

Navy rape victim John Atkins against the pain of a Royal Commission

A MAN raped and tortured as a Navy cadet begs the government to not expose thousands of abuse victims to a Royal Commission.

By IAN McPHEDRAN National Defence Writer

News Corp Australia MAY 5, 2014 6:53PM



Opposes a royal commission ... John Atkins says he was raped and tortured as a 13-year-old naval cadet. *Source: Supplied*

A MAN who was raped and tortured after he joined the Navy as a 13-year-old boy has begged the government to avoid exposing thousands of abuse victims to a gruelling Royal Commission.

John Atkins was systematically abused from when he joined the [Royal Australian Navy](#) as a cadet at [Crib Point in Victoria](#) in 1951.

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His case has been accepted by the [Defence Abuse Response Taskforce \(DART\)](#), but he has not received compensation after his files were lost by the taskforce.

Mr Atkins strongly opposes a Royal Commission because of the vast cost and the fact that it would be too confronting for many victims.

“Whether we like it or not my life was ruined, two marriages were ruined and no amount of compensation can cover that,” Mr Atkins said.

“Many people are too ashamed to talk about their abuse so we need an ongoing judicial process so they can discuss it in their own time and without the pressure of a Royal Commission.”



A proud lieutenant in 1960 ... John Atkins. *Source: Supplied*



Allegedly raped and tortured ... John Atkins as a 13-year-old naval cadet. *Source: Supplied*

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The lawyer who ran the review of abuse allegations for DLA Piper in 2012, Dr Gary Rumble, has called for a Royal Commission. He has the support of many victims groups.

Meanwhile, the Federal Government has all but ruled out a judicial inquiry into decades of abuse in the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

It has also revealed that the total compensation payout for victims dealt with by the DART could pass \$30 million.

So far the taskforce headed by retired West Australian judge Len Roberts-Smith has assessed more than 1200 of the 2400 registered complaints and has made recommended reparation payments to 390 abuse victims dating back to the 1960s and paid out more than \$15 million.

Defence Minister David Johnston will update parliament next month on the progress of the DART.

He will said it was “premature” to be talking about a possible Royal Commission.

“It is important that the work of the DART be allowed to continue and that we do not pre-empt its findings because there is still some way to go yet,” the Minister told [News Corp Australia](#).

“I will be making a statement about the future of the DART and broader improvements to military justice in general. This will also foreshadow reforms to improve accountability and transparency in military justice.”

The independent Reparation Payments Assessor has paid out \$15.6 million including the following; 230 victims have received \$50,000, six \$45,000, 90 \$35,000, two \$30,000, 25 \$20,000, one \$15,000 and 11 people have received \$10,000.

In addition 39 cases have been referred to State and Territory police for further investigation, including 12 to NSW Police, eight to Victorian Police, seven to Qld Police and five to ACT Police.

Matters under investigation include a litany of serious crimes such as threat to kill, rape, unlawful and indecent assault, threat to inflict grievous bodily harm, stalking and intimidation with intent to cause fear, common assault, assault occasioning actual bodily harm, acts of gross indecency on a male, burglary with intent to assault; and/or use of a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence.

So far the taskforce has cost taxpayers more than \$32 million including \$17 million to fund the DART office and its 115 staff.

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Source: <http://www.news.com.au/national/navy-rape-victim-john-atkins-against-the-pain-of-a-royal-commission/news-story/97efeb621c645d2ffbcbce638177eae7>

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