In this issue

Resources for adult victim/survivors of sexual assault

Welcome to the eleventh edition of ACSSA Aware, the newsletter of the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault. This issue reviews several resources relevant to adult victim/survivors of childhood sexual assault and those who work with them. For our service profile we talk to Respond SA, a relatively new service for adult victim/survivors of childhood sexual assault established by the South Australian Government in 2004. There is also a contribution by the Royal District Nursing Service Research Unit on the four new resources that the unit has produced in partnership with Catherine House in South Australia. The resource kit includes two books, the first aimed at providing support to adult victim/survivors around the impact of childhood sexual abuse, and the second aimed at resourcing service providers and group facilitators who work directly with this group. There is also a poster, and a report providing an extensive literature review and recommendations for service provision, as proposed by the research participants.

Also in this issue, we profile the projects that were successful in applying for the first round of funding under the Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Initiative from the Australian Government’s Office for Women. The twenty-seven projects that received funding aim to reduce the impact of domestic and family violence and sexual assault through community-based action research, related partnership projects and product development.

This edition also includes reviews of several recently released reports, including the Sentencing Statistics for Rape Offences “snapshot”, by the Victorian Sentencing Advisory Council; Amnesty International’s report on military sexual slavery; and the Safe at Work? report by URCOT and RMIT, overseen by the Victorian Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Violence Against Women in the Workplace. The “News in brief” section contains further overviews of recently released reports, DVDs and books, as well as news from the sector.

Our good practice profile is of a brochure, What the Law Says about Sex, produced as a joint project between Centrecare Goldfields and the Kalgoorlie Detectives Office in Western Australia. The brochure is aimed at educating on, and preventing, child abuse in remote Aboriginal communities. It covers legal considerations of inappropriate sexual behaviour and encourages reporting of offences and greater awareness of “what the law says about sex”.

Finally, there are our regular columns on conferences and training as well as literature highlights from recent additions to the ACSSA 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 freely available online at http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa.
The ACSSA team would like to take this opportunity to thank Melanie Heenan, who has decided to leave her position of Coordinator and Senior Research Fellow at the Centre. When Melanie was appointed ACSSA’s first Coordinator three years ago, her task was nothing less than to build the sole national information port on sexual assault from scratch – a task she undertook with great skill, dedication and an infectious enthusiasm. It is thanks to Melanie that ACSSA is what it is: her commitment to ending sexual assault, and her integrity in researching the means to do so, are rare qualities that have not only shaped the workings of the centre, but also enriched the day-to-day lives of those of us lucky enough to work with her.

We’ll miss you Mel, and wish you all good things for the future!
New report on attrition for sexual offences in NSW


This new report by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOSCAR) points to continued high attrition rates for sexual offence cases that enter the criminal justice system. It suggests that few sexual assaults are reported to police, of which only a small proportion result in charges being laid. Specifically, of more than 7,000 sexual and indecent assault incidents reported to NSW police each year, only about one in ten result in someone being found guilty in court.

Other key findings contained in the report include the following:

- Among the sexual offences reported to police, criminal proceedings are initiated in only 15 per cent of incidents involving a child victim and 19 per cent of incidents involving adult victims.

- Of the people who had criminal proceedings commenced against them, less than half were convicted.

- The major points of attrition, or where cases tended to drop out of the criminal justice system, were between reporting and charge stage (where decisions are made about whether an alleged offender will be charged with offences) and between charge-stage and the commencement of criminal proceedings.

Criminal proceedings involving sexual assault were more likely to be commenced in circumstances that included aggravation, where the report was made within ten years of it occurring, where the victim was female, where the victim knew the offender, and where the victim was over ten years of age.

BOSCAR notes how difficult it is to gain any meaningful insight from police records into why the attrition rates remain so high for sexual offences. They recommend further research be undertaken to track cases from the report stage through to the conclusion of investigations to assess the precise reasons underlying decisions about whether criminal charges will be laid. They also recommend changes to police recording practices that would see police routinely reporting the reasons why no charges are laid.

The director of BOSCAR, Dr Don Weatherburn, attributed the low prosecution and conviction rates partly to reluctance on the part of sexual assault victims to put themselves through the trauma of a court process and partly to the difficulties involved in proving sexual offences where the only evidence is the victim’s testimony: “If victims are treated respectfully, compassionately and kept informed at all times they may be less likely to withdraw their complaint or choose not to proceed” (p 11).

To download the report in full, go to BOSCAR’s website at: http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/bocsar

Annual Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children

In her second annual report since beginning her mandate, and her first substantive one in terms of presenting her findings, the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on Trafficking, Sigma Huda, has emphasised the relationship between sex trafficking and the demand for commercial sexual exploitation. The report follows on from the UN Commission on the Status of Women’s assertion last year that “eliminating demand for all forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation, is a key element to combating trafficking in women and girls” (at the 2005 Review and Appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action). Huda examines in some detail how this assertion should translate into practical measures. She begins by explaining what is meant by the term “demand”, then discusses various factors relevant to a proper understanding of demand, and finally “highlights a variety of methods employed throughout the world by States, intergovernmental organisations, and non-governmental organisations in order to target the demand side of trafficking” (p.1).

At the 2005 Review, the Commission on the Status of Women did not provide a clear interpretation of “demand”. Since then there has existed a divergence of opinion between those who believe the term should be limited to traffickers themselves, and possibly buyers who knowingly use trafficked women; and those who believe the term should be interpreted more broadly as referring to the demand for commercial sexual exploitation in all its forms. Huda has insisted upon the latter view, noting that “demand must be understood expansively, as any act that fosters any form of exploitation that, in turn, leads to trafficking” (p.11). In terms of addressing demand, she sees sex trafficking as being distinguished from other forms of trafficking as “unlike the purchaser of consumer goods produced through trafficked labour, the prostitute-user is simultaneously both the demand-creator and (by virtue of his receipt of the trafficked person) part of the trafficking chain. […] By engaging in the act of commercial sex, the prostitute-user is thereby directly inflicting an additional and substantial harm upon the trafficking victim, tantamount to rape, above and beyond the harmful means used by others to achieve her entry or maintenance in prostitution” (p.12).

Huda further notes that “there is little reason to believe that any significant amount of prostitution throughout the world exists without use of one or more of the illicit means delineated in the Protocol” (p.13). She is referring to the part of the definition of trafficking in the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (2000) which clearly identifies such elements as the “abuse of power or a position of vulnerability” of another person, as a means by which trafficking occurs. She therefore recommends that State parties “criminalise the use of prostituted persons as a way of fulfilling their obligations under […] the Protocol” (p.16), and sees such criminalisation as the keystone of a human rights approach to eliminating demand for trafficking. She clarifies:

Men do not have a human right to engage in the use of prostituted persons. In some domestic legal systems, men have been granted a legal right to engage in the use of prostituted persons, but […] this right may be in direct conflict with the human rights of persons in prostitution, the vast majority of whom have been subjected to the illicit means delineated in subparagraph (a) of the [Trafficking] Protocol and are, therefore, victims of trafficking. Where the human rights of trafficking victims conflict with the legal rights granted to prostitute-users, the human rights of trafficking victims must prevail. That is what counts as a human rights approach to sex trafficking. (p.15).

The Special Rapporteur emphasises, however, that “any criminal sanction relating to the commercial sex industry should not be used to penalise trafficked women and children. Domestic laws and policies that penalise prostituted women and children contribute to their vulnerability, and make women and children more susceptible to being victimised by sex trafficking” (pp.16-17). She also recommends States ensure that victims of trafficking are neither criminalised “nor subjected to punitive measures such as deportation, which would render them vulnerable to other human rights violations and to re-trafficking” (p.17).

Huda also recommends the implementation of extraterritorial jurisdiction as a strategy to target the demand side of sex trafficking. She notes that a number of states have implemented extraterritorial jurisdiction that would enable the prosecution of child sex tourists, and comments this as an important first step. In addressing sex tourism, Huda places responsibility on “source countries”, noting that “socio-economic, political and cultural conditions in many parts of the world make women and children particularly susceptible to being trafficked, thereby fostering the supply side of trafficking. These conditions are often ignored or even tacitly encouraged by Governments, often for the purpose of encouraging tourism within their borders” (p.7).

British consent campaign targets men

The United Kingdom (UK) Home Office has launched a media campaign warning men that having sex without consent could lead to a prison sentence. The £500,000 campaign includes radio and magazine advertisements, stickers on condom machines and posters in pub toilets. The main message of the materials is that unless a woman actively says “yes” to sex then men must assume the answer is “no”. The campaign comes amid low conviction rates for rape cases in England and Wales, and aims to reduce the number of sexual assaults that occur when a woman is very drunk. Changes to existing laws are also being considered, to allow juries to decide whether a woman was too drunk to give consent.

The objective of the campaign is to put the onus on men to make them aware of their responsibilities and ensure the woman is consenting. Stephen Cooper, a campaigner against wrongful rape conviction, said “steps should be taken by the man to say ‘would you consent to sexual activity later on in the evening?’” But if a woman was drunk, a man should not consider sleeping with her, he said.

The campaign comes only months after Amnesty International found that one third of people in the UK believed a woman was partially or completely to blame for being raped if she had behaved in a flirtatious manner. A survey in January by Cosmopolitan magazine further highlighted how many women themselves did not understand the complexity of the consent issue. The UK Home Office Minister Fiona Mactaggart said she hoped the adverts would “encourage women to think that the law was on their side”.


Two new DVDs

Understanding Sexual Violence: The Judge’s Role in Stranger and Nonstranger Rape and Sexual Assault Cases, DVD Curriculum produced by the United States National Judicial Education Program, Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, 2005.

This DVD is intended as a self-directed or group curriculum resource for education about rape trials (particularly nonstranger rape). It is designed for a variety of audiences, including judges, law enforcement officials, prosecutors, lawyers, probation and parole departments, victim/survivor advocates, health professionals and researchers. Though the focus is on the United States system, the main purpose of the curriculum is to challenge the pervasive rape myths that can permeate any courtroom. A wide range of contemporary research on sexual assault is presented, from feminist-informed analyses of rape, to the neurobiology of trauma and studies of jury decision-making. It also includes panel discussions in which judges talk about how they have applied this information in their own courtrooms. Understanding Sexual Violence can be viewed through a DVD player, or on a computer as a DVD-ROM, and in the latter case supporting materials can be accessed, including summaries of the research cited, an Instructor’s Guide for trainers, and suggestions from judges from more than twenty jurisdictions for applying the material in the courtroom. These resources can also be obtained from an associated website, http://www.njep.org/usvjdvd, which includes a database of annotations of recent articles about sexual assault, a list of related web links, and ordering information.

Sex Traffic, written by Abi Morgan, Granada Television/Big Motion Pictures Production for Channel Four Television (UK) and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2004.

This fictionalised account of the real-life abuse of trafficking of women into prostitution was shown on ABC television in January this year. The writing is well-researched and informative on the complex political issues surrounding trafficking in women for sexual exploitation. It highlights the abusive nature of the practice, challenging discourses that seek to define trafficked women as “economic migrants”. The narrative weaves the stories of two Moldovan sisters, Elena and Vara, who are trafficked through Romania, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Italy to London, “betrayed along the way by pimps, police, and politicians. The reverberations of their story lead from big business in America to corruption amongst the international peace-keepers in Europe” (from the container jacket). The riveting account exposes the $7 billion global business of trafficking of women into prostitution, in this case throughout Europe and America, but revealing obvious parallels with Australasian trafficking.

Both DVDs are available via interlibrary loan (arranged through any local library) from the ACSSA collection at the Australian Institute of Family Studies: http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/info/ficservices.html
New healing/resource book for survivors of male partner rape

Real rape, real pain: Help for women sexually assaulted by male partners, by Patricia Easteal and Louise McOrmond-Plummer

Many ACSSA subscribers will know of the work of both Patricia Easteal – author of Voices of the Survivors and editor of Balancing the Scales: Rape, Law Reform and Australian Culture – and Louise McOrmond-Plummer, an anti-rape activist of many years who also maintains the website, Aphrodite Wounded, for women raped by partners. This new book, Real Rape, Real Pain: Help for Women Sexually Assaulted by Male Partners will be the first to focus exclusively on women who have been sexually abused by husbands and partners. The authors note that because rape and sexual assault is still subject to public and judicial stereotypes of “real” rape (that is strangers in alleyways), and because partner rape is not perceived to be as serious and traumatic as other kinds of rape, survivors of male partner rape often have difficulty finding information and getting support. The book draws on the experiences and voices of 30 survivors of partner rape from Australia, North America and the UK, and serves as a healing/resource book for survivors, supporters and professionals in the fields of counselling and advocacy internationally.

The book will be launched in September this year, and published in Australia by Hybrid. ACSSA will update readers with information on the launch in our July issue. More information on the book is available online at: http://www.pandys.org/aphroditewounded/book.html

ACSSA publications feedback

ACSSA welcomes any feedback that enables us to better resource the sector and provide accurate information. In this section, and with the writers’ permission, we reprint feedback of a substantial nature on our publications, particularly corrections or additions to our published material, in the interest of keeping readers well-informed and up-to-date.

Feedback on Wrap 1, Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Assault

“I was reading the ACSSA Wrap 1 and just wanted to comment on the segment ‘What is Childhood Sexual Assault?’ My comment is that most jurisdictions now have legislation that provides for offences that include procurement and grooming of children. For example, South Australia legislation under the Criminal Law Consolidation Act provides for offences where a person ‘communicates’ with a child for the purpose of engaging a child in sexual activity or making a child amenable to sexual activity.

I point this out only because I think it is important that the current trends in regards to ‘cyber crime’ need to be included for the sake of victim awareness in recognising offending behaviour. After all, the Internet and all the technology that has emerged as a result is fifteen years old. There would be an abundance of people who may not have realised that they were the victims of sexual exploitation regardless of whether there was any physical aspect to the incident.”

Peter Rodney
Detective A/SSGT.
Sexual Crimes Investigation Branch
South Australia Police

Feedback on Aware 10

In the ACSSA Aware 10 Service Profile, contact information for Victims’ Assistance Schemes in each state/territory was provided. It was mistakenly reported that the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) did not have a victim compensation program. The following information on the Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Scheme in the ACT was provided by ACT Policing’s Victims of Crime Coordinator’s Office:
Spinifex Press to cease publishing new books

After 15 years of publishing an enormous range of feminist books, including many on violence against women, Melbourne-based Spinifex Press has announced it will cease publishing new books, and shift its focus to promoting and increasing the profile of books already published. Many ACSSA subscribers will know, as mentioned above, Patricia Easteal’s *Voices of the survivors*, or be familiar with such titles as *Enough, I started crying Monday, The idea of prostitution, The will to violence, Not for sale, and The women’s circus: Leaping off the edge*. These are just a few among the 170 books in the Spinifex catalogue, which includes “books by Indigenous authors and on issues of importance to Indigenous women, books by women with disabilities and books that focus on the politics of disability, books on trade unions and books of importance to working class and poor women; and books by lesbians; across fiction, non-fiction and poetry” (from press release).

Spinifex’s mission statement was from the beginning to publish controversial and innovative feminist books with an optimistic edge. Spinifex titles remain available through their distributors: in Australia and Asia, Macmillan; in Aotearoa/NZ, Addenda; in USA and Canada, Independent Publishers Group; and in UK, Gazelle.

