

# Aware

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

## In this issue...

Welcome to *Aware 22*! As always, the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault is delighted to bring you news, updates, interviews, articles and reviews of happenings to our readers working across sectors addressing sexual assault.

This edition marks some new developments at ACSSA. We are very excited to announce the appointment of some new staff at AIFS who will be joining the ACSSA research team. Deb Parkinson joins us as a senior research officer. Deb brings a wealth of research experience, having undertaken several important projects involving sexual assault survivors. Rachel King and Bianca Fileborn come on board as research officers. Rachel has recently completed her PhD in Queensland. Her research examined police responses to sexual assault. Bianca is currently enrolled in her PhD having just completed an Honours thesis on sexual violence in licensed premises. We're also delighted to announce Haley Clark's new position as a senior research officer. She continues her PhD exploring the justice needs of sexual assault survivors. Each brings commitment, expertise and passion to the work of sexual assault prevention.

We also present a reinvigorated *Aware* with newly named regular sections: **In Brief** (summaries of news, reports, and research), **Developments in the Sector**, and **Profile**. We hope these changes to your quarterly newsletter will inform, guide and interest you. In this edition, **Developments in the Sector** provides information about recent developments in sexual assault prevention work and where you can access available resources.

Our **Profile** section brings you three interviews conducted by ACSSA Senior Research Officer Haley Clark. Libby Lloyd, AM, spoke to Haley about the work of the **National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children** in producing a national plan to address violence against women and their children. Haley interviewed Chief Petty Officer Angela Ballard about establishing the **Sexual Offence Support Persons Network** based at HMAS Cerberus, the Navy's principal training facility and provides a profile of this service, which responds to sexual assault and provides support to victim/survivors who are members of the Australian Navy. Sophie Gale, Council Health Planner spoke with Haley Clark about the **Male Sexual Violence Against Women Taskforce**, a local council initiative to prevent sexual violence in the City of Yarra, Melbourne Victoria.

We also provide the usual updates on reports and research as well as recent literature highlights. All our publications, bibliographies, practice profile and events information are available on our website. Visit <[www.aifs.gov.au/acssa](http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa)> for all your information needs on issues related to sexual assault.

As always we are keen to hear your feedback, news and concerns. We particularly welcome contributions from workers, researchers, policy advisers and others in the sexual assault field as well as the many of the areas that intersect in the lives of victim/survivors. Please contact a member of the ACSSA team to contribute.

**Antonia Quadara**  
Co-ordinator



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Family Studies  
Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault aims to improve access to current information on sexual assault in order to assist policy makers, service providers, and others interested in this area to develop evidence-based strategies to prevent, respond to, and ultimately reduce the incidence of sexual assault.

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault is funded by the Office for Women, Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, through the Women's Safety Agenda. The Centre is hosted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

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## Have you joined ACSSA-Alert? News alert email service

Would you like to receive monthly news and updates on what is happening in the field of sexual assault in Australia and around the world?

*ACSSA-Alert* is an email list for news and updates to subscribers, and is compiled by the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault. You will receive an e-newsletter with announcements about news in the field, updates on the ACSSA website, the release of publications and reports, new services and other information.

You can join *ACSSA-Alert* through our web page on:

[<www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/emaillist.html>](http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/emaillist.html)

## Promising Practice Database

Many readers would be familiar with the ACSSA Promising Practice Database, the online database of Australian sexual assault projects and services. This has been a popular resource, recording nearly 50,000 hits during 2006–07, and we hope this will continue to be a useful source of information.

ACSSA is continuing to build its Promising Practice Database, to document and publicise promising practice and activities being undertaken in relation to sexual assault.

If you or your organisation has developed and/or has been involved in conducting a sexual assault related program or initiative, we would like to invite you to share your program with us. ACSSA welcomes practices from service providers, policy and program developers, educators and trainers, researchers and others working to address sexual violence.

For information about the Promising Practice Database, including how to submit a proposal for consideration, please visit [<www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/ppdb/promisingpractice.html>](http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/ppdb/promisingpractice.html) or email [<acssa@aifs.gov.au>](mailto:acssa@aifs.gov.au) to register your interest in submitting a profile

## Reports & research

### *Coming forward: The underreporting of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse in Victoria.*

Leonard, W., Mitchell, A., Patel, S., & Fox, C. (2009). (Monograph Series Number 69). Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University

*Coming Forward* reports on the responses of 390 gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual and transgender (GLBT) Victorians to an online survey asking them about their experiences of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse. *Coming Forward* is a call for increased understanding and reporting of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse. This includes reporting not only sexual and physical abuse but also the “everyday” vilification and harassment that plagues GLBT people’s lives.

The report uses the term “heterosexism” to describe the complex social and psychological processes underpinning violence and discrimination against GLBT people. In this context, heterosexual violence includes both sexual orientation and gender identity-based violence and discrimination. Everyday harassment and vilification constitutes the majority of abuse directed at GLBT people and has profound effects on GLBT people’s lives. This report argues that this everyday culture of heterosexual harassment provides the fuel for more violent acts of physical and sexual assault.

The report refers to research that has demonstrated that GLBT people continue to experience to significantly higher than average levels of violence, harassment and discrimination, and aims to provide a more accurate picture of the extent and nature of both heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse in Victoria, as well as GLBT people’s experiences dealing with the criminal justice system, allied health and community agencies.

The report provides important insight into nature and extent of heterosexual and partner violence among GLBT people. In total 390 people (60% male, average 35 years) were engaged through an opt-in online survey. The survey comprised both quantitative and qualitative questions, however, this report focuses largely on statistical results.

Some of the findings of the report are:

- One in four respondents reported that they had experienced violence, and one in 20 had been subject to sexual assault, over the last 2 years.
- Just under a third of participants reported having been in a same sex relationship where

they were subjected to abuse by their partner. Women were more likely than men to report having been in an abusive relationship (35% versus 29%) with the percentage jumping to 42% for women who identify as lesbian.

- Of those reporting being subjected to abuse by their partner, 57% reported physical attacks or being hit, with over 50% of those respondents reporting being subject to additional forms of abuse, including sexual abuse or being forced to have sex (30%), emotional abuse (47%) and being regularly insulted (41%).
- Of the one third of participants who reported same-sex partner abuse, 26% reported being sexually abused by their partner.
- Of respondents who had reported same-sex partner abuse, 87% indicated they were no longer in that relationship.
- Much heterosexual violence was found to be random and committed by strangers—one in three incidents occurred on the streets. Nearly one in seven GLBT respondents reported living in fear of heterosexual violence and nearly 85% had been subject to heterosexual violence or harassment in their lifetimes.

