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page 1 of 1

Delay in revoking Cable's 'legend' status shows there's far to go

CATHY KEZELMAN



Removing Barry Cable from the AFL Hall of Fame is too little, and far too late. The reality is that the crime of child sexual abuse demands zero tolerance from the community, and swift action.

The delay in Cable being stripped of "legend" status reveals an ongoing inherent lack of understanding around the gravity of the crime, the impacts of child sexual abuse and the importance of community compassion and

understanding for healing.

This case sheds light on the immense challenges child victims face when speaking out about their sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse is not uncommonly perpetrated by people in a position of power and celebrity.

Cable abused his power, betrayed the trust of a young girl and ensured her silence, with a seemingly blatant disregard for her innocence and humanity.

Speaking out is extremely challenging as victims often experience a lot of shame and self-blame.

Power imbalances sabotage the opportunity for those who

try to speak out to be seen and heard. It goes against true accountability and illustrates the ongoing power differential in which victims remain disempowered, often within communities in which stigma and secrecy abound.

Repeated humiliation and betrayal damage a child's sense of self, and self-esteem.

They fear not being believed, and often keep the secret of their violations for decades.

Silence, however, does not protect against the damage reaped, as the cumulative trauma experienced can affect every aspect of a survivor's being.

While stripping Cable of his

awards is the right thing to do, the delay symbolises a lack of true accountability and support for survivors.

The cost of inaction is immeasurable and compounds the already devastating experiences of victims, their families, and communities.

Sadly, this is just one story of many where power imbalance contributes to the silencing of survivors, and a delay in perpetrators being held to account.

It is high time the community places emphasis on what is of utmost importance — the long path to recovery for those so profoundly betrayed in childhood, often repeatedly

so, in seeking justice and support.

Survivors should know that healing is possible with the right support, and a sense of justice in which perpetrators are finally held to account is a critical part of the process.

As the community reflects on this long-overdue action, it is crucial to remember that while removing Cable from the AFL Hall of Fame is one delayed step towards accountability, survivors deserve swift action, and the priority must be ensuring that victims are heard, believed, and supported.

Dr Cathy Kezelman is president of Blue Knot Foundation