

Aware

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

In this issue

Young people and sexual assault

Welcome to the eighth edition of *ACSSA Aware*, the newsletter of the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault. This issue has a focus on preventing and responding to sexual assault of young people.

Police statistics and independent studies have shown that young women and girls have the highest victimisation rate of any group, at risk from both family members and young men and boys in their peer group. The latter group is the focus of our feature article in this issue, where we look at sexual assault prevention initiatives in schools. The article reflects on past sexual assault prevention initiatives with young women and men, and considers these in the light of the changes in adolescent behaviour reported in the *Sex in Australia* study. Two current school-based programs are reviewed, and the effects of proposed policy changes considered.

Children and young people are also the focus of our service profile, where the Incest Survivors Association in Western Australia outlines the particular challenges of service provision for victim/survivors of childhood sexual assault.

We have also included an overview of state/territory-based policies covering sexual assault. While no state or territory has a specific policy statement on sexual assault, sexual violence is often located within the broad themes of "violence" and/or "women's safety". We compare the publicly-available documents articulating state/territory government commitments to addressing this violence, and specific initiatives or approaches they nominate as being directed towards sexual violence.

There are also a number of updates from around the sector, including a discussion of the report, *A Fair Chance*, on proposals for sexual assault law reform in New South Wales. This is a discussion paper by the New South Wales Adult Sexual Assault Inter-agency Committee, convened by New South Wales police, to address the problem of low conviction rates in sexual offence cases and to identify areas in need of reform.

We have also included a presentation, given by Claire Grealy of Urbis Keys Young Consultants, outlining the National Framework for Sexual Assault Prevention developed for the Office for Women. The Framework is designed to "provide the basis for cross sector responsibility for reducing and preventing sexual assault" and to address sexual assault in Indigenous communities "with the aim of developing a collaborative and community-based approach".

ACSSA PUBLICATIONS

As there are so few forums in which those working in the field can share information with one another, we are very keen to accept articles for publication within the newsletter *ACSSA Aware*. We now accept articles of up to 5000 words, and book reviews, news of conferences, training and research projects are also welcomed (up to 1500 words). If you would like to contribute an article or review to *ACSSA Aware*, details of how to do so are on the inside back cover of this newsletter. You can access our "contributor's guidelines" from the website or contact ACSSA directly.



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Family Studies

Australian Centre for the
Study of Sexual Assault

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault aims to improve access to current information on sexual assault in order to assist policy makers, service providers, and others interested in this area to develop evidence-based strategies to prevent, respond to, and ultimately reduce the incidence of sexual assault.

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault is funded by the Office for Women, Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services, through the Women's Safety Agenda. The Centre is hosted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

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Two new publications are reviewed, both dealing with the experiences of women in prisons: *Severed Connections: An Exploration of the Impact of Imprisonment on Women's Familial and Social Connectedness*, by Dr Dot Goulding and Trish Harris of Murdoch University (2004); and *Drugs and Crime: A Study of Incarcerated Female Offenders*, by Holly Johnson of the Australian Institute of Criminology (2004). On this topic we also draw attention to the third international conference of Sisters Inside, *Is Prison Obsolete?*, to be held in Melbourne in July 2005.

This edition's Good Practice Profile is the *Responding to Sexual Assault and Promoting Sexual Safety* initiative, within Queensland Health inpatient mental health services. Following extensive state-wide consultation, the initiative resulted in the development of guidelines to inform the development of local area policy and procedures.

There are our regular columns on conferences and training as well as literature highlights from recent additions to ACSSA's library collection at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

As always, ACSSA remains keen to receive feedback on how we can better meet the needs of those committed to working against sexual assault, so please continue to provide us with your comments on current or future publications. If this is the first issue of *Aware* you've read, earlier editions can be requested via email or by returning the form on the back page of this issue. And don't forget, all our publications are available online at <http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/>.

Readers' input invited

ANIMAL ABUSE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Do you currently work within domestic violence service provision?
- Are you interested in links between domestic violence, child abuse and cruelty to animals?

Here's a chance to have your say . . .

Researchers from Central Queensland University will soon be mailing out a questionnaire to all Domestic Violence Service providers asking you to share your experiences in this area.

**In the meantime, further information may be
obtained by contacting Nik Taylor on
(07) 4930 9433 or n.taylor@cqu.edu.au**

Exploring approaches to sexual assault law reform

A Fair Chance: Proposals for Sexual Assault Law Reform in NSW, A discussion paper by the New South Wales Adult Sexual Assault Interagency Committee, November 2004, 40 pages.

The New South Wales Adult Sexual Assault Interagency Committee, convened by New South Wales police, are keen to address the problem of low conviction rates in sexual offence cases, and to identify areas in need of reform where the prosecution of sexual assault is concerned.

The Committee consists of a range of key stakeholders including representatives from government departments, the Office of Public Prosecutions, Women's Legal Services, and the New South Wales Rape Crisis Centre. The paper, *A Fair Chance: Proposals for Sexual Assault Law Reform in NSW*, is the product of an 18-month review of both national and international research undertaken by the Legal Issues Sub-committee, appointed by the New South Wales Adult Sexual Assault Interagency Committee, to explore approaches to sexual assault law reform taken by the various jurisdictions in Australia.

The paper looks at the prosecution process in the context of sexual offences and explores current legislation, the impact of the system on victims, and options for reform. Specifically, the paper addresses: (1) jury directions in relation to corroboration warnings and delays in complaint; (2) changes to court procedures that will minimise the associated trauma complainant's experience in going through the prosecution process, as well as reduce delays; (3) the further strengthening of the nature of suppression orders to better protect the confidentiality of complainants; and (4) changes to the substantive law that will more effectively deal with offences involving drug and alcohol facilitated sexual assault, and that will improve the law's treatment of consent.

Of particular interest are the reforms proposed by the sub-committee that could allow the evidence provided by multiple victims in historical cases, or "tendency evidence" (that is, other witnesses who could give evidence of behaviour that was consistent with the charges that had proceeded against the accused), to be more readily admitted in sexual offence cases. *A Fair Chance* highlights the difficulties posed by existing legislation in restricting evidence of uncharged acts or past similar behaviour being admitted. In most cases, the prejudicial effect of evidence that suggests the accused might have a propensity to behave in certain ways, or where there are patterns of abusive behaviour that can be demonstrated in the past (i.e. such as in domestic violence contexts) is understood to outweigh any evidentiary value that it could provide to a prosecution case.

The law also continues to rely on traditional safeguards for cases involving multiple victims. Where victims have had contact with each other, either at the time, or following the events in question, the law has allowed the mere possibility of "concoction" to render the evidence of these other acts or offences inadmissible. For prosecutions involving multiple victims, the law has generally required that charges involving one victim be heard separately from any others.

The options for reform outlined in *A Fair Chance* would provide for a more appropriate balance in allowing prosecutors to legitimately draw on evidence that substantially supports the allegations of single or multiple victims while ensuring that the rights of an accused are properly observed.

Copies of the report can be accessed via the Violence Against Women Specialist Unit's website at www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/vaw

Melanie Heenan is the Coordinator of the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.

State and Territory sexual assault policy

Monique Keel

Sexual assault and family/domestic violence impact greatly on the lives of women, children and men in Australian society. Interpersonal violence against women, particularly intimate partner violence, and child physical and sexual abuse¹ have been on the agendas of state and territory governments since the early 1970s, mainly due to the vocal and consistent lobbying voices of women activists (Carmody 1992; Orr 1997).

Each state and territory now funds women's refuges and crisis centres for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and each state and territory has legislation which makes sexual assault against adults and children a crime. (ACSSA's Issues Paper 4, June 2005, will provide a cross-jurisdictional review of sexual offence legislation.) Although crisis services are an integral component of our response to the prevalence of violence in our society, there are many other services, programs and legislative changes that also can assist in preventing and responding to "public" and "private" violence.

This article presents a brief overview of state and territory policy that covers the area of sexual assault. Although a number of states and territories have had inquiries into issues related to sexual assault, none has a specific policy statement on sexual assault. Instead, sexual violence is located within the broad themes of "violence" and/or "safety".

Here, excerpts from these documents that specifically address the issue of sexual violence against adults are presented. The information is taken directly from the policy documents themselves. Policy related to the protection of children from sexual assault is generally located within documents separate from those that are related to women's safety and are thus outside the scope of this overview.

A look across the various state and territory documents is useful for policy makers who are engaging in state-based program and policy reform, as well as for community organisations and members who remain keen to monitor how governments are positioning their policies to address violence against women. A comparison of the state/territory governments' commitment to women's issues, based solely on these documents, cannot fairly be achieved in the limits of this overview, as not all existing initiatives and programs are outlined in the documents. However, the policy documents provide a good place to begin to understand how governments see their role in ensuring women's safety.

The documents vary widely in their scope and detail. The Australian Capital Territory Action Plan, for example, contains details of which department is responsible for the various actions and how success will be measured. The newly released South Australian Women's Safety Strategy provides a broad outline only of the approaches taken to end violence. The Queensland document details few initiatives and appears to focus on public transport as a major safety issue for women, while in Western Australia, aside from responses related to the "Gordon Inquiry" (the Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities), the only mention of sexual assault is a reference to ongoing funding of its sexual assault crisis services.

This paper does not attempt to analyse or evaluate the strategies or policy statements. The aim is simply to provide a broad description of the documents and the approach taken. Not addressed are how these policy statements have been implemented or the kinds of initiatives that may have been developed in response to the aims and objectives of the documents. Links to the state/territory documents are found in the endnotes, or alternatively they can be accessed via the ACSSA website at www.aifs.gov.au/acssa

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

The main policy document that addresses sexual assault in the Australian Capital Territory is the *2004-2005 Second Action Plan Addressing Violence and Safety Issues for Women in the ACT*.² This action plan was developed to support the ACT Government Policy Framework, Justice, Options and Prevention: Working to make the lives of ACT women safe. The plan covers all types of violence against women and their children, with particular attention given to domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

The plan is centred around three priority outcome areas: protection and justice (a justice system that provides protection, support and advocacy for women); options for women (provision of assistance for women that is appropriate, accessible and responsive); and prevention of violence (understanding, acceptance and acknowledgement of the right of women to live their lives free from violence).

In achieving these outcomes, emphasis is placed on three key areas: reviewing legislation and legal processes; strengthening services and programs; and working with the community. The Action Plan contains details of what needs to happen for each priority area to be actualised, including naming which department is responsible for achieving the outcome and performance measures.

Changes to legislation and legal processes

Examples of changes to legislation and legal processes include:

- Enactment of a Human Rights Act for the ACT, enshrining the rights of women to be free of violence.
- Promotion of collaboration across criminal justice agencies to provide more effective responses to sexual assault and domestic violence.
- Piloting of the integration of data for sexual assault cases across criminal justice agencies and improvement of data collection.
- Undertaking of a trial of circle sentencing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders.

Community prevention of violence against women

The continuation of work with the community to prevent violence against women includes:

- Funding community education to raise awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault issues, and helping change community attitudes towards violence.
- Conducting anti-bullying and anti-sexual harassment programs in schools, involving students and parents.

NEW SOUTH WALES

The New South Wales Government is currently implementing a statewide, whole of government *Strategy to Reduce Violence Against Women*. The Strategy aims to develop and promote effective prevention approaches, and improve access to services. It has three key elements: a partnership response to all violence against women; a focus on prevention; and a broad definition of “violence against women”.

The Strategy involves: the Regional Violence Prevention Specialist Program; the Violence Against Women Specialist Unit; the NSW Council on Violence Against Women; community education; and prevention programs.

The main policy document that outlines the state’s strategies to reduce and respond to sexual assault is the NSW Action Plan for Women 2003-2005.³ The NSW Action Plan (2005) provides an outline of the state government’s policy initiatives, programs and services related to sexual assault. It is updated regularly and currently outlines a number of government commitments to reduce sexual assault.

Recent and current sexual assault policy initiatives include:

- the review of the implementation status of the recommendations of the *Heroines of Fortitude* report (1996), which focused on addressing the difficulties experienced by women sexual assault victims going through the court system;

- the employment of a Sexual Assault Liaison Officer at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions; and
- the employment of more female Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers in the NSW Police Force to improve reporting of family violence and sexual assault.

Training programs include:

- education and training provided by the New South Wales Health Education Centre Against Violence, including specialist sexual assault training and resources for sexual assault workers and other health workers; and
- training for Aboriginal sexual assault officers.

Programs for victims

- The Victim-Offender Conferencing and Communication Program enables conferences, meetings and other communication between victims and offenders, which can be initiated by the victim in cases of sexual assault.

Sexual assault support services

- There is \$9 million allocated to sexual assault services annually.

Victim services include:

- Witness Assistance Service for victims of violence crimes under prosecution, including sexual assault;
- training for staff at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions on the impact of sexual assault and domestic violence on women and children; and
- Sexual Assault Regional Liaison Forums for Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions lawyers, Crown Prosecutors and sexual assault workers to increase understanding of each others' roles.

Information and referral includes:

- the development of an information sheet for victims of sexual assault on entitlements to victims' compensation and counselling.

Funding programs:

- funding of projects aimed at reducing violence against women including self defence training, working with survivors of child sexual abuse, and addressing sexual assault in nightclubs.

Prevention programs include:

- information campaign for young people on the dangers of drink spiking.
- *Manly Safe Chix Project*, a sexual assault education project for young people in northern Sydney;
- *Date Rape Cubes* produced in the Southern Region as a resource to promote discussions with young people about sexual assault and consent issues;
- forum for accommodation services in New England to address issues of sexual assault for women with disabilities;
- drinks spiking campaign; and
- dating violence campaign in universities.

Promoting healthy relationships:

- review of violence prevention programs for adolescents.

Drug and alcohol facilitated sexual assault:

- the Attorney General's Department is conducting a range of information and prevention strategies in relation to drug and alcohol facilitated sexual assault.

Community education initiatives:

- *Be Safe Be Sure* project, a sexual assault education program for women with intellectual disabilities.

Interagency and other coordinating mechanisms:

- Sexual Assault Review Committee convened to discuss issues relating to the investigation and conduct of sexual assault prosecutions.
- New South Wales Government Interagency Committee on Adult Sexual Assault, convened by NSW police to address issues relating to the management of sexual assault cases, looking at issues relating to the legal system, and services for victims of sexual assault.

The central coordination and management of the Strategy's work is conducted by the Violence Against Women Specialist Unit, located in the Communities Division of the New South Wales Department of Community Services.

QUEENSLAND

The main policy related to violence against women in Queensland is the *Women in the Smart State 2003-2008 Directions Statement*.⁴ The QLD Directions Statement (2005) identifies health, balancing work, family and lifestyle, economic security, safety and women's involvement in leadership, decision-making and community building as key priorities. This framework guides program and service development and delivery over the coming years. It was launched alongside a Services Directory, detailing programs and services currently available through Queensland Government agencies.

Goal 4 of the Statement states: "Women experience higher rates of domestic and sexual violence than men at all stages of their lives." The Directions Statement aims to enhance women's safety by: implementing strategies to reduce violence against women; helping women feel safe and supported in their homes and communities; and improving transport services to women.

There are no specific programs related to sexual assault included within the Statement.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

On 10 December 2003, the Northern Territory Ministerial Standing Committee on Crime Prevention requested the Department of Justice, in consultation with the Department of Health and Community Services, the Department of the Chief Minister, and Northern Territory Police, to develop a project plan for presentation to the first Ministerial Standing Committee of 2004, that outlines a proposal for a Northern Territory Sexual Assault Action Plan.⁵

On 17 December 2003, the Northern Territory Minister for Justice announced that a Government Taskforce would be established to tackle the rate of sexual assault across the Territory. The Minister announced that the primary focus of the new Sexual Assault Taskforce, to be headed by the Office of Crime Prevention, Department of Justice, would be to reduce the level of sexual crimes in the Territory through the development of a targeted Sexual Assault Prevention Plan. The Minister advised that the Plan would identify current data, police and legal responses, services for survivors of sexual assault, remote area issues and coordination across various government agencies.