Sexual assault constituted 5.2% of the heterosexual abuse experienced in the last two years by female respondents, and 4.8% of the male respondents. In contrast to most heterosexual abuse that occurred in the company of others, sexual assault constituted a significantly larger percentage of incidents that occurred while alone.

Nearly 12% of the sample reported being sexually assaulted at some point in their lives.

While 57% of respondents reported that they had not sought assistance, 70% did not report their experiences of violence to the police or other official body. The report found that the most consistent reason for not reporting was heterosexism. This ranged from fears of being outed to fear of further discrimination, fear of being treated unfairly, to previous negative experiences of violence and/or discrimination.

The findings of the report suggest that more than half of the respondents who contacted the police found them less than “reasonably supportive” or “reasonably valuable”. However, contact with a Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officer (GLLO) was found to be dramatically more supportive and valuable. GLLOs are a result of a Victoria Police initiative. They are police officers officially designated to liaise with specific marginalised or special needs groups.

Lawyers were reported only slightly more positively than the police. In contrast, respondents reported much more valuable and supportive experiences with bodies like gay and lesbian community or support groups, counsellors, psychologists and social workers.

In recognition that violence is part of GLBT people's day-to-day lives, the report recommends legislative and social reforms to challenge heterosexism and provide full legal and social recognition of GLBT people. It also recommends the provision of GLBT-sensitive mainstream service delivery and develop GLBT-specific services where appropriate. The report suggested a collaborative approach with Victorian Police taking the lead role in conjunction with government and GLBT organisations to address the barriers preventing improved reporting of heterosexist violence. Finally, the need for improved information and more research was considered necessary in addressing the abuse highlighted in report.

The report is available online at <[www.glhv.org.au/node/508](http://www.glhv.org.au/node/508)> or contact Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria on (03) 9285 5382.

### ***Sex offender treatment programs: Effectiveness of prison and community based programs in Australia and New Zealand.***

Macgregor, S. (2008). Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse (Research Brief No. 3).

This Brief reports on the evaluations of 13 sex offender treatment programs in Australia and New Zealand in an attempt to develop an understanding of the relative effectiveness of the programs, including responses specific to Indigenous offenders. Macgregor reported that findings from the evaluations suggest that all except one of the programs were effective in reducing sexual offending recidivism although each evaluation has significant methodological limitations that restrict the findings' validity. Macgregor also stated that many sexual offender programs, particularly community-based programs and programs targeted at Indigenous offenders, have not included evaluative components and argued that incorporating evaluative components into program's design is necessary for establishing best practice guidelines. Macgregor's key findings include: that holistic community-inclusive approaches to sexual offending programs may be more appropriate than individualistic, cognitive behavioural therapy approaches for Indigenous offenders and draws on learnings from New Zealand research to argue that "the incorporation of traditional and holistic forms of treatment is more effective for reducing sexual [offending] recidivism

amongst Indigenous offenders" and that programs should be delivered by Indigenous staff and elders. Magregor also argued that there needs to be a greater emphasis on young offenders and to include offenders' families in the treatment process.

The Brief is available online at <[www.indigenousjustice.gov.au/briefs/brief003.pdf](http://www.indigenousjustice.gov.au/briefs/brief003.pdf)>

## **Resources**

**Booklet – *It's not your fault: Men talk about living beyond the effects of sexual abuse.* (2008). Respond SA.**

Research suggests that about one in six young males are sexually abused. The Respond SA booklet *It's Not Your Fault* is written for men living with the effects of child and teenage sexual abuse. Its starting point is to acknowledge that sexual abuse of males in childhood and teenage years is rarely spoken about, and this silence can create isolation and anger which compounds the impact of the abuse on the victim/survivor and their loved ones.

*It's Not Your Fault* encourages men to talk about abuse, rather than suffer the isolation of thinking "I am the only one". Relying on a knowledge base accumulated from male victim/survivors and professionals, the booklet suggests that talking about abuse leads to empowerment and is a necessary component of the healing process. One victim/survivor reflected:

***Every time I talk about it I get bigger and he gets smaller. It hurts but it's good to talk. I've learnt I'm not to blame ... he treated me like I was a toy to be used, but I know that I am a good person who is worthy of affection. (p. 5)***

*It's Not Your Fault* contextualises this form of sexual abuse by emphasising the power imbalance between adults and young people (including teenagers). It provides a useful table that highlights the varied nature of this power imbalance. This acknowledgment is necessary to remove the frequent feelings of self-blame.

The booklet outlines some of the tactics of sexual abuse perpetrators, which is a poignant reminder that this type of abuse often involves manipulation, trickery and abuse of trusted relationships rather than solely relying on physical violence. One of the common "effects" of abuse (and indeed, a common "tactic" used by offenders) is creating self-blame. *It's Not Your Fault* reaffirms the "truth" of the encounter as abuse. While emphasising the unique and different story of each victim/survivor, *It's Not Your Fault* identifies common feelings experienced by victim/survivors including shame, anger, isolation and flashbacks, and discusses different coping

strategies that other victim/survivors have found useful and empowering. The recreation of this other story is part of the healing process and focuses on the creation of an identity that is bigger or stronger than the abuse.

A key strength of this publication is its accessibility and its holistic focus. It is a useful resource for victim/survivor men as well as their partners, family, friends and professionals who provide necessary support.

The communicative style of the booklet with frequent text boxes of quotes reinforces a key message to victim/survivors, “you’re not alone and you don’t have to suffer alone”. A useful contacts page provides details of counselling and health providers (South Australia only). *It’s Not Your Fault* provides a practical guide for an often silenced aspect of sexual abuse, men (and their loved ones) who are grappling with the effects of sexual abuse as a young person. The booklet is available online at <http://respondsa.org.au/MenuBar/Resources/MensBooklet.aspx>

### Documentary – *One of the Lucky Ones*

This short film tells the story of Wendy Chandler, a university lecturer and award-winning filmmaker, raped by a stranger who broke into in her flat on 24 March 2002. As suggested by the title, Chandler considers herself “one of the lucky ones” because her attacker was found and convicted. But there is a hint of irony in this—while Wendy managed to gain a conviction, no stretch of the imagination would ever allow her experience to be described as a “lucky” one. Chandler suffered severe consequences in the aftermath of her assault, including the breakdown of relationships, mental trauma and an attempted suicide. The film explores the impacts of sexual assault and the trial process on the recovery of the victim/survivors of sexual assault through an in-depth examination of one woman’s experience. In the words of Chandler who describes the assault being like “a spider’s web that grew into every corner of my life and trapped everything, and everyone, along the way”, the film shows the pervasive impact of sexual assault and does this without pathologising victimisation.

