



Episode 16: Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi

Transcript

00:00:00,460 --> 00:00:21,919 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

I would put lived experience and cultural authority at the centre of every decision-making space in this country, because I believe Aboriginal women are the ones who carry the stories, the truth, the lived experience. And when we're there leading, designing systems, everything will shift.

00:00:21,980 --> 00:00:50,840 [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.

00:00:54,420 --> 00:01:03,640 [Micaela Cronin]

I am really excited to welcome my guest on today's episode of the podcast. Holly, thanks so much for joining me for this conversation about the future.

00:01:03,640 --> 00:01:05,300 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

Thank you for having me.

00:01:05,300 --> 00:02:49,600 [Micaela Cronin]

First off, I want to start by acknowledging today that I am very happy to be on 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 ongoing generosity and wisdom. I want to extend those respects to elders across this incredible country for their- for their leadership, particularly women's leadership in the space of ending violence against women and children. My commitment is to work and live as an ally in this role and always. So joining me today on the podcast is Holly Guerewiri. Holly, I'm just gonna take a moment to introduce you. We are very fortunate to have Holly as one of the founding members of the Commission's valued lived experience advisory council, and Holly has played a really instrumental role in helping us learn about how we establish that council and what the work is with the Commission, again, to support the national plan in ending gender-based violence. Holly is an indigenous early years educator and a powerful survivor advocate, living and working on country in the Northern Territory. Central to Holly's work is advocating for First Nations women and children, for their safety, healing, truth-telling, kindness and walking with communities. And she definitely brings that wisdom and commitment to the work with the Commission. As well as using her lived experience for advocacy to end gender-based violence, Holly puts enormous amounts of time and passion into training police across the Northern Territory as part of their PArT, prevent, assist and respond training program. Holly, thank you so much for joining me today to talk about your vision for the future.

00:02:50,500 --> 00:02:53,220 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

Thank you for inviting me. It's really important.

00:02:53,220 --> 00:03:00,220 [Micaela Cronin]

So Holly, let's start by telling me a bit about what motivates you to do this work, to strive for a different future.

00:03:00,220 --> 00:03:04,880 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

What motivates me is deeply personal.

00:03:04,880 --> 00:03:24,060 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]



For more than 25 years, I've walked alongside Aboriginal women and children in some of the most remotest parts of the Northern Territory, listening to stories that many people never hear. The courage, the grief and the strength sits deep within my bones-

00:03:24,060 --> 00:03:24,140 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm-hmm

00:03:24,140 --> 00:03:26,160 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

... and they're the reason why I don't give up.

00:03:26,160 --> 00:03:38,960 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm-hmm. And Holly, you bring that, too, that depth of emotion and commitment you bring to every conversation I've had with you, so ... And it really shines through, Holly. We are very lucky to have you on our council.

00:03:38,960 --> 00:03:52,780 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

Um, well, I'm very lucky to share the voices of the countless women that I have the privilege of working with. For a long time, I didn't even have the language to describe my own experiences, and so therefore language was my prison.

00:03:52,780 --> 00:03:53,720 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm-hmm.

00:03:53,720 --> 00:04:04,620 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

And to me, PART is a twofold process because we are giving the language to the people that I never had.

00:04:04,620 --> 00:04:04,960 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm-hmm.

00:04:04,960 --> 00:04:31,540 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

We're giving frontline workers understanding that they've never been taught. So as much as the frontline workers are being giving- they've been giving this understanding, on the flip side, I'm now having family members ring me who have had experiences with police and asking, "Did this man, did this woman do training? Because they were really kind and they used the same language from your program."

00:04:31,540 --> 00:04:41,410 [Micaela Cronin]

Holly, that's- that's incredible. That's so powerful. It must feel extraordinary to be witnessing that very direct impact of your work.

00:04:41,410 --> 00:04:50,570 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

It is- it is- it's really powerful, um, because I feel like it's- it's we're inside the system but we're not a part of the system.

00:04:50,570 --> 00:04:51,200 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm-hmm.

00:04:51,200 --> 00:04:58,300 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

So we're transforming it from the inside out, but we're transforming it with the voices of Aboriginal women.

00:04:58,300 --> 00:05:18,520 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah, yeah. What an incredible partnership, eh? Voices of Aboriginal women and the knowledge and wisdom that you are bringing to that, to be inside the system, and that- my view is the people working inside the system who are passionate about changing it are more likely to be successful in- in the- in those kind of approaches.



00:05:18,520 --> 00:05:24,560 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

Yes, I'd have to agree. And we're really lucky to have, um, obviously Dr Shea Brown-

00:05:24,560 --> 00:05:25,620 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm-hmm

00:05:25,620 --> 00:05:34,540 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

... Maggie Aylmore, two fabulous women, just really impactful in their change and the way they create it.