The interdepartmental Sexual Assault Task Force is currently developing a Sexual Assault Prevention Plan for the Northern Territory. The Discussion Paper and Action Plan for the development of the Sexual Assault Prevention Plan was expected to be released within the first half of 2005.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The main policy document addressing sexual assault in South Australia, released on 8 March 2005 is "Our Commitment to Women's Safety in South Australia".⁶ This document does not have a specific focus on sexual assault although it does recognise that sexual assault is a form of violence affecting women.

The Strategy outlines four key directions for the Women's Safety Strategy:

- prevention of violence against women;
- provision of services to those who need them;
- protection for women from experiencing violence; and
- performance: monitoring and evaluation of the Women's Safety Strategy.

There are two documents that accompany the Women Safety Strategy, one entitled *Women's Safety: Our Achievements So Far*, which lists all government programs to date that relate to women's safety. This document includes initiatives specific to adult sexual assault, such as a perpetrator program within correctional facilities and a rape prevention project for women with a mental illness. The second document, entitled *Over The Next Six Months We Will*, includes one initiative aimed at reducing sexual assault – a booklet for young Aboriginal women.

TASMANIA

The most relevant policy document related to sexual assault in Tasmania is the *Report of the Task Force on Sexual Assault and Rape in Tasmania 1998*.⁷ In 1995 the Tasmanian Government established a Task Force

to review the whole-of-system response to sexual assault and rape. The emphasis of the Task Force Report is that sexual assault is a crime and must therefore be aligned with the crime prevention responsibilities of government.

The strategy developed by the Task Force aims to enable the government and the community to work together to develop positive solutions to reduce crimes of sexual assault and rape. It aims to change the public attitude to sexual assault, provide a less traumatic process in the courts, ensure consistent condemnation of the proven offender and provide an adequate level of support for the victim.

Recommendations were made which aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- a better coordinated policy development structure which reflects a government and community partnership in reducing the incidence of sexual assault;
- an improved response from the legal system to the victims of sexual assault and rape;
- the establishment of practice standards across the range of services which respond to sexual assault;
- improved education and training of all service providers who respond to sexual assault;
- attention to access and equity issues so that services are developed for, or inclusive of, particular groups who are currently without access to an appropriate service;
- ongoing monitoring of the impact of legislative and policy changes;
- an improved information system for the compilation and analysis of information on victims, offenders and crimes; and
- crime prevention education in relation to sexual assault and rape, including strengthening of community education activities to improve public understanding of the issues.

VICTORIA

Victoria's policy response to sexual assault is contained within the pages of the *Women's Safety Strategy: A Policy Framework (2002)*⁸ and the accompanying document *Acting on the Women's Safety Strategy (2002)*. Within the policy statement, sexual assault is included in the general area of violence against women, as well as being a specific area discussed.

The *Women's Safety Strategy* provides a good overview of how violence affects women in Victoria and provides an analysis of the impact of violence on women, and current thinking about how best to reduce violence and meet women's safety needs.

There are four key directions in which the Victorian Government proposes to focus its efforts: protection and justice; options for women; violence prevention and education; and community action and coordination.

Sexual assault is discussed within these four areas, with some details of specific programs and initiative outlined in the *Acting on the Women's Safety Strategy* document. These initiatives include: the

ADDENDUM

ACSSA ISSUES PAPER 2: MAPPING HEALTH SECTOR AND INTERAGENCY PROTOCOLS ON SEXUAL ASSAULT

Updating information on New South Wales Adult Sexual Assault Interagency Guidelines

New South Wales Police, Health and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) have asked that we clarify the status of the "NSW Adult Sexual Assault Interagency Guidelines" as detailed in ACSSA's Issues Paper 2 (March 2005), *Mapping Health Sector and Interagency Protocols on Sexual Assault*, authored by Liz Olle.

They note that the existing interagency policy is contained in the *NSW Adult Sexual Assault Interagency Guidelines*. New South Wales Police is currently convening a review of these Guidelines. The document quoted in Issues Paper 2 therefore does not represent the Guidelines that remain in operation. The draft referred to in the Issues Paper remains just that – a draft only.

Information regarding the revised Guidelines can be obtained from the chair of the Review Committee Tamahra Manson, Senior Policy Officer (NSW Police) via email mans1tam@police.nsw.gov.au or telephone (02) 8835 9162.

establishment of the Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Sexual Assault and Non-Relationship Violence Against Women: a review of the Victoria Police operating procedures for sexual assault; and an Inquiry into the Law and Procedure in Relation to Sexual Offences undertaken by The Victorian Law Reform Commission.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

There are a number of policy documents in Western Australia that address the issue of sexual assault. The major report is the *Western Australian Family and Domestic Violence State Strategic Plan 2004-2008*.⁹ The 2004-2008 plan aims to prevent and reduce the incidence of family and domestic violence in Western Australia. It is a culmination of comprehensive community and inter-government consultation to identify priority areas, focus areas and high level strategies, which could achieve maximum results in the community.

The resulting strategic framework will guide all government departments in future planning and implementation of policies and programs aimed at the safety of women and children. Specifically, in the area of sexual assault, the Plan lists the funding of six specialised Sexual Assault Resource Centres as a core response to sexual assault in Western Australia.

A second major policy area regarding violence against women and children in Western Australia is in relation to the Gordon Inquiry.¹⁰ This inquiry looked into how the Government should deal with widespread sexual abuse and violence occurring within Western Australia's Aboriginal community. Included within the response is the funding of Aboriginal Liaison Officers with the Sexual Assault Referral Services and a number of changes related to responding to child sexual abuse. The website contains brochures that detail exactly how the Gordon Secretariat intends to spend the money allocated to addressing family violence and sexual assault in Indigenous communities.

References

Moira Carmody (1992), "Uniting all women: A historical look at attitudes to rape", in Jan Breckenridge & Moira Carmody (eds), *Crimes of violence: Australian responses to rape and child sexual assault*, Allen and Unwin, North Sydney.

Liz Orr (1997), "The development of services against sexual assault in the State of Victoria 1970-1990", Unpublished Masters Thesis, La Trobe University, Melbourne.

Endnotes

- 1 This paper focuses on policy that principally addresses adult sexual assault. In June 2005, the National Child Protection Clearinghouse is releasing a paper reviewing state/territory policies. A brief discussion of state policies related to child protection can also be found within the following document: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/subject/5/criteria/child%20protection>
- 2 *The 2004-05 Second Action Plan Addressing Violence and Safety Issues for Women in the ACT is available from ACT Office for Women on the web at: <http://www.women.act.gov.au/governmentpoliciesandinitiatives.html>*
- 3 *The NSW Action Plan for Women 2003-2005: Violence and Safety* can be found on at... http://www.women.nsw.gov.au/ProvidingInfo/ProvidingInfo_ActionPlan.htm
- 4 *The Women in the Smart State 2003-2008 Directions Statement* is available from Queensland Office for Women at <http://www.women.qld.gov.au/?ID=76>
- 5 The project officer with the department is Kate Halliday, contact details: PO Box 3457 Darwin NT 0801. Phone (08) 8999 8950.
- 6 The South Australian document, *Our Commitment to Women's Safety in South Australia (2005)* is available from the South Australian Office for Women's Policy at: http://www.officeforwomen.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?area_id=10&nav_id=660
- 7 *The Report of the Task Force on Sexual Assault and Rape in Tasmania 1998* is available from Women Tasmania at <http://www.women.tas.gov.au/resources/reports/index.html>
- 8 *The Women's Safety Strategy: A Policy Framework (2002)* and the *Acting on the Women's Safety Strategy* document are available from Office of Women's Policy: <http://www.women.vic.gov.au/CA256EAE0012F311/Womens%20Policy/Womens+Safety>
- 9 *The Western Australian Family and Domestic Violence State Strategic Plan 2004-2008* is available from Family and Domestic Violence Unit at http://familyanddomesticviolence.communitydevelopment.wa.gov.au/content/content.asp?page=email_order_form_research.htm
- 10 For information on the Gordon Inquiry Response see <http://www.gordonresponse.dpc.wa.gov.au/>

For the first time in Australia, we have a National Framework for Sexual Assault Prevention!

In 2004, the Office for Women published a report prepared by consultants from Urbis Keys Young outlining a National Framework for Sexual Assault Prevention. This is an edited version of a presentation by **Clare Grealy** showcasing the key findings from the project.

I'd like to thank the Office for Women for inviting us to participate in this forum – to hear the speakers and showcase our work – but most of all for the opportunity, a year on from its finalisation, to reflect critically on the work we did to develop the National Framework for Sexual Assault Prevention (NFSAP).

I'd like to acknowledge my colleagues on this study. Kerry Reed-Gilbert is a Wirradjuri woman from New South Wales and has a long personal and professional commitment to addressing violence against Aboriginal Women. Ania Wilczynski has contributed to numerous studies in the area of violence against women. I began my career in human services 20 years ago at the Adelaide Rape Crisis Centre. Thus each of us brought a particular commitment to this important work.

In this presentation I'll be addressing what we set out to do, some reflections on our approach, and findings and the Framework.

Urbis Keys Young successfully tendered to develop the National Framework for Sexual Assault Prevention. The Framework was to “provide the basis for cross-sector responsibility for reducing and preventing sexual assault” and was to address sexual assault in Indigenous communities “with the aim of developing a collaborative and community-based approach”.

The objective was to: (1) provide the basis for cross sector responsibility for reducing and preventing sexual assault; (2) address sexual assault in Indigenous communities; and (3) provide a seamless platform with prevention strategies against child sexual assault.

The required tasks were to: (1) undertake an extensive literature review; (2) consult widely with stakeholders; (3) and develop the Framework, which would include a set of national principles, and recommendations or key priorities for future work in the area. To this end, we conducted a review of prevention, early intervention and responses to sexual assault in Australia and internationally. We undertook consultations with Australian Government agencies, state/territory agencies, and other relevant bodies. And we developed a cross-sectoral policy framework, including a set of national principles for sexual assault prevention and recommendations/key priorities for future work in the area.

The Framework

To start at the beginning, we took a step back and thought carefully about what a framework is, or should be, and what it should be able to offer. The notion of a “framework” includes that it be well constructed, systematic in its construction, and flexible for different applications.

By definition, a framework holds up something else. To do this it needs to be sturdy and well constructed. The idea of “framework” also implies some internal logic, something systematic about its construction, but in this instance it also needed to provide flexibility. The other important point at the outset was to anticipate the potential of the framework: how it might be used or applied, by whom, and what their stake might be in its development.

We saw its applications as many and varied. The Framework should:

- provide a basis for responsibility to be shared across multiple sectors of stakeholders;
- provide a mechanism that will promote the breadth of learning being generated everyday in every project, service, policy group, legislative review and so on;
- provide a way forward that would harness the enormous existing effort being put into the prevention of sexual assault across the country;
- support good practice across both policy and practice settings – making the links and the learning easier; and
- provide guidance and the impetus for the review of service delivery in ways that take into account the emerging evidence base.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders ranged across diverse professional disciplines, cultural groups, political and ideological perspectives and geographic locations.

The majority of people involved in the issue of sexual assault are passionate about their work, they often have strongly held opinions and values, and bring all of this to their work, whether they are service providers to victims, offenders, researchers, or policy makers. Our methodology needed to reach each group and bring people together, often for the first time.

Approach

The approach we developed included:

- forming a team comprised of Indigenous and non-Indigenous members;
- conducting a wide ranging literature review leading to the collection of hundreds of documents from Australia and overseas;
- developing resources to support workshops and focus groups in the consultation phase;
- creating “entry” strategies in each location, including the identification and engagement with a key agency, person or group to assist in organising the consultation, to provide local legitimacy and integrity, and to encourage people to attend; and
- identifying the broadest range of stakeholders possible, conducting local discussion to check we had everyone, and making direct and repeated invitations to attend;

When the draft Framework was complete, three peers with expertise in the field were invited to review the document; this provided invaluable feedback. We also ensured that we understood the progress and scope of other activities funded under the National Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault that might be relevant to the Framework, with the aim of ensuring that the Office for Women received a product that made sense in the overall context.

Some of the issues and complexities

A range of issues arose during the course of the project.

- It was important that we respected the fact that the sectors had strongly felt stakes in such a Framework.
- There were tensions and complexities in doing this work. The tensions were (and are) real, and our approach needed to predict the implications of these and work with those that arose along the way.
- Understanding prevention and the role of tertiary responses was an issue. There was a great strength of feeling brought to the development of the Framework by stakeholders and when resources are inadequate there is always a tension in terms of where investment goes – towards prevention or tertiary responses. We were also keen to explore where the appropriate balance between these two ends of the spectrum might lie.
- Another issue was the linking of adult sexual assault to child sexual assault responses. The project brief required us to link adult sexual assault prevention with child sexual assault systems – the fit between a national framework for adult sexual assault prevention and state based child sexual assault systems was certainly a challenge.
- Promoting interest in a national definition was an issue. A national definition was a focus in the brief, but stakeholders were less interested in this being an outcome.
- Reviewing the state of the existing evidence base which is in its infancy raised its own limitations. We thus included a focus in the literature review on program level evaluation that included unpublished papers resourced from services themselves, or examining “good practice” sites.
- A lack of clarity in some program design in terms of what types of violence the program targets was an issue. The question of “evaluability” often arose, with program design not always articulated, or described in so broad a way that legitimate links could not be made between the services provided and outcomes for people using these services.
- Finally, a challenge was that the consultation phase coincided with the high media attention and stakeholder awareness of the Office for Women’s postponed national campaign.

Reflections

Parallel processes using different approaches. We had already intended to use different formats for Indigenous and non-Indigenous consultations, using a single discussion paper, which would be inclusive of the full range of issues. However, as it was being prepared it became evident that a single paper would not be meaningful in the context of both mainstream and Indigenous discussions. The development of separate papers for the Indigenous and non-Indigenous consultations proved to be beneficial. The Indigenous paper stated clearly what we knew about sexual violence in Aboriginal communities and its impact on Aboriginal women, their children and their communities. The tailored paper, and the frank approach we took to naming the issues, was welcomed.

Reaching state/territory people with responsibility. A real challenge was reaching government people with responsibility for this area – indeed, not all states had people with responsibility for this area.

A primarily metropolitan focus. The only non-metropolitan areas in which consultations were conducted were Cairns, Alice Springs and Bendigo, and this was a limitation in some regards. However, those consulted included a number of stakeholders with responsibility for non-metropolitan regions, and some based in non-metropolitan areas who travelled to attend the consultations.

Challenged traditional/entrenched divides. An absolute strength was the challenge to traditional divides which people rose to without exception, often meeting for the first time with stakeholders who had traditionally sat at opposite ends of the table – for example, workers in offender-related programs having a dialogue with services that addressed the needs of victims.

Findings

General comments

When the fieldwork was completed, my colleagues and I spent three days downloading our notes, impressions and the richness of 23 workshops and focus groups across the country. What really struck us was the consistency of the issues and concerns, and importantly, consistency in the types of responses that emerged across the different groups in the community. The other key theme was the consistently high degree of commitment and will to work differently and more effectively, and the consistent reference to the need for leadership to make this occur.

Framework outline

Now to the Framework itself. The challenge was to bring together mountains of information, ideas and options into a format that could actively be used to move forward. Ultimately we structured the Framework around three themes, with corresponding sections in the document.

The first theme addresses the issue of evidenced-based prevention, including access to information pathways and how success in sexual assault prevention might be evaluated.

The second theme, points of intervention, addresses the focus of intervention, including the efficacy of and relationship between primary and secondary and tertiary strategies.

Finally, we looked at the ways in which prevention activity can be maximised, including the challenge of integrating effort across multiple sectors and disciplines. The impact of the language used, and definitional debates were also addressed.

