



## Episode 6: Conor Pall

### Transcript

**00:00:00,099 --> 00:00:21,959 [Conor Pall]**

[instrumental music plays] In a future, hopefully much sooner than 2050, children will be safe and that safety wouldn't come conditionally. Um, it wouldn't be if they're lucky or if they can self-advocate, or if they are articulate. Safety would be a starting point.

**00:00:21,959 --> 00:00:54,439 [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.

**00:00:54,439 --> 00:01:08,519 [Micaela Cronin]**

I'm so pleased to welcome my guest on today's episode of the podcast, who brings a very important voice to this conversation, and one that I have learnt so much from. Conor Pall, thanks so much for joining me for this conversation about the future today.

**00:01:08,519 --> 00:01:10,379 [Conor Pall]**

Thanks for having me, Micaela.

**00:01:10,379 --> 00:02:25,539 [Micaela Cronin]**

First, I want to start by acknowledging that I'm on the lands of the Wurundjeri people today, of the Kulin nation, and pay my deep respects to their elders, past and present, for their care of these lands and for their generosity and wisdom and how much I have learnt, and I think how much we all have to learn in this work. My commitment is to work and live as an ally in this role and always. Connor, you're an incredible advocate for the future and a voice of experience that aligns with a pivotal priority for the commission, putting the voices of children and young people at the centre of our work and of all of our efforts. You've rapidly become a nationally recognised voice in domestic, family and sexual violence reform, and you're currently the deputy chair of the Victorian Victim Survivors Advisory Council. And you are generously and powerfully using your own experience as a male survivor from country Victoria to drive change that really matters. In this podcast about building a better future, it feels absolutely right to be speaking with someone who has experienced the challenges that you so generously share and is showing us how to move forward. So Conor, tell me a little bit about what motivates you to do the work that you do, to strive for a better future.

**00:02:25,539 --> 00:03:19,939 [Conor Pall]**

Hmm. Thanks so much for your very kind introduction, Micaela. And yeah, it's a pleasure to be speaking with you and just wanna thank you for all the work that you do at the commission in elevating the voices of victim-survivors, um, which of course includes children and young people who've experienced family violence. I think I'm motivated by the children and young people who don't have the words yet to express the things that they're living with and, you know, the shadow that is family violence. And I wanna make sure that we have a world that they grow up in that sees them, that believes them, and that is ready to provide relevant support to help them heal and recover and break the often intergenerational cycle of violence. And I think the anchor that I carry with me that keeps me sort of tied to my purpose and why I do the work I do

**00:03:19,939 --> 00:03:25,739 [Conor Pall]**

is the memory I carry of my younger self. You know, one that

**00:03:25,739 --> 00:03:57,759 [Conor Pall]**

went to school and wished that people, that someone would ask if I was okay. The one that was sitting in courtrooms holding my mum's hand and the one that was put into the back of a police car when he was unsafe. I think back then, I was trying to make sense of the chaos that was never mine to carry, and it's a re- the reality of so many children and young people still today. And I think I try to be that person that I needed back in those moments, and I think that's my compass.

**00:03:57,759 --> 00:04:12,499 [Micaela Cronin]**

Connor, that's such a powerful image and a, such a moving motivation for the work that you do. So personal. Thank you for sharing that. Is there someone that when you think about that, who is it that was that for you?

**00:04:12,499 --> 00:04:31,619 [Conor Pall]**

[sighs]. I think... I often think about hope, like glimmers or pockets of hope in my journey of being a young person, a, a young victim survivor who grew up with family violence and in family violence. And I'm not just driven by the hard shit and hard stuff that I went through.

**00:04:31,619 --> 00:04:31,999 [Micaela Cronin]**

Mm-hmm.

**00:04:31,999 --> 00:04:36,339 [Conor Pall]**

I'm, I'm driven, like, by hope and I think my mum

**00:04:36,339 --> 00:04:54,259 [Conor Pall]**

gave me that hope. I think she, that came from her and comes from her still. And you know, I o- I often reflect back when everything felt like it was falling apart, when there was no stability in my life. And you know, I b- I became parentified and I held onto parts 'cause I didn't wanna worry Mum, but...

**00:04:54,259 --> 00:04:54,939 [Micaela Cronin]**

Mm-hmm.

**00:04:54,939 --> 00:05:02,339 [Conor Pall]**

You know, she was always there giving me hope. And it was quiet hope, it was, it was fierce hope...

**00:05:02,339 --> 00:05:02,539 [Micaela Cronin]**

Mm-hmm

**00:05:02,539 --> 00:05:45,099 [Conor Pall]**

... that I think I carry that with me today for myself, but also for other children and young people. And I think I'm also driven by the young people and I get hope from the young people that I work with and alongside most days. And I think those children and young people remind me that if we actually listened, if we leant in and listened to children and young people, if we really heard them, that this future we keep talking about, about, you know, ending family violence in a generation, putting children and young people on a pedestal to break cycles on their own, if we actually listened to what they needed right now, that future wouldn't be so far away.