According to the program publicity, this “hybrid” docu-drama, written and directed by Chandler herself, combines both live action and the digital form, including visual effects, animation and motion graphics to add depth and emotion to the experience of the victim/survivor. Mary-Ann Henshaw plays Wendy, with the voiceover by Lisa McCune.

A series of vignettes and flashbacks bring to life the traumatic experience of the rape and its aftermath. The phrase “can you tell me what happened?” is

played on a loop, illustrating the harrowing ordeal of repeated disclosure to crisis services, the police, the forensic team and counsellors. Wendy is numb and distraught, and the post-assault process does not help: “At the hospital I waited to hear some magic words that would heal me. But I wasn’t a patient ... I was a crime scene.” The days and weeks after the sexual assault bring further trauma. When finally appearing to be on the road to recovery, Wendy responds unexpectedly to images and news from the war in Iraq. Her breakdown results in a diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and depression, and she is placed in a psychiatric hospital, where she attempts suicide.

Thanks to a DNA match with a sample from another victim, in August 2003 the police charged a man with Wendy’s assault. John Davidson, a 26-year-old father of two, who had already been convicted of a previous sex offence, pleaded guilty to the attack.

Throughout her experience, Chandler met many women who revealed that they too had been sexually assaulted, most of whom had never reported it. In the film, an iceberg—its small visible tip dwarfed by the mass hidden beneath the water—is used to represent the hidden figure of sexual assault. Of the 17,795 sexual assaults reported to the police in Australia that year, less than 1,000 resulted in a conviction. According to the film, it is estimated that around 100,000 women were sexually assaulted that year—a figure that is in line with the Personal Safety Survey (ABS, 2006) prevalence estimates for 2005 (101,600). We are told that Wendy had a less than 1% chance of seeing her attacker imprisoned (see Lievore, 2003; Gelb, 2007 on attrition rates). It is this silent “dark figure” and the impacts that these women are often silently enduring, from psychological and relationship breakdowns, to drug and alcohol abuse, that motivates Chandler. Perhaps it is in this sense that she is lucky—to be able to tell her story and along with it the story of silent others.

A thoughtful piece, as much about the recovery process as the rape itself, *One of the Lucky Ones* is a refreshing antidote to film and television productions that present sexual assault as titillation. It suggests the power of what can happen when survivors of assault are able to speak on their own terms. This film would make an excellent educational tool.

*One of the Lucky Ones* appeared as part of the SBS Hot Docs Animation Season on Tuesday 3 February 2009. It won the Most Popular Film Award at the Flickerfest International Short Film Festival 2008.

Comprehensive information can be found on the official website at [www.oneoftheluckyones.com](http://www.oneoftheluckyones.com).

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## Website – Living Well

Living Well, <[www.livingwell.org.au](http://www.livingwell.org.au)>, is a resource designed to assist men who have experienced child sexual abuse or sexual assault. The intention, as outlined on the site's homepage, is for Living Well "to act as a collection point for information and resources that are useful for men who have been subjected to sexual violence, as well as for partners, friends, family and service providers". The website contains information about male sexual abuse, disclosure and responding, personal accounts of men who were sexually assaulted as children, tips for living well, a survey of men's experiences, links to support services and resources for workers. The resource is still developing and the creators welcome suggestions and contributions to further develop the resource in ways that are useful to men who have experienced sexual violence.

## Website – Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention: Sexual Violence Prevention

The Sexual Violence Prevention website, <[www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/sexualviolence/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/sexualviolence/index.html)>, is part of the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) within the US Department of Health and Human Services. The CDC's aim is "moving the field toward primary prevention and early intervention by exploring ways to prevent violence against women before it occurs". They outline the key activities in the area of violence prevention as surveillance, research, capacity building, communication, partnership and leadership. The website contains information on framing sexual assault as a health issue, prevention strategies (specifically the CDC's social ecological model of prevention), sexual offences data, "risk" and "protective" factors, consequences of sexual violence, research-based practice and links to online resources and services. The website contains a range of the centre's publications on sexual assault, including fact sheets, issues papers and project reports, such as the Centre's Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) Program, which has provided grants to services across the country for rape prevention and education programs.

## Conferences, workshops, forums

### Workshop – Sisters Day Out

The Aboriginal Family Violence and Prevention and Legal Service Victoria has been conducting wellbeing workshops for young Koori women in Victoria in since July 2007. The workshops are aimed specifically at women between 15 and 35, however older women are often in attendance. Sometimes a workshop will have three generations of family members present. The cultural aspects of the program are central to its implementation and are designed to strengthen the role of Koori women in their families and communities.

The workshops incorporate information with an informal, relaxed atmosphere. In between pampering, valuable information is provided in an accessible way. The workshops operate in a culturally safe environment to provide Koori women with requisite support and referral networks, plus vital legal and health information. The information sessions include topics on family violence, sexual assault, Intervention Orders and Victims of Crime assistance.

The workshops are conducted across Victoria. Contact Aboriginal Family Violence and Prevention and Legal Service Victoria on Freecall 1800 105 303, email [sistersdayout@fvpls.org](mailto:sistersdayout@fvpls.org) or visit the website at <[www.fvpls.org/AboutSDO.php](http://www.fvpls.org/AboutSDO.php)>

## Current work on sex trafficking and sexual violence

At the November (2008) conference of the Australia and New Zealand Society of Criminology, two papers stood out in their descriptions of current research concerning sexual violence, particularly in relation to sex work and trafficking.

### Sanja Milivojevic: "The Trafficking Patchwork"

Sanja Milivojevic turned a critical eye on the representation and policing of trafficking. She began her paper with a survey of the myths about the trafficking of women through a brief analysis of newspaper representations. From here Milivojevic explored how these representations shape understandings of trafficking: what it consists of; who the victims are; how they experience the crime; what kind of person they are, and so on. She investigated the implications that such representations have on national and international responses to the crime of trafficking in which only certain extreme forms are recognised and addressed. Milivojevic argued for a more critical approach to address trafficking which might better recognise its diverse forms and the varied experiences and engagements of the women affected.