Framework principles

In developing the principles we wanted to reflect the magnitude of the issue and the level of commitment and the leadership required to have an impact.

From the literature to the consultations it is absolutely evident that responsibility for the eradication of sexual assault rests with the whole Australian community.

Prevention must begin with addressing the cultural values and norms that support and tolerate sexual assault. This is a long-term undertaking requiring sustained leadership and effort. It also requires an evidence base anchored in the Australian context, which is disseminated across all the relevant spheres. Portfolios across all levels of government, partners outside of government and the whole community each must make a contribution.

Evidence-based prevention

To achieve evidence-based practice in any field, coherent information pathways are required. At present information sources are highly scattered. Front line services in particular lack the resources to invest in information management – and this has a double-edged consequence. Not only is practice disconnected from the emerging evidence base, but also the evidence base is not being expanded by front-line practitioners who are otherwise well placed to contribute.

In terms of developing indicators of success, there is no standardised national data collection in the sexual assault field, official statistics are well recognised as problematic, and self report surveys, while recognised as a valued methodology, raise questions of definition and comparability. In truth, the nature of the evidence required and how to get it, how to measure it, is not yet well enough understood.

Points of intervention

The obvious question is where to intervene in order to have the greatest effect. In practical terms, the answer inevitably links to the availability of resources.

Contemporary primary prevention campaigns seek to shift social norms by changing the meaning of behaviour. It is well recognised that primary prevention will not be effective in and of itself. But it is certainly valued as a springboard for well-targeted secondary efforts.

Secondary prevention takes into account what is known about risk factors and targets or “at risk” groups. In the sexual assault context this has raised concerns about the potential for victim blaming, or male stereotyping. Other questions that concern the effectiveness of programs or the adequacy of resourcing must also be raised. For example, key transition points in young people’s development are recognised as effective times to provide information and resources. But how much, when, and by whom?

These questions are only just beginning to be asked and *only just* beginning to be researched.

The place of tertiary responses in a preventive framework was the only link we found to child sexual abuse efforts. If prior assault is a risk factor for later assault, the response of child sexual abuse services is absolutely critical to prevention.

We also found that the links between stakeholders across these three areas of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention were consistently ad hoc. There is also some sensitivity about issues such as who should provides services, how links between services should work, and where the funding for the content of programs is coming from.

Maximising the impact

Integration of effort. It is abundantly clear that no single agency can lead prevention efforts alone, and because the responsibility lies across multiple agencies and portfolios there is a risk of a further scattering of effort. The biggest challenge identified by the project is sustaining integrated effort beyond short-term or one-off projects. Integration is hard and takes resources, but dissipated effort is a waste of resources.

Language and prevention initiatives. Given the key targets in sexual assault prevention are the norms and values that support a violence-tolerant culture in Australia, targeting these values requires the careful construction of campaigns which communicate well-crafted messages to each target group, including the broader community, violent and non-violent men and women, and young people across diverse cultural groups and settings. This challenge places the effective use of language in prevention efforts centre-stage.

- Prevention messages must use the vernacular of the target community to deliver messages and information.
- Sexual assault frequently occurs in the context of a range of other behaviours. The language used in prevention strategies must identify and name this continuum of behaviour.
- The key question when considering definitions of sexual assault is the purpose and utility of the definition. For example, can a single definition address the legislative, prevention and response contexts of sexual assault? What is lost through the variation in definitions across stakeholder groups, and what are the implications for prevention?
- There are significant research implications of the varying definitions of sexual assault used across disciplines, and the research methods preferred by the various disciplines. Implications range from what each discipline considers data, what is considered rigorous and/or reliable, and where to position the starting point of each inquiry.
- The defining of key terms may be a more relevant approach in the context of prevention than seeking to define “sexual assault” at a national level. Key terms may include date rape, acquaintance rape, rape in marriage, and other terms descriptive of the context in which sexual assault commonly occurs.

Proposed areas for future action

The Framework includes numerous ways forward, but there are a number that we draw particular attention to in the report, or that we believe should be given the highest priority. These include:

- Setting a national sexual assault research agenda
- Developing prevention plans
- Establishing the source of existing and new investment
- Providing investment into evidence-based programs
- Funding resource outcome-based evaluation
- Improving access to information pathways
- Ensuring that Indigenous voices are heard in key decision making forums.

Thanks for listening.

Claire Grealy is the senior consultant for the study team. The Showcasing Seminars took place in Brisbane in March 2005 and were hosted by the Australian Government’s Office for Women (Department of Family and Community Services) and the Queensland Office for Women.

Hard copies of the Urbis Keys Young Report, *National Framework for Sexual Assault Prevention*, can be requested from the Office for Women by phoning 1800 808 863. Online copies can be obtained via the following link: <http://ofw.facs.gov.au/padv/02/resources.html>

by Lara Fergus

Women in prisons

Two major studies have been released recently on women in prisons, including new research on issues of sexual assault. In addition, Sisters Inside, an independent community organisation advocating for the human rights of women in the criminal justice system, is holding its third international conference in Melbourne in July 2005.

***Severed Connections: An Exploration of the Impact of Imprisonment on Women's Familial and Social Connectedness*, by Dr Dot Goulding and Trish Harris (2004), Murdoch University, Perth.**

Severed Connections is a two-year study that identifies six main socio-economic and cultural groups of women in prison in Western Australia and aims to challenge the "one size fits all" approach to program and service delivery. The report is a largely ethnographic account of the experiences of women in prison, newly released women and their families, using the women's own voices and acknowledging them as experts of the prison experience. The authors note that the study "has its ethos firmly grounded within the framework of prison reform" (Goulding and Harris 2004: 7).

Despite the vastly different backgrounds of the women, the research showed they shared certain common experience: "With only a handful of exceptions, each of the women in this study had endured histories of emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse" (Goulding and Harris 2004: 54).

High numbers of women recount their experiences of sexual and family violence, particularly by intimate partners, during the interviews. The problem of returning to abusive relationships, and of women being revictimised upon release from prison, is also examined. Mental illness was another major common experience. Other factors making reconnection difficult included homelessness, social isolation, addictions, the threat (for some) of deportation, self-harm and suicide.

One of the major recommendations of the report is the establishment of secure halfway houses in both metropolitan and rural areas "where women nearing release and those serving short prison terms can serve out their sentences in an environment more aligned with community standards", and that "information regarding domestic violence, relationship violence and sexual abuse be made readily available in all prisons holding women" (Goulding and Harris 2004: 54)

The full report *Severed Connections* is available online at:
<http://www.scase.murdoch.edu.au/projects-prison.html>, and
<http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/research/vicservice.html>

***Drugs and Crime: A Study of Incarcerated Female Offenders*, by Holly Johnson (2004), Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.**

Drugs and Crime is a study that is national in scope, covering six jurisdictions throughout Australia, and looks at the drug and alcohol use, and "criminal careers" of 470 incarcerated women. As suggested by the language choices in the title, the research takes a very different approach from that of the *Severed Connections* study. Rather than prison reform, it aims at "a better understanding of patterns in offending and drug use, and the connection between the two", to "assist in the development of crime prevention strategies for women" (Johnson 2004: xii). The women in the study tended to have extensive criminal histories and prior contacts with the criminal justice system, and the majority also reported chronic and persistent drug use.

Nevertheless, while the study's major focus is on pathways *between* drugs and crime, it also looks at the pathways *to* drugs and crime. Sections detailing "risk factors" of drug abuse in the various chapters consistently point to histories of sexual, physical and/or emotional abuse.

The research showed that: "Eighty-seven per cent of incarcerated women were victims of sexual, physical or emotional abuse in either childhood (63 per cent) or adulthood (78 per cent). The majority were victims of multiple forms of abuse; childhood and adult abuse were correlated with drug dependency and involvement in the sex trade . . ." (Johnson 2004: xiv)

The majority of incarcerated women were victims of multiple forms of abuse, and physical abuse in childhood was a predictor of violent offending. Mental health problems were correlated with drug dependency, violent offending and involvement in the sex trade. Furthermore, women with alcohol and drug dependencies, and those who were violent offenders, were also more likely to have grown up in families with alcohol dependence as an issue. The "Conclusions and Policy Implications" chapter reflects these results, albeit somewhat conservatively, calling for interagency commitment to addressing "the common factors in both drug use and crime – sexual and physical abuse, mental health problems and other negative family experiences – at an early stage" (Johnson 2004: 107).

The full report *Drugs and Crime* is available online at:
<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/rpp/63/index.html>
with the key findings outlined at:
<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi2/tandi289.html>

Is Prison Obsolete? Sisters Inside 3rd International Conference, Melbourne, Hotel Y, 20-22 July 2005

Sisters Inside Inc. are holding their third international conference, *Is Prison Obsolete?*, in Melbourne in July 2005. Sisters Inside is an independent community organisation, which exists to advocate for the human rights of women in the criminal justice system in Queensland, and to address gaps in the services available to them. The organisation works alongside women in prisons to determine how best to fulfil these roles.

The conference will address the crucial issues relating to the criminalisation of women, their experience of prison and post release. Speakers include Angela Davis, Debbie Killroy, Dot Goulding, Kim Pate, Jackie Huggins, Gina Dent, Lillian Holt, Terry Hannon, Debra Parkes and Julia Sudbury. The conference program will include more than 20 workshops and keynote presentations focusing on: Women in prison; Service provision; Advocacy; and Alternatives to prisons.

Sisters Inside also runs many programs for women in prisons, including a Sexual Assault Counselling Service. This service employs two counsellors, one Indigenous and one non-Indigenous, who work with the women in Southeast Queensland prisons. This program was established in 1994 due to the high percentage of women in prison who have been sexually abused at some time in their life and this abuse being one of the contributing factors to their offending.

The conference program, registration details and call for papers are available from the Sisters Inside website at:
<http://www.sistersinside.com.au/conference2005.htm>

ACSSA INVITES YOUR VIEWS

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA) invites readers to discuss the issues raised in this feature article through our email discussion list, *ACSSA-Discuss*. In particular, we invite workers and educators across the various sectors to talk online about schools-based education programs and prevention initiatives.

ACSSA-Discuss is a moderated email list for the discussion of topics of interest to people involved with the sexual assault field. To join *ACSSA-Discuss* send an email to "majordomo@aifs.gov.au" with the message "subscribe acssa-discuss", and leave the subject line blank.

For more information about the ACSSA email discussion group visit the mailing lists page on the ACSSA website at www.aifs.gov.au/acssa.

Prevention of sexual assault

Working with adolescents within the education system

The last 30 years have seen tremendous changes in the way sexual assault is understood in society. Through dedicated lobbying, awareness-raising and research, feminist activists have put sexual assault on the political, legal, social and education agenda.

Monique Keel

The high rates of sexual assault experienced by young people suggest that there is an urgent need for prevention initiatives to be developed that focus on adolescents.

This lobbying has resulted in the development of services that support victims of violence as well as the introduction of laws that make various forms of sexual conduct a crime. For example, it was during the 1980s that rape in marriage became a crime in Australia. And yet, despite this progress, the incident rate of sexual assault remains high, particularly for young women. According to police statistics, young women and girls aged 10-19 have the highest sexual assault victimisation rate of any group (ABS 2004). The statistics for adult women indicate that 33,000 people (or 200 victims per 100,000 adult people) over the age of 18 years were the victim of at least one sexual assault in the previous 12 months (ABS 2003), while in the *International Violence against Women* survey, 34 per cent of Australian women reported experiencing a sexual assault during their lifetime (Mouzos and Makkai 2004).

These high rates of sexual assault experienced by young people suggest that there is an urgent need for prevention initiatives to be developed that focus on adolescents. Schools are therefore considered a key site for the prevention of sexual assault, not only as students are within their formative years and developing attitudes to sexual and human relationships (Urbis Keys Young 2004), but also because many students become sexually active during their high-school years.

The results of the *Sex in Australia: Summary of Findings of the Australian Study of Health and Relationships* (known hereafter as the *Sex in Australia* study) indicate that the majority of males and females born between 1981 and 1986 had had vaginal intercourse by the age of 16 years. This age is lower than reported in previous studies (Smith, Rissel, Richters, Grulich and de Visser 2003).

This article provides a brief reflection on past sexual assault prevention initiatives with young women and men, and consideration of what direction and changes might be made to prevention initiatives given the changes in adolescent behaviour reported in the *Sex in Australia* study. A review of what is currently considered best-practice sexual assault prevention in schools is provided, which covers both proposed policy changes and a review of what programs are currently underway. An overview of two current programs, one in Melbourne run by CASA House (Centre Against Sexual Assault) and one in South Australia run by SHine SA, is also presented.

Past and current notions of prevention

In ACSSA's second newsletter, Alexandra Neame (2003) contemplated how traditional prevention frameworks have been drawn on or adapted by those looking at how to "prevent" sexual assault. She noted that historically the prevention of sexual assault was understood to be the responsibility of individual women and girls "avoiding rape" by adopting "responsible dress codes" and not placing themselves in

risky situations. While prevention initiatives, particularly within tertiary education settings, still tend to focus on victims' taking responsibility for their own safety, this approach is now being critiqued on a number of grounds, prompting a new way of thinking about prevention, and resulting in new messages being adopted for incorporation in schools-based education programs.

The traditional prevention programs have been questioned on the basis of the disproportionate attention they give to victim/women's behaviour (as opposed to men's), and of their framing of sexual assault as the isolated acts of individuals (without adequately analysing the social context). In a recent paper exploring sexual ethics and violence prevention, Moira Carmody and Kerry Carrington (2000) argue that prevention programs focusing on women's behaviour and responsibility are more about "risk management" than "prevention". Such programs, rather than supporting women rights to safety, are likely to reinforce societal attitudes that blame women for the assault.

Many Australian adolescents hold unfavourable attitudes towards rape victims, perceiving the victim as responsible for the assault (Xenos and Smith 2001). Similarly, the *Young People's Perceptions of and Attitudes to Sexual Violence* study (Daws, Brannock, Brooker, Patton, Smeal and Warren 1995) found that many young people, particularly young men, feel that it is acceptable in some circumstances for a man to force a woman to have sex, particularly if she "led him on" or "got him excited". Although a significant minority of male adolescents hold such views, the majority of adolescents surveyed believe that sexual violence is unacceptable (Daws et al. 1995).

The victim-blaming attitude reported in Daws et al. (1995) study, is not just prevalent amongst young people. Within the criminal justice system court processes commonly put the victim "on trial". Girls and women are forced to relive the trauma of the offence repeatedly, through often hostile and irrelevant questioning, and usually in the presence of the perpetrator. Despite state and territory legislation that limits the admission of "sexual history" unless it has "substantial relevance", the cross-examination of the victim often involves repeated questions about the victim's demeanour, dress and sexual history (Department for Women in New South Wales 1996; Heenan and McKelvie 1996). This line of questioning not only moves the focus away from the perpetrator's actions but also implies that the victim was responsible for the assault against her.

A second criticism of prevention initiatives that focus on women's and girls' behaviour is that these projects are generally concerned with violence that occurs in the public sphere, by strangers. In the International Violence against Women survey, Mouzos and Makkai (2004) found that sexual assault by a stranger was less likely to occur than assault by a friend, acquaintance or colleague. The researchers found that 11 per cent of women have experienced sexual violence (including touching) by a stranger over their lifetime, with one per cent of women in this survey reporting forced sexual intercourse by a stranger during their lifetime. However, the researchers found that 18 per cent of women reported sexual assault by a friend, acquaintance or colleague over their lifetime, with 3 per cent reporting forced sexual intercourse.

More recently, there has been a shift in focus within prevention initiatives towards violence perpetrated by acquaintances and friends,¹ which reflects this knowledge that women are more likely to be assaulted by those they know than by a stranger. While an increased focus on "acquaintance rape" is welcome, historically there has been a reluctance within the prevention field to recognise the extent to which sexual violence occurs in the private sphere, between those in an intimate and/or family relationship and a failure to develop strategies to prevent and respond to sexual violence within these relationships.