**00:05:45,099 --> 00:06:06,239 [Micaela Cronin]**

That's incredibly powerful, that, that sense of hope, isn't it? What you've described in so quickly is those two, the two things, right? The pain and the hurt, uh, that is lived through in family violence, but also the hope that balances that, and the importance of balancing those two things and having hope for the future.

**00:06:06,543 --> 00:06:18,683 [Conor Pall]**

... hope, hope for the future and hope for the today, hope for the young people still living unsafely in their homes today. And I think we all need to hold on to that hope but also move that hope into action.



**00:06:18,683 --> 00:06:35,263 [Micaela Cronin]**

Which is an incredibly good segue into my first question. If we are going to think about how our national commitment to ending gender-based violence in a generation is successful, what would your vision for 2050 be?

**00:06:35,263 --> 00:06:39,643 [Conor Pall]**

I've been doing some maths, and in 2050, I'll be 46, which is-

**00:06:39,643 --> 00:06:40,004 [Micaela Cronin]**

[laughs]

**00:06:40,004 --> 00:06:42,023 [Conor Pall]**

... wild to say-

**00:06:42,023 --> 00:06:42,263 [Micaela Cronin]**

Yes

**00:06:42,263 --> 00:06:43,543 [Conor Pall]**

... um, out loud. [laughs]

**00:06:43,543 --> 00:06:47,644 [Micaela Cronin]**

I know. I'm not gonna tell you I did the maths and I thought, "Oh, I'm not necessarily sharing." [laughs]

**00:06:47,644 --> 00:07:01,683 [Conor Pall]**

Yeah. [laughs] Uh, it's a bit scary. But, um, like, I, I often reflect back, Micaela, to think about who I was when I was 10, when I was 12, and when I was 17, living in family violence. And-

**00:07:01,683 --> 00:07:01,983 [Micaela Cronin]**

Mm-hmm

**00:07:01,983 --> 00:07:31,724 [Conor Pall]**

... you know, back then, my life was plagued by family violence. And there were moments where I didn't think I'd make it to 21, where I am today, let alone 46 in 2050. And I think if we're actually to do this, if we're really to end gender-based violence in a generation and live up to our self-concept that we're a society that values children and young people, that values victim-survivors in all of our diversity,

**00:07:31,724 --> 00:08:01,123 [Conor Pall]**

46-year-old me in 2050 and other advocates who I walk alongside today, we wouldn't, we wouldn't still be having to go into rooms and telling our stories of systemic failures, not only of the abuse that we've experienced but the systemic exclusion that we've experienced as children and young people. We wouldn't be in rooms adding, "And children, and children-"

**00:08:01,123 --> 00:08:01,303 [Micaela Cronin]**

Mm-hmm

**00:08:01,303 --> 00:08:09,183 [Conor Pall]**

... hoping that someone cares enough to do something. Because I think in, in a future, hopefully much sooner than 2050-

**00:08:09,183 --> 00:08:09,423 [Micaela Cronin]**

Mm-hmm

**00:08:09,423 --> 00:08:23,343 [Conor Pall]**



... children will be safe, and that safety wouldn't come conditionally. Um, it wouldn't be if they're lucky or if they can self-advocate or if they are articulate. Safety would be a starting point.

**00:08:23,343 --> 00:08:32,303 [Micaela Cronin]**

Yeah, Conor, that's so important to say, to talk about safety being a starting point, isn't it? And no matter, regardless who you are or where you are?

**00:08:32,303 --> 00:08:34,363 [Conor Pall]**

That's... Yep, that's exactly right.

**00:08:34,363 --> 00:08:44,263 [Micaela Cronin]**

So if you could travel through time to this vision of 2050 and spend a few days there, what would you wanna know? What would you be looking for? What questions would you have?

**00:08:44,263 --> 00:09:20,763 [Conor Pall]**

When I walk into services and spaces and see artwork made by children and young people, I want to look at that artwork and think, "Are the policies of this service made by children and young people also?" I'd wanna see if we've stopped shaping services and systems in talking about and around children and young people and see that we've started shaping services and systems with children and young people, not for them. And I'd wanna know that we're doing more for young boys across the country and that-

**00:09:20,763 --> 00:09:20,803 [Micaela Cronin]**

Mm-hmm

**00:09:20,803 --> 00:09:33,923 [Conor Pall]**

... young boys in every school, in every home are being taught that strength isn't violence, and that vulnerability, compassion, and boundaries is what it is to be a boy and a man-

**00:09:33,923 --> 00:09:34,123 [Micaela Cronin]**

Mm-hmm

**00:09:34,123 --> 00:09:49,303 [Conor Pall]**

... in 2050, but hopefully much sooner than then. And Micaela, I'd wanna know, and, you know, this might sound self-serving of me, but I'd wanna know if any of this has made a difference, if the hours of

**00:09:49,303 --> 00:10:39,083 [Conor Pall]**

retelling my story, of going back to some of the most darkest parts of my life, and other children and young people having to go through the... back through the archives of their lives and their experiences, act- whether all of that has actually changed the system for other children and young people. Because if there's anything I've learnt in the past three years of, of advocacy and learning that I'm so much more than my experience, that I'm Conor Paul before I'm a victim-survivor, I've learnt that carrying hope can be heavy. And sometimes, I carry it like armour. And I'd like to put it down for a moment and just know all of that work, not just by me but by so many others before me, was worth it.

