

Aware

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

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It's "in our hands" to stop violence against women

Welcome to the fourth edition of *ACSSA Aware*. The previous edition of this newsletter took as its theme "women's rights as human rights", following the *16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women* campaign. In this edition, we continue the theme of human rights, looking at Amnesty International's recently launched *Stop Violence Against Women* campaign.

In the previous edition, Senator Natasha Stott Despoja noted the ongoing difficulty in translating the issue of violence against women "from a private political concern to a public issue of debate, and then to a public issue that receives a response and action". Nowhere has this difficulty been more apparent than in the field of international human rights, where a traditional focus on state violence has all but ignored the most widespread human rights abuse in the world – that of violence against women in the family. Amnesty's six-year campaign marks the culmination of the organisation's own long journey to broaden the scope of its work on human rights to include abuses perpetrated in the so-called "private sphere".

The feature article in this edition, "Making Rights a Reality", examines how such conceptual changes to human rights may mark the beginning of a new era of activism of greatly increased relevance to women, and looks at what the Amnesty campaign means in terms of raising awareness and promoting better responses to sexual assault in Australia.

Also in this edition, there is a review of a recently-published report by Patricia Hayes on behalf of Working Against Sexual Harassment (WASH), entitled "Taking It Seriously: Contemporary Experiences of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace". The key findings of the report are outlined, and details of how to obtain copies are provided.

We also look at how some members of the community have organised their response to the recent series of sexual assault allegations involving footballers. "Football Fans Against Sexual Assault" (FFASA) have launched a web-based campaign aimed at providing a vision for football codes on promoting respectful sexual attitudes and behaviours towards women.

Our service profile this time is of *SideStreet*, an Adelaide-based counselling service working with young women and men aged 12 to 25 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and who have experienced sexual and/or physical abuse. We also profile one of the new additions to our Good Practice Database – this time the "Sexual Violence Services Tampon Card", produced by Yarrow Place Rape and Sexual Assault Service in collaboration with *De Jour*.

There are also *ACSSA Aware's* regular updates on conferences, literature highlights from recent additions to ACSSA's library collection at the Australian Institute of Family Studies, and a new section on training services.

As always, the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault is 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 you would like to contribute an article or review to the *ACSSA Aware* newsletter, refer to the details of how to do so on the inside back cover. 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. Don't forget, all our publications are available online at www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/.