Mouzos and Makkai (2004) report that, over their lifetime, 12 per cent of women are sexually abused by a current or former intimate partner, with the most common type of assault reported being forced sexual intercourse (which contrasts with assault by a non-partner, wherein the most common form of assault is

Many Australian adolescents hold unfavourable attitudes towards rape victims, perceiving the victim as responsible for the assault

unwanted touching). An additional 3 per cent of women report having been sexually abused by a relative (father, brother, uncle, etc.) during their lifetime. Hence, while sexual assault of young women in “dating relationships” is a real issue in need of attention, there is still an enormous need for prevention initiatives to target sexual assault perpetrated by boyfriends and other intimate partners.

Traditional approaches to prevention have also focused on individual behaviour or individual pathology to explain rape, rather than position the incidence of sexual offences as occurring within a social and cultural context where sexual harassment and assault is not taken seriously. An understanding of the influence of social and community attitudes to men’s behaviour is generally not included within prevention programs. There are many ways in which violence against women and children is effectively condoned within society. Within the media, particularly within music videos, computer games and movies, violence against women and girls is normalised and often glorified. Jackson Katz, an American anti-violence campaigner, in his recent video *Tough Guise* (Katz and Earp 1999), speaks of the negative influence of hyper-masculine role models, who are commonly depicted in the media, such as in music videos by rap artists. He notes that this continual portrayal of violence as normal impacts both on individuals’ and society’s tolerance of violence.

In a recent newspaper article, Johann Hari (2005) argues that many boys and young men regularly view pornography on the internet, and that their understanding of what constitutes normal sexual relations is also shaped increasingly by pornography. He argues that these images need to be countered in realistic ways as there is a wide gap between what is presented in sex education in schools and what young men and boys view on the internet. He quotes a 17-year-old boy, who after a number of negative interactions with women, discovered that “what I didn’t know was that there was such a huge emotional gap between porn and reality”.

Recently there has been greater recognition of how dominant models of masculinity within society are related to the prevalence of sexual assault. Masculine group culture (for example, within sporting clubs) has the potential to reinforce behaviour that is often irresponsible and violent. The recent incident in New South Wales where a group of National Rugby League (NRL) players ran through a university dormitory, drunk, and where one player sexually assaulted a student, exemplifies this point. In recognition of the need for this culture to be countered and in response to a number of sexual assaults by players, a number of sporting codes in Australia, including the NRL and the Australian Football League (AFL) are in the process of developing sexual assault training for players and officials.

A final criticism of the individual-focused prevention initiatives is that in viewing violence in individual terms men were portrayed as biologically and necessarily violent and women as passive recipients of violence. Critics of this biologically-determinist view of violence, such as Bob Pease of Men Against Sexual Assault, have called on men to accept responsibility for their violence rather than blaming women. Pease notes that men are not biologically constructed to be violent, rather the “violence is both socially-constructed and individually-willed” (Pease 1995: 267).

Jackson Katz (1999) argues further that that response to violence of “boys will be boys”, so often heard from the playground to the sporting ground, is unacceptable on two levels. First, dismissing the violence as “boys’ behaviour” allows the violence to continue; second, insinuating that boys and men do not have the ability to stop their violence portrays men as automatons incapable of wilful control of their actions.

Carmody (2003) is also careful to note that arguments that view men as necessarily “dangerous” and women as passive recipients of violence do not take into account the many ways that “men can be men”, and the various forms through which masculinity can be expressed. Such positions also fail to acknowledge the diversity of women’s and men’s lives, and how age, culture, disability, sexuality and

An understanding of how men and women negotiate ethical sexual relations is useful in informing prevention policy and programs.

class can impact on people's experience of sex and relationships. A recognition of the diversity of women and men's lives, attitudes and experiences allows for the potential to develop violence prevention initiatives that explore positive ways of experiencing and negotiating relationships, and of developing communication between individuals and within the community that are non-violent and meet individual's needs.

Carmody (2003) argues that the next step within violence prevention is for the voices of those who engage in positive and consensual relationships, whether short-term or ongoing, to be heard within the violence prevention discussions. This, she argues, will not preclude discussion of assault, but allow young people the chance to explore what they want within a relationship, rather than just exploring how to avoid what they don't want. An understanding of how men and women negotiate ethical sexual relations is useful in informing prevention policy and programs. Carmody argues that "all sexual encounters, regardless of the gender of the people involved, invite the possibility of ethical sexual behaviour" (2003: 199). Encouraging the development of "ethical sexuality" may be the next big step in prevention education, having the potential not only to reduce violence, but also to provide young people with relationship-enhancing skills.

Recent approaches to sexual violence prevention

In light of the above discussion it is encouraging to explore contemporary approaches to the prevention of sexual assault and to discuss what is currently considered best practice. An important contribution to the field is the report by the consulting group Urbis Keys Young (2004), which is the first national attempt to develop a policy framework for national sexual assault prevention (see presentation of the Framework elsewhere in this edition). This report provides an overview of what is known about sexual assault prevention, with schools-based initiatives being situated as critical to the task.

The Framework developed by Urbis Keys Young (2004) draws on the knowledge that:

- peers are highly influential at high school age, and how this may be utilised within education;
- there is a need for evaluation of programs to determine the effect of programs over time;
- current approaches nationwide are undertaken on an ad-hoc basis with most intervention occurring as a one-off session (one-off sessions have been found to be ineffective);
- there is no systematic application of programs and no efficient method of using the existing evidence on when to intervene, and on what constitutes effective program design and delivery formats;
- positive programs are deemed to be ones that are long-term, using single sex groups and trained peers;
- planning and delivery of programs is extremely resource intensive;
- a schools-based approach is limited to youth attending school and excludes those who have left school – this is particularly of concern for young Indigenous people who not only experience high levels of community and family violence but also have high school-withdrawal rates; and
- consideration must also be given to how best educate migrant and refugee youths who bring both positive and negative experiences related to violence and relationships, who may not have had any assault prevention in their previous country and may be older than the average student.

Within the report by Urbis Keys Young (2004) it is suggested that schools-based programs should be made compulsory and that national standards or guidelines be developed in association with individual states and territories.

The schools-based guidelines proposed would include:

- a "whole of school" approach;
- recognition that sexual assault education occurs within the context of sexual/human relationship education, which begins in primary schools; this is based on the knowledge that rape-supportive attitudes are often held by young boys before high-school age;
- consideration that discussion of sexual matters is often taboo in many cultures, and also a recognition of the limitation of heterosexual-focused education which inhibits young people from "coming out", and also from talking about homophobic violence and same-sex sexual assault;

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- tailoring the education to correspond with the formative stages of young people's lives, recognising that sexual assault occurs as a possible end-point on a continuum of unwanted power-based sexualised behaviours; and
 - the introduction of national performance indicators to allow evaluation of the programs.

As well as the important contributions made by Carmody and others, Jane Mulroney (2003) has also provided a useful outline of Australia-wide programs that promote healthy relationships for young people. Within her paper she reviews schools-based programs as well as a range of community, web/resource and recreation-based programs to promote positive relationships. Towards the end of the paper she provides a list of recommendations regarding the development of prevention programs that deal with violence and healthy relationships. She notes that these recommendations could also be applied to sexual assault programs, particularly as it is recommended that sexual assault programs be incorporated into wider relationship programs.

The recommendations outlined by Mulroney (2003) include that:

- Prevention approaches need to be incorporated as part of a broader strategy concerning violence and healthy relationships.
- Initiatives targeting young people aged 12-15 years should involve primary, secondary and tertiary prevention strategies.²
- Strategic and comprehensive planning that takes into account local needs and issues should be undertaken in the development of programs.
- There is a need to inform parents about prevention initiatives and involve them in the process.
- Programs are more effective if specific risk factors are targeted and appropriate methods are implemented to address those risk factors operating at all levels, including individual, family, peer, school, and community.
- A clear rationale should be articulated about the educational principles and strategies used to encourage change.
- Specific consideration must be given to the population where the program will be implemented, especially strategies to engage with Indigenous, immigrant or refugee youth, and disadvantaged young people who are at most risk.
- Program content or curriculum development needs to incorporate elements designed to inform young people about violence and options available to them, challenge attitudes about the use of violence and gender construction, develop skills and provide opportunities to practise and implement skills.
- Support mechanisms need to be clearly articulated and schools be informed about the existence of these.
- Follow-up sessions or a commitment to a prevention program that occurs over a lengthy period of time is instrumental to achieving long lasting behavioural and attitudinal change.
- Careful consideration must be given to evaluation measures used to determine the effectiveness of intervention methods. An evaluation strategy should be integrated into the program from the beginning.

Paul Schwere, an American academic who has been prominent in the area of violence prevention, suggests that our knowledge of how to prevent violence among adolescents and young adults is in its infancy, and urges future programs to incorporate an evaluation component. He too provides a list of recommendations for prevention programs, particularly aimed at dating violence.

In addition to those outlined by Mulroney, Schwere (2002) makes the following suggestions:

- target the whole population, not just selective students, as this means that those not yet engaging in unwanted behaviours, as well as those high-risk individuals who are unlikely to seek treatment, will be reached;
- programs should avoid confrontation, blaming men, or blaming victims: rather they should adopt a gender-neutral focus, particularly if one is targeting mixed-sex groups: this is necessary to avoid resistance to the ideas put forward by defensive individuals;

- introduce skills training early on such as effective communication, conflict resolution, and anger management – these skills require practice and can lead to a reduction in conflict both within and outside of the relationship;
- focus on attitude change, as this has proven to be consistently successful;
- include a peer-counselling component: this is important, as we know that teenage victims seek help from friends far more often than from professionals;
- presentations should be tailored to the particular age and gender group;
- use local statistics as they will have a greater impact than national statistics;
- programs should focus on increasing healthy behaviours and relationships, not just decreasing negative behaviours;
- use several presentation methods and get students actively involved in activities: consider supplementing the program with videos;
- provide students with multiple sessions whenever possible – this would also involve booster/revision sessions in the program, so as to retain the changes evident immediately post-program;
- theory-based prevention programs are generally more effective – attempt to articulate your beliefs about the causes of adolescent violence, and keep these in mind as you develop your program.

Schools as sites of prevention

The development of comprehensive schools-based programs specifically aimed at sexual assault prevention is relatively recent, although specialist sexual assault services, such as the South East Centre Against Sexual Assault (SECASA) in Victoria, have been working in this field for more than a decade. There are now a number of programs currently underway across Australia. Most recently, the Australian Government developed an anti-violence education resource pack aimed at Year 11 and 12 students, that provides teachers with the tools to communicate with students about maintaining healthy relationships and to identify abusive behaviour. The curriculum resource was distributed to all secondary schools in Australia, and although its primary focus is on physical violence, attention is given to the issues of sexual violence within the resources. The package is also primarily directed at young men, with a message that encourages them to act responsibly and respectfully in their relationships with other people, particularly in the context of their intimate relationships (Australian Government 2005).

Individual prevention programs within schools are often initiated by the school in response to one or more incidents, and the program is generally undertaken in collaboration with an outside sexual assault, domestic violence or community health organisation. Renee Imbesi from CASA House (the Centre Against Sexual Assault), a service that works with secondary schools in the north-western region of Melbourne, notes that CASA does not go looking for schools to work with – the schools come to them.

The curriculum within the CASA House program has changed in response to feedback from students and teachers as part of an evaluation undertaken in 2002, and has also changed to reflect what is known nationally and internationally about best practice prevention education in school settings. As suggested above, anti-violence programs are often now located within the broader theme of “human relations” units, rather than as stand-alone units. A sexual assault curriculum is also now more likely to include discussion and information about domestic and family violence in general, in recognition of the fact that the greatest predictor of victimisation in later life is earlier victimisation. What this means is that those who are most at risk of sexual assault are people who have experienced violence previously, such as during childhood (Messman and Long 1996; Humphrey and White 2000).

Individual prevention programs within schools are often initiated by the school in response to one or more incidents, and the program is generally undertaken in collaboration with an outside sexual assault, domestic violence or community health organisation.

A sexual relations curriculum is also increasingly based around the notion of respect, and explores what constitutes healthy relationships or how ethical sexual relations between individuals can be achieved. A benefit of “focusing on positives” within relationships is that this type of approach is more appropriate with primary school aged children. The authors of the *Sex in Australia* study suggest that, as the age of young Australians’ first experience of sexual intercourse is decreasing, and that young people often experiment with other forms of sexual activity beforehand, there is a “need to urgently review the teaching of sexuality education in primary school” (Smith et al. 2003: 4).

Staff at CASA House found the responses to the evaluation questionnaire extremely valuable. The students indicated that they were grateful for the opportunity to discuss issues of sexual health, sexual coercion and violence, as they do not have the opportunity to do so elsewhere, particularly not with an adult. One of the most notable findings from the project is that the students said that they were very keen to talk directly about sex, and did not want to talk around the issue.

One major difference between the CASA House program and previous school-based sexual assault programs is that the emphasis of the discussion is on sex, rather than rape or violence. In response to stories and scenarios, students are encouraged to have open debate about how to differentiate between sex and sexual assault, with an emphasis on the importance of free agreement from both partners and how to communicate openly about it. Students report that this enables them to apply the program’s messages in the context of their relationships and sexual encounter, which makes the information more practical and relevant to their lives.

The schools-based program at CASA House involves advocates from CASA House attending schools and conducting workshops with students from Years 9, 10 and 11. Initially CASA House workers ran one-off sessions, the aim of which was primarily about providing information about services to the students. In light of the findings of their evaluation, CASA House workers now generally deliver between three and five sessions that cover the following topics: introduction to sexual assault and harmful behaviours; the meaning of consent and social pressures that influence communication; the impact of sexual assault on male and female victims; and social action strategies to prevent sexual assault in society, including an activity where students design campaign materials such as slogans and posters.

Only in the final session are boys and girls present in the same room and encouraged to debate their opinions with each other. In the earlier sessions, the facilitators run separate sessions for the boys and for the girls. While the content is identical for both boys and girls so that there is no mystery about what the others are hearing, separating them allows for the students to better communicate with the facilitators and same-sex peers. Local police officers are also now involved in the program as they bring a different perspective and knowledge to the sessions and are able to reinforce the message that sexual assault is both harmful and criminal.

Another highlight of the CASA House program is that it not only involves the students, but also includes a ninety-minute session with staff prior to the sessions with the students. This includes an introduction to sexual assault and information on how to respond appropriately to disclosures. This teacher training was found to effect better policy and procedures at the schools. CASA House workers also found that many schools wanted to engage in this type of process but did not know how to do it. A unique part of the CASA House program is that the program is tailored to each school that they work with, and, where possible, the sexual assault education is incorporated into other programs such as human relations education. To date, more than 700 students and 200 teaching professionals have participated in the program.

SHine South Australia’s *share* program

Another recent program, considered to be the benchmark for programs within Australia, is the *share program*³ designed and implemented by SHine South Australia (formerly Family Planning South Australia) in collaboration with the South Australian Department of Education, and funded by the South Australian Department of Health.

The *share* website includes information about the project, its curriculum, associated research and resources. *Share*, which stands for “sexual health and relationships education”, is a new project that aims to improve the sexual health, well-being and safety of young people by supporting school communities to deliver education in a safe, supportive environment. Rather than merely focusing on the biology and physiology of sexual health and relations, *share* aims to improve the knowledge, skills and confidence of students in Years 8-10, so that they can make informed decisions about their sexual health and the relationships they will form throughout their lives. *Share* aims to engage students in their own learning and encourages communication and participation with parents or carers (SHine SA 2005). SHine SA is currently working in 15 state schools involved in the project and is therefore offering the most substantial and comprehensive prevention program in Australia at this time.