00:05:34,540 --> 00:05:34,960 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah.

00:05:34,960 --> 00:05:44,719 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

Um, and of course Assistant Commissioner Michael White. He's supported the program from the start, and I think that's important, the collective support.

00:05:44,720 --> 00:06:20,844 [Micaela Cronin]

Yep. And bringing together of different knowledge and wisdom and expertise, and I'm sure you play an incredibly powerful role in that. So that- that brings me well to the next question, which is about, if all this work, all this effort that you're putting in now, if- if our collective national commitment to ending gender-based violence in a generation is successful, so all of these things that we're doing have worked-What would your vision for, what, 2050, so really putting your mind forward to what's it gonna look like in 25 years? What will the future look like?

00:06:20,844 --> 00:06:24,044 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

This is the exciting question because we get to dream.

00:06:24,044 --> 00:06:25,003 [Micaela Cronin]

Yes.

00:06:25,003 --> 00:06:32,484 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

So my vision for 2050 would be an Australia where safety is not an aspiration, it's a normal.

00:06:32,484 --> 00:06:33,323 [Micaela Cronin]

Hmm.

00:06:33,323 --> 00:06:46,364 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

Safety would be woven into our everyday lives, into our systems, and into the way we treat each other. I would also like to see a nation where Aboriginal women are not just added into the conversation, that they're leading it.

00:06:46,364 --> 00:06:47,063 [Micaela Cronin]

Hmm.

00:06:47,063 --> 00:07:01,344 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

They are decision-makers. They're policy shapers. They're working with the police, education, justice, and health. Yeah, I think an Aboriginal woman not just surviving the system, but shaping the system.

00:07:01,344 --> 00:07:07,183 [Micaela Cronin]

Hmm. That would be transformational, wouldn't it? We don't- we don't see enough of that now.

00:07:07,183 --> 00:07:42,123 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

No, I don't think so. And I think that's one of the reasons why PART is so successful, is because it unapologetically wraps itself around the voices of victim-survivor stories and-and that's how we draw our



learning out from these stories who are all based in the Northern Territory, um, and we- we're fortunate enough to cover a quite wide demographic. We have same-sex male relationship. We have immigrant migrants, and we also have indigenous women.

00:07:42,123 --> 00:08:04,123 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah. It's a very diverse community, isn't it? But- but Northern Territory, and what we often hear about Northern Territory is the struggles and the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's experiences of violence. But I have also seen some of the best examples of empowered programs like what you are talking about.

00:08:04,123 --> 00:08:16,614 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

I think, obviously, we do have struggles in the territory, but we're really resilient and we never give up, and we're always hopeful, and we always remain solutions-focused, and I think that's important.

00:08:16,614 --> 00:08:55,383 [Micaela Cronin]

Hmm. And-and that's what this podcast... The point of this podcast was exactly what you're describing, right? Is how do we- how do we really, honestly, face up to the difficulties that communities are experiencing but be hopeful and-and strive for that future? So if we... If I could send you... I would love to send you forward to this vision of yours in which indigenous women are shaping and leading the future, and where safety is normal, not aspirational, and you got to spend a few days there, what would you want to know? Where would you go? What questions would you have?

00:08:55,384 --> 00:09:07,424 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

I think if I could stand in that future, the first thing I would want to know is, what did we finally have the courage to let go of? Because in this country, we don't fail for a lack of ideas.

00:09:07,424 --> 00:09:07,824 [Micaela Cronin]

Hmm.

00:09:07,824 --> 00:09:15,024 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

We fail because we cling onto systems that are built on control and fear and sometimes racism.

00:09:15,024 --> 00:09:15,684 [Micaela Cronin]

Mm-hmm.

00:09:15,684 --> 00:09:22,104 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

So I'd wanna know, what was the shift? What made us finally have that courage to let go?

00:09:22,104 --> 00:09:27,624 [Micaela Cronin]

Hmm. That's such a good question, Holly. Knowing... Because... That's right. What is it we let go of?

00:09:27,624 --> 00:09:27,714 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

Mm-hmm.

00:09:27,714 --> 00:09:35,824 [Micaela Cronin]

Because we try to do too many things and we have so many systems that we've had for so long that are fun-fundamentally flawed. Yeah?

00:09:35,824 --> 00:09:36,364 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

Mm-hmm.

00:09:36,364 --> 00:09:52,743 [Micaela Cronin]

So if you had the ability to make any changes, whatever the changes were that were necessary to help us. Like, what i- what are the things that you think we need to let go of? What is, from your perspective... What's the one thing that we need to do to work towards achieving a violence-free 2050?



