

**ROSIE BATTY ROADSHOW BREAKFAST
SPEECH BY HER EXCELLENCY
PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AM
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
WREST POINT, SANDY BAY
WEDNESDAY 19 OCTOBER 2016**

Good morning.

I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to Rosie Batty, for her amazing work as an activist and campaigner against domestic and family violence. Like no other single person in this country, by having the courage to use her personal tragic story to bring attention to this issue, she has brought domestic and family violence to the forefront of national consciousness. After what must have been an exhausting year as 2015 Australian of Year, her advocacy has continued. And so the issue remains firmly on the policy agenda. It is now very widely known that one woman every week dies at the hands of a violent partner.

Rosie has recognised that action is needed on multiple fronts; that there is a need for institutional change and law reform in tackling the response to family violence and also a change in the social attitudes which underlie family violence. The theme for this breakfast is to promote a national approach to law reform in regard to Australia's family law system and in particular to promote the Five Step "Safety First in Family Law" developed by Women's Legal Service Australia.

What impressed me about this plan was that it offers clearly defined practical steps of what should be done to improve the response of the family courts to domestic and family violence by defining gaps and problems in the existing response and offering solutions.

Without going into more detail of these Five Steps, I would like to return to a comment Rosie has made about herself. She is reported to have said, "I'm not tough but I am strong." This is an important distinction – the difference between being tough and being strong. It is a difference worth thinking about and one that I think we need to explain to our children.

It is now acknowledged that while there is no single cause of violence against women and their children, factors that drive higher levels of violence are rigid gender roles and stereotypes of what it is to be masculine and what it is to be

feminine, and that these stereotypes are an obstacle to equal and respectful relationships.

We know that young people are struggling to understand what a respectful relationship looks like, and violence supportive attitudes are common. For example, a survey of young people in Australia revealed that one in four don't think it is serious if a guy who is normally gentle sometimes slaps his girlfriend when he is drunk and they are arguing and that it is pretty normal for girls to be pressured into having sex. Moreover, 16% believe that women should know their place and more than a quarter believe it is important for men to be tough and strong.

Rosie shows there is an important difference between being tough and mentally strong.

In my role as Governor, I am trying to do what I can to reduce the gendered drivers of violence against women, by such things as promoting women's independence and decision making in public life and in personal relationships, challenging gender stereotypes and roles, and strengthening positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men and girls and boys.

I am also an advocate of banning physical punishment of children and of strengthening efforts to promote non-violent parenting.

And I acknowledge the need to reduce backlash by engaging men and boys in gender equality, and encouraging them to challenge rigid and restrictive gender role and identities. Backlash or resistance to change is something that Rosie explored in her visit to Sweden earlier this year.¹ It seems to be the explanation for high rates of domestic violence in Sweden, as well as highlighting the fact that gender equality is not the complete answer to family and domestic violence.

Thank you.

¹ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-15/rosie-batty-face-to-face-with-a-domestic-violence-perpetrator/7214978>, accessed 18 October, 2016.