For further information visit the Spinifex website: http://www.spinifexpress.com.au

Victims of violent crime who have sustained an injury are eligible to apply to the Magistrates Court for financial assistance under the Victims of Crime (Financial Assistance) Act 1983. The crime must have occurred in the ACT and must have been reported to police for a person to be eligible to apply. The sort of injuries that are covered under the scheme are in relation to physical or mental injuries, including mental shock or nervous shock or the aggravation of existing conditions, resulting from the crime. An injury may also consist of damage to things like glasses, or contact lenses, artificial limbs, hearing aids or dentures. If the crime results in an unwanted pregnancy, that can also be regarded as an ‘injury’.

The sorts of financial assistance that can be awarded to a person are:

- past or future expenses reasonably incurred as a result of the injury;
- lost earnings due to their incapacity to work because of the injury;
- expenses, other than legal fees, in making the application, e.g. the cost of a medical report.

Victims of sexual offences and victims who have sustained an ‘extremely serious injury’ are also eligible to apply for special assistance as part of their application. Special assistance is a lump sum payment that provides some acknowledgement of the pain and suffering caused to the victim. An ‘extremely serious injury’ is defined as an injury consisting of the loss or impairment of a bodily function, disfigurement or a mental or emotional disturbance or disorder, where the injury is permanent, and is extremely serious and will always be extremely serious, and causes a great and permanent reduction in the victim’s quality of life.

Where the primary victim has died as a result of the criminal conduct, a related victim (that is a close family member, a dependant or a person who had an intimate personal relationship with the primary victim, may be eligible to apply for financial assistance. People who are financially responsible for looking after a primary victim (for example a young child) may also apply to the Court for financial assistance for expenses reasonably incurred by them as a result of the injury, and loss of earnings they have suffered as a result of the injury.

Applications should be made to the Court within 12 months of the injury being sustained but there is provision for a person to apply to the Court for an extension of the time. The maximum total of financial assistance that can be awarded to a victim is $50,000. A free minor legal assistance service is available for victims of crime in the ACT. Any enquiries regarding the scheme can be made to our office on (02) 6217-4381/431.”

Victims of Crime Coordinator’s Office
ACT Policing
Australian Federal Police
**Calls for research participants working in primary prevention**

Susan Evans, a PhD candidate at the University of Western Sydney (UWS), would like to talk to workers in the field of primary prevention of child abuse and neglect, family/domestic violence or sexual violence. She is researching how primary relationship violence prevention work is promoting non-violent, and “good” relationships, and is keen to hear workers’ experiences in the areas of policy development, and the processes of writing, facilitating or evaluating primary prevention programs relevant to violence in relationships. Susan says: “perhaps some of you have experienced dilemmas in this aspect of prevention work, or have developed strategies you use when promoting ‘good’ relationships, that you wouldn’t speak about in the public domain but might share in this research project”.

The project aims to “further contribute to better work being done to prevent violence in relationships, and to the professional development of human service workers”. The project has ethics approval, and participants would receive an information sheet and questions before deciding if they want to be involved. Participation would remain confidential.

*If you would like to be involved, please email Susan at: su.evans@uws.edu.au*

**Attitudes towards drink spiking and its prevalence**

A Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) postgraduate student, Bridget McPherson, is looking for volunteers aged from 18 to 35 to participate in a study on drink spiking, and is hoping that services may be able to assist in advertising the study to potential participants. She believes that the research “holds the potential to provide vital data to agencies and the community itself” and will be of greatest benefit “with a large number of participants, including people who have and haven’t experienced drink spiking”. She would appreciate any assistance services can offer in placing flyers, or advertising through a newsletter or website.

Bridget has previously conducted research into the relationship between parental attachment and risk-taking in young people, and spent time working with high-risk adolescents who had experienced abuse, mental illness and substance abuse. In this study, which has ethics approval, she is seeking to determine the prevalence of drink spiking in the community, as well as “motivations and attitudes surrounding social activities including sexual activity and alcohol and substance abuse”.

Study participants are required to fill in a confidential questionnaire, which takes about 15 to 20 minutes. The questionnaire is available at http://weblearn.rmit.edu.au/ses

*For further information, contact Bridget McPherson on 0413 687 967 or by email at S3072622@student.rmit.edu.au*

**Working with women victim/survivors of childhood sexual abuse**

Kristina Birchmore, a PhD candidate at the University of South Australia (UniSA), is looking for voluntary participants who work with women as generalist counsellors, specialist childhood sexual abuse counsellors, or sex therapy counsellors. The study is for the purpose of examining the knowledge that professionals and survivors draw on to understand women’s experiences of sexual intimacy when they have a history of childhood sexual abuse. The research seeks to compare the knowledge and interpretations of practitioners with those of women affected by childhood sexual abuse.

The UniSA Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the research. Participation would involve completing a confidential online survey, which would take 10 to 30 minutes.

*Please contact kristina.birchmore@unisa.edu.au for additional information and link to the online survey.*
The Sentencing Advisory Council was established in Victoria in 2004 as an independent statutory body by the Sentencing (Amendment) Act 2003 to advise the Victorian Attorney-General on sentencing issues. Its main functions are to:

- provide statistical information on sentencing, including information on current sentencing practices;
- conduct research and disseminate information on sentencing matters;
- gauge public opinion on sentencing;
- consult on sentencing matters; and,
- provide the Court of Appeal with the Court's written views on the giving, or review, of a guideline judgement.

The first task of the Council, in response to a request by Victoria's Attorney General, the Honourable Rob Hulls MP, was to provide advice on the use of suspended sentences in Victoria and to consider possible reform options. This announcement came soon after there was public outcry over a convicted rapist being given a wholly suspended sentence by a County Court judge. A rally attended by several thousand people in Melbourne called for Parliament to abolish the use of suspended sentences for rape offences (The Age Newspaper, 15 December 2005), and to reassure the public that rape offenders were being treated seriously by the courts.

As part of a broader exercise, the Sentencing Council has been investigating the use of suspended sentences across particular categories of offences. Here, ACSSA considers the key findings reported in the Sentencing Snapshot that the Council prepared in relation to sentencing outcomes for the offence of rape.

The report can be downloaded in full from the Sentencing Advisory Council's web site at: http://www.sentencingcouncil.vic.gov.au

The Sentencing Snapshot (hereafter 'the Snapshot') takes account of all sentencing outcomes for people sentenced for the principal offence of rape in the Supreme and County Court of Victoria between 1999/2000 and 2003/2004. This includes both people who pleaded guilty to rape, or were found guilty by a jury. In Victoria, the maximum penalty for rape is 25 years imprisonment.

Snapshot of sentencing ‘types’ for rape offences

The Council found that a total of 166 people had been sentenced for rape between 1999/2000 and 2003/2004. All 166 were male. Custodial sentences were given in a clear majority of cases over the five-year period. For example, in 2003/2004, 94 per cent of convicted rapists received a custodial sentence.

Imprisonment is the most likely type of custodial sentence that is handed down to a convicted rape offender. Just over three quarters (77 per cent) of the 166 men who were sentenced for rape received a sentence of immediate imprisonment. Just under a quarter of people sentenced for rape (23 per cent) received a sentence type other than a gaol term, including:

1 Over this same five-year period, Victoria Police recorded over 4,500 reports of rape. See Victoria Police Crime Statistics Reports.
wholly (6 per cent) or partially (5 per cent) suspended sentences;
- intensive correction (2 per cent), community-based (3 per cent) orders, and adjourned undertakings (1 per cent);
- detention in a youth training centre (3 per cent);
- hospital and treatment-based orders (2.4 per cent).

The average age of the 166 offenders who were sentenced for rape offences between 1999/2000 and 2003/2004 was 36 years.

**Suspended sentences for rape offenders**

Over one in ten offenders sentenced for rape (11 per cent) was found to have received a wholly or partially suspended prison term during the five-year period under review. According to the Snapshot, the courts were ordering more partially, than wholly suspended prison terms for rape in 2003/2004, than they had been in the previous four years. Based on the limited nature of the data systems available to them, they were unable to say what factors might influence this fluctuation.

**Rape sentencing – terms of imprisonment**

The Snapshot distinguishes between two methods in describing sentence type. First, the Council refers to the *principal sentence* which is the sentence imposed in relation to the most serious individual offence of rape (that is, only the sentence for this offence will be considered). Second, they refer to the *total effective sentence*, which takes account of other offences related to the principal offence on which the offender may also have been convicted (for example, in addition to the offence of rape, an offender may be convicted of non-sexual assaults such as causing serious injury or unlawfully detaining a person; a judge will arrive at a sentence that reflects the totality of the seriousness of the offences).

The Council also provided figures on *non-parole periods* where the court imposes a period of imprisonment beyond which a person may become eligible for parole. The following figures provide the terms for offenders who received an immediate term of imprisonment during the five-year period under review, and for the most recent year examined by the Council.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms of imprisonment</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Most recent year examined - 2003/2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal offence of rape</td>
<td>5 years, 1 month</td>
<td>5 years, 7 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total effective sentence where rape is principal offence</td>
<td>6 years, 10 months</td>
<td>7 years, 8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-parole period</td>
<td>4 years, 9 months</td>
<td>5 years, 5 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to note that the Snapshot exclusively reports the *means*, or average, terms of imprisonment, without also reporting the *medians*, that is: the mid-point or 50th percentile. The median would have been particularly helpful in this context because it takes account of the extremes at either end of the sentencing spectrum, and is a better reflection of the most common outcome. For example, where a convicted serial rapist may attract a total effective sentence of some 20 years or longer, an offender who is found guilty of raping an acquaintance may receive a total effective sentence of 4 years. Examining the median terms alongside the average would have therefore helped to moderate this range and provide figures that don’t over-inflate, or under-state, the nature and status of the majority of sentencing outcomes where a prison term is set.

In 1997, sentencing figures reported by researchers undertaking an evaluation of Victoria’s law reform activity following the introduction of changes to rape laws and procedures, demonstrated this difference...
The authors reported both the average and median sentences given to 74 offenders who had pleaded guilty or been found guilty of a rape offence during their 18-month study period, between January 1992 and June 1993. The median terms were considerably lower than the means for both the total effective sentence and the non-parole periods.

For offenders who had pleaded guilty to rape, the average (mean) total effective sentence was 6 years and 8 months with a non-parole period of 5 years. The corresponding median figures for the total effective sentence given to offenders who had pleaded guilty was 5 years with a non-parole period of 3 years and 6 months (Heenan & McKelvie, 1997, pp. 242-243). However, it is also possible that, with a different sample of cases, or that since that time, there might be a closer association between the mean and median terms set. Unpublished research by the Council reveals a closer association between the mean and the median in recent years.

**What stage is the reference on suspended sentences at now?**

Quite apart from the sentencing trends for rape reported in this *Sentencing Snapshot*, the Council has looked broadly at the issue of suspended sentences across all offence categories. Their *Preliminary information paper* on suspended sentences was published in March 2005, with a *Discussion Paper* published soon after in April 2005 (used to inform community debate and aid consultations about the role of suspended sentences in Victoria). The Council’s proposals have been tabled in their *Suspension sentences: Interim report* of October 2005, and include 46 recommendations aimed at simplifying and modernising sentencing orders in Victoria. One of the key recommendations in this report is to remove the power of the court to wholly or partially suspend a prison sentence. The *Interim report* also recommends introducing sentencing options that will allow courts to issue new orders, particularly to young offenders aged between 18 and 25 years that do not include terms of imprisonment.

The Victorian Attorney-General is expecting the Council’s *Final report* on this subject to be submitted by the end of 2006.

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Rape for the “comfort” of soldiers


Reviewed by Lara Fergus

Late last year Amnesty International released the report, Still waiting after 60 years: Justice for survivors of Japan’s military sexual slavery system, on the systematic sexual violence suffered by the euphemistically-termed “comfort women”. As noted in the report, “comfort women” is a translation from the Japanese “jugun ianfu”, and, though widely used, is objectionable in its minimisation of the extreme human rights violations committed. The women and girls were abducted, forced, coerced or deceived into sexual slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army from around 1932 to the end of World War II. They were transported, often internationally, into “comfort stations” where they were raped, and often beaten, by up to 50 soldiers a day over several years. Amnesty estimates that up to 200,000 women and girls were enslaved in this way, though the exact number will never be known – women from Korea, Timor Leste, Indonesia, the Philippines, China, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Burma and many of the Pacific Islands.

Though examples of systemised sexual violence against women by soldiers are many, Amnesty highlights the institutionalised sexual slavery used by the Japanese Imperial Army during World War Two in this report as one of the most compelling examples. It constituted the “legalised military rape of subject women on a scale – and over a period of time – previously unknown in history” (Hicks, 1995 p.xv). The report begins with information from a variety of sources about the history, extent and nature of this “widespread and systematic” practice. It also includes many testimonies from survivors, which, though harrowing, are necessary reading for those who believe women’s experiences must inform our theory and practice around sexual violence. Finally, a large part of the report is devoted to a thorough legal analysis of the responsibility, under international and national law, of the Japanese Government to provide reparation, with Amnesty clearly targeting the current government to implement specific changes. While this latter analysis is too detailed to be adequately reviewed here, below is an overview of the parts of the report dealing with the history and nature of the “comfort women” system, drawing parallels with contemporary manifestations of sexual slavery and military sexual assault.

We just had to get on with our lives as if nothing had happened, that was really hard because for us the war never ended because the shame continued, we were always afraid someone might find out, we carried this horrific shame. I really couldn’t do anything about it, you carry all the shame, you feel dirty, you feel sorry, you feel different, you feel unworthy, they took away my youth, my possessions, my dignity. It is so amazing that after the war, men came back with all these medals on their chest and all women came back with were these scars. (Jan Ruff O’Hearne, who was repeatedly raped over a period of three months in an Indonesian “comfort station” during World War Two, in an interview with Amnesty International Australia, June 2005)
According to the Amnesty report, the first military “comfort station” was probably that established in Shanghai in 1932 (Yoshimi, 2000), and “full-scale institutionalisation of such facilities for sexual slavery appears to have begun after 1937” (Amnesty International, 2005 p.6). This institutionalisation developed alongside Japanese colonisation and military expansion across the region. Attempted justifications for the system included: “to reduce the number of rapes in areas where the army was based; prevent sexually transmitted diseases; counter the threat of espionage and […] improve soldiers’ morale and relieve them of ‘combat stress’ ” (Amnesty International, 2005 p.7, citing Boling, 1994-5; and Hicks, 1995). Reports and regulations – on such elements as inspections of the facilities, venereal examinations and schedules for the use of the “comfort stations” by officers or lower ranking soldiers – testify to the official sanctioning of the system.

Through “recruitment” techniques almost indistinguishable from those used by traffickers today, the Japanese military “preyed on [the] women and girls who because of age, poverty, class, family status, education, nationality or ethnicity were most susceptible to being deceived and trapped into the sexual slavery system” (Amnesty International, 2005 p.8). For example, particularly in Korea, “poor young girls were led to believe they would be earning good wages in factory work or similar employment [and] most were motivated by the need to support their families” (Amnesty International, 2005 p.9). The vast majority of women enslaved were young, aged between 12 and 20, and most came from poor rural backgrounds. Where the above “recruitment measures” of coercion and deception were inadequate, the Japanese military did not hesitate to use extreme violence and outright abduction, either of individual girls or women, or in large-scale “slave raids”.