There are numbers of features of the *share* program, which have resulted in it being considered by many as an example of best practice prevention within schools. First, the project works on a whole of community model, and, as part of the project, the teachers undergo extensive training. Second, *share* project workers provide ongoing support to the school communities. Additionally, all schools hold parent information evenings before implementing the program. This provides an opportunity for the materials to be perused, for parents to meet with teachers, and for questions to be answered. Parents must provide written consent before students can participate in the *share* program (SHine SA 2005).

A third feature of the program is its curriculum, which includes a comprehensive relationships and sexual health program. It is based on the scope described in the Middle Years Band of the Health and Physical Education learning area of the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework (SACSA). This curriculum was developed for the *share* project, and describes 45 lessons to be taught (15 per year level) for Years 8, 9 and 10. The curriculum is taught in *share* schools by teachers who have participated in 15 hours professional development.

The curriculum focuses on a core set of topics and builds in complexity from Year 8 onwards. For example, within the theme of “relationships”, the Year 8 students explore what it means to be in a relationship, what is a friend, what is a sexual relationship etc, while the Year 9 students go on to discuss their rights and responsibilities within relationships, and in Year 10 there is discussion about what is a healthy and unhealthy relationship, and about relationship breakdown and relationship violence.

The curriculum was originally written in 2002 by SHine SA. It was used in 2003 by almost 200 teachers in the *share* schools. Each teacher and many students provided feedback. The 2004 curriculum has incorporated that feedback. In 2004 79 per cent of students rated the program good or excellent and relevant to their lives.

A further feature of how the program has been conceptualised is that research and evaluation are considered an important part of the project. La Trobe University was contracted to undertake a literature review of the critical factors for success in conducting effective sexual health education in schools.

The draft review (Dyson, Mitchell Dalton and Hillier 2003) has identified the following factors:

- be positive about sexuality;
- move beyond information provision;
- address the social and cultural world in which young people make decisions
- address the issue of gender;
- refrain from teaching abstinence alone;
- promote an understanding that sexuality and sexual behaviours are diverse;
- address the issue of risk;
- focus on the development of particular skills;
- incorporate peer education and peer support;
- create a supportive learning environment; and
- involve the wider community, particularly parents.

One major difference between the CASA House program and previous school-based sexual assault programs is that the emphasis of the discussion is on sex, rather than rape or violence.

Researchers at La Trobe University are also undertaking the impact evaluation of the project which will involve surveying a sample of students from the *share* schools over the next three years and comparing them with students in other schools to assess the development of their knowledge, attitudes and behaviours around relationships and sexual health. The literature review is available on SHine SA's website.

Conclusion

Sexual assault prevention initiatives have altered dramatically over the last 30 years. Whereas once women were made responsible for their own safety, now, increasingly, men are being forced to take responsibility for their actions. Although many victim-blaming myths are still prevalent within society, the focus of prevention initiatives have shifted and are now increasingly centred around promoting healthy behaviours from a young age. It is encouraging to see the issue of sexual assault, which women fought for so long to bring into the public arena, now part of young people's education.

Schools are now recognised as prime sites of prevention, with an increased emphasis on negotiating ethical and consensual relationships. It is important that this occurs at a time when young people are forming their views on sex, sexuality and relationships, and beginning to be sexually active. It is equally important that young people are educated to behave in ways that are non-violent and to have the opportunity to talk about and develop respectful ways of conducting relationships.

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Endnotes

- 1 Initiatives such as the Centre Against Sexual Assault's *Right to Party Safely* project focus on "partying safely".
- 2 See Urbis Keys Young (2004) for a breakdown of these. This report considers school-based programs as secondary prevention strategies, although other sources classify them as primary prevention strategies.
- 3 *Share* is a collaboration between SHine SA, the South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services, and the Department of Health. *Share* is funded by Department of Health.

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Medical responses to adults who have experienced sexual assault

The *Medical Responses to Adults Who Have Experienced Sexual Assault: An Interactive Educational Module for Doctors* was developed by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG), and produced by a working party of experts in the field and representatives from eight medical colleges.

The module is in the form of an interactive 150-page training handbook with questions and case studies, designed to be incorporated into both General Practitioner and Specialist training programs to prepare doctors to care for patients who have been sexually assaulted.

The managing editor and contributor was Liz Olle, and major contributors included Marg D'Arcy, Lyndall Young and Alexandra Welborn, with Carolyn Quadrio, Sheila Knowlden, Sue Packer, Sheila Bryan, Eleanor Long and Kerren Clark.

Pru Goward, Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner, commented that the *Interactive Educational Module for Doctors* "demands a degree of humility and gender understanding from medical practitioners which is commendable, and which would be nice to see replicated for barristers, police prosecutors and judges" (quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* 31/3/05). Ms Goward praised the publication for encouraging doctors to challenge their own assumptions about sexual assault.

Copies of *Medical Responses to Adults Who Have Experienced Sexual Assault* are available from the RANZCOG for \$50.00 (plus GST if purchased within Australia). Order forms can be downloaded from the RANZCOG website at www.ranzcog.edu.au/sexual-assault-module and sent to: Reception at College House, 254-260 Albert Street, East Melbourne Vic 3002 Australia. Phone: (03) 9417 1699. Fax: (03) 9419 0672. Email: ranzcog@ranzcog.edu.au



Incest survivors' association (Western Australia)

Each edition of ACSSA Aware includes a profile that offers a perspective on current issues in service delivery. In this edition, ACSSA speaks to **SANDRA BASHAM** of the Incest Survivors' Association, a counselling service for adolescent and adult survivors of incest and other child sexual assault, based in East Perth.

ACSSA: Could you briefly describe the origins of the Incest Survivors' Association?

ISA: In 1978, Women's Health Care House and Australian Women Against Rape (Perth) organised a publicised, 24-hour phone-in designed to give women who had been sexually assaulted an opportunity to speak about their experiences. Of the 150 calls, more than half related to intra-familial sexual abuse. The group of women who headed up the phone-in formed self-help and support groups after identifying that most of the women callers had been silenced and not supported by their families and loved ones. Many callers were profoundly depressed and had a mental health diagnosis.

Individual counselling as well as group counselling commenced shortly thereafter, initially on a volunteer basis. Incest Survivors' Association Inc. (ISA) was formally incorporated in 1984 after obtaining a grant to provide services. ISA was the first non-government association to deal specifically with child sexual abuse and post-traumatic stress disorders later in life.

In 1986, ISA was directed to "professionalise" by the then State Government who began direct partial funding of the association to provide services to the community, recognising that the thousands of annual phone calls identified a large, hidden, community problem. From this time onwards, all staff had to have tertiary qualifications, mandatory insurance, and clinical supervision; the association had to be audited annually, with six-monthly and annual progress reports to (state) Family & Children's Services. We are still as accountable. ISA now operates as a non-government, non-for-profit charity, with relative autonomy.

The Incest Survivors' Association has expanded its services over the years to include public talks, training for community groups, varied educational training facilities, internet support and information services, and facilitation of survivor parenting groups. ISA also compiles the bi-annual *ISA Journal* for members and professionals, which is sent out Australia-wide.

ISA currently has a "Preferred Provider Status" agreement with the (state) Department for Community Development, which provides approximately 55 per cent of our funding. The remainder of funds comes from client fees, service fees, donations and memberships.

ACSSA: What is the philosophy of the service and how does it differ from mainstream sexual assault service?

ISA's philosophy is to provide trauma-focused professional counselling, offer support services, provide information, life and parenting skills, and support the strengths of its clients. ISA aims to assist in the breaking of generational cycles of abuse by assisting clients to build safe relationships and safe families. This may entail providing services to non-offending significant others in relationships with survivors.

ISA aims to educate the community about the long-term harms of intra-familial and extra-familial child sexual abuse and supports child-positive attitudes in agreement with international human rights declarations. ISA provides a non-sexist, non-sectarian, non-political service that is respectful of client's core beliefs.

ISA operates very differently from the (state) Health Department fully-funded and operated centre. ISA is not a medical emergency and crisis centre that collects forensic evidence of recent sexual assault (we will provide referral and information to such services). ISA is not fully-funded and thus remains

autonomous from excess government control. ISA is a non-government, not-for-profit charity, with a Board of Management. ISA does not have a limit on how long a client can use the service, and recognises that recovery is a long-term process. Clients can self-refer to ISA or be referred by other agencies, GPs, hospitals, schools and other professionals. Our services are not mandated. ISA provides services to (non-offending) significant others in relationships with survivors. ISA provides strengths-based parenting groups specific to survivors.

ACSSA: What are the issues that are specific to survivors of childhood sexual assault?

ISA: To attempt to fully answer that would take years of qualitative research! However, dealing with adult and mature-minor survivors of child sexual abuse requires dealing with issues (not in order of importance) such as:

- *Assessment* – engaging a client (on their terms), learning to talk, learning to trust, and confidentiality. Client safety is the key factor.
- *Client safety* – environment, relationships, triggering events, sexuality and self-care (as opposed to self-harm or suicidal ideation). Gaining a sense of choice and control.
- *Being believed and validated* – dominant narratives, validating narratives, deconstructing self-blame narratives, identifying strengths. Immediacy: Will the therapist reject or abandon me?
- *Identifying traumas* – challenging the denial, minimisation, blame shifting and rationalisation of traumas. Recognising the impact of trauma, and harmful lies the client believes.
- *Effects of trauma reduced* – identifying triggers, “affect” regulation, memories, insomnia, hypervigilance, addictions, self-blame, shame, self-harm. Review of client self-assessment at intake compared to now.
- *Mental health issues* – “diagnosis” stigma, what does this diagnosis mean? Shame issues. True versus false guilt. Fear of abusing (especially for males).
- *Identity* – who am I? Grief, loss of sense of self, gender and sexuality issues, co-dependency issues, and self-character strengths identification. Emotional intelligence.
- *Integration* – reconstruction of alternate narrative, communication how-to’s, assertiveness versus aggression, sexuality (what is okay for me), boundaries in relationships. Where am I now?
- *Reconnection* – with self (acceptance), significant others (understood), children (safe, competent parenting) and society (work, study, socialising – feeling okay).

ACSSA: How important is it to have a separate service for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse?

ISA: The Incest Survivors’ Association deals with adults and mature minors (over 13 years) who are survivors of child sexual abuse who can *choose* to engage in therapy. Government agencies may provide free short-term counselling (six to eight weeks) for child sexual abuse, but the nature of such work is long-term – a separate agency is vital to the client feeling “safe” and their therapy being confidential and not time restricted. It is inappropriate to engage a client then tell them they can’t see you anymore a few weeks later; this could be understood by the client as *another* rejection or abandonment.

ISA wanted to focus on working with survivors willing to get well on their *own* terms. We only work with adults and mature minors because for some survivors, it can be a very triggering thing to walk into an agency where there are children as young as they were when they were abused. Without adequate, separate work areas, it could be distracting in therapy sessions to hear children elsewhere in the building. ISA doesn’t have premises conducive to working with children (as well as adult survivors), nor the finances to operate that way.

Children engaged in legal investigations of child sexual abuse are most often mandated into therapy (as are their families), which is very challenging work. There is also the legal minefield of working with young children and assessing their abuse in a mandated setting (ISA refers children to another non-government agency in Perth in whose work we trust). In real terms, ISA doesn’t have the financial backing to do the work, pay the insurance and move premises.

ACSSA: Could you tell me more about the services you offer?

ISA: The Incest Survivors’ Association offers one-on-one counselling sessions of 50 minutes with a professional Psychologist, Social Worker, Post-Graduate Psychotherapist, or Forensic Sexologist for a fee that is based on a sliding scale related to income. Currently our lowest fee is \$37 (for pensioners) and our highest is \$77 (for couples and out-of-hours).

Women's Therapy Groups usually comprise six to eight people and interviews are conducted to assess the suitability of the client. Groups generally operate for two hours over eight weeks with one full-day Saturday. They cost \$27.50 per two-hour session (including GST). ISA has tried to facilitate male survivor groups for many years, but having adequate funding and staff to develop one has been a problem, as has finding a suitable male co-facilitator.

Parenting Groups are strengths-based and deal with: parenting styles / parent and child behaviours / responsibilities / emotions / discipline / communication / relationships and guilt and shame. These groups operate less frequently now than in previous years, and survivors who express interest often cannot fund the \$22 per two-hour session, once a week over ten weeks, to attend. ISA doesn't get any extra funding to provide this vital service, hence fees need to be charged.

Training is available by ISA staff for a minimal fee to cover costs of administration and travel. ISA has recently sent out expressions of interest to local agencies to assess interest in covering issues such as: being a partner of a female survivor; being a partner of a male survivor; parenting a child who has been sexually abused; recovering family safety after disclosure; parenting issue for survivors; common mental health issues for survivors; common sexuality difficulties for survivors; survivors in the legal system; and handling family disbelief, punishment and isolation.

The Incest Survivors' Association is still sending out more surveys, and we expect to be offering training later in the year. Membership of ISA allows access to the self-help library at our offices, as well as the *ISA Journal* at no extra charge.

ACSSA: In what ways does service delivery to adult survivors of childhood sexual assault differ to services for survivors of more recent assault in adulthood?

ISA: Primarily in that services for more recent sexual assault operate in a more crisis-intervention mode and act in relation to *immediate* risk to client health – for example, body (wounds, damage, surgical), sexually transmitted disease, collection of forensic samples (in case of criminal charge to be made later), considering children (working with state authorities), and immediate client safety (family violence). Most of their counselling services are free, and thus short-term because they are fully-funded by government bodies. The counselling service components also often have months-long waiting lists.

ISA doesn't offer a medical model or forensic-based service (which of course has its place). Nor is ISA a mandated service. As previously explained in our service description, our services are client driven, not government-department driven. We rarely have a waiting list because we have great, flexible staff that have worked long-term in the field.

ACSSA: Is the public conception of childhood sexual assault limited?

ISA: Absolutely. The general public I have unofficially surveyed, and even some clients, tend to classify child sexual assault as penile-vaginal penetration. This ignores other forms of sexual assault perpetrators commit, such as oral sexual assault, digital sexual penetration, anal penetration, "object" sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking behaviours and intrusive sexual questioning and innuendo, exposure to pornographic material (internet and actual), forced voyeurism of sexual acts (internet and actual) and sexual or developmental ridicule (for example, walking into bathroom, bedroom or toilet to make fun of a child's sexual development).

Much behaviour can traumatise a child and many, many factors (including cultural and religious taboos) affect what the child will perceive as sexually abusive and result in trauma. The uninformed public tends to think that survivors of childhood sexual abuse should just "get over it" a lot quicker than they do, which adds to the "band-aid" mentality of dealing with generational abuse in society, which in turn leads to ignorance in terms of government authorities inadequately funding long-term intervention agencies.

ACSSA: What myths would you most like to debunk about childhood sexual abuse?

ISA: There are quite a few well-entrenched myths:

- That mothers are always to blame, because most of them really knew deep down what was going on – they must have. *Most don't.*

- That young children (for example, under five years) will forget what happened to them, as their memories are unreliable. *Not so – memory kind is different at different life stages and child testimony reflects this.*
- That all sex offenders are violent when they offend against a child. *Not true. Most don't like to leave scars or forensic evidence that they've assaulted a child as they are more likely to be caught.*
- That sex offenders are “strangers”. *They're not – they are someone you know, who has carefully planned and “groomed” you or your child. And sometimes they are a brother, sister or cousin too – not just a stepfather, grandfather or uncle.*
- Women don't sexually offend against children. *Yes they do. In much fewer cases, but with young children too, not just the teenage boys represented in the media.*
- Only certain kinds of children are vulnerable. *Partly true – offenders look for needy children. But, depending upon intra-familial or extra-familial, male and female children are both at risk.*
- Offenders only target certain kinds of children. *Some offenders are “preferential” to age, gender, looks or body size. But others are “opportunistic”.*
- Offenders are dirty old men. *Some may be, but by then, they've had a long career of offending. Offenders tend to first offend in adolescence and then continue in various forms and environments.*
- Offenders are mentally deficient. *Most are actually very clever given the detailed plans they make to “groom” and the excuses they can come up with to rationalise offending.*

ACSSA: What are the greatest challenges you face in providing the service?