### Larissa Sandy: “Sex Worker Homicides in Australia: Preliminary Findings”

On the basis of her analysis, Sandy claimed that sex workers are 60–120 times more likely to be murdered than women who don’t work in the sex industry. However, she identified a significant gap in research addressing this issue. She presented the preliminary findings of her analysis of the National Homicide Monitoring Program data. Some of her key findings revealed that 1% of reported homicides involved sex workers. This constituted 65 homicides. Of these, 54 victims were the sex workers and 11 of the homicides were committed by the sex workers. Of the sex workers killed, 41% were street-based, while 17% were escort workers

and 5% were brothel-based. More than half of the non-sex worker offenders were clients to their sex-worker victim, 17% were intimate partners and 4% were friends of the sex-worker victim. In her conclusion, Sandy drew attention to the higher rate of female sex worker victims than the much smaller (10%) representation of male sex worker victims. She also drew attention to the much greater risk of homicide faced by street-based sex workers.

The power point slides for these presentations are still available through the conference website at <[www.anzsoc.org/conferences/2008/presentations.html](http://www.anzsoc.org/conferences/2008/presentations.html)>

For further information about sex workers and sexual assault see ACSSA Issues 8, *Sex Workers and Sexual Assault in Australia: Prevalence, Risk and Safety*.

## DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SECTOR

# Prevention frameworks

HALEY CLARK, KIRSTY DUNCANSON & ANTONIA QUADARA

### The ACSSA team

Since ACSSA was established in 2003, sexual assault prevention has been a central issue for us. At this time, across the sector, across policy and across research, what “prevention” meant has been vigorously debated and developed. As Moira Carmody reflects in ACSSA Issues 10 (in press), sexual assault prevention has significantly developed as a concept. Where in the past it largely focused on young women, exhorting them to say no effectively (refusal skills) or develop a mean right hook (self-defence), the last decade has seen the blossoming of a conceptually rich and empirically robust idea of prevention, one informed by a feminist analysis of sexual violence, as well as community psychology, public health, and human rights approaches.

Borrowing from public health thinking, this notion of prevention comprises several levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. Borrowing from varied behavioural sciences, the range of factors that influence people’s behaviours and their motivations to change them are identified. Borrowing from a human rights framework, it acknowledges that freedom from violence is essential to individual and collective wellbeing. And ideally, a feminist-informed understanding of the causes of violence against women is the primary lens through which these different knowledge bases are viewed (VicHealth, 2007; Carmody et al., 2009). There is a growing consensus across diverse sectors of government, organisations and stakeholders that “there are many causes of violence against women. But there’s one main cause. And that is the attitude of men towards women” (Rudd, 2009).

Part of the shared impetus for primary prevention work has been the growing recognition of the long-term and wide-ranging impacts of violence against women, and that such impacts go beyond individual victim/survivors. ACSSA Issues 7, “*Ripple Effects*” of Sexual Assault (Morrison, Quadara, & Boyd, 2007), synthesised much of the recent research to show the “ripple-effects” of sexual assault on families, partners, friends, and communities. Access Economics published *The Cost of Domestic Violence to the Australian Economy* in 2004, the same year VicHealth released its report *The Health Costs of Violence: Measuring the Burden of Disease Caused by Intimate Partner Violence*. Both publications revealed the extraordinary costs of violence against women on individuals’ wellbeing, the health system, productivity, and the community. Access Economics (2004) found that

There is a growing consensus ... that “there are many causes of violence against women. But there’s one main cause. And that is the attitude of men towards women” (Rudd, 2009).

domestic violence cost Australia \$8.1 billion and VicHealth's (2004) analysis revealed that intimate partner violence was the leading contributor to death, disability and illness in Victorian women.

Providing recent data and an estimation of what costs will look like in 2021, the National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children (2009) released *The Cost of Violence Against Women and Their Children*. Using the reported prevalence approach in the Personal Safety Survey (ABS, 2006), the council estimated that without appropriate action, the total cost of violence against women and their children will be \$15.6 billion. The total cost includes seven cost categories:

- pain, suffering and premature mortality costs;
- health costs associated with treating the effects of violence against women;
- production-related costs (e.g., the cost of being absent from work, and employers having to replace employees);
- consumption-related costs (e.g., replacing damaged property, or costs of moving);
- second-generation costs (e.g., children witnessing and living with violence and subsequent effects);
- administrative and other costs (e.g., police, incarceration, court system costs); and
- transfer costs (i.e., inefficiencies associated with the payment of government benefits).

These costs are distributed across eight groups: victim/survivors, children, friends and family, perpetrators, employers, federal government, state/territory and local government, and the rest of community/society. In descending order, victim/survivors, governments and then communities are the top three groups who bear the economic burden of violence.

Throughout 2008 and 2009, an enormous amount of work has been done by governments and organisations to develop the sexual assault prevention field. In this section, we look at some of the most recent that work has been done in this area, highlight the key areas of debate and provide information on accessing these sources.

## Prevention frameworks

Perhaps the most significant development was the release of the National Council's report, *Time for Action: The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children*. In 2008, the Australian Government set up an 11-member National Council charged with developing the plan.<sup>1</sup> This was comprised of people with significant commitment to and expertise in the violence against women sector. Many council members have managed sexual assault and domestic violence services. Others brought research expertise and knowledge of the area that had been in the making for decades. They were charged with leading a national conversation about violence against women and identifying what needed to be done. What is important to note about this conversation is that it began at the outset in a register—set by the Prime Minister—in which gender and feminist informed analyses were central:

**As a nation, the time has well and truly come to have a national conversation—a public national conversation, not a private one—about how it could still be the case that in 2008 so many Australian women could have experienced violence ... It is my gender—it is our gender—Australian men—that are responsible. And so the question is: what are we going to do about it? (Rudd, 2008)**

In answer to this question, the council set out six areas of action for the next 12 years, with priority and longer-term goals identified:

- Communities: Communities are safe and free from violence;
- Relationships: Relationships are respectful;
- Service response: Services meet the needs of women and their children;
- Justice: Responses are just;
- Behaviour change: Perpetrators stop their violence; and
- Systems integration: Systems work together effectively.