Though some women and girls “were forced into sexual servitude near their homes, many were transported long distances to wherever Japanese soldiers were based” (Amnesty International, 2005 p.9). Sim Dal-yun, from Korea, testifies in the report:

_I was taken by ship. I think to Taiwan. There were many girls on the ship. [...] I was battered and hit so harshly that sometimes I fainted, once a soldier cut my thigh with a knife. My mental state was so unstable, I was like a dead body; I just lay there; soldiers would still come in and rape me. I was so young, I was in complete shock_ (quoted in Amnesty International, 2005 p.9).

Upon arrival at a “comfort station”, the women and girls were kept detained, with their movements closely monitored and restricted. Most women were not allowed to leave the military camps in which the “comfort stations” were situated, which were surrounded by barbed wire making escape impossible. Even if they were allowed to leave the camp, they found themselves in the middle of a war zone – and often in a foreign country with no money or ability to speak the local language – meaning they had nowhere to go. Those who managed to escape were highly vulnerable to being caught, and severely punished with physical and sexual violence when they were.

While in the “comfort stations”, the women and girls had to endure repeated rape and beatings. Some were forced to labour during the day and then raped at night. The report details the level of abuse they suffered:
Some were forced to “serve” 50 soldiers a day. Women have testified that their genitals were swollen and they experienced constant bleeding. They could not sit, sleep or urinate without pain. Soldiers would wait in line and rape the women one after the other, some were gang raped. Others were kept as the personal sex slaves of individual officers (Amnesty International, 2005, p.11).

As a result of the almost universally harsh conditions and extreme violence, the health of the women and girls deteriorated, and many died as a result of disease, malnutrition, exhaustion and ill-treatment. The Japanese military feared the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, which was one stated reason for the enslavement of such young, sexually-inexperienced girls. While forced health checks were carried out by army doctors, these were limited to preventing the spread of such diseases. The women and girls were denied medical attention for their other injuries, such as “cigarette burns, bayonet stabs and other forms of torture and ill-treatment inflicted on them” (Amnesty International, 2005, p.12). Many were killed or committed suicide during their enslavement.

The report notes that survivors faced additional trauma at the end of the war, when:

Some were summarily killed, some died in combat at the frontlines, while others were simply left stranded. Survivors faced severe hardship whilst attempting to make their way home, some died in transit. There are accounts of women who assimilated into the countries they were taken to. Some survivors returned to their home countries but rarely to their home towns. On return, the women kept silent about what happened to them. [...] The location of shame upon the violated woman is a thread that links the experiences of “comfort women” to other victims of sexual abuse in war, peace, at home and elsewhere across the world (Amnesty International, 2005, p.13).

The survivors are now in their seventies and eighties. Many have died without hearing an apology on behalf of the Japanese government or seeing justice served on the perpetrators. The impact and trauma of the abuse has continued throughout their lives. Hardly any of the survivors interviewed for the Amnesty report had been able to have children, as a result of their internal injuries or sexually transmitted disease. The emotional torment and psychological damage is evidenced in the testimonies of many of the survivors, who describe lives of isolation and solitude, of feeling “different from other women”, of “hiding”, of being scared. One survivor, Kang Soon-ae, who was abducted when she was 13 years-old, spoke of the long-term emotional effects of the abuse:

I thought about killing myself often … I feel tired, really tired; nobody knows my pain. I can smell the men, I hate men. The Japanese government should see me, realise what they did. The have to admit what they create (quoted in Amnesty International, 2005 p.14).

In addition to this, the survivors of the sexual slavery system, like survivors of trafficking and other forms of sexual abuse, spoke of being afraid to disclose or report what had happened to them because of consequences ranging from disbelief, rejection and alienation, to being declared unfit for marriage and suffering the resulting economic and social repercussions. In 1991, a Korean survivor, Kim Hak-soon, became the first to speak publicly about her experience. The Amnesty report notes that:

Aged 74, her decision was based on having no living relatives to be ashamed of her past. She in turn inspired many other women, including Lola Rosa Hensen who spoke on television and radio in the Philippines in 1992 urging survivors not to feel ashamed but come forward and demand justice. These remarkable women gave strength and courage to many others, becoming champions of justice for all victims of Japanese military sexual slavery (Amnesty International, 2005, p.17).

Many of the survivors now organise demonstrations and conferences, and have addressed United Nations (UN) bodies and pursued litigation in Japan and the United States. In the face of ongoing impunity for perpetrators of the abuse, and lack of redress to the survivors, women’s rights activists came together in 2000 for the Women’s International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan’s Military Sexual Slavery. Though a non-judicial tribunal, it gave the opportunity for survivors to testify in a formal environment and made recommendations based on legal findings.
The recommendations issuing from the tribunal, and the analysis in the Amnesty report of Japan’s obligations under national and international law, are too detailed to be reproduced here. In summary, however, Amnesty has reflected the demands of survivors in calling on the Japanese government to:

- Accept full responsibility for the “comfort women system” wherever it occurred;
- Issue an apology that is acceptable to the majority of “comfort women” and their immediate relatives;
- Offer adequate and effective compensation;
- Guarantee non-repetition by ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; and,
- Provide an accurate account of the sex slavery system in Japanese text books on World War II.

(Amnesty International Australia, 2006, p.4)

The Amnesty report also draws links with wider military sexual violence, noting that rape, mutilation and murder of women and girls are common tactics in war. Many theorists have examined the particular history of militarisation with regard to sexual violence and prostitution. Sheila Jeffreys, for instance, situates the massive growth in the prostitution industries of Saigon, Thailand and the Philippines as a direct result of large United States (US) military presences (Jeffreys, 1997, citing Enloe, 1983; Sturdevant & Stoltzfus, 1992). Robert Jensen goes further to draw links between prostitution/pornography and war, saying they “both depend for their success on the process of rendering human beings less-than-fully-human so they can be hurt” (Jensen, 2005, p.31). He quotes one investigative journalist reporting during the 1991 Gulf War that US pilots watched pornographic movies before flying missions, apparently to get them “pumped up” to drop bombs (Kurtz, 1991, quoted in Jensen 2005).

A recent report by Human Rights Watch notes that during the 1992-5 conflict in the former Yugoslavia, thousands of women were raped by Bosnian, Serb and Yugoslav armed forces (Human Rights Watch, 2002). Such sexual violence was not only opportunistic but systematic, taking place in rape camps and detention centres scattered throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. The report goes on to point out that:

With the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement in December 1995, violence against women and girls in Bosnia and Herzegovina did not cease. The grim sexual slavery of the war years has been followed by the trafficking of women and girls for forced prostitution (Human Rights Watch, 2002, p.4).

The latest report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, draws specific links between military deployment and sexual exploitation. Respondents to her questionnaire confirmed that the influx of military personnel, peacekeepers and even employees of international organisations or international aid workers, into “a situation of armed conflict or political instability, often brings about a demand for services deriving from sexual exploitation [which] can lead to an increase of trafficking. Human rights advocates also provided information on the role of United Nations peacekeeping troops in creating a demand for prostitution and trafficking in post-conflict situations” (Huda, 2006, p.18).

Some countries and organisations have taken action to reduce such exploitation, with the UN, the US and Norway banning their military personnel from using prostituted persons. In addition, “forty-six nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) have agreed to prohibit their military personnel from
engaging in the use of prostituted women who are known to be controlled by traffickers, and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has adopted a code of conduct for all mission members in Bosnia and Herzegovina that prohibits mission members from promoting or facilitating prostitution and trafficking in persons” (Huda, 2006, p.18).

Despite this increased awareness of the abuses women suffer in wartime – and other developments such as the recognition of rape as a war crime and crime against humanity under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court – there remains widespread impunity for such crimes, with states failing to investigate, perpetrators left unpunished, and victims denied reparation. Many of the survivors of the “comfort women” system are also involved in campaigning to end wider violence against women across the world. Survivor Lola Julia Porras is quoted in the report as saying:

*Women are being raped now; they are being killed. [...] I spoke in the former Yugoslavia to women who themselves had been raped in the conflict, after I spoke they came up to me, they were crying, they said they themselves were not ready to speak about what happened to them but that I had given them courage and hope* (quoted in Amnesty International, 2005, p.18).

References


On 9 August 2006, Amnesty International will be holding an international day of action, calling for justice for the survivors of Japan’s military sexual slavery system. The report, *Still waiting after 60 years*, is available on the Amnesty International website at: http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA220122005

The What’s New page of the ACSSA website also contains regular updates and links to this and other recently-released reports relevant to sexual assault: http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/whatsnew.html

Reports are later archived in our Research Collection: http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/research/docsmenu.html
Four new resources have been produced as outputs of a two-year capacity building participatory action research project funded by Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation. We worked with two groups of women survivors of childhood sexual abuse and two groups of service providers to this client group. The first resource is a workbook titled *Reclaiming myself after child sexual abuse* (van Loon and Kralik, 2005). It is aimed at supporting survivors dealing with the impacts of abuse/assault and the subsequent life issues the women face. The second resource is another 200 page book *Facilitating transition after child sexual abuse* (van Loon, 2005). It is aimed at service providers and group facilitators working with this client group. The third resource is the final report of the research project which provides an extensive literature review and recommendations for service provision proposed by participants (van Loon & Kralik, 2005). It will be useful to inform policy and planning for governments and health and social service agencies. The final resource is a poster that describes the transition process through life's disruptions. This poster has received accolades in every forum in which it has been presented, because it resonates with people, helping them make sense of disruptive life changes (van Loon & Kralik, 2005). All four resources are available for free electronic downloading from the Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS) Research Unit website http://www.rdns.org.au and the Catherine House website http://www.catherinehouse.org.au.

**Why we commenced this project**

There is a plethora of research demonstrating people who have experienced childhood sexual abuse are at increased risk of mental illness, and drug, alcohol and gambling addictions. These issues are directly linked to this group being over-represented in the homeless population (Anderson & Chiocchio, 1997). Catherine House, an inner-city supported accommodation provider, state that over 90 per cent of the women seeking emergency accommodation have experienced sexual abuse in childhood. While these women were receiving support for their addictions and mental health needs, the underlying cause was not being adequately addressed. They teamed up with the RDNS Research Unit to work with homeless women to find ways to help them to move forward from such adverse childhood experiences. The RDNS Research Unit has expertise in researching with people regarding life, health and social transitions. They are particularly interested in working with people who are experiencing chronic illness and/or social disadvantage.

The team wanted to locate a way to build the personal capacity of these women by helping them work through their past pain so they may reframe their current responses to life's problems. The aim was to facilitate the women's transition toward independence and a life where drugs, alcohol and gambling were less likely responses, because these behaviours were contributing to the women's homelessness. Additionally, the team wanted those working with this client group to increase their awareness and sensitivity of the women's specific needs.

The team received a grant from the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation and together they commenced working with two groups of women survivors of childhood sexual abuse (n=16) and two groups of service providers (n=24) to work out a process that could help these women survivors to create change in their lives. The groups allowed the women to find their voices about deep and painful life stories that had been carried in silence for many years, yet the disrupting influence of that life story had dominated most of the women's life choices. The process the team used and the content of what the groups discussed are presented in the two books that were launched in November 2005.

**The research process**

We used participatory action research because we wanted to do more than obtain information (Banks-Wallace, 1998; Holstein & Gubrium, 2000; Aranda, 2001; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Koch, 2005; Koch, Mann et al., 2005). We worked with the women childhood sexual abuse survivors for two to three hours each fortnight for 18 months to generate the data together. All interactions were taped and transcribed verbatim and analysed and returned to the women by post for their considered action. The books were formulated as a direct response to the women's request for an
accessible “self-help” workbook. The women participated in every aspect of the research process. The team did not dictate the content of what was to be discussed at each meeting, rather the women explored current issues in their lives using a simple process called “Look, Think, Act”.

In this process the women work back from the present to see how situations have been managed in the past and what effects those responses have had on the woman's life. The process focuses on locating issues or problems that people wanted to change. The approach provided women with a safe space and regular time to work through situations to develop a clearer understanding of how their current behaviours and responses might be linked to thoughts, feelings and attitudes that they had learned, many of which were grounded in their experiences of sexual abuse in childhood.

We located the strengths and wisdom each woman brought to her current situation, which was an empowering process. At the end of the project the women benefited from their participation and we as researchers had an authentic product that could be used by other organisations to benefit survivors of childhood sexual abuse and possibly survivors of other forms of abuse.

The “Look, Think and Act” process

This process first coined by Stringer (Stringer 1999; Stringer & Genet 2004), is a simple three-step method that can be used by any person. It's called “Look Think Act”:

**Look** This step basically involves working out “What is going on?”

**Think** This step addresses the questions “What do I want to do about it?” and “What can I feasibly do right now that will provide me with the best outcome now?”

**Act** This step encourages each woman to take some action toward making her plans happen. We suggest she takes the “easiest” steps that are likely to give her the best results. However, this is actually difficult because the woman must have the courage to step out of an identity that is “victim” oriented. In this state the woman believes she is in a powerless position where everything happens to her and she has no options at her disposal. With encouragement we invite her to consider she has enough power to start to change her situation and reclaim the territory of her own life.

The women experienced validation in sharing their life experiences and found they had much in common. In speaking about the situation the women made sense of aspects of their life story. Their past disruption and the ensuing chaos has had them feeling like “flotsam and jetsam in the sea of life”, as one participant put it, but in the narrative work they started to find anchor points that reflected stronger and more able women than they believed they were.

This helped them work out who they were and where they were going, so they could decide how they wanted to live and create change accordingly. As their future plans unfolded, hope was rekindled and the woman’s motivation to work at creating change grew. They understood how past and present were connected and became able to separate themselves from the things that had been toxic to their wellbeing. They could see they were more than the sum of their past experiences and this ignited the hope required to create change.

This was not a quick fix process. It takes dedicated time to help a woman face her pain, feel her pain, name it, grieve her losses and then work out how she wants to live and be in the world now. Using the process takes practice and the women need encouragement to work with it until it becomes more second nature. Over time their own progress provides the motivation they require to keep moving forward with their life. The process, however, is accessible to everyone. Service providers and volunteer community groups can use it with good effect, providing they create a safe group within which to work and have people committed to working with the women for around 12 months.

The research outputs

Along with several published papers (van Loon, 2004; van Loon et al., 2004), the first book (~200 pages) is aimed at women survivors of childhood sexual abuse and can be used in conjunction with a support group, or a worker with whom the woman is comfortable. The book contents came from our group work which was led by issues the women were encountering. They said the book should cover the impacts of childhood sexual abuse and work with the reader on various common issues, emotions and feelings that may be linked to childhood sexual abuse. Through exploring these issues the women are assisted to separate themselves from the abuse experiences and move toward reclaiming an independent identity with which they are comfortable. The book does not claim to be an authoritative text that guarantees healing. It provides a process that we know to be empowering and helpful, about issues that we know are common struggles.

The second book is aimed at service providers. It gives a background to the problem of childhood sexual abuse with an extensive review of the literature necessary for understanding the issues. It discusses important factors in creating a therapeutic relationship with this client group. It gives a brief overview of how to create the space for participation in a group that is handling such sensitive issues and helps service providers to understand how to use the “Look, Think and Act” process to facilitate transition.
Five hundred hard copies of each book were distributed free to key services in South Australia who work with this client population. The book is also available for free downloading from the Royal District Nursing Service Research Unit website http://www.rdns.org.au, and the Catherine House Inc. website http://www.catherinehouse.org.au so the package is accessible for everyone in the community to use.