ISA: The greatest challenge ISA faces is a financial one. We would like to offer more services at lower fees, operate for longer hours and provide free services for parents to help break generational cycles of abuse. But finding *long-term* non-government funding for wages, promotion and media, better facilities, travel to regional areas for workshops, and having corporate sponsors committed to a child-positive agency is very difficult. Most supplementary funding comes from grants, which are not guaranteed from year to year.

Sponsorship or corporate patronage for an agency that specialises in our field of work is very difficult to obtain. Janet Holmes A'Court and Rolf Harris used to be our patrons, but they've both moved on. Finding a balance between keeping a low media profile of our premises for our clients' safety and having a public face for funding, sponsorship and recognition is difficult.

ACSSA: Are there some issues that you've been working on since your inception that seem to be persisting and that you're still working on?

ISA: Yes, there are a few that have persisted, such as: therapy groups for male survivors; working more with culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse groups (this is an area of personal interest); breaking “cycles” of generational abuse – working with families, parenting programs and assisting children; finding adequate long-term funding to better provide expanded services and better utilise staff expertise; providing more training to interested community, educational and social groups about childhood sexual abuse issues; and full-time staffing – ISA has no full-time staff due to cost restrictions.

ACSSA: Are there any emerging issues for adult survivors of childhood sexual assault that you're aware of and working on, particularly ones that mainstream agencies might not yet be aware of?

ISA: As mentioned previously, ISA is assessing interest in the local professional and educational arenas regarding workshops for partners and significant others in relationships with survivors. We have so much contact with partners who have trouble understanding what's going on. We've had an amazing response so far – I haven't seen anything out there for loved ones of survivors that informs, educates and supports them.

Similarly, there's not much I've seen out there that helps parents of children whose children have been sexually assaulted to assist them to get their families “safe” again – to rebuild, strengthen, affirm the good, and help the whole family to recognise abusive behaviours and communicate better.

ACSSA: What service would ISA most like to be able to provide that is currently not feasible?

ISA: First, therapy groups for male survivors. Second, low cost or free parenting groups. Third, wider training to high schools and tertiary training institutes – *normalising* discussion about child sexual assault in

the professions. When I trained initially as a secondary teacher, not *one* tutorial addressed how to deal with disclosure. Nurses, GPs and other health professionals need to have some basic knowledge as an integral part of their courses.

ACSSA: Are there any lessons that you have learned in your work that you'd like to share with workers in mainstream agencies?

ISA: Respect your client's autonomy. Recognise that child sexual assault issues are long-term work. If you're not available for, or interested in, such work, refer them early to a long-term agency. Don't be part of a band-aid solution.

Find their strengths, then help them to identify them themselves. Recognise your job is to render yourself obsolete as the client gets control of their own life, solves their problems their way and finds their own boundaries and identity. This may take well over a year or more.

Remember, therapy is client-focused not therapist-focused. The client is the expert on their experience, even if they aren't initially clear on it. You help them to see it with different eyes and integrate it differently.

Be willing to assist their partners and family to understand what's going on during therapy and how the process may affect their relationship, the changes that may come, and how they can help their loved one without losing themselves or not having their needs met too.

Expect some weird phone calls or threatening letters (not from clients), even to contest some subpoenas over the years. Discussing what you do for a job may make for "interesting" responses at social events, including disclosures. Overall, the work is so rewarding: to bear witness to client recovery is a privilege and a testimony to the resilience of the inner child and the human spirit.

■ ACSSA is grateful to the Coordinator of the Incest Survivors' Association, **Sandra Basham, B.Ed (Sec). Dip A.C. Ed. Cert V & Dip C.C & F.T. Candidate, Master of Forensic Sexology.**

Incest Survivors' Association

Incest Survivors' Association 21 Lacey St, East Perth WA 6004.
Phone: (08) 9227-8745. Fax: (08) 9227-1510. Email: isa@global.net.au
Website: www.isa.asn.au/ Opening hours: 9am to 4.30pm on Mondays and Tuesdays.

WOMEN INCEST SURVIVORS NETWORK

In September 1994 the national Women Incest Survivors Network (WISN) was formed after the *First Confest for Women Incest and Child Sexual Abuse Survivors* was held in Sydney. WISN was established to promote awareness in the community about child sexual assault and the needs of survivors. Since that time the WISN Newsletter has been published bi-monthly throughout Australia and overseas.

WISN has always been a voluntary group that has also provided discussion papers to the New South Wales Law Reform Commission and the Wood Royal Commission, and at sexual assault and mental health conferences. It has been active politically in identifying the ways in which the legal system perpetuates the myths and stereotypes that dominate legal discourse and the provision of services to victims of recent and past sexual assault. The barriers that existed ten years ago remain as the ethos and spirit of both the state and legal systems have not changed during that time. Victims of recent and past sexual assault are disenfranchised and still

suffer significant barriers to justice and access to services. WISN remains committed to change and speaking out.

Over the years WISN has continued to inform women about the need for services and the extent and impact on the lives of women and girls throughout their lifespan. We publish your stories, poems, comments, news, information, and political comment and a national service directory bi-annually.

Membership of WISN is open to women and girl survivors of child sexual assault and sexual assault. Membership includes subscription to six editions of the WISN Newsletter, and ranges from \$16.50 (unwaged) to \$33 (waged). WISN welcomes subscriptions from organisations that provide services to victim/survivors, and offers special membership rates for multiple copies of the Newsletter.

**For further information contact: Women Incest Survivors Network, PO Box 370, Leichhardt, NSW 2040.
Email: katgrrl@optusnet.com.au**

Responding to Sexual Assault and Promoting Sexual Safety within the Queensland Health inpatient mental health services

ACSSA is very keen to build on our national collection of Good Practice Programs and Responses for Sexual Assault. This online collection of programs provides an important resource for national information-sharing across the work of service providers and policy makers in developing or refining models for responding to sexual assault. See details below for how to submit an entry to the database.

A recent addition to ACSSA's good practice collection is the initiative *Responding to Sexual Assault and Promoting Sexual Safety*, within Queensland Health inpatient mental health services.

In 2003-2004, this initiative undertook extensive state-wide consultation to develop the *Responding to Sexual Assault and Promoting Sexual Safety Guidelines* (2004) for Queensland Health inpatient mental health services. The Guidelines inform the development of local area policy and procedures for responding to victims of recent and past sexual assault and promoting sexual safety within Queensland Health inpatient mental health services for consumers aged 16 years and over.

In late 2004, implementation workshops were developed and conducted with inpatient mental health services to embed the Guidelines in practice. The initiative also involved the development of information resources accessible to staff and consumers within inpatient mental health services to improve the knowledge, understanding and response to the combined issues of recent and past sexual assault, sexual safety and mental health.

In 2005, the work of the *Responding to Sexual Assault and Promoting Sexual Safety* initiative will involve the development and implementation of a state-wide professional development and training strategy for inpatient mental health services to support the implementation of the Guidelines and improve knowledge, understanding and responses in relation to the combined issues of recent and past sexual assault, sexual safety and mental health.

To obtain further information and a copy of the Guidelines, contact Mel Shelley, Senior Project Officer. Phone: (07) 3271 8645. Fax: (07) 3271 8634. Email: mel_shelley@health.qld.gov.au

Submissions invited

ACSSA invites submissions of examples of Good Practice Programs and Responses for Sexual Assault from service providers, policy and program developers, educators and trainers, researchers and others working to address sexual violence. These can be programs, approaches or initiatives currently or recently conducted.

For more information or to contribute a good practice program by completing the short online questionnaire, go to <http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/gpdb/goodpractice.html> or phone ACSSA on (03) 9214 7888.

CONFERENCES

The following conference listings are taken from the website of the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.

Sisters Inside: Is Prison Obsolete?

20–22 July 2005
Melbourne, Vic

Sisters Inside Inc. are holding their third international conference, *Is Prison Obsolete?*, which will address the crucial issues relating to the criminalisation of women, their experience of prison and post release. Speakers will include Angela Davis, Debbie Killroy, Dot Goulding, Kim Pate, Jackie Huggins, Gina Dent, Lillian Holt, Terry Hannon, Debra Parkes and Julia Sudbury. The conference program will include more than 20 workshops and keynote presentations focusing on: Women in prison; Service provision; Advocacy; Alternatives to prisons.

Further information is available from the Sisters Inside website at www.sistersinside.com.au, or phone (07) 3844-5066.

A Quarter-Century of Social Change

20–22 July 2005
Sydney, NSW

The Social Policy Research Centre's (SPRC) next Australian Social Policy Conference will be held at the University of New South Wales. The theme for the 2005 conference will be "Looking Back, Looking Forward: A quarter-Century of Social Change". The end of the long economic boom in the mid-1970s led to the realisation that new social policies were needed to cope with the new economic and social environment. The establishment of the SPRC in 1980 was one response to this. Twenty-five years later, economic growth has returned, but inequality continues to grow and social change continues to be rapid." This conference has no thematic strand/topic area on sexual assault but has an Open-Strand for papers on subjects of interest and importance outside the main themes.

Further information is available from the Social Policy Research Centre website: <http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au>

Mental Health Services: Dancing to the Beat of a Different Drum

30 August – 2 September, 2005
Adelaide, SA

The Mental Health Services (MHS) 15th annual conference will be held in Adelaide, the city that hosted the first MHS conference in 1991, and again in 2000. The "drum" of the title of this conference is the heartbeat of an inclusive society, where citizenship for people with mental illness is valued. In this society our relationships are built on recognition of the sense of worth within each individual. We value the diversity of beliefs, values and attitudes that each of us takes on our journey. Keynote speakers are Roberto Mezzina from Trieste, Italy, and Ron Coleman from the United Kingdom.

Further information is available from the Mental Health Services website: <http://www.themhs.org>

Refocusing Women's Experiences of Violence

14–16 September 2005
Bankstown, NSW

The combined Domestic Violence Liaison Committee of South West Sydney (Bankstown to Wingecaribee) has organised this feminist conference which will examine the practices, policies and protocols and procedures that support a woman's right to safety and security. The conference will apply feminist theory and approaches to service delivery models that respond to violence against women. The aim will be to build a dynamic picture of what service provision models work for a range of women, drawing on women's own experiences as well as from practitioners in the field. Effective preventative strategies at a local, national and international level will also be investigated. The key sponsor for this event is the University of Western Sydney, Social Justice Unit.

Further information is available from the Bankstown Women's Health Centre, 74 Restwell Street, Bankstown 2200. Phone: (02) 9790 1378. Email: bwhc@swshas.nsw.gov.au

For more conferences and events visit the Conferences page on the ACSSA website:
<http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/conferences.html>

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault website lists organisations that provide training in areas relating to sexual assault. This column lists some of the courses on offer.

South Australia

Responding to violence: Narrative possibilities

This one-week workshop with Michael White has been designed specifically for practitioners whose work involves responding to violence. This includes those who work with children and adults who have been subjected to violence and trauma, as well as practitioners who are working with those who have enacted violence. Ways in which the maps of narrative practice can shape conversations and approaches to responding to violence will be discussed in detail. The workshop will be suitable for those who have not attended training with Michael White in the past, and those who have been to previous intensive trainings.

Date: 1–5 August 2005

Cost: \$660 (includes GST)

Email: dcp@senet.com.au

Website: The Dulwich Centre:

<http://www.dulwichcentre.com.au>

Victoria

Sexual assault and the legal system

Dr Caroline Taylor will present workshop on “Sexual assault and the legal system: Understanding and negotiating the legal process” for workers in the health, welfare and legal sectors. Dr Taylor is a Research Fellow at the University of Ballarat and author of the two books: *Surviving the Legal System: A Handbook for Adult and Child Sexual Survivors and their Supporters* (Coulomb, Melbourne, 2004); and *Court Licensed Abuse* (Peter Lang, New York, 2004).

The workshop is two tiered and deals exclusively with the legal response to sexual violence via the court processes. Participants will gain an informed understanding of how the legal system responds to sexual violence and the “game plans” and “tactics” lawyers use in trials that undermine and de-authorise the experiences of child and adult survivors of sexual assault. Empirical research with

examples from trial transcripts to show how legal trials work will be presented. Participants will gain insights that will equip them to understand the legal response to survivors and enable them to prepare and support survivors for engagement with, and negotiation of, the legal system.

Date: Tuesday 26 July 2005, 9.00am – 4.30pm

Venue: Downtowner on Lygon, 66 Lygon Street, Carlton, Melbourne.

Cost: \$110 for Australasian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies members; \$135 for non-members

Phone: Felicity May (03) 9523 5965

Email: fmair@ozemail.com.au

Website: Australasian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies www.astss.org.au

Victoria

WestCASA: Professional development series

WestCASA’s training program aims to meet a range of education needs in the field of sexual assault and trauma. The program is relevant to workers from a variety of fields who want to develop their knowledge of sexual assault and how to respond appropriately to victim / survivors. It is also highly relevant to experienced counsellors who wish to develop specific areas in their sexual assault counselling expertise. Prospective participants select which training is applicable to them and then discuss their choice with the respective trainers. Certificates are provided upon completion of each training course.

Courses offered include: “Ongoing counselling with adult survivors of childhood sexual assault” (8 September 2005); and “When offender behaviour becomes the survivors’ reality: Using this knowledge therapeutically” (27 October 2005).

53 Ballarat Road, PO Box 443, Footscray Vic 3011.

Phone: (03) 9687 8637.

Email: westcasa@vicnet.net.au

For more training courses visit

www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/training.html

For more training courses visit
www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/training.html

If your organisation provides training or professional development in the area of sexual violence that you would like listed on the ACSSA website, please contact acssa@aifs.gov.au with the details.

The resources listed here comprise selections from new additions to the ACSSA library collection.

Adult survivors of childhood sexual assault

Speaking out: Adult survivors of child sexual abuse, by Greg Robinson and Liane Haddock, Central Coast Community Women's Health Centre, Gosford, NSW, 2004, video (43 min), plus booklet/discussion guide.

The journeys of five adult survivors of child sexual abuse are followed as the program takes the audience through processes of counselling and healing. The film uses song, dialogue and flashback scenes to give voice to the stories, and identifies ways survivors can seek support through friends, counsellors and group work. The project aims to raise community awareness of child sexual abuse and encourage survivors to seek support and assistance.

Mediators of the link between childhood sexual abuse and emotional distress, Valerie E. Whiffen and Heather B. MacIntosh, *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse: A Review Journal*, vol. 6, no.1, Jan 2005, pp.24-39.

"A history of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) is a risk factor for adult emotional distress, including symptoms of depression, anxiety, dissociation, and trauma. However, CSA is likely associated with adult distress indirectly through an impact on mediating variables. In a review of the empirical literature, the authors found support for the roles of shame or self-blame, interpersonal difficulties, and avoidant coping strategies as mediators. In addition, emotional distress appears to mediate links between CSA and other adverse outcomes, such as alcohol abuse and revictimization. The authors conclude with a number of methodological and conceptual recommendations." (Abstract)

Child sexual abuse: Learning from the past, by Joan Zorza, *Sexual Assault Report*, vol.8, no.3, Jan/Feb 2005, pp.35-38, 43.

This article examines the many myths that surround the sexual abuse of both adults and children. Some of the myths go back more than one hundred years. The author concludes by suggesting that it is time to start objecting to all of

these misogynist myths, especially when they are raised in court cases. It is then up to the other side to defend them if they can.

Attitudes

Playing by the rules project, by Catharine Lumby, Wendy McCarthy, Karen Willis and Michael Flood, University of Sydney, Sydney, 2004.