1 Council members were: Libby Lloyd AM (Chair); Heather Nancarrow (Deputy Chair); Associate Professor Moira Carmody; Dorinda Cox; Maria Dimopoulos; Dr Melanie Heenan; Rachel Kayrooz; Andrew O'Keefe; Vanessa Swan; Lisa Wilkinson and Pauline Woodbridge. The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault and the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse contributed with advice and feedback as non-voting members of the council.

The National Plan was formally released on 29 April 2009. The Minister for the Status of Women, Tanya Pliberseck, the Attorney-General, Robert McLelland, and Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, spoke of the importance of attending to violence against women in a multidimensional way. Consistent with his earlier statements, Prime Minister Rudd again referred to the gendered aspect of the violence, not only that women were usually the victims and men usually the perpetrators, but for prevention to be meaningful, and for it to gain traction within communities, men as a group needed to step in. Accompanying the release of the plan was the government's response. Eighteen of 22 recommendations for priority actions have been adopted by the government. Its implementation will be overseen by the Council of Australian Governments.

Earlier, in 2008, Amnesty International released a report intended to guide a national plan. *Setting the Standard: International Good Practice to Inform an Australian National Plan of Action to Eliminate Violence Against Women* is a part of Amnesty International's 6-year campaign (launched in 2004) to stop violence against women.

aimed to "ensure that Australia develops a first-class national plan of action: one that draws on international good practice and meets Australia's human rights obligations". This report saw a human rights framework as key to the elimination of violence against women in Australia and advocated that a national approach needed to place human rights "squarely at the centre of all policies and practices that deal with violence against women". It was released at the same time the Australian Government announced its plan to develop a National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children. It provided an important resource for informing the National Plan.

For Amnesty International, doing sexual assault prevention at a national level needed to be structural, strategic and sustained. It proposed that an Australian national plan of action needed to be cross-sectorial and cross-portfolios, and to deal with violence against women as a "socio-structural problem, based in sex discrimination". Contained within the report was specific advice on strategic approaches together with practice examples from a range of countries in order to identify "international best practice" in three areas of action: prevention, provision and prosecution.

*Time for Action* used Amnesty International's conceptual approach for a national plan (i.e., structural, strategic and sustained) to generate an "As Is" jurisdictional analysis of Commonwealth, and state and territory responses to violence against women. This "As Is" snapshot is a great resource in two senses: it provides knowledge about the structure of the key actors (departments), policies, legislation and service provision currently in place across the country; and it also makes clear the gaps that a national plan will attempt to address. Examples given by the "As Is" analysis include the need for greater collaboration and information sharing across jurisdictions, consistent and integrated state and territory action plans, consistent legislation and continued funding for initiatives.

Going from a national perspective to a local one, Women's Health in the North produced a synopsis of primary prevention initiatives that address violence against women in the northern-metropolitan subregion of Melbourne entitled *Mapping of Primary Prevention of Violence against Women in the Northern Metropolitan Subregion of Melbourne*.<sup>2</sup>

It drew on VicHealth's framework for primary prevention (VicHealth, 2007). It adds an important local dimension to a high-level framework such as that of VicHealth. Profiles of 15 current initiatives were documented in the report. These came from a range of areas including the arts, community and health services, recreation, workplaces and businesses, educational institutions, and local council. The initiatives focus on a range of target groups including various culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, sex workers, young people, community leaders, Indigenous communities, men and general awareness-raising.

One intended outcome of the synopsis was that both current work in the area as well as the gaps could be identified by practitioners and others, and that it might provide for the sharing of ideas and collective planning around prevention of violence against women in the area.

## Prevention education

Much work has been done with regards to prevention education, particularly with young people. Addressing attitudes and behaviours that facilitate sexual violence, providing strategies for behaviour change, strengths-

Amnesty International advocated ... that a national approach needed to place human rights "squarely at the centre of all policies and practices that deal with violence against women".

2 A copy of the report can be requested through Women's Health in the North. Phone (03) 9484 1666 or visit the website at <[www.whin.org.au](http://www.whin.org.au)>.

based programs, and holistic curriculum development are seen as critical to primary prevention outcomes (for discussions of these efforts, see Imbesi, 2008; Quadara, 2007, 2008).

Addressing attitudes and behaviours that facilitate sexual violence, providing strategies for behaviour change, strengths-based programs, and holistic curriculum development are seen as critical to primary prevention outcomes.

In 2009, the release of *Framing Best Practice: National Standards for the Primary Prevention of Sexual Assault Through Education* (Carmody et al., 2009) can be seen as a culmination of the evolving sophistication of prevention education in Australia. The National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence (with funding from the Office for Women, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) commissioned the Social Justice Research Centre to undertake research about what was working in the field: the National Sexual Assault Prevention Education Project (SAPE).

Based on this research, and guided by a recognised need for ways of identifying effective practice (and of the flip side, identifying ineffective programs) six standards for designing, implementing and evaluating programs were identified:

- **A coherent conceptual approach to program design.** A theoretical approach is needed to inform the program. Whatever conceptual framework is used, “a gender analysis of sexual assault is foundational to any program”.
- **The use of a theory of change.** Programs should demonstrate a conceptual link between the activities being undertaken and the proposed change outcomes of these activities.
- **Inclusive, relevant and culturally sensitive practices.** Program developers need to be aware of the culturally-based elements of programs and strive to make programs inclusive, relevant and culturally sensitive for all participating groups.
- **Comprehensive program development and delivery.** The “who, what, where and when” of the program will need to be included in the design. Programs should be based on best-practice research evidence from international and local literature.
- **Effective evaluation strategies.** Program evaluation strategies should be appropriate to the information being sought (e.g., type of questions, data collected, methods of analysis and recommendations made) and built into program design.
- **Support for training and professional development of educators.** Educators require resources and support specific to their prevention role.

Carmody et al. (2009) explained that the purpose of the standards are to provide:

- an overview of the range of issues to be considered when developing education programs;
- tools for reviewing and assessing areas of strength and weakness in current programs;
- methods for reshaping more effective programs;
- a framework for evaluating applications for funding programs (e.g., to help build on current or previous programs, evaluate current programs, or to build new programs); and
- tools for encouraging and supporting community organisations to assess their own programs.

Possibly, the prospect of standards may cause concern for some. The report itself acknowledges key areas of challenge such as resourcing workforce development; resourcing program delivery; and resolving information provision for “over-researched” and “under-researched” standards. At the same time, it is apparent that the point of having such standards is less to judge “ineffective” programs than it is to guide what has become both an increasingly sophisticated arena and one central to universal prevention strategies.