More research is planned

The women in this study wanted to hear the stories of ordinary women who had experienced childhood sexual abuse, who had been able to move on and reclaim their lives in order to live a life that they were content with. The RDNS research team received a small grant from Community Benefit SA and are interviewing 12 women to obtain narratives of hope by locating in these stories the strategies, attitudes and processes the women used to transition into a future of their choosing.

The RDNS Research Unit can offer their expertise to partner with other service providers to use this research process with other vulnerable client groups, in order to improve health and social service provision. Additionally, the RDNS Foundation gratefully receives donations to support their research program that seeks to promote health and prevent illness for marginalised groups within our community. More information can be obtained by phoning (08) 8206 0111 or emailing researchunit@rdns.org.au. Similarly, Catherine House continues its excellent support to vulnerable women who find themselves homeless for a variety of reasons, and their work can be supported by phoning (08) 8232 2282 or emailing director@catherinehouse.org.au.

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All four resources are available for free electronic downloading. The two work books, Reclaiming myself after child sexual abuse, and Facilitating transition after child sexual abuse are online at the Catherine House website at: http://www.catherinehouse.org.au/research.htm

The poster can be downloaded from the Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS) Research Unit website at: http://www.rdns.org.au/research_unit/research_focus.htm and the research report (and workbooks) at: http://www.rdns.org.au/research_unit/research_projects_current.htm

References


Safe at work? Women’s experience of violence in the workplace (hereafter “Safe at work?”), a report by the Union Research Centre Of Technology (URCOT) and Working Women’s Health, presents findings from a research project conducted to identify the incidence, prevalence and impact of violence against women in Victorian workplaces. The project was overseen by the Victorian Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Violence Against Women in the Workplace, which was established under the Victorian Government’s Women’s Safety Strategy and chaired by the Victorian Office of Women’s Policy. The Steering Committee includes representatives from government and non-government organisations and aims to improve prevention of, and responses to, violence against women occurring in the workplace setting, including workplace violence, bullying and sexual harassment.

The starting point for the Safe at work? research project was to undertake a gender analysis of workplace violence after a review of relevant literature revealed that previous studies tended to “deal with workplace violence in a non-gendered way” (p.5). In this sense, the research recognised “the importance of gender and its relationship with race, ethnicity, culture, class, age, sexuality, disability, or other status to understand women’s experience” (p.6). Consequently, the research analyses how gender, race, class, sexuality and power impact on violence in the workplace. The study adopted a broad definition of workplace violence encompassing physical and non-physical forms of violence occurring inside or outside the workplace setting, such as: “physical assault; threatening behaviour; bullying; verbal abuse and various forms of harassment” (p14). The violence could be perpetrated by a colleague, supervisor, client, customer, family member or member of the public.

The study used a number of research methods to ensure a diverse range of women’s experiences were taken into account, including: a literature review; a telephone survey of 1,000 Victorian women (with 977 valid responses); focus group discussions with Indigenous women, lesbian and immigrant women; and interviews and focus groups with managers and women from four selected industries (health, manufacturing, education and retail/hospitality).

Given the Australian and international literature available on workplace violence, the Safe at work? research project set out to address the following questions:

1. What is the type and frequency of violence in the workplace against women in general and against particular groups of women?
2. How does the experience of workplace violence impact on women, including its impact on their lives outside of the workplace?
3. What are the cultural and structural characteristics of sectors and workplaces where there is reported violence against women?
4. What has supported or hindered women from reporting the violence, and receiving responses appropriate to their needs?
5. What are the economic and social costs of workplace violence?
The findings from the literature review, telephone survey and focus groups demonstrated that violence in the workplace affects women of all ages and across industries and occupations. Women experienced significant levels of workplace violence, which was often normalised and legitimated, particularly where violence against women was embedded in the organisation’s culture. Further, gender inequality in workplaces, as in society, led to women being engaged in positions of vulnerability or insecure employment.

Findings from the telephone survey

The survey findings demonstrated that violence against women in Victorian workplaces is significant, with 607 women (62.1 per cent) experiencing some form of violence at work in the last five years, including: being sworn at or shouted at; hostile behaviours; being intimidated or threatened; bullying; victimisation; physical attacks; racial or sexual harassment; robbery; wounding or battering; stalking; and rape. Of those who experienced violence in the last 12 months, 96 per cent said it had occurred on multiple occasions. Men were more likely to perpetrate violence against women in the workplace (69 per cent), although 31 per cent of the perpetrators were women. Almost 50 per cent of women surveyed (n=484) reported witnessing violence directed towards others in the workplace. Further, the survey results suggested that violence against women in the workplace was often normalised and that women found it difficult to label their experiences of violence. Although 69 per cent of women had experienced or witnessed the behaviours listed above, only 39 per cent of women surveyed initially identified what they had experienced or witnessed as “violence”. The findings illustrated that supervisors and colleagues perpetrate more violence against women in the workplace than people “external” to organisations (that is clients, customers, students and patients). In 40 per cent of “internal” workplace violence, managers, supervisors or business owners perpetrated the violence, and in 60 per cent of cases the perpetrator was another worker.

Findings from the focus groups

In addition to the telephone survey, focus group discussions were held to further investigate experiences of violence for specific groups of women (immigrant women, Indigenous women and lesbians).

The findings demonstrated that immigrant women experienced unique factors, which increased their vulnerability to violence in the workplace. Immigrant women were over-represented in low paid and low status occupations, experienced language barriers that impeded their access to services and information, and were often unfamiliar with their rights. Immigrant women reported that the violence they experienced was mostly perpetrated by supervisors or managers and often occurred in discriminatory environments. Immigrant women also reported experiencing racialised violence and reported feeling alone, isolated and vulnerable in the workplace.

Indigenous women experienced violence in “a broader context of racism and disadvantage in access to work and to career advancement” (p.8). In this sense, in non-Indigenous organisations, women experienced violence as an extension of being treated as “second class” people while in Indigenous community organisations, the violence which occurred reflected broader family and community structures. That is, the authors say, violence experienced by women in Indigenous community organisations related to the power individuals held because of their family backgrounds and the way in which workplace violence was perceived and dealt with was affected by the family-based structure and close-knit nature of Indigenous communities. High levels of violence in some Indigenous communities also impacted on perceptions of workplace violence. Younger women faced unique difficulties in addressing violence as it may involve confronting an “elder” who holds considerable power in the community or workplace.

Lesbians spoke of feeling alienated and different from managers and colleagues, battled ignorance about their communities and themselves and reported regularly experiencing discrimination and harassment because they were lesbians. “One of the biggest concerns for lesbians was the extent to which they felt able to be open about their sexuality without being afraid of adverse consequences” (p.8). Violence experienced by lesbians was often subtle and “difficult to prove” with one study participant reporting that “it’s the indirect stuff that makes you think that you are going insane” (p.32).

Findings from the industry case studies

The research included four industry studies: the health industry, the education industry, the manufacturing sector, and the retail/hospitality industry. The health and education industries were chosen...
because they were female-dominated industries. Within the health industry, women experienced internal workplace violence, which resulted in significant productivity losses. These findings were similar to previous studies, which illustrate that internal workplace violence is most common in organisations with hierarchical structures. The findings from this study also suggest that non-physical violence may be widespread and unchecked in the health industry and that internal violence (perpetrated by colleagues and managers) has a greater impact than external violence (perpetrated by non-employees). These hierarchical structures were also evident in the education industry with women often being engaged in the least powerful positions and experiencing a “culture of violence where violent behaviour [was] perpetrated and modelled ‘from the top down’ ” (p.37). Women also experienced employment insecurity resulting in reluctance to report workplace violence. The study found that fear of job loss was heightened in areas with limited job markets (that is regional communities). Further, the negative impact of external workplace violence from parents and students (that is distress and injury) was worsened if managers failed to respond appropriately.

Women working in the manufacturing sector on both the factory floor and in professional roles experienced male-dominated work environments where violence was normalised and entrenched. Women in this industry often felt they had to tolerate a certain level of violence and sometimes felt fearful and threatened, particularly if employed in vulnerable positions.

Women in small retail businesses were often unaware of action they could take, other than leaving their job, if the business owner was the perpetrator of violence. Women in the retail and hospitality industries also experienced violence (“being treated badly”) from members of the public on regular basis. The study found that some small organisations did not have the processes in place to adequately address this.

The impacts and costs of workplace violence

The findings illustrate that workplace violence adversely affects women in many ways and impacts on individuals, their families, communities and workplaces. In the telephone survey four out of five women (79 per cent) who experienced violence reported their enjoyment of the job was affected “a lot” or “somewhat”. Women also spoke of developing psychological disorders, leaving their jobs, developing substance abuse problems or experiencing relationship breakdowns. Further, 3.5 per cent of women surveyed made WorkCover claims and more than one in ten (11 per cent) took sick leave as a result of workplace violence.

Workplace violence also resulted in costs to organisations including: reduced efficiency, staff turnover, absenteeism, early retirement costs, counselling program costs, mediation or grievance proceedings, anti-discrimination action, and applications to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. Costs to the community included health care costs or costs associated with family breakdown and unemployment.

Women’s responses to workplace violence

Three out of five women who reported experiencing violence in the telephone survey had reported it to a manager or a person in a position of authority. Reasons for not reporting violence in the workplace included: women feared losing their jobs; violence was “normalised” in the workplace and seen as unavoidable; women did not know what could be done about it; some women feared the reporting process would be traumatic; women believed that violence was condoned by managers resulting in lack of faith in the system; and, as with other types of violence against women, the associated shame silenced their experience of workplace violence.

Many women reported taking action to protect themselves even if they preferred to not formally report workplace violence. This included confiding in family and friends, seeking information and support from a manager or confronting the perpetrator.

Outcomes were varied for women who reported violence. In some organisations that had established policies and processes in place, the violence was addressed; in some instances the report went no further than the initial person who took the report; and in some cases women were later punished or ostracised for reporting violence. Where responses were inadequate, women attributed this to their managers not fully understanding the extent of the problem, not caring enough or not wanting to deal with it, or managers not having the skills or knowledge to deal with it.
Preventing violence against women in the workplace

This research suggests that although under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic) it is an employer’s responsibility to provide a safe and healthy workplace, unless women believe the employer takes this responsibility seriously, they will not take action themselves. The research also illustrates that even where policies and guidelines exist in organisations, women engaged in insecure forms of employment are particularly vulnerable and likely to face barriers to taking action to stop violence. The study demonstrates that to understand and prevent workplace violence it is important to analyse the “personal and power politics in the workplace and broader societal relationships” (p11). Women offered many suggestions for action against workplace violence including:

- improved regulation and monitoring of workplaces so women can safely make complaints;
- education and training for employers and employees;
- stronger legislation that supports workplace diversity;
- support for women experiencing violence including a confidential telephone support service, counselling and providing women with advice about available options/action;
- Indigenous women suggested mentoring programs for young women into leadership and improvements in the governance and management of community organisations;
- education campaigns informing employers of their responsibilities and employees of their rights; and,
- training which provides an understanding of the forms of violence in organisations, diversity training, and training about acceptable and professional work behaviour.

The Safe at work? research demonstrates that violence against women in Victorian workplaces is a significant and widespread problem and that the costs are experienced by individuals, families, communities, workplaces and society. Further, the importance of acknowledging women’s experiences of violence and taking appropriate action is highlighted.

The research illustrates that women face many barriers to reporting and resolving workplace violence including: being engaged in insecure or low-paid employment; being fearful of losing their job; working in organisations that condone or normalise violence; and the power dynamics between the perpetrator and themselves. This results in women often not reporting or resolving the violence they experience in the workplace.

The extent of workplace violence against women evidenced in the Safe at work? research demands the development of interventions to address this widespread issue. Effective policies, training, prevention strategies and interventions at a statewide level, across industries and within workplaces need to be developed to address violence against women in Victorian workplaces. These need to recognise all forms of violence, physical and non-physical, and the barriers women face in the workplace when responding to the violence they have experienced. Further, the research highlights that addressing the issue of violence against women in the workplace is an individual, community, workplace and government responsibility.

You can access copies of Safe at work? from the website of the Victorian Office for Women’s Policy, at: http://www.women.vic.gov.au/safeatwork

The What’s New page of the ACSSA website also contains regular updates and links to this and other recently-released reports relevant to sexual assault: http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/whatsnew.html

