriginal people. And I strongly believe it will work well for everyone, that we need to take that approach for everyone. Um, and I hope that is done better in the future.

Micaela Cronin

So, Alison, if you had the ability to make any necessary change from your perspective to help that vision come to light, what's the one thing you would do now to work towards achieving a violence-free 2050?

Alison Scott

It would be that way that we look at, at people, essentially, of taking that holistic wellbeing approach. I think we need to not be scared of the complexity and the nuances and go we need to look at it all in able to, uh, really have meaningful change. Um, I think the, the mindset that we have and the way that we approach things and our ways of doing business are not as helpful as they could be right now. And I think changing that and having more of a collaborative approach would have a real impact for services and ultimately the client in front of you feeling seen and heard and being understood.

Micaela Cronin

Mm. If we can get that mindset shift to really think about... I think you've articulated it really well both the, the seeing the person in front of you as an individual, but the diversity of those experiences is critically important.

Alison Scott

Yeah. It is. And, and not just seeing the, the broken person in front of you. Really seeing the whole person. I am not, you know, this broken person. I am a strong, powerful, loving person. And with so many good qualities. And it's not helpful just to focus on the bad all the time. Um, I think we really need to be more empowering, uh, in the way we do business. And that that, you know, reminds people, especially when you're in a bit of a hole and, and things are going wrong around you and you're getting horrible messages said to you, those..... reminding that person that you are valuable and you are smart and you are capable, um, are also important.

Micaela Cronin

They are really powerful messages, and I think that's a lovely vision for the future, a powerful vision for a future in which, as you described, people are living in safe, happy families, seen as a whole person with all



of their diversities and strengths, um, and parts of them that need support at different times. Thank you so much for your, your wisdom, Alison, and sharing in this podcast conversation.

Alison Scott

Thank you so much for having me. It was really lovely to discuss this and, and to see, you know, talk about the future, 'cause I think that is, um, what we're all aiming for and we've all got a role to play in creating that positive future for our next generations.

Micaela Cronin

We do. Thank you, Alison. [upbeat music]

Female voiceover

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