## Debates in prevention

The involvement of men in prevention work is often referred to as a central component of effective prevention. There is broad agreement for this. Yet, there is ongoing discussion about just what such involvement of men consists of and its implications for the women’s sector. In this sense, it also touches on debates about how central feminism is or should be to prevention work. At the end of 2008 at least two forums considered these issues at length.

The Prevention of Male Violence Against Women Conference was held at the Abbotsford Convent Arts Centre (16–17 October 2008). The conference was co-sponsored by Women’s Health in the North, City of Yarra and Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault. Like the Mapping of Prevention Initiatives, it had a specific emphasis on doing prevention in a local area (the northern metropolitan region of Melbourne).

The conference addressed a range of theoretical, legislative, cultural and practical issues surrounding violence prevention. It included a main address by Professor Bob Pease on men's role in men's violence prevention, with a panel address facilitated by Maria Dimopolous on "what works" in violence prevention.

This address was based on an Australian Domestic and Family Violence Issues Paper (Pease, 2008), on the topic of whether men can be reliable allies in men's violence prevention. Using a feminist framework, Pease argued that many of the ways that men are currently being engaged in preventing men's violence against women focus on the violence, often adopting bio-medical and ecological models of prevention at the expense of addressing the structural roots of violence, including gender inequality, power and male privilege. Rather, Pease argued, in order to seriously work towards preventing violence against women, we need to apply socio-political understandings that address violence within the context of the state: "Violence against women is not just one segmented area. If we're going to actually make an impact on it, we've got to make an impact across all the other levels of the state." This includes providing women with equal opportunities, ending gender discrimination, addressing homophobia, having equal representation of women in agencies and giving up male privilege. As such, violence prevention initiatives need to be guided by a feminist framework. Pease also argued that men's role in the prevention of violence against women should be framed in terms of ethical responsibility rather than benefits. Pease proposed that in engaging men in men's violence prevention, we must name men's privilege, identify men's vested interests in and benefits from violence against women, move away from celebrating "other" forms of masculinities, recognise resistance and backlash, and address the structural causes that underlie men's violence against women. Pease cautioned: "If we're going to be serious about engaging with men, we've got to recognise that men have vested interests in not changing and if we do not acknowledge and recognise that and acknowledge the resistance, we're not going to bring about change."

As a conceptual paradigm then, Pease sees feminism as providing a structural assessment of why violence against women happens. Power, social and economic inequality are as much part of the context of violence as poor attitudes to women and relational difficulties. Likewise, Maria Dimopoulos challenged other panellists to consider how power, masculinity and gender inequality are being addressed in their ideas of "what works" in prevention.

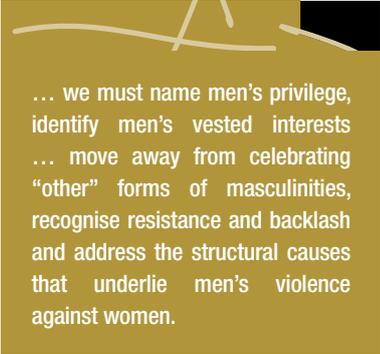
But here, we might find ourselves with another point of debate: the role of feminism in prevention frameworks, policy and implementation. Is feminist-informed the same as feminist? Do we all agree what either of these terms might refer to? After some 35 years of action and thought, there is no single strand of feminist politics or praxis; most thinking is sophisticated and complex. At one level this debate might be too "high level", abstract, or theoretical to spend too much time ruminating on when practical outcomes should be the focus. At another level, however, it may fundamentally impact on how goals are prioritised and how outcomes or effectiveness are even identified or measured.

These issues were debated again later in the year. ACSSA and the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse jointly hosted a forum specifically about men's role in prevention. Professor Pease spoke to a similar set of concerns. Joining him was an esteemed panel that provided responses to his address, including:

- Dr Michael Flood (LaTrobe University/VicHealth);
- Ms Mayet Costello (Sydney University);
- Ms Michelle Wright (No To Violence);
- Ms Isabelle McRea (White Ribbon Day Foundation); and
- Mr Dan Whitthaus (White Ribbon Day Foundation).

With the panel, the audience discussed the dilemmas, tensions and possibilities associated with men's involvement in violence prevention work. Difficult topics were raised, such as the dangers of co-option, the diverting of funding away from services for women, the centrality of feminist/critical frameworks for understanding violence, and the tension between "theory" and "practice". Yet many also celebrated the possibilities and positives of men's involvement in violence prevention, seeing their integration into prevention work as essential to reducing the incidence of violence.

It is likely that this is only one debate currently going on among prevention workers and researchers. That there are debates, and that these debates are complex, with no clear "right" answer set out is testament both



... we must name men's privilege, identify men's vested interests ... move away from celebrating "other" forms of masculinities, recognise resistance and backlash and address the structural causes that underlie men's violence against women.

to the complexity of “doing prevention” and to the sophistication, expertise and commitment prevention workers bring to the field.

- A copy of Bob Pease’s paper can be found at <[www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au/issues\\_Papers.htm](http://www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au/issues_Papers.htm)>
- Panelists’ responses are posted on ACSSA’s website at <[www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/conferencepapers.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/conferencepapers.html)>

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# Taking a national approach to sexual violence prevention

An interview with Libby Lloyd, AM

INTERVIEW BY HALEY CLARK

Haley Clark interviews Libby Lloyd, AM. Libby chaired the National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, which was charged with producing a national plan to address violence against women and their children. *Time for Action* was released in April 2009. Here Libby and Haley reflect on the work of the council.

**To start with, can you briefly tell us about how the council came about, what its core business was and what activities the council undertook?**

The Minister for Housing and the Status of Women, The Hon Tanya Plibersek, appointed the National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children at the end of May 2008 and it was the realisation of an election commitment. The 11-member council was appointed for a term of 12 months, and was asked to:

- provide expert advice and direction to the Australian Government on measures to reduce the incidence and impact of domestic and family violence and sexual assault on women and their children;
- provide guidance to achieve the implementation of key elements of the Government's election commitments to improve women's safety, including progressing the development of a National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children;
- provide leadership in the identification of best practice, and policy and program development to prevent violence against women and their children;
- consult widely across government and the community, including policy-makers, funding agencies, service providers, peak sector organisations, and victims, survivors and perpetrators; and
- report biannually on the progress of women and their children's safety to the Minister for the Status of Women.