00:09:52,743 --> 00:10:19,983 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

I think if I could make one transformative change, I would put lived experience and cultural authority at the centre of every decision-making space in this country. Because I believe Aboriginal women are the ones who carry the stories, the truth, the lived experience. And when we're there leading, designing systems, everything will shift. Funding, policy, language, policing, healing, and prevention.

00:10:19,983 --> 00:10:30,762 [Micaela Cronin]

Hmm. That's such a powerful vision, Holly. Have you seen examples of that being done well? Moments where you've seen it done well, where you think it has achieved change?

00:10:30,762 --> 00:10:33,703 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

Well, I think, actually, PAART is-is achieving-

00:10:33,703 --> 00:10:33,924 [Micaela Cronin]

Yeah

00:10:33,924 --> 00:10:41,782 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

... is achieving that change right now. And I think in the future, when we do have the opportunity to look back

00:10:41,784 --> 00:11:00,223 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

in retrospect, PAART... I'm excited to see wha- where PAART's gonna go because we've only been delivering it for two years and we're already seeing it pop up in, you know, coronials where police are able to see their shortcomings prior when they hadn't received the training-

00:11:00,223 --> 00:11:00,604 [Micaela Cronin]

Hmm

00:11:00,644 --> 00:11:05,114 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

... and then in reflection, when they had received the training, what they would do differently.

00:11:05,114 --> 00:11:05,144 [Micaela Cronin]

P-

00:11:05,144 --> 00:11:07,084 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

And so for me, that's powerful.

00:11:07,084 --> 00:11:16,064 [Micaela Cronin]

That's incredibly powerful. And if you're already seeing the evidence of that, uh, horrifically coming up in coronial inquests about people's deaths-

00:11:16,064 --> 00:11:16,584 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

Mm-hmm

00:11:16,584 --> 00:11:30,564 [Micaela Cronin]

... that's-that's real transformational learning if the- if people are thinking that- in that way. What do you think? Tell us a bit more about PAART. Tell us a little bit more about what is it that you think is the secret to the... What's so powerful about PAART?

00:11:30,564 --> 00:11:45,424 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]

What's powerful about PAART is, I think, not many people actually have a lot of education or knowledge about domestic, family, and sexual violence. We have a lot of assumptions, but we don't have a lot of that evidence-based education-



00:11:45,424 --> 00:11:45,584 [Micaela Cronin]
Hmm

00:11:45,584 --> 00:12:23,007 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]
... and that's what PAART is. PAART is evidence-based education. And so we're really giving police the ability to stop, step back, and see the whole picture. Recognizing the patterns, recognizing the underpinning of coercive control, putting the cultural lens, the trauma-informed lens on the work. And also,... it's resourcing police with knowledge so that they can be more efficient and effective in their work, which also reduces vicarious trauma and things like that. So I think that's what stands out for PART.

00:12:23,007 --> 00:12:23,406 [Micaela Cronin]
Mm.

00:12:23,407 --> 00:12:27,228 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]
And also because it was designed here in the territory for the territory.

00:12:27,228 --> 00:12:48,747 [Micaela Cronin]
Yeah. So that's a really concrete example of something that could- could have a transformational impact if it's- if it's scaled up and resourced and supported and committed to in the way that all of you who have developed it hope that it will be. That's an incredibly concrete example of how we're gonna change the future together, Holly.

00:12:48,747 --> 00:13:07,848 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]
That's right. And I would really love to see PART scaled nationally. I mean, versions of PART could- could be implemented in education. And we do deliver to health as well. Yeah, I think education is a really nice gentle way to work on ending gender-based violence.

00:13:07,848 --> 00:13:08,318 [Micaela Cronin]
Yeah. Yeah.

00:13:08,318 --> 00:13:10,228 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]
And it's really important.

00:13:10,228 --> 00:13:17,968 [Micaela Cronin]
Well, and it's something clearly you're deeply committed to, um, throughout your life. So Holly, thank you so much for the work that you do.

00:13:17,968 --> 00:13:22,407 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]
Yeah. Thank you. And- and thank you for your- for the work that you do as well, Michaela.

00:13:22,407 --> 00:13:28,247 [Micaela Cronin]
Mm. Well, it's a joy and a privilege to work alongside you. Thank you for today's conversation, too.

00:13:28,247 --> 00:13:34,608 [Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi]
Thank you.

00:13:34,608 --> 00:14:27,767 [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. If you need support, contact 1800RESPECT, or call 1800-737-732. For other original 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.

[End transcript]