The aim of this project was to investigate attitudes and behaviours towards women amongst players in the National Rugby League and to make recommendations about education and mentoring programs, codes of conduct and other approaches to ensuring fair and respectful treatment of women. Interviews were conducted with players, CEOs, Chairs, senior management, coaches, trainers, administrators, welfare officers, and women working in rugby league. This report summary lists the project's key findings and recommendations. An attached media release introduces the report summary.

Attitudes toward rape: A comparison between Asian and Caucasian college students, by Joohee Lee, Elizabeth Pomeroy, Seo-Koo Yoo and Kurt T. Rheinboldt, *Violence against Women*, vol.11, no.4, Apr 2005, pp.77-196.

The purpose of this study is to investigate differences in attitudes toward rape between Asian and Caucasian college students. The Attitudes Toward Rape scale was used to measure beliefs about rape in a convenience sample of 169 college students. Three items regarding stranger rape myths were added. Findings suggest that Asian students are more likely than Caucasian students to believe women should be held responsible for preventing rape and to view sex as the primary motivation for rape. Asians also have stronger beliefs than Caucasians do that victims cause the rape and that most rapists are strangers. This research suggests that outreach programs can play an important role in providing information, education, and prevention regarding rape and that males and Asian students should be target populations for such programs.

Resources listed in these pages may be borrowed from the Australian Institute of Family Studies library via the interlibrary loan system.

Cross cultural issues

Intersections of oppression in women's experiences of intimate violence, by K. Gray and M. Bradford, *Queensland Centre for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence Research Newsletter*, vol.3, no.3, Jan 2005, pp.5-8.

The author uses the concept of intersectionality proposed by Crenshaw (1991) to analyse the intersection of gender, race and class in domestic and family violence settings. An intersectional approach encourages practitioners to work with women's own angles of vision. The intersectional perspective provides insight into the way social, economic, cultural, political and legal forces oppress and marginalise women and compound women's experiences of intimate violence. The article focuses on gender race intersections in Australia specifically regarding Indigenous women and migrant women and discusses class and status.

Service profile: Immigrant women's support service (Queensland), interview with Annabelle Allimant, *Aware: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault Newsletter*, no.5 Jan 2005, pp. 20-24.

In this interview, the Coordinator of the Immigrant Women's Support Service in Queensland talks about the following: the service's philosophy and organisation; the importance of having a separate service for women from non English speaking backgrounds; issues that are specific to this group of women; what the service offers to female survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault; how the service addresses the issue of male partner rape; issues that the service is working on; and lessons learned.

Date rape

Understanding women's labelling of unwanted sexual experiences with dating partners, Melanie S. Harned, *Violence Against Women*, vol.11, no.3, Mar 2005, pp.374-413.

Qualitative data are used to examine the process by which women come to label their unwanted sexual experiences with dating partners as sexual abuse or assault, as well as the factors that impede such labelling. Issues of consent, causal attributions, and minimization were found to be central to understanding why women did or did not label. Labeling was generally a gradual process and was most often triggered by social support seeking. Women who did not label typically defined the incident as something less serious than sexual abuse or assault, although some provided definitions indicating that they had felt victimized.

Drink spiking

National project on drink spiking: Investigating the nature and extent of drink spiking in Australia, by Natalie Taylor, Kate Charlton and Jeremy Pritchard, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, 2004.

Knowledge about drink spiking in Australia is currently very limited but there have been suggestions that incidents of drink spiking have been increasing in recent times. The Australian Institute of Criminology was commissioned to undertake stage one of a national drink spiking project on behalf of the Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs. This first stage focuses on identifying the nature and extent of drink spiking in Australia and identifying communication and educational initiatives to prevent and respond to drink spiking. This report summarises the literature and research to date on drink spiking; analyses data from a range of sources (including police data and data from a national telephone hotline conducted with drink spiking victims) to build an empirical evidence base on drink spiking; highlights what needs to be done to improve evidence collection and rates of prosecution; summarises key themes which emerged from discussions with stakeholders; and identifies potential educational initiatives to prevent and respond to drink spiking.

Education

Stop it . . . before it starts! A program for adolescents: Building positive relationships and avoiding violent ones, by Tanya Jacobs, Mina McGrath and Sharon McCallum, Office of Women's Policy, Northern Territory Government, Northern Territory, 2004.

Designed for delivery by organisations as diverse as schools, Indigenous communities, non-government organisations, and community-based organisations, this training package provides a series of modules which target general groups, and Indigenous groups (comprising Indigenous participants only). The modules cover information about violent relationships; learning about healthy relationships; and applying the information and learning to a real life scenario.

Healing

The man who stole my mother's face: A search for justice, a film by Cathy Henkel, Hatchling Productions: Film Finance Corporation Australia, New South Wales Film and Television Office, 2003. DVD-video (74 min.).

"Following a traumatic sexual assault, a daughter returns to South Africa to find and confront the

man her mother identified as her attacker. What begins as a quest for justice becomes a revelation about the process of healing." (Container jacket).

Intimate partner violence

Ending intimate abuse: Practical guidance and survival strategies by Albert R. Roberts and Beverly Schenkman Roberts, Oxford University Press, New York, 2005.

Written for professionals and their clients, this book describes types of intimate partner violence, including duration and severity, based on case studies with 501 women, and presents guidance on getting help. Chapters on drug induced acquaintance rape and police and court procedures, and a directory of American resources and services are also included.

Predicting wife assault: A critical review and implications for policy and practice, by Zoe N. Hilton and Grant T.Harris, *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse: A Review Journal*, vol. 6, no.1, Jan 2005, pp.3-23.

"In this review, the authors examine the research evidence for the prediction of wife assault recidivism, lethal wife assault, and wife assault onset. They also review and present original data on the effect of treatment attendance on wife assault risk. Violence does not always become a stable habit, and variables associated with wife assault onset do not necessarily predict recidivism. General antisociality, psychopathy, substance abuse, and a history of assault and psychological abuse in the relationship are the most promising predictors of recidivism. Formal risk assessments, and victims' predictions, have demonstrated value in predicting recidivism. The authors review existing assessments for wife assault onset and recidivism and explain the relative merits of actuarial tools and structured clinical assessments. Because of statistical and practical limitations to predicting lethal assault, they recommend using an actuarial assessment of wife assault risk, plus attention to the strongest correlates of lethal assault when lethality is a concern." (Abstract)

Attitude to animals: An indicator of risk of interpersonal violence? by Nicola Taylor and Tania Signal, *Journal of the Home Economics Institute of Australia*, vol.11, no.3, 2004, pp.9-12.

"Recent research has highlighted links between violence to animals and violence to people. Drawing on data investigating links between aggression and attitudes to animals, this paper assesses the utility of such theories, in particular addressing links between domestic violence, child abuse and

harm to companion animals. We conclude that whilst causal relationships between attitudes to animals and violent behaviour cannot be established as yet, animals may well provide an insight into the cycle of abuse and therefore attitudes towards animals may be utilised to develop early intervention and prevention measures." (Journal abstract)

Living conditions of women who experience violence from their partners: Norway and Australia comparisons, by Gunn Strand Hutchinson and Wendy Weeks, *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, vol.39, no.4, Nov 2004, pp.393-407

This article briefly explores the comparative ways in which the Australian and Norwegian welfare systems support women and children escaping violence, when they are seeking to become established independently. The two welfare systems are compared with regard to family structure, women and the labour market, women and income, support for crisis accommodation and housing, and child care. It demonstrates that Norway provides a more woman-friendly welfare state." (Journal abstract)

Legal issues

Prosecutorial decisions in adult sexual assault cases, by Denise Lievore, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, 2005.

Prosecution agencies are often criticised for their performance in prosecuting sexual assault. This paper reports on selected findings from an Australian study analysing prosecutorial decisions made by Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) prosecutors in five jurisdictions: the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Tasmania. The study focused on cases involving indictable sexual offences against adults. The results indicate that case decisions are primarily based on evidentiary considerations related to the ability to secure a conviction, but they also raise questions about the handling of cases involving prior relationships.

Victim credibility in adult sexual assault cases, by Denise Lievore, Canberra, ACT, Australian Institute of Criminology, 2004.

The exercise of prosecutorial discretion is one of the most important but least understood aspects in the administration of criminal justice. The decision to prosecute often involves matters of professional judgment and there is a concern that prosecutors' appraisals may be filtered through prejudicial gender stereotypes and moral norms. Sexual assault cases involving adult victims often

come down to the word of the victim against that of the defendant. This paper presents findings from an Australian Institute of Criminology study of prosecutorial decision making in adult sexual assault cases. The paper presents a thematic analysis of interviews with Crown Prosecutors from five Australian jurisdictions, examining factors that prosecutors take into account when assessing victim credibility and deciding whether to prosecute. The paper discusses pressure to proceed, reluctant victims, credibility, moral and gender stereotypes, and the problem of intoxication.

Sexual offences law and procedure, by Melanie Heenan, *Aware*, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault Newsletter, no.5 Jan 2005, pp.8-15.

The Victorian Law Commission's final report into sexual offences contains recommendations that aim to improve the system for victims going to court in sexual offence cases. This article focuses on three areas: reviewing the police response; cross examination by the accused; and specialised responses to sexual offence cases.

Prosecuting sexual assault: The complexities and difficulties, by Margaret Cunneen, paper presented at the *Crime in Australia: International Connections* Conference, Melbourne, November 2004. Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, 2004. Online only at: <http://www.aic.gov.au/conferences/2004/cunneen.pdf>

"Over recent years the complexity of sexual assault trials has been increased by developments in three areas, which are the subject of discussion in this

paper: multiplicity of offences, complainants and accused; better investigations; and directions and warnings - a list is provided of the range of matters which must be taken into account before a jury may retire to consider its verdict." (Abstract)

Mediation in sexual abuse cases: To be or not to be? By Tom Altobelli, in *Pathways towards dispute management: papers of the 6th National Mediation Conference*, 18 - 20 September 2002, Canberra. Full text is available online at: <http://www.leadr.com.au/ALTOBELL.PDF>

"How appropriate are mediation and similar processes in dealing with disputes arising out of allegations of sexual abuse? This paper looks at the research and identifies some major issues and arguments relating to this question. It argues that sexual abuse cases should not be mediated, except in rare circumstances. It looks at issues of transparency, accountability and public and private interests." (Abstract)

The court doors may be open, but what lies beyond those doors? An observation of the workings of the Wynberg Sexual Offences Court, by Kelley Moulton, Social Justice Research Project, Institute of Criminology, Faculty of Law, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa, 2000. Full text is available via publisher website: <http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/sjrp/public.htm#GENDER>.

The Wynberg Sexual Offences Court was established in 1993 with the following objectives: the reduction of inappropriate or insensitive treatment of sexual offence complaints, the development of a

Women Against Violence: An Australian Feminist Journal

The Women Against Violence Journal is a national journal examining issues relevant to the work to stop violence against women. The journal is founded on the belief that those working against violence against women welcome the opportunity to document initiatives, policy and practice development and encourage debate. The journal reflects a feminist philosophy and a social justice framework.

Issue 16 is at the publishers and will be distributed mid June. The planning of this edition centred on two articles in particular. Both are timely and important and focus on fathers' rights activist groups. The articles chronicle the development and political lobbying strategies that fathers' rights groups have utilised and the access to political power that these groups have attained.

Issue 17 is in press. This issue will be dedicated to the memory of Wendy Weeks, a founding member of the journal Editorial Committee, who died suddenly in July 2004. A number of Wendy's friends and colleagues have written tributes as a way of celebrating her life and her invaluable contribution to the women's movement. We have also included Wendy's complete bibliography – a testament to the enormous contribution she made to scholarship. In addition, this issue includes thought-provoking contributions from researchers and practitioners, on feminist services, feminism in Australian social policy and the challenges faced by rural women experiencing mental illness.

coordinated approach to the processing and management of sexual offence cases by criminal justice agencies, and the improvement of the reporting, prosecution and conviction rate for sexual offences. This thesis evaluates the progress made by the court in achieving these objectives to date. The author's findings indicate that while there has been some improvement in the prosecution and conviction rate for sexual offences, there has been little reduction in the secondary victimization of sexual assault complaints, and that there is little evidence of an integrated approach to the management of sexual assault cases by criminal justice agencies.

Policing sexual assault, by Jeanne Gregory and Sue Lees, Routledge, London, 1999.

"By focusing on research in Britain and other countries, [this book] traces the ways in which the criminal justice system has responded to feminist demands for improvements in service and access to justice for the victims of domestic and sexual violence. It includes the first survey of police recording practices of male rape and also presents a detailed account of the experiences of women complainants, their views of the police, the medical examination and court procedures." (Book jacket)

Family violence and the law: putting "private" violence on the public agenda, by Judith Pierce, paper presented at *Families Matter: 9th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference*, Melbourne, February 2005. Available online only at: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/afrc9/peirce.html>

"The Victorian Law Reform Commission is undertaking a comprehensive review of Victoria's family violence laws. It is required to examine the broader legal context in which the legislation operates, and to analyse the philosophy that underpins the overall legal response to family violence in Victoria. This paper provides a brief description of the Victorian intervention order system; explores potential legal approaches to family violence; and, discusses the Commission's research findings to date." (Abstract)

Medical practitioners

National newsletter, Doctors for Sexual Abuse Care, Auckland, New Zealand, 1999. Full text is available via publisher website: <http://www.dsac.org.nz/newsletter/index.html>.

Doctors for Sexual Abuse Care (DSAC) is a professional organisation of doctors from many disciplines whose prime focus is education and

support of medical practitioners to ensure maintenance of internationally recognised standards of best practice in the medical and forensic management of sexual assault. The DSAC newsletter aims to inform members and associates of DSAC about news and important issues.

Offenders

Assessment of the risk of reoffending by Indigenous male violent and sexual offenders, by Alfred Allan and Deborah Dawson, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, 2004.

A risk assessment tool that has been developed specifically for Indigenous sexual and violent offenders is reported on in this paper. The paper discusses problems associated with overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system and the lack of Australian risk assessment instruments. It considers the results of the study, which suggest that it will be necessary to develop separate instruments for violent and sexual offenders, and also for subgroups of these two groups.

Managing sex offender risk, edited by Hazel Kemshall and Gill McIvor, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London, 2004.

This book aims to present relevant research for the effective management of sex offenders. With a predominantly U.K. focus and not solely restricted to intervention strategies and programs it provides a broad overview of the typologies and characteristics of offenders as well as strategies for managing different kinds of offender including children and young people who are sexually aggressive.

Feminist thinking in male sexual assault programs, by Robert Sainz, *Psychotherapy in Australia*, vol.11, no.2, Feb 2005, p.49.

This article reports on a men's group which focused on the shared experience of being survivors of sexual assault. In what the author describes as a "feminist inspired project, a hybrid of narrative therapy, psychology of the self and Jungian archetypes, men discussed openly the most vexed, perennial and marginalised issue of masculinity".

Developing a unique risk of violence tool for Australian Indigenous offenders, by Alfred Allan and Deborah Dawson, Edith Cowan University, Criminology Research Council grant 2002. Full text is available via publisher website <http://www.aic.gov.au/crc/reports/200203.html>

Modern corrections practice requires an assessment of the risk of reoffending on at least two

levels. First, risk assessments are necessary to decide which offenders should be targeted for rehabilitation. Second, risk assessment is necessary to deal with the increasing demand by the public and politicians that offenders who are at a high risk of reoffending, especially violent and sexual offending, should not be released prematurely. This paper reports on a risk assessment tool that has been developed specifically for Indigenous offenders. (Abstract)

Policy

National policy guidelines for victims of sexual offences, Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, Pretoria, South Africa, 1998. Full text is available via publisher website: http://www.doj.gov.za/2004dojsite/policy/guide_sexoff/sexoff_guidelines1998.htm

Website consists of policy documents issued by various South African government departments and setting out each department's policy and procedures for dealing with sexual offenders and victims of sexual offences. The documents have been developed by the individual department for the use of departmental personnel and service providers working in the field of sexual violence. They are collated here by the South African Dept. of Justice and Constitutional Development as the basis of a cohesive national framework for dealing with sexual offences.

