

Aware

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

In this issue

Welcome to the second issue of *ACSSA Aware* – the newsletter produced by the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, located at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. We introduce this issue on the heels of our official launch on 26 September 2003 at which Minister Vanstone kindly accepted our invitation to set the scene for the Centre's future work and activities. See page 3 for a brief review of the launch.

This edition includes two key feature articles covering critical areas within the sexual assault field.

The first is a stirring keynote address delivered by Jackie Huggins, Co-Chair of *Reconciliation Australia*. Presented at a recent conference in Queensland, the address speaks to the issue of family violence in Indigenous communities, which was the focus of a recent summit convened by Prime Minister John Howard. Following the summit, the Australian Government pledged 20 million dollars to address the consequences of violence and child abuse in Indigenous communities. The funds will support a range of initiatives that attend to issues of drug and alcohol abuse, communities in crisis, and provide grant support for non-government organisations to develop programs targeting substance abuse. Funding was also provided under the *National Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault* to assist in developing programs aimed at preventing sexual violence among young Indigenous people.

The second article is a discussion piece by ACSSA researcher Alexandra Neame that looks at notions of prevention in responding to adult sexual assault. The discussion briefly examines the ongoing debate within the sexual assault field of how to adapt or work within traditional prevention frameworks. It acknowledges the residual tension between victim advocates and prevention theory, where women's groups were highly critical of prevention approaches that spoke of "rape avoidance" and treatment programs without considering the wider social and cultural context that shaped the traditional understanding and response to rape.

Each issue of the newsletter will endeavour to profile services, programs and projects that help to inform us of current issues in sexual assault service delivery. In this edition, Tim Bavinton speaks to ACSSA about the Service Assisting Male Survivors of Sexual Assault (SAMSSA), in the Australian Capital Territory.

This issue also contains our regular columns – ACSSA's website update, information on the development of our Good Practice database, forthcoming conferences and events, literature reviews, and notices of new publications. Information on how to access the Events Calendar for "16 days of activism against violence against women" in individual states and territories is also published in this edition.

We encourage all readers to make good use of the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault. Sign up to the ACSSA mailing list to receive our publications; submit your programs/projects for consideration to the Good Practice database; send us your ideas or comments on what you think should be considered key areas of research in sexual assault; and give us your feedback on what the Centre provides. Many thanks in anticipation!