**00:10:39,083 --> 00:11:01,103 [Micaela Cronin]**

Yeah, that's incredibly, uh, moving to hear, Conor. That's not... It's nothing self-serving. It's incredibly generous to give of yourself to drive change. And knowing that it has had an impact is absolutely what a lovely vision of you going and finding your 47-year-old, 46-year-old self and having a chat about all of the change that has-

**00:11:01,103 --> 00:11:01,143 [Conor Pall]**

Mm-hmm

**00:11:01,143 --> 00:11:02,983 [Micaela Cronin]**

... come from your advocacy.



**00:11:02,983 --> 00:11:03,123 [Conor Pall]**

Yeah.

**00:11:03,123 --> 00:11:13,083 [Micaela Cronin]**

So that, that leads to my next question, which is about, about what it is... So you've gone and you've had a chat with your 47-year-old, 46-year-old self, and you come back-

**00:11:13,083 --> 00:11:14,123 [Conor Pall]**

Stop adding that year on.

**00:11:14,123 --> 00:11:14,963 [Micaela Cronin]**

Sorry, I know.

**00:11:14,963 --> 00:11:15,103 [Conor Pall]**

[laughs]

**00:11:15,103 --> 00:11:17,403 [Micaela Cronin]**

I get, I get in trouble. I do that all the time. [laughs]

**00:11:17,403 --> 00:11:18,523 [Conor Pall]**

[laughs].

**00:11:18,523 --> 00:11:38,423 [Micaela Cronin]**

The... You come back, and you're... and, and you've learnt from the future, and you've seen what changes happened. If you had the ability to make any changes from your perspective and what's important to you, what's the one thing you would do now to work towards achieving a violence-free 2050?

**00:11:38,423 --> 00:12:18,072 [Conor Pall]**

Oh, there's so many things. I think I'd stop asking children and young people to wait and to be happy with the system that we've got. I think the reality is right now, if you're a child or young person, you're more likely to be ignored and shut out than you are to be invisible by the system. Like, if there was one thing that I could change, it would be that we have a national, standalone, dedicated service for children and young people, just for them, one that sees children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right. Because-And right now, like,

**00:12:18,072 --> 00:12:25,071 [Conor Pall]**

the system waits for your mum or your protective parent to speak, or your teacher to report to Child Protection.

**00:12:25,071 --> 00:12:25,611 [Micaela Cronin]**

Mm-hmm.

**00:12:25,611 --> 00:12:49,672 [Conor Pall]**

And I f- [sighs] if I could make one change, I would be centring children and young people in every single part of our response to family violence, not just on paper or policies or websites, but in the actual design and delivery of services for children and young people. I'd be centring them in every single part of our response, not just to family violence, but across government.

**00:12:49,672 --> 00:13:22,011 [Micaela Cronin]**

And Connor, you are... Can I say you are already contributing to that in such a significant way, that ensuring that young people have a voice and are heard in every aspect of the work. It does give me hope listening to you respond to that question 'cause I think you are already helping show us how to do that, and there are so many good, powerful voices that are saying that. And I do feel hopeful that if we can do that, if we do that one thing, then we will get where we will need to be in 2050.



**00:13:22,011 --> 00:13:40,411 [Conor Pall]**

Yep, thank you. Thank you, Michaela. And I think one thing, like, that, you know, everyone can do now is not giving children and young people a voice, but actually leaning in to listen to the voices that they have. I think often we, we think that we need to do something to give children and young people a voice-

**00:13:40,411 --> 00:13:40,432 [Micaela Cronin]**

Yes

**00:13:40,432 --> 00:14:01,991 [Conor Pall]**

... but really, in that, we forget that we're not listening to the voices that they have already. So I just... I really hope that the advocacy that I've put in, you know, over the past three years, but the countless other children and young people who I have the privilege of advocating with and alongside, that our voices are, are lent in and listened to and acted on with us, not for us.

**00:14:01,991 --> 00:14:19,251 [Micaela Cronin]**

Connor, that's such an important point about language, isn't it? Because it is not about not having a voice or not having something to say. It's about whether, whether people are listening and where there is active spaces created to listen. And I wanna work with you in ensuring that we do that together.

**00:14:19,251 --> 00:14:20,352 [Conor Pall]**

Thank you, Michaela.

**00:14:20,352 --> 00:14:23,631 [Micaela Cronin]**

Thank you, Connor. It's been great to have a conversation with you.

**00:14:23,631 --> 00:14:30,811 [Conor Pall]**

Likewise. [instrumental music]

**00:14:30,811 --> 00:15:22,971 [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. To learn more about the Commission, visit our website at [dfsvc.gov.au](https://dfsvc.gov.au). If you need support, contact 1800RESPECT or call 1800-737-732. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, you can call 13YARN or 139276. The views expressed in this podcast are those of the guests and do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government or the Commission. [instrumental music] [End transcript]