Preventing violence against women: a European perspective, by Sheila Reid, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, France, 2003.

"In this book, produced by the integrated project *Responses to violence in everyday life in a democratic society*, Sheila Reid reviews recent Council of Europe reports, publications and legal texts in order to identify common principles and best practice." (Book jacket)

Rape

Just sex? The cultural scaffolding of rape, by Nicola Gavey, Routledge, Hove, United Kingdom, 2005.

Drawing on feminist theory, cultural analysis, and in-depth interviews with women about their experiences, this book examines social and feminist research on rape and coercive sex and the phenomenon of date rape. Sexual intercourse and heterosexual relations need to be understood in the context of broader cultural constructs. 'Just sex' argues that while there is indeed a blurred line between rape on the one hand and just sex on the other, this does not mean coercive sex should be

tolerated as simply part of the natural dynamics of sexual relations.

Rape reporting after reforms: Have times really changed? By Jody Clay-Warner and Callie Harbin-Burt, *Violence against Women*, vol.11, no.4, Apr 2005, pp.150-176.

Using data from the National Violence Against Women Survey, the authors examine whether rapes committed after reforms were more likely to be reported to police than those committed before reforms. The authors also consider whether the gap between the reporting of simple versus aggravated rape has narrowed. They find that rapes committed after 1990 were more likely to be reported than rapes occurring before 1974. Aggravated rape continues to be more likely to be reported than simple rape, however, and this effect is stable over time. The authors conclude by discussing the implications of these findings for evaluating the success of rape reform statutes.

Is it rape?: On acquaintance rape and taking women's consent seriously, by Joan McGregor, Ashgate, Aldershot, United Kingdom, 2005.

This book considers how the law treats nonconsensual sex, in cases between acquaintances and without extreme physical violence. The book discusses the nature of consent, coercion, and autonomy, with reference to attitudes of the law and to other academics.

Risk factors

Violence against women: Identifying risk factors, National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, United States Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 2004. Full text is available via publisher website: <http://virlib.ncjrs.org/vict.asp?category=50&subcategory=105>

"This NIJ Research in Brief addresses whether sexual and physical abuse in childhood and adolescence are risk factors for becoming a victim of violence against women as an adult. It combines the results taken from two studies, one of which followed college women and men for 4 years, and the other, which followed low-income, mostly black women who had been victims of childhood sexual abuse. Each study found that child sexual abuse alone was a risk factor only when combined with adolescent sexual abuse. Although each study examined a narrowly defined population, taken together, both studies came to remarkably similar conclusions." (Publisher website)

Women's resources and use of strategies as risk and protective factors for reabuse over time, by Lisa Goodman, Mary Ann Dutton, Natalie Vankos and Kevin Weinfurt, *Violence Against Women*, vol.11, no.3, Mar 2005, pp.311-336.

"Using a longitudinal and ecological approach, we investigated the relationships between women's material and emotional resources and strategies and their ability to stay safe over time in a sample of 406 help-seeking African American women. The multivariate analysis demonstrated that social support served as a protective factor and resistance strategies as risk factors for reabuse during a 1-year period. It also showed an interaction between social support and history of violence such that for participants who had experienced the most severe violence, social support did not serve as a protective factor; however, for the other participants, those with the least amount of social support had a 65% predicted probability of reabuse during the next year, compared to a 20% predicted probability for women reporting the highest level of social support. Policy and programmatic implications of these findings are discussed." (Abstract)

Managing sex offender risk, Hazel Kemshall and Gill McIvor, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London, 2004.

"Drawing on key research into assessment, treatment and recidivism, the authors offer practical guidance on improving intervention techniques with sex offenders. They explore the monitoring and surveillance strategies and cognitive-behavioural techniques currently used both in prison and in the community, and give clear directions for future practice. Providing a detailed overview of the typologies and characteristics of offenders, they suggest strategies for managing different kinds of offender, including children and young people who are sexually aggressive." (Book jacket)

Sexual harassment

In the company of men: Male dominance and sexual harassment, edited by James E. Gruber and Phoebe Morgan, Northeastern University Press, Boston, 2005.

"This collection of original essays investigates the links between male dominance and sexual harassment in light of new research and more complex understandings of masculinity. Treated not merely as a matter of worker sex ratios but as an inherent element of workplace culture, male dominance is observed from a variety of quantitative and qualitative approaches ranging from criminology and sociology to psychology and gender studies." (Book jacket)

Suicide

An overview of Australian Aboriginal suicide: Part one, by Terri Elliott-Farrelly, *Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal*, vol.29, no.1, Jan-Feb 2005, pp.11-15, 27-28.

Information on Indigenous suicide rates, methods, risk factors and causes are presented in this article. The article looks at difficulties with data collection, the meaning of Aboriginal suicide, mental illness, the effects of racism and discrimination, and the following causative factors: low sense of purpose in life; lack of role models and mentors; inadequate parenting; sexual assaults; alcohol and drug use; animosity and jealousy within a community; grief cycles; and illiteracy.

Interpersonal violence, suicide and cultural diversity: What are the links? by Sarah Stewart, *Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse Newsletter*, no.20, Dec 2004, pp.11-12. Full text is available via publisher website: http://www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au/PDF%20files/Newsletter_20.pdf

The author highlights the substantial body of research that has explored the relationship

ADVANCE NOTICE

Special Issue on Women's Right to Choose – Again

The Women Against Violence Editorial Committee invites contributions for a special issue to be published late 2005/early 2006 in response to current debates in Australia about abortion, fertility, pregnancy and women's right to choose. Articles addressing issues of politics, policy and service provision in these areas are encouraged.

The deadline for abstracts is October 2005. Author guidelines are available on the website www.rwh.org.au/casa/ or contact Gail Draper at CASA House Melbourne on (03) 9347 3066

For more information or to subscribe, visit the CASA website at www.rwh.org.au/casa/ and click on Women Against Violence Journal.

between suicide and experiences of interpersonal violence. However, studies that investigate the prevalence of suicidality in relation to experiences of domestic violence, sexual assault and childhood abuse in a cross cultural context are few, particularly studies of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The author is currently involved in the data gathering and consultation phase of a project to develop resources to support service providers working with people from nondominant cultural groups in addressing the risk of suicide in the context of interpersonal trauma.

Surveys and statistics

Women's experiences of male violence: Findings from the Australian component of the International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS), by Jenny Mouzos and Toni Makkai, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, 2004.

Between December 2002 and June 2003, over six thousand women in Australia aged between 18 and 69, participated in the International Violence Against Women Survey. They provided information on their experiences of violence, including threats of violence, from former and current intimate partners, other known males, such as relatives, friends and acquaintances, and strangers. It also looks at women's reported experiences of childhood violence.

Measuring violence against women: A review of the literature and statistics, Janet Phillips and Malcolm Park, Parliament of Australia E-Brief, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2004. Full text is available from publisher website at: www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/SP/ViolenceAgainstWomen.htm

"It is very difficult to measure the true extent of violence against women as most incidences of domestic violence and sexual assault go unreported. In 2002, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) crime survey, *Crime and Safety Australia*, estimated that only 28 per cent of female victims of assault and 20 per cent of female victims of sexual assault in Australia report the incident to police. In a recent briefing by the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, *What lies behind the hidden figure of sexual assault*, Neame and Heenan discuss issues of prevalence and barriers to disclosure. Another report by Denise Lievore and published by the Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women (OSW) in 2003, *Non-reporting and hidden recording of sexual assault: an international literature review*, discusses the low level of

international and Australian reporting rates and analyses the reasons behind the under-reporting. In recent years there have been many other studies and surveys on violence against women both in Australia and internationally. This electronic brief aims to draw together major resources, research and studies on violence against women and sexual assault in Australia and a selection of the major international surveys. It complements a previous brief, *Domestic Violence in Australia*, issued by the Parliamentary Library in August 2003, which includes links to interest groups and an overview of Commonwealth government violence against women initiatives and perpetrator programs." (Introduction)

Doing it down under: The sexual lives of Australians, by Juliet Richters and Chris Rissel, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2005.

What do most Australians do sexually, and what do they know and think about sex and sexual health? This book presents the results of the largest ever national sex survey of Australians. The survey targeted participants aged between 16 and 60 and covers the following topics: first times; what people do; how often; how many partners; attitudes towards sex; masturbation; kinky stuff; gay and straight; relationships; infidelity; getting pregnant; avoiding pregnancy; sexual difficulties; sexual assault; paying for sex; sexually transmitted infections and safe sex; and how Australia compares with other countries.

Rural communities

NCOSS visits far west NSW: Broken Hill, Lightning Ridge, Walgett and Moree, by Dinesh Wadiwel, *NCOSS News*, vol.31, no.11, Dec 2004, pp.6-7.

The Council of Social Service of New South Wales conducted regional visits to Broken Hill, Lightning Ridge, Walgett and Moree in July 2004 to make contact with communities and gather data for its pre budget submission to Government. This article presents information on conditions in these areas in relation to: child abuse, sexual assault, domestic and family violence; children and young people at risk; education and employment; health; housing and homelessness; Aboriginal people and law and order; and transport.

Working on sexual assault

Responding to sexual assault and promoting sexual safety within Queensland Health inpatient mental health services: Guidelines to inform the development of local

area policy and procedures for responding to sexual assault and promoting sexual safety within Queensland Health acute care, extended treatment and medium and high secure inpatient mental health services, by Queensland Health, Brisbane, 2004.

These guidelines are intended to assist workers and consumers in the mental health, sexual assault and disability sectors in Queensland. They provide a framework for the development of local area policy and procedures to address issues relating to sexual assault and sexual safety within Queensland Health acute care, extended treatment and medium and high secure inpatient mental

health services. The guidelines cover: gender, mental illness and sexual violence; sexual assault; responding to a report of recent sexual assault; past sexual assault and abuse; sexual harassment; sexual safety; risk assessment; assessment vulnerability; identifying and responding to sexually disinhibited behaviours; policies regarding sexual relationships; sexual relationships between staff and clients; impaired capacity; clients under 16 years; diverse needs; safety in design of mental health services; follow up support; confidentiality and documentation; staff support and education; education for clients and family members; services access, availability and promotion; and evaluation.

PREVIEW

ACSSA publications

Issues Paper 4

Available now!

The law and sexual offences against adults in Australia

Author: Mary Heath

This issues paper aims to provide a plain language account of the current status of the law relating to key penetrative sexual offences against adults in Australia. It also aims to outline the legal issues relating to some parts of the law of evidence which have significant impacts upon procedures in sexual offence trials and on victim-complainants' experiences in court. It seeks to provide an accessible introduction to the current status of the laws governing sexual offences to allow sexual assault workers, counsellors and victim-complainants to more readily understand the relevant criminal law. In doing so, it aims to supplement existing guides which provide support and information about going to court as a complainant witness in a sexual offence trial.

Briefing Paper 5

Available now!

Trafficking in women for sexual exploitation

Author: Lara Fergus

Recent years have seen many changes in international and national responses to, and legislation on, trafficking in persons. In this paper we review some of the theoretical approaches to trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, as well as legislative, policy and service responses. We aim to provide an overview of recent developments and navigate the varied and often opposing modes of analysis surrounding the issue. ACSSA intends this paper to serve as an informative resource for services, policy makers and researchers on the subject of trafficking in women for sexual exploitation in Australia.

ACSSA Aware 7 – Special Edition Newsletter

Available now!

In this special "one-off" edition we highlight examples of good practice in service provision from each state and territory, in the spirit of sharing information and experiences across the sector. We have presented each program in two major parts: the first describing the various aspects of the program, and the second check-listing the program's "good practice" elements according to the above criteria, as nominated by the organisation or service responsible for the program. At the end of the newsletter is a table outlining contact details for further information on each program, research upon which the program draws, program outcomes in terms of publications, pamphlets, etc., and funding sources. The programs detailed in the body of the newsletter are arranged alphabetically according to state/territory.

Men's collective anti-violence activism and the struggle for gender justice, by Michael Flood, *Journal of the Society for International Development*, vol.44, no.3, Sept 2001, pp.42-47.

"Changes in men's lives, gendered power relations and the social construction of masculinity are key factors in the prevention of violence against women. Men themselves need to play a central part in the process. This article looks at the emergence of collective activism by men on gender based violence around the world. It argues that these groups should work in partnership with women and considers arguments about whether men's efforts to end men's violence should be linked to wider struggles for gender

equality, social justice and human rights." (Abstract)

The questions posed by our work with women who have experienced sexual abuse, by Sue Mann, *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, no.4, 2004, pp.3-12.

"This paper is one in a series by the author focusing on complex and challenging questions that arise in work with women who have experienced sexual abuse as children..In this paper the author describes the principles which shape her approach in this work, as well as responses to questions about sex work and sexual identity that have arisen in her conversations with women." (Journal abstract, edited) ■

Contribute to ACSSA Aware

Service providers, researchers and those interested in working against sexual assault are encouraged to contribute to the *ACSSA Aware* newsletter. We are interested in short reviews (no more than 1500 words) of books, conferences, workshops and projects. We will also consider more substantial articles (no more than 5000 words) on significant issues in understanding, responding to, or preventing sexual assault.

ACSSA Aware aims to provide a lively forum for ideas, argument and comment: thus we welcome readers' letters, comments and feedback on issues discussed in ACSSA publications.

Please email contributions in a Microsoft Word document to acssa@aifs.gov.au, or post to the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, 300 Queen Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000.

We welcome your feedback

Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault

Help to shape the work of the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault. We are interested in hearing your views on the best way to meet the needs of our stakeholders. If you have any comments on services that could be offered, possible topics for publications, or possible areas of research, please fill in the section below and return it to the Institute. Comments can also be provided online via the ACSSA website, or email us at: acssa@aifs.gov.au

What other services would you find useful for your work?

What topics would you liked covered in ACSSA's publications, or considered for research projects?

Membership form overleaf ►

ACSSA services

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault is funded by the Office for Women, Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services, through the *National Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault*. ACSSA provides stakeholders with a variety of services (see below). ACSSA is located at the Australian Institute of Family Studies in Melbourne.

Resources

ACSSA is building a collection of publications and best practice literature, reports, and training resources to inform initiatives and programs directed at improving the understanding of, and response to, sexual assault. These materials are available for browsing at the Australian Institute of Family Studies Information Centre, or may be borrowed through the interlibrary loan system. Bibliographic information on these resources may be searched online via the Institute's catalogue.

Advisory service

ACSSA's research staff can provide specialist advice and information on current issues that impact on the response to sexual assault. Email research queries to acssa@aifs.gov.au

Policy advice

ACSSA offers policy advice to the Australian Government and other government agencies on matters relating to sexual assault, intervention and pathways to prevention.

Publications

ACSSA produces Issues Papers, Briefing Papers and Newsletters which are mailed free of charge to members of the mailing list. Publications can also be received electronically.

Good Practice database

ACSSA is developing a *Good Practice* database, to document and publicise best practice projects and activities being undertaken in relation to sexual assault.

Research

ACSSA staff undertake primary and secondary research projects, commissioned by Government and non-government agencies.

Email alert and discussion lists

ACSSA-Alert and *ACSSA-Discuss* keep members posted on what's new at the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault and in the sexual assault field generally, and allow networking and communication among those working on issues related to sexual violence against women.

Membership form

Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault



◀ Details overleaf

If you would like to join the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault mailing list, please fill in this form and return it to the Institute. Membership of the Centre is free.

- Please add my name to your mailing list to receive ACSSA publications
- I would like to receive publications in hard copy
- I would like to receive publications electronically
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