

Aware

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

In this issue

Dear ACSSA Reader

Welcome to the 16th edition of *ACSSA Aware*, the newsletter of the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault. One of the aims of ACSSA is to serve as an information sharing point for workers, and to this end we are very pleased to publish two articles from workers in the sexual assault prevention field. The first feature article (by Melanie Bournell, Tamara Lee and Donna Chung) describes how the workers from the Violence, Abuse And Neglect (VAN) Service at Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service (NSCCAHS), Gosford, New South Wales, have been approaching the issue of attitudes towards sexual assault in their local community. Rather than relying on research from other communities, they conducted their own survey to try to gauge the present climate in their local area. This produced some very useful results, and the article discusses their findings and the implications for their prevention work. The second feature article (by Renee Imbesi) describes a school-based prevention program, the *Peer Educator Project*, being run by CASA (Centre Against Sexual Assault) House in Melbourne. The project trains and supports young people to raise awareness of sexual assault issues in their school community themselves. This article describes the origins of the program, the research underlying the project and the issues being faced in its ongoing development.

We hope that the inclusion of these articles will be useful and inspiring for others engaged in prevention work around Australia and, as always, ACSSA encourages you to let us know about the work you and your agency are undertaking. We are more than happy to assist people who would like to write about their work so that others can learn from their experience and share their own ideas.

Rural readers will be interested in our review of the report by the Upper Murray CASA, with Jigsaw Research, entitled "Where is the care in the country?" This highlights the extreme difficulties women in rural areas can experience accessing timely and effective support following sexual assault. The research illustrated the need for an immediate response for victim/survivors of sexual assault, and it is heartening to note that since the report was published the Victorian Government has announced funding for crisis care units in regional areas. We have also included a brief update from the researchers on their current work of looking at partner rape in rural areas.

As always, our News in Brief section outlines some of the major current issues in sexual assault, and a comprehensive literature section will keep you up-to-date with all the latest releases!

We welcome reader feedback, so get in touch and let us know what you would like to see covered in future ACSSA publications. Also, we are always keen to hear from workers in the sexual assault field, and are happy to assist with preparing articles for publication in *ACSSA Aware*. You can access all ACSSA publications online at www.aifs.gov.au/acssa

The ACSSA Team