Reports are later archived in our Research Collection: http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/research/docsmenu.html
In February 2005, under the Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Initiative, up to $1.5 million in funding was announced for 27 community-based projects to be run in 2005-06 and 2006-07. These projects aim to reduce the impact of domestic and family violence and sexual assault through community-based action research, related partnership projects and product development. Funding agreement negotiations are currently underway, and projects are expected to commence in shortly. The Australian Government’s Office for Women have provided us with the following table, which presents details of the funded projects and how to contact project managers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Project name and description</th>
<th>Contact details</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnardos Auburn Children’s Family Centre Sydney NSW</td>
<td>Domestic Violence Counselling and Support for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities</td>
<td>Paul Harkin (02) 9646 2770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane Indigenous Media Association Cape York QLD</td>
<td>Cape York Indigenous Media Project</td>
<td>Ian Watson (07) 3892 0100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse (CALD) Communities</td>
<td>Domestic Violence Counselling and Support for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities</td>
<td>Paul Harkin (02) 9646 2770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault VIC</td>
<td>Responding to Victims and Survivors of Sexual Assault with Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder</td>
<td>Judy Flanagan (03) 9870 7310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence QLD</td>
<td>Strength, Health and Empowerment (SHE)</td>
<td>Di Macleod (07) 5591 1164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incest Survivors Association Inc WA</td>
<td>Building Generations</td>
<td>Sandra Basham (08) 9227 8745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner South Community Health Service Melbourne VIC</td>
<td>Listening to What Matters: Responding to the Voices of Women Affected by Family Violence</td>
<td>Lucille Chalmers (03) 9534 0981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm Island “Safer Tomorrow” Workshops</td>
<td>Safety Resource Card</td>
<td>Me Gillian Cordell (08) 8413 8122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm Island Safety Resource Card</td>
<td>Funding will be used to develop a resource card that contains information on relevant services, support and other critical educational information. The organisation will work with South Australian Police to facilitate and support distribution of the card by police when attending domestic violence disputes.</td>
<td>Me Gillian Cordell (08) 8413 8122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm Island “Safer Tomorrow” Workshops</td>
<td>Funding will be used to conduct workshop groups with young people to gather information about their relationship attitudes and behaviours as well as their ideas about effective ways to promote healthy relationships to young people. The project will use this information to develop a group work facilitator’s manual that can be used by community workers working with young people. The project will also produce a young women’s magazine to provide messages aiming to prevent domestic and family violence.</td>
<td>Di Macleod (07) 5591 1164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm Island Safety Resource Card</td>
<td>Funding will be used to develop a resource card that contains information on relevant services, support and other critical educational information. The organisation will work with South Australian Police to facilitate and support distribution of the card by police when attending domestic violence disputes.</td>
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<th>Contact details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Social Service Australian Branch</td>
<td>Learning from the Links between Domestic Violence and International Parental Child Abduction</td>
<td>Lis De Vries <a href="mailto:lis@iss.org.au">lis@iss.org.au</a> (03) 9614 8755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyabra Community Association QLD</td>
<td>Women’s Narratives in Response to Domestic Violence: Research and Resources Project</td>
<td>Paul Montgomery <a href="mailto:paulm@kyabra.org">paulm@kyabra.org</a> (07) 3373 9499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre NSW</td>
<td>Healthy Relationships Youth Kit</td>
<td>Kamalle Dabbousy <a href="mailto:coordinator@lmc.org.au">coordinator@lmc.org.au</a> (02) 9601 3788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnolia Place Women’s Shelter Launceston TAS</td>
<td>Children’s Shelters Booklets</td>
<td>Muz Arnold <a href="mailto:magnolia@tpg.com.au">magnolia@tpg.com.au</a> (03) 6344 6535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Rural Women’s Coalition</td>
<td>Helping to Prevent Family Violence in Rural Australia</td>
<td>Dr Jenny Hutchinson <a href="mailto:jhutchison@ruralwomen.org.au">jhutchison@ruralwomen.org.au</a> (02) 6584 4294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission NT</td>
<td>Integrated Family Violence Justice Project</td>
<td>Meredith Harrison <a href="mailto:meredith.harrison@ntlac.nt.gov.au">meredith.harrison@ntlac.nt.gov.au</a> (08) 8999 3005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Island Women’s Advisory and Support Service Regional NSW</td>
<td>Strong Families - Strong Communities</td>
<td>Kiri Hata <a href="mailto:kirihata@optusnet.com.au">kirihata@optusnet.com.au</a> (02) 9516 3281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat Thomas Memorial Community House WA</td>
<td>Women and Justice</td>
<td>Trish McGowan <a href="mailto:pto@wn.com.au">pto@wn.com.au</a> (08) 9335 4775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with Disability Australia</td>
<td>Sexual Assault in Disability and Aged Care Action Strategy</td>
<td>Stefanie Williams <a href="mailto:stefaniew@pwd.org.au">stefaniew@pwd.org.au</a> (02) 9370 3100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships Australia VIC</td>
<td>Keeping Women Safe After Separation</td>
<td>Jane Vanderstoel <a href="mailto:jvanderstoel@rav.org.au">jvanderstoel@rav.org.au</a> (03) 9261 8700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships Australia TAS</strong></td>
<td>Tasmanian Ways of Working Project</td>
<td>Sue Holmes <a href="mailto:sueh@reltas.com.au">sueh@reltas.com.au</a> (03) 6211 4050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This project will develop a counsellor-training DVD, drawing on complex, real-life counselling cases where domestic or family violence has been identified. Only cases where informed consent has been provided will be drawn upon, and names and some of the details will be changed to protect the identity of clients. Case study scripts from the sessions will be written-up, and actors will be used to film the dramatised counselling sessions for the DVD, which will be made available for training of staff. An assessment tool will also be developed for use by community workers working with individuals or families where domestic and family violence has occurred.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sisters Inside</strong></td>
<td>Indigenous Women Working Together towards SAFETY</td>
<td>Debbie Kilroy <a href="mailto:debi@sistersinside.com.au">debi@sistersinside.com.au</a> (07) 3844 5066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funding will be used to develop three resources that demonstrate new approaches of working with Indigenous women who have been in prison and their children, who have experienced family violence, on how to stay safe after prison release. Workbooks for children will also be produced, and several creative workshops will be held (art, circus), facilitated by Indigenous women elders and counsellors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University of Newcastle Family Action Centre Newcastle and Hunter Region NSW</strong></td>
<td>What Can We Do? Communities Responding to Violence</td>
<td>Graeme Stuart <a href="mailto:Graeme.Stuart@newcastle.edu.au">Graeme.Stuart@newcastle.edu.au</a> (02) 4921 7241 Paul Schott <a href="mailto:paul.schott@newcastle.edu.au">paul.schott@newcastle.edu.au</a> (02) 4921 7076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funding will be used to develop strategies that can be used by residents of communities living in close proximity to each other (e.g. caravan parks and some Aboriginal communities) to help reduce domestic and family violence by encouraging and supporting people who witness domestic violence to respond in appropriate ways. Following consultation with the target communities the project will develop resources and products to assist. Training resources will also be developed for use by community workers to support and encourage members of broader communities who witness domestic and family violence to respond in appropriate ways.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victims of Crime NT</strong></td>
<td>Positive Ways: Indigenous Say</td>
<td>Treena Monroe <a href="mailto:vocalnt@bigpond.com.au">vocalnt@bigpond.com.au</a> (08) 8941 0995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funding will contribute to a conference that aims to create an awareness of victim support and justice programs and promote and share best practice in urban and rural communities in NT, across Australia and in New Zealand.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wilma Women’s Health Centre NSW</strong></td>
<td>Silent No More</td>
<td>Shirley Kent <a href="mailto:shirlsk@optusnet.com.au">shirlsk@optusnet.com.au</a> (02) 4627 2955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funding will support groups with Indigenous and deaf women who are adult survivors of child sexual assault; build a resource containing information on child sexual assault and its impacts, and experiences of women survivors of child sexual assault; and develop a research paper exploring experiences of women accessing groups (Indigenous, CALD, disabilities, drug and alcohol) who have experienced family violence as adults.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women with Disabilities</strong></td>
<td>Development of a Resource Manual on Violence Against Women with Disabilities</td>
<td>Carolyn Frohmader <a href="mailto:wwda@ozemail.com.au">wwda@ozemail.com.au</a> (03) 6244 8288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This project comprises the development and production of a resource manual on violence against women with disabilities (including alternative formats such as Braille, audio, Easy English, Compic, large print, etc)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women’s Health West Crisis Accommodation Service VIC</strong></td>
<td>Library for CAS</td>
<td>Jenny Hickinbotham <a href="mailto:jennyh@whwest.org.au">jennyh@whwest.org.au</a> 0500 505 350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funding will provide materials for a resource library for the Crisis Accommodation Service for women and their children escaping domestic violence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WOWSafe: Women of the West for Safe Families SA</strong></td>
<td>Respectful Rap</td>
<td>Alison Newton <a href="mailto:alison.newton@health.sa.gov.au">alison.newton@health.sa.gov.au</a> (08) 8243 5403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funding will be used to develop and distribute a rap CD promoting respectful relationships.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zonta Club of Frankston VIC</strong></td>
<td>Animal Assisted Educational and Therapeutic Activities</td>
<td>Patricia McLean <a href="mailto:patriciamclean1@bigpond.com">patriciamclean1@bigpond.com</a> (03) 5971 1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funding will be used to provide children and young people with therapeutic animal care activities to reduce the incidents of aggressive, violent or self-harming behaviour, as well as examine and develop an effective practice model.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACSSA: What was the impetus for the establishment of Respond SA and what are its key aims and objectives?

Jodie Sloan: The impetus arose from a number of inquiries and public disclosures of childhood experiences of sexual abuse by adults. In early June 2004, the South Australian Government responded by acknowledging the prevalence and seriousness of this abuse. Its strategy was to establish a new designated service specifically for adults who have been subjected to childhood sexual abuse. It was decided that the service should be provided by a non-government, non-Church agency that would not have any conflict of interest in the provision of services and Relationships Australia in South Australia (SA) was therefore asked to establish the service. Key stakeholders such as Women’s Health Statewide, Yarrow Place, Uniting Care Wesley and Victim Support Service were initially consulted regarding the appropriateness of Respond SA being placed within Relationships Australia (SA) and the need for agencies to work collaboratively regarding the establishment and development of the new service.

So the initial impetus was the recognition of the numbers of children sexually abused by the clergy or while in state care and the consequent effects of these crimes in later life. However, it was also recognised that the problem of childhood sexual abuse extends way beyond these groups. So Respond SA also responds to the significant unmet need of adult survivors of child sexual abuse more generally. The client groups we respond to are really quite broad. They include:

- adults (16 years and over) who have been subjected to childhood sexual abuse;
- their families; and
- workers and agencies who work with or respond to the client group.

We are also committed to customising service initiatives to reach specific populations with very specific needs, that is people abused in care, Indigenous men and women, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, people with disabilities, prisoners, and people in rural and remote areas.

In designing the Respond SA service Relationships Australia (SA) identified four main objectives. We wanted to ensure that:

1. adult survivors are able to access a range of support services;
2. there is an appropriate response by organisations when a report of past sexual abuse is made;
3. health care workers and other frontline professional groups have the knowledge and skills to appropriately respond to the needs of adult survivors; and

4. there is increased knowledge and understanding in the community about the difficulties and issues involved for adult survivors.

The first of these objectives became operational immediately whereas objectives 2, 3 and 4, which require strategic planning (and time) to become fully effective, are “works in progress”.

ACSSA: There are very few services dedicated to adult survivors of childhood sexual assault that operate in Australia, suggesting that Respond SA may be carving new ground. What kinds of service delivery frameworks or models have informed the approach taken to the development of Respond SA?

Jodie: Because we recognise the overlap between various forms of abuse and violence, we wanted a model of service delivery and training that was integrated, coherent, coordinated and flexible. For example, a person who was sexually abused as a child might have also been recently sexually abused or subjected to domestic violence as an adult. This sort of thinking is evident in the creation of the broad violence brief within Relationships Australia (SA) that has been given to Mailin Suchting as Manager of Training and Education.

We were aware from the outset of potential problems with compartmentalising training, but we also needed to recognise the issues that are specific to adults subjected to childhood sexual abuse. We think we have managed to balance these two approaches quite well.

We have always insisted that it is not appropriate to limit service delivery to particular categories of abused adults (for example wards of the state). A service such as Respond SA has to cater for all adults who have been sexually abused as children, regardless of the context. And we are pleased that we have been successful in encouraging both men and women to access the service.

We also believe firmly in collaboration. Any training and community development will be richer if there are partnerships with existing providers. For this reason we have close training partnerships with a number of organisations and are brokering some counselling to private practitioners, which has also proven successful as a strategy for reducing the counselling waiting list.

It is also important that we work with other government initiatives such as the current “Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry” running in South Australia. We have co-operated with the Inquiry, providing witness support and training for Commission staff. We also try to give priority in our counselling services to people participating in the Inquiry.

Relationships Australia (SA) has extensive networks through its diverse range of programs and this, together with the wide experience of the Respond SA staff, has meant that we have been able to quickly establish strong working relationships to work with specific population groups such as Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

We are committed to statewide service delivery. Increasing services to rural and remote areas is one of our greatest ongoing challenges. We offer counselling from six Relationship Australia offices (one in the city, four in the suburbs and one in the Riverland). We also provide outreach services in a number of community health services in the Adelaide suburbs, in Mt Gambier in the State’s South East, as well as in two prisons (one in Mt Gambier). We are aware from our client satisfaction survey that offering a decentralised service is greatly appreciated and increasing our reach will be an important priority for the coming year.

Another important part of our model is that Relationships Australia (SA) is also a Registered Training Organisation and so we have a managerial position responsible for training, education and workforce development as well as my position as operational manager of the Respond SA service. I think this enabled us to successfully combine a broad strategic approach with responsiveness to the particular needs of our client group.

ACSSA: Why do you think survivors have been so under-served by social, medical legal institutions to date?

Mailin Suchting: The simple answer is that in spite of its serious impact on the health and wellbeing of people who have been abused, childhood sexual abuse commonly remains an unidentified issue. What
becomes a more complex question to answer is why the issue has not been identified and more effectively addressed.

And the answer to this question is multifaceted, so I’ll run through some of the factors that I think have the most influence.

Service providers have not typically been trained in the area of sexual abuse generally or childhood sexual abuse specifically. This means that there is not a high index of awareness of childhood sexual abuse within the services that survivors are likely to access. For example, In the Women’s Health Statewide SA Report It’s not my shame (1994) some health workers described feeling “out of their depth” and “inadequate” in their ability to respond to childhood sexual abuse issues.

In addition to lack of awareness about the extent and nature of childhood sexual abuse among service providers, the issue is also generally surrounded by secrecy, shame and taboo. Survivors may not link current difficulties with earlier abuse – and even if they have made the connection, it is not easy to disclose and talk about the experience. This is especially true if those offering services do not provide appropriate opportunities or have the necessary skills to raise the matter.

We know from the research that most perpetrators of childhood sexual abuse are adult males who in many cases are family members or someone the child knows and is encouraged to trust. Yet, historically, there has been a view that what happens in families should stay within families. The idea of the family being a private haven in a harsh world has been sanctified by the church, supported by the legal system and reinforced in counselling and educational contexts.

This widespread respect for the family as a fundamental building block of society has meant that people have been reluctant to interfere or disrupt its dynamics. It has also meant that perpetrators and survivors may not have thought of the abuse as a crime. Even when the survivor was aware that it was a crime, there are many reasons for non-reporting, for example fear, knowledge of the tactics that will be used by the perpetrator, ambiguous feelings about the perpetrator, shame, and lack of confidence in support options. It should also be noted that the law allowing the reporting of child sexual abuse crimes committed before 1982 was only changed in South Australia as recently as 2003.

Representations of family life in popular culture are also often highly romanticised. All of these sorts of issues contribute to widespread social disbelief and discomfort in acknowledging that sexual abuse does occur within families – or that family “friends” could possibly do such things.

An example of generalised disbelief is that, in the areas of prevention and intervention, there has been an almost exclusive focus on extra-familial abuse, coupled with “stranger-danger” messages. This has resulted in state and territory governments focusing their attention on a very select number of situations that do not necessarily represent the experiences of the majority of adult survivors of child sexual abuse. Respond SA’s 2004-2005 statistics on clients phoning the Helpline bear this out. Where the relationship of the perpetrator to the client was known (in about 50 per cent of calls), a large majority of perpetrators were immediate and extended family members (62 per cent).

The compounding consequence of these sorts of factors is often a mutual silence about childhood sexual abuse between client and service provider, which reflects a broader social response. In practice, this means that often the consequences or “presenting problems” of survivors – for example, drug and alcohol misuse, depression, anxiety, sexual or relationship difficulties – are treated without the underlying issue of childhood sexual abuse ever coming to light. It also means of course, that because funding for specialised services has typically been sparse, there has been an assumption that generic services will address the issue, without adequate attention to the need for a detailed understanding of the connection between these presenting issues and childhood sexual abuse.

**ACSSA: How do the specific needs of adult survivors differ from the needs of other survivors?**

**Mailin:** Anyone who has been subjected to sexual abuse may at different times in their lives have a range of needs, including legal, medical, social and personal support. There is also a huge problem about the ways in which survivors who choose to use the legal system have to prove that the perpetrator is guilty. This process often creates additional trauma and no doubt also accounts for under reporting of sexual abuse generally.
However, there are particular issues involved in childhood sexual abuse. The difference in power between the perpetrator and the child is usually huge. It is also often extremely confusing to the child. We know for example, that perpetrators are often family members and almost always male. And so the child experiences traumatic relationship confusion as well as the actual abuse. Issues arise involving trust, betrayal, fear, love, secrecy, and believing oneself to be bad in some fundamental way. In addition children may not know who, if anyone, can be told, or what the consequences of telling would be. All of these factors are likely to have a profound and ongoing effect on the child's development.

As well as these complexities, the survivor often has an ongoing relationship with the perpetrator and this may take place in close proximity over time. If disclosure is made, for example, to another family member, there can be family division in terms of who believes what and supports who. In such a situation the child is also confronted with ambiguous and conflicting family responses to their abuse.