The council consulted widely to develop the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, presenting our conclusions to the Government.

**On a personal note, what have been some of your previous responsibilities and roles that have led to your involvement in the council?**

I've had a somewhat peripatetic life and my career has taken me in many directions. I started my working life as an Occupational Therapist working in psychiatry. I have had to combine this with postings overseas, as my husband was in Foreign Affairs, and with raising a family.

In Australia, I've worked mainly in the community sector and in the Commonwealth Public Service. While overseas I worked with various UN and community agencies and in two separate assignments with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)—in Indonesia and South-East Asia, and in Iraq. I have also been involved in a voluntary capacity with a wide variety of not-for-profit organisations both in Australia and overseas.

I've always been interested in women's human rights, especially in the international context—and my involvement in the area of violence against women grew from activism in this area. I carried this interest through in Australia and in 2002 I became national president of UNIFEM Australia. During my 3-year term we re-energised the Australian White Ribbon Campaign and my engagement with the issue of violence against women increasingly became one of advocacy and of engaging men as partners in raising the issue at both the local and national level. White Ribbon, and its current 600+ White Ribbon Ambassadors, are

working to raise awareness and to bring about changes in community attitudes and behaviours, particularly those of men and boys.

**The need for culture change around violence against women is recognised as a key component of prevention. What did the council learn about the most effective ways of achieving this? How would it be monitored and evaluated?**

The council was very interested in the growing international movement towards primary prevention; these are prevention activities that truly reduce the prevalence of violence against women and their children. Many excellent initiatives are in place across the country but the council was challenged to identify which of these prevention and early intervention activities have actually proven to be effective in changing violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours over time. Where there is solid evidence to demonstrate that these programs work well we will be recommending they be strengthened, further tested, or replicated in other situations. The council is keen to promote and support initiatives that have been thoroughly evaluated and have been proven to be effective.

**Was part of the council's brief to provide direction in relation to preventing violence against women in Indigenous communities?**

Yes, this was a strong focus. We consulted widely with Indigenous women and men, in the major cities and in regional and remote Australia. We also consulted experts through several round-table discussions. In these forums, and through submissions, many excellent suggestions were put to us, many of which were supported in the National Plan.

**Prevention education has emerged as a key area of action. One of the suggested activities are school visits by role models to promote respectful relationships. Have there been "lessons from the past" in this type of approach that we can learn from?**

In all of the council's consultations, the issue of creating culture change and the need to promote respectful relationships across the community, especially for young people, was raised as the most important approach to prevention.

The incoming Rudd Government committed to put in place respectful relationships resources for all Australian High Schools and these have already started to be rolled out across Australia. They also committed to promote culture change, at the community level, around violence against women. One of these initiatives was to fund the White Ribbon Campaign—to increase the White Ribbon Day education activities in rural and regional communities; and to sponsor high school visits by community role models (such as White Ribbon Day Ambassadors) and of experts to promote respectful relationships and the importance of not using violence. These initiatives are in the process of being evaluated for their effectiveness—but already it is seen that more men are increasingly willing to take a strong public stand on this issue.

**In addition to primary prevention, what were some of the other key issues that emerged in the consultations?**

Many issues raised with the council fell into the early intervention and prevention category—such as education and awareness raising with the aim of changing behaviours, including of perpetrators (those who have already been violent). Also raised with the council as matters of importance were:

- the need for improvements in the area of services to victims;
- the need for laws to be more consistently applied and coordinated—such as transfer of intervention/protection orders; and
- more effective perpetrator treatment programs and better planning and coordination of policies, programs and services at the federal, state/territory and local levels.

The council saw considerable synergies across the country in the way states and territories are dealing with violence against women and their children. All jurisdictions have implemented, or are in the process of implementing, cross-departmental and inter-agency approaches to ensure systems work together better. We also know there is an absence of mechanisms to evaluate these strategies; and an absence of any strategic interaction or coordination across jurisdictions. While ideological commitment appears

relatively uniform across all jurisdictions, the funding commitments and service provision vary widely. This is particularly evident in terms of the coordination of government divisions and agencies and, for example, the provision of specialist courts. Variations in justice responses, particularly regarding a focus on pro-arrest in cases of domestic violence, in refusal of bail and prosecution were also consistently brought to the attention of the council.

### **What sort of challenges do you see in implementing a national approach to sexual violence prevention when sexual violence laws and service delivery are state and territory issues?**

While the states, territories and local governments have the major engagement and responsibility in education, law enforcement and delivery of justice, and service delivery to both victims and perpetrators of violence, so too does the Commonwealth have an important role. There are many initiatives underway at the moment at the national level that will have considerable impact at the local level, for example the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, the Homelessness Review, the Northern Territory Emergency Response, and there are many others.

The Commonwealth Government with its relationship to states and territories has an important role to play in leading research and establishing good practice, examples of this historically have included the establishment of ACSSA and commissioning the Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey. And of course the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is increasingly playing an important role in linking Commonwealth and state activities.

The Commonwealth is committed to taking a leadership role in prevention and the development of a National Plan is an important step towards this—in the shaping of young people's attitudes toward respectful relationships and in challenging community tolerance of violence. Of course the Commonwealth also has a significant responsibility in the area of family law and in the funding of services for victims. There are also great opportunities now for the Commonwealth to work with the states and territories to support and reinforce good practice initiatives at all levels across Australia.

**Haley Clark** is a Senior Research Officer at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

## **Publish in ACSSA *Aware!***

There are so few forums in which those working in the sexual assault field can share information with one another. ACSSA provides one of these forums through the document you are reading—*ACSSA Aware*. We are keen to publish articles written by you within this newsletter on the topic of sexual assault. We are particularly keen on publishing articles that will be of interest to those working in the sector, and to any and all interested in preventing sexual assault.

We accept article contributions of up to 5,000 words. We also accept film and book reviews, and news of conferences, training and research projects of up to 1,500 words.

If you would like to contribute an article or review to ACSSA *Aware*, please email a Microsoft Word document to [acssa@aifs.gov.au](mailto:acssa@aifs.gov.au), or post to ACSSA, Level 20, 485 La Trobe Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000.

