

Aware

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

A message from the Minister

There is a high incidence of sexual assault in Australia. The Australian Government is concerned by this fact and has invested \$16.5 million to establish the *National Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault*.

The *Initiative* represents the Australian Government's commitment to reduce and prevent sexual assault, and aims to implement strategies that address the incidence of sexual assault in the community.



From current research about the nature and prevalence of sexual assault we know that, while there are no limits to who may be the victim of sexual assault, the overwhelming majority of survivors are women and girls. We also know that a high proportion of those who offend are in trusted relationships with the victim – such as family members, partners, husbands or friends – and that many victims are assaulted over long periods of time. Most victims do not report their experiences to police, and for those who do, only a small proportion of the offenders will ever be prosecuted or convicted. The impact of sexual assault is often long term, affecting victim's lives on emotional, psychological, social, and economic levels.

Under the *Initiative*, the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA) has been established at the Australian Institute of Family Studies to ensure national information relevant to sexual assault is accessible. The Centre will also function as an important contributor to the development of research programs and agendas aimed at improving the response to sexual assault, as well as to reducing the incidence of sexual violence overall.

I am pleased to introduce the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault in its first newsletter, and hope its contribution will be valuable and productive.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amanda Vanstone', written in a cursive style.

Senator Amanda Vanstone
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister
for the Status of Women