A child is unlikely to be able to access outside support. And even if they could, the same issues of who can be trusted are understandably ever-present. These sorts of issues impact on people subjected to childhood sexual abuse throughout their lives. They all have individual needs because each person and situation is unique. Nonetheless, there are commonalities in issues that we see all the time at Respond SA. These include: the need to be believed; to reconcile that someone in a position of trust committed a crime against them; to be able as an adult to trust in adult relationships; to understand their sexual responses and choices; to build a sense of strength; and to understand their feelings about others who were close to them while the abuse occurred.

Childhood sexual abuse works to undermine those basic developmental needs of safety and the construction of a coherent identity. It can significantly disrupt the developmental task of children to learn who they are and how they belong. For all of these reasons counselling services that are dedicated to adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse are vital.

ACSSA: What need does Respond SA fill? How is it different from other specialist services such as Yarrow Place, the Rape and Sexual Assault Service in South Australia?

Jodie: Respond SA and Yarrow Place are both government-funded statewide services for women and men aged 16 years and over. Yarrow Place focuses on adult rape and sexual assault and Respond SA is a dedicated service for adults who have been subjected to childhood sexual abuse. Both services also provide counselling for people who are “significant others” such as partners and parents of the survivor. Both services provide therapeutic services, such as individual counselling and group work programs and both are Registered Training Organisations.

Respond SA however, is not a crisis service or a provider of medical services. We work with adults who have been sexually abused as children. This is an extremely important component of the overall service delivery profile in relation to sexual abuse in South Australia.

Childhood sexual abuse emerged as a public issue in South Australia when Naomi Women’s Shelter noted the high number of runaways due to incest in the period 1976-1977. Subsequent research undertaken by the Adelaide Rape Crisis Centre, and then Women’s Health Statewide, followed by Government commissioned reports such as the Child Protection Review1, have all highlighted the substantial number of adult survivors for whom no specific service existed.

The sexual abuse of children has received a high profile in South Australia in 2004, in relation to the abuse of children in care and by members of various churches. This resulted in the Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry that is still running in South Australia. Significantly, however, it has also become apparent (confirming former research) that people who have been abused in childhood come from a much broader population base than solely those in care or in church contexts. There are huge numbers of people who have been sexually abused in family situations. We deliver services to any adult member of the community who has survived sexual abuse.

ACSSA: Could Respond SA be modelled in other states and territories or is it more specific to the political, social or historical context of service development in South Australia?

Jodie: There are certainly some uniquely South Australian factors involved. We have a particular history in terms of the way sexual assault services have developed, compared with other states. One distinctive

part of the service development landscape here was the establishment of Statewide Sexual Assault Reference Group (SSARG). This is an interagency group which has been very important for South Australian service providers, providing a plank for collaborative approaches and linking government and non-government services.

However, having said that, I think our model could also succeed elsewhere and we would very much like the opportunity to be involved in national conversations about best practice models. Respond SA is a member of the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence (NASASV), and we will certainly seek to have greater input into national discussions in the future.

ACSSA: What kind of research would contribute most to our knowledge-base on adult survivors and the effects of child sexual abuse?

Jodie: The whole area of childhood sexual abuse is seriously under researched. What we do know is that the incidence is high and that it is a crime that is commonly not reported or even disclosed. We need, therefore, to understand more about what helps and hinders survivors to disclose and what the most helpful responses to that disclosure would be.

We are currently undertaking a research project that is a collaboration between Respond SA counselling staff and the University of NSW Centre for Gender Related Violence. It is a unique project in that all of the contributors have worked together to design the research questions and to develop the most effective and appropriate ways to collect information.

Among other things we will map people’s pathways to using the Respond SA service, their previous experience of counselling, and patterns of disclosure and how others responded to such disclosures. We will also explore clients’ hopes and expectations of our counselling service. This will provide Respond SA with invaluable data in terms of planning and priority setting. And it will also be the basis of papers that will be published and presented within Australia and internationally. I think it is important that work in the area has local applicability and that it contributes to a wider collective response to the issue.

We are also very aware that research is much needed about groups such as culturally and linguistically diverse communities and people in prison. For example there is a high incidence of women in prison who have been subjected to sexual abuse in childhood. This correlation needs to be better understood and we need to find ways of improving programs of support pre- and post-release for these women.

We have also been discussing the need for further exploration of different ways of working with people who have been subjected to childhood sexual abuse. Possibilities include one-to-one counselling work, shared counselling, “outsider witnessing”, and different group work models incorporating the arts (for example women and dance).

I believe that childhood sexual abuse is an issue of fundamental human rights, principally the right to live in safety. The prevalence of this crime and the silence surrounding it is a scandalous contravention of these rights. So research that contributes to better awareness, understanding and effective response should be supported and encouraged.

ACSSA: What services are now being offered by Respond SA?

Jodie: Respond SA has five main elements:

1. a telephone Helpline which provides support, information and counselling to callers;
2. specialist counselling (face to face or by telephone);
3. provision of support groups;
4. training and workforce development; and
5. policy advice to government and the sector.

In addition to these, we also want to make a contribution to research in the area. So each of our counsellors is participating in the research project, earlier discussed.
ACSSA: Does Respond SA participate in the workforce development of staff in other agencies? What kind of training has been developed?

Mailin: Yes, workforce development is an important aspect of our work. Because Respond SA is located within Relationships Australia (SA), which is a Registered Training Organisation, we are in an ideal position to offer a broad range of professional education and training, community development and workforce development programs. An important part of my role has been to work with the Respond SA team and other agencies to collaborate on workforce development strategies across the sector through the Australian Institute of Social Relations, another division of Relationships Australia (SA).

We want to target those workers who are most likely to be able to produce better outcomes for people who have been sexually abused as children. But because survivors often present with health and welfare issues which are not named as sexual abuse up front, we try to work with a whole range of health workers – people like general practitioners (GPs), psychiatrists, drug and alcohol workers, mental health workers, Aboriginal workers, and disability service workers. We see training for these workers as critical to effective workforce development. So, in partnership with other organisations like UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide, Women’s Health Statewide (WHS) and the University of South Australia’s Research and Education Unit on Gendered Violence, we have developed and delivered GP training. We have also collaborated to deliver sector training specifically on Working with men who have been sexually abused as children. Our partnership with Women’s Health Statewide extends to co-facilitating in metropolitan and rural areas three modules of training developed by WHS which focus on Foundation skills for working with adults subjected to childhood sexual abuse.

One especially important initiative has been an Interagency Calendar: Skill ing a workforce to respond to violence and abuse. South Australia has a good history of individual agencies working successfully to address these issues so partnerships across the sector makes a lot of sense to us. The Calendar was developed in partnership with Women’s Health Statewide, SHine SA, Victim Support Service and Yarrow Place as a 6-month calendar of courses (accredited and non-accredited) offered by various agencies in 2005. This initiative has been repeated for a further six months and has a continuing commitment from participating agencies until the end of 2006. These courses address a wide range of topics related to violence and sexual abuse as well as disability issues, migrant and refugee issues, and related cultural and social issues. This calendar has been distributed widely to workers in community services and health institutions, as well as to people working for churches and foster care agencies, and those in juvenile justice, corrections and mental health areas.

We have also developed a close working relationship with the “Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry”, providing three training programs for lawyers and other Commission staff addressing child sexual assault in institutional care settings and focusing on the effects of hearing testimonies. Feedback from the training has been very positive and additional training to meet the needs of Inquiry staff has recently been requested.

We are also very aware of the need to work with specific populations such as Indigenous women and men, prisoners, people subjected to institutional abuse and people with disabilities. And there are of course associated training needs associated with working with people in these groups. To meet this need we have developed and delivered training about:

- working with adults subjected to childhood sexual abuse in institutional care settings; and
- practice skills in group work with adults subjected to childhood sexual abuse in institutional care settings.

We have also customised some training programs for:

- new workers in alternative care settings;
- Aboriginal youth workers;
- workers with homelessness;
- counselling students; and
- custodial officers at Northfield women’s prison.
ACSSA: Respond SA is keen for service initiatives to be developed for specific populations – in particular to develop services for Aboriginal women and men, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with disabilities, people living in isolated or remote communities and people who have been subjected to institutional abuse. Can you tell ACSSA Aware readers how these service initiatives are progressing?

Mailin: Respond SA is very aware that many people are living in circumstances that create compounding issues, both in terms of childhood abuse and of access to appropriate services. We are actively working in an outreach way and in partnership with relevant groups. For example, we are involved in an Aboriginal youth worker training project in Ceduna, Port Augusta, Murray Bridge, and the APY Lands run by Relationships Australia (SA). We offer services in prisons and we are customising training with CALD community educators on the issue of responding to disclosures.

We also recognise the need for a range of different strategies to be in place, for example interactive media to facilitate community development in rural and remote communities. And we provide telephone counselling and groupwork, as well as face-to-face individual appointments. We also offer some services in regional areas where we know there is demand. All of the services we offer are struggling to meet demand and so it becomes important to maintain the quality of what is already in place and at the same time to keep working in the areas that require ongoing involvement and advocacy.

ACSSA: Respond SA is being monitored in terms of its implementation and progress. How is the evaluation being conducted, and what will be the most important measures of its success?

Jodie: We have several evaluation strategies in place and also a more in-depth research project underway. Because we were aware of the need to provide some needs analysis and outcomes-based information to government, we commissioned a very early evaluation of the service’s first six months. This was completed in March 2005 and the report is available on our website (http://www.respondsa.org.au).

This report obviously could not evaluate the effectiveness of the actual counselling and Helpline services provided. This would require a longitudinal study over a much longer period of time. However, our evaluation team was able to achieve a number of things. They were able to assess the delivery of the outputs we had been contracted to deliver. They were also able to assess the appropriateness of the service model for assisting clients, looking at things like:

- the range of services;
- the client groups reached; and
- the location of services (both geographically and within Relationships Australia SA).

And they were able to situate Relationships Australia (SA) and Respond SA in the sector. This included looking at our partnerships with other service providers, any service gaps and duplications and therefore the general role and function of the service.

This initial evaluation had both qualitative and quantitative components. Qualitative components included a comprehensive literature review and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in the sector which provided a useful snapshot of external perceptions of our role and the need for such a service. The quantitative components involved collecting demographic data and collating service usage statistics to find out who is using the service, when, where and how.

Since then the same evaluation team has collated and analysed Helpline and counselling data since our inception in July 2004 through to November 2005. And they also devised a survey to provide a snapshot of clients’ satisfaction with the service at a particular period of time – the month of November 2005. While this was a relatively small sample (36 responses were received) it did provide valuable insights into the needs, expectations and satisfaction levels of a cross section of adults using our service. And it was very affirming that we are on the right track in our approach, with extremely high levels of satisfaction being expressed about the general helpfulness of Respond SA’s services and the professionalism of our counsellors. People were especially appreciative of:

- our skilled counsellors with specialist expertise in childhood sexual abuse;
- the absence of any fees for services;
being able to address their needs at their own pace (rather than having a designated number of sessions); and

a sense of healing, growth and hope for a stronger future.

However, the survey also confirmed that the demand for counselling for childhood sexual abuse issues currently exceeds the availability of immediate response services. The length of the waiting list is a frustration for many clients and the worry is that this may deter some people from pursuing much needed assistance. We have now devised a number of strategies to reduce the numbers on our waiting list, including the brokering out of some counselling work to private practitioners. So far nine private counsellors have signed up which has allowed us to reduce our waiting list by 35 per cent.

**ACSSA: What would you say is Respond SA’s greatest achievement to date?**

**Jodie:** This is a difficult question to answer. Initially, I thought our greatest achievement was getting established so quickly! We had very little time between the government announcing the new service and when we opened the doors. We really had to hit the ground running. That in itself seemed like a massive achievement – we had to find qualified counselling and managerial staff, and consulting and office space, in both metropolitan and outreach locations, and set up all our record keeping. We could not have done all this without a high level of support from other services, particularly from key services such as Women’s Health Services, Yarrow Place Rape & Sexual Abuse Service, UnitingCare Wesley, Victim Support Service and Community Health Services. The Chief Executive Officer of Relationship Australia SA, Judith Cross, has been fantastic in this whole process of liaising with other services and getting us established.

I think our service usage statistics speak very powerfully of how well we have established an identity and met a demonstrable need. For example:

- As of 31 December 2005 – 1779 client callers had contacted the Helpline since the service began in July 2004.
- 77 per cent of these callers identified as survivors of CSA and 12 per cent were “significant others” for example family of survivors.
- 779 clients had attended a counselling appointment, and a total of 2,173 counselling sessions have been provided.

We have also run a number of group work programs for women and men, mostly in partnership with other services, and facilitated training for our own staff and for the sector (detailed earlier by Mailin).

I am very proud of the diversity of activities with which we have been involved, alongside the Helpline, and the counselling and group work. We have also set up a website, produced posters and brochures, organised an evaluation within our first six months and undertaken a client satisfaction survey. We are also involved in an innovative research project which we hope will contribute significantly to knowledge in the field.

**ACSSA: What will the focus of Respond SA be for 2006?**

**Mailin:** It is vital to secure recurrent funding for Respond SA. So much good work is happening or is in development. It is not viable for clients, professional partners or staff to commit to such important and difficult work without the security of adequate and ongoing funding.

I think the dimensions of the problem of childhood sexual abuse for adults have been unrecognised in the past. Many people believed that childhood sexual abuse occurred mainly in the context of state care. Our experience is that the population of adults who have been abused as children is much broader than that and a dedicated service is an important asset to the sector.

We will be maintaining our focus of providing excellent accessible services to clients as well as developing further training strategies for the workplace, beyond foundation training. Our commitment to marginalised groups will continue and we will build a standardised data profile that will assist in identifying gaps in access for the future. We will continue to support the Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry as well as providing broad based services, and we will continue to develop collaborative relationships with other services.
The What the Law Says about Sex brochure was added to the ACSSA Good Practice Database in February 2006. The brochure was a joint project between Centrecare Goldfields and the Kalgoorlie Detectives Office in Western Australia, and is considered an important component of a proactive, whole of government strategy aimed at educating and preventing child abuse in the remote Aboriginal communities.

The project was initiated by Detective Senior Sergeant Bernie Hett of Kalgoorlie Detectives Office in March 2003 in response to the 2002 findings of the Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities (referred to as the “Gordon inquiry”), and involved the West Australian Health Department, Sexual Assault Resource Centre, and the Department of Community Development, as well as Centrecare.

From the Gordon inquiry’s findings, it was clear that there were endemic problems in the communities, relating to sexual assault, sexually transmitted disease, lack of reporting and the lack of a specialised police presence dedicated to combating these problems and other associated issues. The inquiry report made strong recommendations for “strengthening responses to child abuse and family violence”, and “strengthening responses to vulnerable children and adults at risk” and also called for police services to adopt a proactive approach to addressing these issues in remote Aboriginal communities. On closer consultation with the communities and service providers, there appeared to be a need for raising awareness through sex education in these communities, particularly in relation to the age of consent, safe sex and the current status of sexual offence laws in Western Australia.

Detective Senior Sergeant Bernie Hett worked closely with Dr Howard Sercombe, a consultant at Centrecare, to ensure that the brochure was presented in appropriate language for delivery to the remote communities in the district. Input from Aboriginal agencies and Magistrate Sue Gordon (the principle author of the inquiry report) was also sought to ensure the information was culturally appropriate for distribution within the communities.
The brochure’s content covers legal considerations of inappropriate sexual behaviour and encourages reporting of offences and awareness of the law without using an authoritarian voice. It was suggested that having this information readily available to the community would increase the confidence of communities in reporting sexual offences to the police as well as increase the likelihood of offenders being apprehended and prosecuted.

The brochure was further enhanced using artwork by Aboriginal artist Joanne Honeysett, from Taungurung, Victoria. The result was a brochure that uses colloquial and straight-forward language to communicate easily to a broad audience.

To support this project, a detective “presence” in the Lands has demonstrated that police are willing to support the community in the long term. Where reports of sexual offences are made, detectives from Kalgoorlie provide support to victims, witnesses and the community. The Kalgoorlie detective’s office also maintains a partnership with Ngaanyatjarra Health Services who provide counselling and education sessions at remote Aboriginal communities. Since the project has been implemented, some women who were previously too frightened to speak out have already come forward and reported offences. As a result of their courage a serial sex offender was apprehended and charged with serious sexual offences.

The sex education project has been implemented across the Goldfields-Esperance District and disseminated to other Regions. The Health Department of WA has reprinted 20,000 copies for distribution across the state.


Since the project has been implemented, some women who were previously too frightened to speak out have already come forward and reported offences.

For more information on our database of Good Practice Programs and Responses for Sexual Assault, please contact ACSSA at acssa@aifs.gov.au, or on (03) 9214 7888. We invite submissions of examples of good practice 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. Good Practice programs can also be submitted online at http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/gpdb/goodpractice.html

Relocating Melbourne’s CASA House

After 18 years, CASA House have left their beloved and sometimes bemoaned (as they describe it) terrace on Cardigan Street in Carlton, and have relocated to the 3rd floor, Queen Victoria Women’s Centre, 210 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne CBD. Their phone numbers remain the same.
CONFERENCES

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

5th International Conference on Drugs and Young People
24-26 May 2006
Randwick, NSW

The theme for the 5th International Conference on Drugs and Young People is the culture and context of young peoples’ drug use across various settings.

Further information: Phone: (03) 9278 8137. Email: DYP@adf.org.au Details available on the ADF website at: http://www.adf.org.au/browse.asp?ContainerID=5dyp

ACROD - National Conference on Social Participation
30-31 May 2006
Sydney, NSW

Call for papers deadline is 18 November 2005. This inaugural ACROD National Conference is for providers and funders of services for people with disability including day activities, transition to work, recreation, community access, post school options, alternatives to employment, lifestyle options and leisure.

Further information: Phone: (02) 9503 1603. Email: gabe@acrodnsw.net Details available on the ACROD website at: http://www.acrod.org.au/conferences/SP2006/home.htm

Third International Conference on Therapeutic Jurisprudence
7-9 June 2006
Perth, Western Australia

Therapeutic jurisprudence examines the effect of legal processes on the wellbeing of those involved in them, including litigants, witnesses, victims of crime, juries, judicial officers, lawyers, clients and court staff. It explores the healing power of the law. Though commonly associated with problem solving court programs such as drug, family violence, re-entry and mental health courts and alternative sentencing regimes, its scope is as broad as the law itself, embracing such areas as workers compensation law, family law, child welfare law, native title law, circle sentencing courts, international law, coronial practice, civil litigation, appeal proceedings, judging, legal practice, court administration and legal education.

Further information: Email: aija@law.monash.edu.au Details available on the International Network on Therapeutic Jurisprudence website at: http://www.therapeuticjurisprudence.org/

International Family Violence and Child Victimization Research Conference
9-11 July 2006
Portsmouth, New Hampshire, USA

Sponsored by the Family Research Laboratory and the Crimes Against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire, this conference is part of an ongoing series of conferences on all aspects of family violence and child victimization dating back to 1981. These conferences have a strong research focus and offer a unique opportunity for researchers and scientist/practitioners from a broad array of disciplines to come together for the purpose of sharing, integrating and critiquing accumulated knowledge on family violence. While many sessions do focus on methodological issues (more of interest to researchers), there is also cutting-edge research on all aspects of family violence and victimization of children.

Further information: Email: frl.conference@unh.edu Details available on the conference website at: http://www.unh.edu/frl/conferences/2006/

The 16th Conference of the European Association of Psychology and Law – the Case, the Courts, the Consequences
27-30 June 2006
Liverpool, UK

The conference will include a range of papers, presentations and workshops from leading experts within the field, covering aspects of investigation, court proceedings and rehabilitation and psychological and legal approaches to crime.

Further information: Email: eapl@liv.ac.uk Details available on the EAPL website at: http://www.i-psy.com/eapl
The organising committees for ISSBD 2006 invite you to join your Australian and International colleagues for the first conference to be hosted by Australian ISSBD members. Australia boasts a proud tradition of scholarship and practice around human developmental processes. Participation in ISSBD 2006 will give you an opportunity to experience life down-under, renew friendships and research contacts, and embark on new associations as you keep up to date with the latest research and thinking on human development.

Further information: Phone: (03) 9417 0888. Email: isssbd2006@meetingplanners.com.au Details available on the conference website at: http://www.issbd2006.com.au

The conference is organised through the Centre for Women’s Studies & Gender Research at Monash University and co-sponsored by the Research Centre for Women, Gender, Culture and Social Change at the University of Queensland. The AWSA is the peak professional organisation for Women’s Studies and Gender Studies in Australia.

Further information: Phone: (03) 9905 3259. Email: awsa2006@arts.monash.edu.au Details available on Monash University’s Women’s Studies website at: http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/ws

Organised by SHine SA, with support from the SA Department of Health and Flinders University School of Education, this conference is for educators in schools, universities and curriculum and policy areas, school administrative staff, researchers, those who provide training and development to teachers, interested students, parents and community agency staff who work with schools. It will cover a broad range of topics that fit under the “relationships and sexual health” umbrella, such as healthy relationships, communication skills, HIV/STI education, sexual diversity and anti-homophobia education, growth and development, sexual violence and coercion, puberty, and contraception.

Further information: Phone: (08) 8431 5177. Email: alaisha.demeo@health.sa.gov.au Details available on the SHine SA website at: http://www.shinesa.org.au

This conference will address interdisciplinary practices across the social sciences, and between the social sciences and the natural sciences, applied sciences and the professions. Main speakers will include some of the world’s leading thinkers in the social sciences, as well as numerous paper, colloquium and workshop presentations by practitioners, teachers and researchers.

Further information: Email info-ic06@commongroundconferences.com Details available on the conference website at: http://i06.cgpublisher.com/welcome.html

The conference will examine the role of the public in sentencing policy, with a focus on victim and community representation on sentencing councils, parole boards and other bodies. The conference will look at both the theoretical framework for public participation as well as the practical work being undertaken by sentencing councils and boards from around Australia and the world.

Further information: Phone: (03) 9803 4225. Email: events@conferenceworks.net.au Details available on the Sentencing Advisory Council website at: http://www.sentencingcouncil.vic.gov.au

This major international conference is designed to encourage exploration of the role and effectiveness of legislatures in protecting human rights. Until
recently academic and public attention has focussed mainly on the contribution of courts to the protection of human rights through the enforcement of bills of rights. This conference aims to build on the growing awareness of the significant role of legislation in protecting human rights.

**Further information:** Phone: (03) 8344 1011. Email: cccs@law.unimelb.edu.au Details available on the Centre for Comparative Constitutional Studies website at: http://ccc.s.law.unimelb.edu.au

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**Eleventh International Conference on Violence, Abuse and Trauma**

14-19 September 2006
San Diego, USA

Under the banner “working together to end abuse”, this conference deals with the diverse contexts of abuse, including domestic violence, child maltreatment, elder abuse, youth violence, sexual violence, trauma and war. A multidisciplinary conference bringing together over 1,500 people and agencies, it aims to make a significant positive impact on creating violence and abuse-free homes, communities and societies.

**Further information:** E-mail: fvconf@alliant.edu Details available on the website of the Institute on Violence, Abuse and Trauma (formerly the Family Violence and Sexual Assault Institute) at: http://www.ivatcenters.org/conference.htm

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**Violence Against Women: Diversifying Social Responses**

22-24 October 2006
Montreal, Canada

Organised by Résovi, a research component of the Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Family Violence and Violence Against Women (CRI-VIFF), this international conference will bring together researchers, practitioners, policy makers and students from different countries, and provide an excellent opportunity for participants to share their knowledge, experiences and insights about violence against women and the various social responses that have been developed to combat it. Exchanges between participants will make it possible to refine our understanding of how different social contexts of violence and inequality impact designated groups of women and as well as the strengths and limitations of government and community initiatives to address their specific needs.

**Further information:** Email: conference@criviff.ulaval.ca Details available on the conference website at: http://www.criviff.qc.ca/colloque/accueil_ang.asp

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**ACSSA Aware 10**

Available now!

In the 10th edition of the ACSSA newsletter (released earlier this year), we reviewed the Western Australian Federation of Sexual Assault Services forum, entitled Sex, Laws and Videotapes, which brought together legal experts and sexual assault providers to discuss the recent reforms to sexual assault legislation in Western Australia. We also provided an overview of a number of key reports released in the latter half of 2005. These included No Longer Silent, the final report produced by Dr Denise Lievore in her role examining criminal justice responses to sexual assault at the Australian Institute of Criminology; and the NSW Evaluation of Child Sexual Assault Special Jurisdiction Pilot report, by Judy Cashmore and Lily Trimboli at the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. The service profile for the 10th edition was of the Specialist Legal Clinic, jointly run by the Springvale Community Legal Centre and the South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault (SECASA), Victoria, and our Good Practice Profile was of a booklet designed for Bosnian women who have experienced sexual assault, particularly in the context of armed conflict, produced by CASA House (Centres Against Sexual Assault) in Melbourne.

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**Issues Paper Number 5**

Available now!

Exploring the links between sex offender treatment and sexual assault prevention

Authors: Donna Chung, Patrick O’Leary and Tammy Hand (University of South Australia)

This Issues Paper on sex offender treatment programs examines the research on prevalence and the nature of sexual offending, a history of intervention responses, and a critical review of contemporary sex offender treatment programs and their underlying theoretical perspectives. The paper also documents the various programs offered in Australia and considers the implications of those evaluations that have been conducted. Future directions for research and practice developments in the area are outlined.

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**ACSSA Wrap 2**

Coming soon!

Male Victim/Survivors of Sexual Assault

ACSSA’s second Wrap summarises the issues, statistics and resources that inform current research, policy and practice on/for male victim/survivors of sexual assault. It examines the key issues for male victim/survivors of sexual assault — whether experienced in childhood, adolescence or adulthood — and looks at how these issues, which are often similar for women, can sometimes be experienced uniquely by male victim/survivors. The Wrap will present current research on prevalence and incidence, barriers to reporting, criminal justice and service responses, and possible future directions. The emphasis in the Wraps is to outline the most up-to-date, evidence-based research and theory on the topic, and to direct the reader to relevant resources, including books, articles, and online documents.
New South Wales  
Education Centre Against Violence

The centre offers a large number of sexual assault courses throughout the year and training manuals and packages.

Courses include:
• Foundations for working with adults who were sexually assaulted as children;
• Who can a man tell: working with men who have been sexually assaulted;
• Responding to adults and children with a disability who have been sexually assaulted; and
• Adult sexual assault in Aboriginal communities.

Further information: Phone: (02) 9840 3737. Email: ecav@wsahs.nsw.gov.au Online Education Centre Against Violence: http://www1.health.nsw.gov.au/ecav/index.asp

Queensland  
Phoenix House

Phoenix House is a non-government organisation, funded by the Queensland Health Service, the Department of Child Safety, Queensland and the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra. Phoenix House provides a public health prevention response, including the provision of professional workshops and training throughout the Bundaberg region, and beyond. All training is provided within a framework of current research and best practice, and is usually provided free of charge locally, or at cost price out of region.

Further information: Phone: (07) 4153 4299. E-mail: admin@basas.org.au Online http://www.conncqld.org.au/basas

Phoenix House training includes half-day, one, two, three and five-day courses, and include the following:

Stop It Now!
Designed for parents, caregivers and anyone else who has an interest in the prevention of child sexual abuse. Covers: what to watch out for in adults; possible signs in children of child sexual abuse; the impact of child sexual abuse; protecting children; and developing safety plans.

Safety Planning
Designed for parents/careers of children/young people with sexualised /sexually abusive behaviours.

Therapeutic Care
Designed for parents/carers of children/young people with sexualised /sexually abusive behaviours.

Mother Blame
Designed for health workers and others who work with individuals and families whose lives have been effected by child sexual abuse. Covers: “grooming” tactics and the cycle of abuse; mother blame; responses that strengthen; and systems abuse.

What Can I Do?
Designed for non-Aboriginal health workers and others who work with individuals and families in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community, whose lives have been effected by child sexual abuse. Explores culturally sensitive responses.

Working with Traumatised Adults
Designed for health workers and others who provide a crisis response to adults who have been recently sexually assaulted.

Childhood Sexual Abuse
Designed for health workers and others who work with adults, young people and children who have been sexually abused in childhood. Covers: traumatic dynamics of child sexual abuse; responding to disclosures; core issues in the therapeutic relationship (for example trust, safety, boundaries, strengths based approach); reporting; and the justice system.

Groupwork with Women
Designed for those workers who are skilled in groupwork, but new to the field of sexual violence. Covers: theories; needs analysis; planning and group content; implementing; and evaluation.

Working with Men
Designed for health workers and others who work with adult males who have been sexually abused in childhood. Covers: dynamics of child sexual abuse; issues for males; how males cope; therapeutic approaches.

Puppets, Sand and Gooey Stuff
Designed for counsellors, health workers and child safety officers who work with traumatised children and young people. Provides a plethora of goodies to take back for practice. Covers: the therapeutic relationship; therapeutic play; and “puppets, sand and gooey stuff”.

A Narrative Means to a Therapeutic End
Designed for health workers and others who work with adults, young people and children who have been sexually abused in childhood, and are interested in providing a narrative response.
A Cognitive Means to a Therapeutic End
Designed for health workers and others who work with adults, young people and children who have been sexually abused in childhood, and are interested in providing a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy response.

Working with People with an Intellectual/Learning Disability
Designed for health workers and others who work with individuals with special needs who have been sexually assaulted, or are exhibiting sexualised behaviours.

Three-day course
A three-day package for interagency workers to explore the key concepts of responding to sexual abuse. Covers: childhood sexual abuse; responding to sexualised and sexually abusive behaviours; modalities of practice; practical skills; groupwork.

Five-day course
A five-day package for skilled practitioners who are starting to work with, or want to improve their skills, in working with young people with sexually abusive behaviours.

South Australia
Workshop Partnership Accountability in Work with Gendered Violence - Relationships Australia (SA)
3-4 April 2006
Hindmarsh, South Australia
This workshop examines the common questions that emerge for workers in the area of gendered violence. These relate to how women and men co-work in areas of gendered violence, what gender sensitive practice looks like and how communication is affected by gendered ways of being.

Further information: Phone: Mailin Suchting (08) 8245 8100. Email: m.suchting@rasa.org.au

Victoria
One day workshop with Dr Caroline Taylor - Sexual assault and legal process: understanding and negotiating the legal process
Dr. Taylor will present a two-tiered workshop dealing 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. The workshop is informative and presents empirical research with examples from trial transcripts to show how legal trials work. Professionals will gain deeper insights that will better equip them to both understand the legal response to survivors and better prepare and support survivors for engagement with, and negotiation of the legal system.

Further information: For information on upcoming workshop dates and locations contact Daniel Torpy. Phone: 0410 537 140 Email: torpy.daniel.d@edumail.vic.gov.au

Western Australia
Sexual Assault Resource Centre (SARC)
The following workshops are taken from the SARC Education and Training Calendar, Graylands Hospital, Graylands, WA.

Further information: Phone: (08) 9340 1820. Email: suzanne.helfgott@health.wa.gov.au or judi.stone@health.wa.gov.au

Another layer of trauma 25 May 2006
This workshop will focus on the traumatic impact of sexual abuse in Aboriginal communities. Multiple layers of trauma, both historical and current, cannot be underestimated in working with Aboriginal clients. Implications in terms of dealing with sexual abuse will be explored. This full-day workshop will be facilitated by Dr Helen Milroy, Psychiatrist and Director for the Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health, University of Western Australia, and Dorinda Cox from SARC. The target audience includes Aboriginal health workers and people who work with aboriginal clients.

It happens to boys too: Responding to sexually abused males 8 June 2006
Research indicates that one in six males are sexually abused as children, and one in ten males sexually assaulted as adults. This workshop aims to dispel a number of myths associated with sexual abuse in males and focuses on therapeutic options available.

The relationship between Aboriginal sexual violence and the justice system 22 June 2006
Over 88 per cent of all sexual assaults go unreported in Aboriginal communities. Why are Aboriginals so reluctant to report incidents of sexual assault or abuse? This workshop will address these issues and focus on how clinicians can respond to Aboriginals wishing to negotiate the legal system. Ms Gningala Yarran-Clanton, Indigenous lawyer and former Prosecutor at the Department of Public Prosecutions and SARC staff will facilitate this half-day workshop. The target audience is practitioners working with Aboriginals who have experienced some form of sexual violence.
LITERATURE HIGHLIGHTS

The resources listed here comprise selections from new additions to the ACSSA library collection. They may be borrowed from the Australian Institute of Family Studies library via the interlibrary loan system.

Adult survivors


This study examined the revictimisation experiences of survivors of childhood trauma. Adolescent girls who had experienced extrafamilial violent or sexual abuse were more likely to be involved in date victimisation. Differences between repeat victimisation in a single long-term relationship and revictimisation by different partners were noted.

Audio-visual resources


This video has been designed to promote greater understanding of adult sexual assault in the community and to promote best practice for professionals working with sexual assault victims. It can be used as a training tool for police, counsellors, doctors, and other professionals.


This DVD depicts three counselling sessions, which involve an adolescent girl who has been sexually assaulted, a woman who was sexually abused as a child, and a woman who has been sexually assaulted and is preparing for a medical and forensic examination. The video demonstrates general counselling skills, responding to disclosures of sexual assault and child sexual abuse, and strategies to manage dissociation and self-harming behaviour. Training notes with key questions and issues for discussion accompany the video.

**Understanding sexual violence: The judge’s role in stranger and nonstranger rape and sexual assault cases**, by the US National Judicial Education Program, Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, 2005.

This DVD is intended as a self-directed or group curriculum resource for education about rape trials (particularly nonstranger rape). It is designed for a variety of audiences, including judges, law enforcement officials, prosecutors, lawyers, probation and parole departments, victim/survivor advocates, health professionals and researchers (see outline on page [insert page no. – under ‘Two New DVDs’ in News in Brief section] of this edition).


This DVD depicts two counselling sessions, one with an adolescent Aboriginal girl who has experienced sexual abuse; the second with an Aboriginal woman who experienced sexual abuse as a child. The video demonstrates general counselling skills, working within a cultural context, and responding to disclosures of sexual assault and child sexual abuse. Training notes with key questions and issues for discussion accompany the video.

Disability


Women identified as having a disability are recognised nationally and internationally as a group who experience violence at a greater rate than the general population. The author reviews current research and discourse on violence against women with disabilities particularly as a health issue, with a focus on the state of Victoria. A voice for women with disabilities is called for, as are legislative changes at the state and federal level.

**Responding to sexual assault in aged and disability care settings: The SADA project**, by Northern Sydney Health, in *Passion, power, practice: 2nd National ACROD Ageing and Disability...*
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 18 (available May 2006)

Issue 18 will be a general issue including articles exploring women’s capacity to overcome oppressions in mental health care, the gendered needs of women clients when working with families where alcohol/drugs are involved, churches and institutionalised abuse, feminists researching domestic violence and perpetrator programs and best practice in violence prevention education with men. This journal will also feature a review of Dr Caroline Taylor’s latest book, Court Licensed Abuse, and a briefing that critiques the Australian Government’s Violence Against Women – Australia says no! campaign.

Issue 19 - Women’s Right to Choose – Again

This special issue, to be published in 2006, is in response to current debates in Australia about abortion, fertility, pregnancy and women’s right to choose and contributions will address issues of politics, policy and service provision in these areas.

For more information on the Women Against Violence Journal, contact Gail Draper at CASA House Melbourne on (03) 9347 3066, email casa@rwh.org.au or visit the website at http://www.rwh.org.au/casa/

A significant number of people in aged care and disability settings have been sexually assaulted and most of these people do not have fair access to the criminal justice system nor the resources to ensure their ongoing safety. The SADA (Sexual Assault in Disability and Ageing) project addresses the sexual assault of these vulnerable people, the difficulties involved in ensuring their safety and in pursuing prosecution. SADA aims to create a framework for action in which agencies work together to ensure protection of vulnerable people in care settings and to provide an effective response to incidents or concerns of sexual assault.

HIV / AIDS


This document provides a literature review and analysis of programs used in developing countries to address gender-based violence with a link to the reproductive health/HIV sectors. It outlines the range of approaches available to address gender based violence within sexual reproductive health and HIV programs, with a focus on the following areas: behaviour change communications programs; service delivery programs; community mobilisation programs; policy programs; programs aimed at youth; and programs working with refugees, internally displaced populations, and/or returnees.

Human rights


In this keynote conference address, the speaker maintains that sexual assault and violence against women is a human rights issue. She discusses Amnesty International’s global and long-term campaign to stop violence against women and profiles violence against women on the global stage. The challenge ahead for Amnesty International and the elimination of violence against women lies in the regions of Mexico, of Darfur, and of Iraq.

The challenges of securing human rights to safety in Australian family law frameworks, by E. McInnes, in Home Truths: Stop Sexual

In this paper the speaker argues that human rights to safety for women and children are in jeopardy in the Australian family law system and that there is an urgent need for system reform. The speaker states that Australian family law frameworks currently routinely re-expose children and mothers to continuing abuse, sometimes with fatal results. Protecting victims of violence is blocked by a number of challenges including constitutional divisions, state responses to domestic violence and child protection, lack of legal aid and the family law pro-contact culture. It is recommended that a multidisciplinary national family violence unit be established as part of the family law system to gather evidence from relevant police, health, education and child welfare records and the parties in cases of alleged abuse to provide expert advice to inform court decision making. Legal aid should be extended to all cases involving abuse and violence to ensure vulnerable parties have access to their legal rights.

Indigenous women


Indigenous women and girls are dramatically over represented in the prison system all around Australia and the majority have experienced sexual assault or abuse or physical violence before entering the prison system. The author argues that we need to address the causes of this current destructiveness and acknowledge that everyone plays a role in the destruction. The author looks at the needs of, and obstacles faced by, Indigenous women who are released from prison and makes recommendations about community involvement and programs for healing and personal development that would assist the women.

Intimate partner violence


This study examined the relation between the experience of physical violence in a dating relationship and the decision to leave that relationship. Findings indicate that victimised and nonvictimised women based their relationship termination decisions on the same information. Exposure to psychological abuse had more impact on the decision to leave a relationship.


This paper provides information on the recently released Family Court Family Violence Strategy and provides some practical ideas to support workers and women who are involved with the Family Court where there is family violence. It is the belief of the authors that dissemination of information about the Court’s Family Violence Strategy will assist in achieving the best possible outcomes for women who have experienced violence in their relationship and are seeking resolution through the Court.


This power point presentation covers a range of issues relating to domestic homicides in Western Australia including familicide; media coverage; policy, legislative and programmatic responses; the Annual Silent Domestic Violence Memorial, and police powers. It makes several recommendations for action in legislation, policy, practice and attitudes.


“Police response to incidents to intimate partner violence can be critical. This volume investigates the elements in the institutional, legal and organisational context that are relevant for police response to incidents in the realm of the private sphere and whether there exists a relation with the reporting of such incidents by victims.”—Book jacket.

In this article the author expands on the notion of “intersectionality” discussed in a previous article. The focus of this article is the interaction of constructs of disability, rurality and lesbianism in shaping and compounding women's experiences of domestic and family violence. Disability, rurality and lesbianism may interact with other dimensions of gender, race and class to shape and amplify women's vulnerability to domestic violence. The authors conclude that responses that deconstruct and honour women’s individual experiences together with recognition and exposure of the systemic and structural processes that support and perpetuate oppressive and discriminatory practices, are essential for supporting women to realise their rights to safety and freedom from abuse.

Law reform

The impact of pre-recorded video and closed circuit television testimony by adult sexual assault complainants on jury decision-making: An experimental study, by N. Taylor & J. Joudo, Canberra, ACT, Australian Institute of Criminology, 2005.

Findings from a mock sexual assault jury trial conducted in 2005 are presented in this report. The study investigated juror decisions and perceptions of various modes of adult sexual assault complainant testimony; via closed circuit television (CCTV), pre recorded videotape or face to face in the courtroom. The impact of emotional versus neutral complainant testimony was also examined. The report explains the methodology and discusses the following: the use of CCTV and pre recorded video in evidence; prior research on the manner in which testimony is presented in the courtroom; overall factors influencing juror perceptions; perceptions of jurors immediately following trial but before jury deliberation; jury verdicts and jury processes; post jury deliberation; factors that influenced beliefs about the guilt of the accused; and insights obtained from juror comments and feedback.


This report examines the possibilities for change in criminal justice responses to sexual assault in the Australian Capital Territory. It makes a number of recommendations across the range of levels in legal process, including: Investigatory structures and processes; Collaborative approaches to investigating child sexual abuse; the role of the Director of Public Prosecutions; Sexual offence provisions in the ACT; Court practices, procedures and facilities; Support for victims during investigation and prosecution; Use of technology to allow victims to give evidence from outside the court and for prerecorded evidence; Training in legal and non legal aspects of sexual offences for all professionals involved in the investigation and prosecution processes.

Rape


In this article the sequence of sexual behaviour of both victim and offender in sexually charged situations resulting in rape are examined. Two distinct styles of offence were identified which may help inform rape prevention strategies.


Home Office figures show an ongoing decline in the conviction rate for reported rape cases, with the conviction rate in 2002 being 5.6 per cent. This report draws on material from two evaluation projects funded by the Home Office Crime Reduction Programme Violence Against Women Initiative in an attempt to explain the high attrition rate in rape cases. It presents findings from the evaluation of two Sexual Assault Referral Centres, one non-centre based support service and three comparison areas where there was no specialist service for victims. Researchers tracked 3,500 rape cases through the courts and interviewed 228 rape victims. The authors identify six points at which attrition is likely to occur, and make recommendations for targeted interventions to reduce the attrition rate in these cases.

Sexual exploitation/objectification


Pornography, prostitution, stripping and sex trafficking are all variations on the abuse of women, this article argues. The article discusses the
demand driven nature of these services; the damage done to the sex life and sexual function of the viewer of pornography; the different effects of pictures and words, the nature of episodic memory and the treatment of pornography addicts; the rape myth; permission giving beliefs among offenders; cybersex addiction; damage to families; and the legal fight against pornography in the United States.


This book investigates the rise of a new branch in the women's movement, where women equate empowerment with the choice to be sexually aggressive, such as objectifying themselves and enjoying pornography and casual sex. The author disagrees that this is a liberating rebellion, and uses examples from the media and interviews with students and professional women to argue that treating themselves as pop culture sex objects is a backwards step to true power and freedom.

Suicide


There are substantial bodies of literature focusing on suicide and interpersonal trauma, and on suicide across cultures, and a growing body of knowledge relating to interpersonal trauma across cultures. However, there is a marked gap in the literature that brings these three areas together. Studies that specifically investigate the prevalence of suicidality in relation to experiences of domestic violence, sexual assault and childhood abuse in a cross-cultural context are scant. Moreover, inconsistencies in data collection and reporting and considerable variability in results among the few existing studies highlight substantial methodological limitations and definitional differences in the research. This hampers both identification of at-risk groups and examination of possible risk and protective factors. What is clear is that interpersonal trauma and suicide are linked in significant and complex ways. What is less evident is how culture mediates this inter-relationship. It is suggested that gender and cultural biases in suicide research may account for our limited understandings in this area. Implications for practice include the need for alternative research perspectives and more inclusive frameworks that promote greater cross-discipline dialogue and intersectoral collaboration. There is thus ample scope for further research in this area so as to elucidate the implications for suicide prevention, intervention and postvention work with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. (Author abstract, edited)

Theories


“This comprehensive text provides an up-to-date review and critique of current theorising about sexual offending. It presents the key ideas underpinning each theory in a clear and accessible manner. Theories are rigorously tested and evaluated, and their merits are examined from both a research and a clinical point of view.”—Book jacket.

 Trafficking


This book describes the global industry of sex trafficking: its victims, its buyers, the economic conditions that effect supply and demand, and the international networks. Sub-topics include organised crime, buyer profits and victim “debts”, and the relationship between prostitution and the military - with wartime rape and the growth of the sex industry near foreign military bases.


The United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, provided a definition of trafficking and a framework to address trafficking. This article discusses the situation in Australia, a destination country for victims of trafficking, and evaluates legislative and policy responses that aim to address trafficking.


This study explores the right of trafficked victims of forced prostitution to remain in destination countries through the application of legal standards and victim protection mechanisms found in national, regional and international law. It highlights the importance of State recognition that
trafficked persons are victims of serious human rights abuses, and contends that states need to safeguard the legal rights and protective needs of trafficking victims. The study further considers the feasibility of the position that trafficked persons should have the right to temporary residence and work permits, thereby enabling trafficked persons to recover and rebuild their lives, and facilitating the effective prosecution of traffickers by encouraging victims to report to the authorities and to act as witnesses. Also under examination is the thesis that trafficked persons should be given the opportunity to apply for permanent residence permits under national and international laws.


In her second annual report since beginning her mandate, and her first substantive one in terms of presenting her findings, the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking, Sigma Huda has emphasised the relationship between sex trafficking and the demand for commercial sexual exploitation. Huda begins by explaining what is meant by the term “demand”, then discusses various factors relevant to a proper understanding of demand, and finally “highlights a variety of methods employed throughout the world by States, intergovernmental organisations, and non-governmental organisations in order to target the demand side of trafficking” (p.1) (see overview on p.3 in News in Brief of this edition).
ACSSA services

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault is funded by the Office for Women, Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs through the Women’s Safety Agenda. 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, ACSSA Wraps (short resource 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 continuing to build its 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

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 back issues of ACSSA publications

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Position
Organisation
Address
Postcode
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Send this completed form to: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault
Australian Institute of Family Studies
300 Queen Street Melbourne Victoria 3000 Australia