You should also view our "contributor's guidelines" on the ACSSA website [www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/pubsmenu.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/pubsmenu.html)

## **CONFERENCES**

For a full list of upcoming conferences, seminars and events, visit the Conferences and Events page on the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault website: [www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/conferences.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/conferences.html)

# Responding to sexual assault within the Navy

An interview with Chief Petty Officer Angela Ballard

INTERVIEW BY HALEY CLARK

Chief Petty Officer Angela Ballard is the Australian Navy's most experienced sexual offences support person. Based at HMAS Cerberus, the Navy's principal training establishment, she co-established the Sexual Offence Support Persons Network (SOSP) with founder, Commander Fiona Sneath, in July 2002. The "Cerberus Model" for responding to and providing support to sexual assaults has been benchmarked across Navy establishments and fleet units. Angela has been proactive in finding ways to continually improve the practices and procedures of prevention and intervention of sexual assaults at HMAS Cerberus. She speaks with ACSSA's Haley Clark about responding to sexual assault within the Australian Navy.

**As the home of the Recruit School, HMAS Cerberus is a sailor's first contact with life in the Navy. What are some of the issues faced by new recruits coming into the academy environment for the first time and how do these compound responses to sexual assault?**

For many new personnel entering into the Navy, it is their first real taste of independent living (if you could call living in accommodation blocks that house a couple of hundred personnel "independent"). It is often the first time they have lived away from the home environment, for some the first time of earning a good salary and the first time they have had to look after themselves. It can also be a time for many when they have had to make choices or have choices taken away from them. Rules and regulations in the initial part of their training can be novel, but coming to terms with them as a way of life challenges a few. When someone joins the Navy they come to us from very different backgrounds; but they are all at the same level where I would say they had no or limited knowledge of what they were in for—like the communal living for instance. Not many have had to negotiate what to watch on the television let alone share a room or a shower. So for some, their personal space and values can be challenged.

Recruits will usually get a period of approved leave at the end of their fourth or fifth week and we recognise that their first taste of "freedom" since joining the organisation combined with an increased level of physical fitness, being "cashed up" and access to alcohol can be problematic. It is for this reason the Navy has programs in place consisting of a series of educational awareness sessions which address alcohol, drugs and sexual offences.

A lot of people don't show their real self until they have moved from recruit school onto their category school training where they have something like 60 hours of unsupervised time over a weekend. What we need to remember too is that they are adults and society doesn't expect us to supervise them either. It's hard to describe and unless you've been there it's probably harder to understand, but the relationship that is built up in a very short period of time between roommates, class mates and the division creates a sense of belonging, develops a sense of loyalty and of honour. Not everyone fits in though, and something that confronts our recruits and trainees is being accepted by their new peers, which is why staff spend a lot of time developing teamwork amongst them. Being accepted is very important for our people and this can contribute to an individual's decision to not report when they have been sexually assaulted. A huge mindset that new people to our organisation have is that reporting an incident of sexual assault will impede their career, disrupt their training and that they may be judged on their behaviour. Those that have been assaulted and utilised our support system will tell you that it is quite the opposite and we work hard to overcome that mindset through our education and awareness sessions.

**The values of the Navy are honour, honesty, courage, integrity and loyalty. How have these helped shape the sexual assault response at HMAS Cerberus? What challenges do/can these values present to responding to sexual assault?**

HMAS Cerberus is often called the "cradle of the navy", as every new sailor to the Navy commences their career here. Serving in Australia's Navy Program (SANP) is an overarching program for activities that use

a values-based approach to improving the Navy's organisational culture. The values-based approach aims to ensure all people take responsibility for their own actions and the reputation of the organisation and in doing so uphold the Navy values, both on and off duty. Essentially it is about how we act because of what we believe. Our values are the foundation by which we live by and we expect all those who serve to live by. This has led to difficulty for some individuals, including victims of sexual assault, in prioritising their values. For instance, having the moral courage to report issues of concern can be distorted by (misguided) loyalty to a friend or to the organisation. We have education and awareness programs in place to combat this. Over the past seven years we have seen confidence grow in the reporting culture of these incidents, particularly with the sexual assaults known as "acquaintance" or "date" rape.

**The military justice system has come under significant scrutiny in the [last five years], particularly in relation to its (mis)handling of sexual offences committed by members of Australian Defence Force (ADF) on civilians. What difficulties do you face when responding to sexual assaults perpetrated within the military in relation to the military justice system? How does the need to deal with military, state, national and international laws complicate your response process?**

Investigating sexual assaults is currently not within the ADF's jurisdiction in Australia so these issues are passed to the appropriate civilian authority to deal with. While this has been the preferred method of handling of these serious allegations for many years—ensuring transparency for the individuals concerned—it has at times created difficulties in managing individuals who have had multiple allegations made against them. In my experience, without sufficient evidence to have someone charged for an offence, there is very little that the ADF can do—and that has posed its own challenges for us in managing the continuance of careers of both members.

The purpose of legislation is to minimise risk to an individual and the organisation and in my opinion responding to allegations of sexual assault should be no different, however jurisdiction does complicate this for the ADF.

**What strategies has HMAS Cerberus used to overcome these challenges?**

Where an allegation of sexual assault has been made, Cerberus has had to implement varying management strategies to tackle the challenges faced by delays in investigations, co-workers' complaints against each other and relationship breakdowns. These have included the issuing of workplace directives; assistance to a member in taking out an Apprehended Violence Order; and sending personnel on leave or posting to geographically separate them. Effective management of the members involved can be and is achieved at HMAS Cerberus by appropriate case management.

**How are issues of gender and culture addressed in responding to sexual assault within a male-dominated military institution?**

Education programs within the Navy have been around for the past 16 years, along with the Good Working Relationship program, which is now known as Equity & Diversity. In 2002, Cerberus, under command of Captain Clinton Thomas, instituted multiple levels of education and awareness in this area to Commanders, Managers, Supervisors, staff and trainees, and included the development of a sexual offence response network comprising male and female senior staff. Over the past seven years since the Sexual Offence Support Persons (SOSP) network has been established, it has been necessary to respond to sexual assaults involving male to female, male to male, female to female, and female to male. Cerberus has developed a strong culture of dealing with allegations of sexual assault swiftly and sensitively. Being a male-dominated environment hasn't been an issue for us in appropriately responding to incidents. In fact, because the SOSP network and the education and awareness programs are managed and strongly supported by the Command, it gets the serious attention it deserves.

**HMAS Cerberus trains about 5,000 personnel annually, with around 800–1,000 trainees located at the premises at any one time. How have you worked with this high level of transient population in developing a sexual assault support?**

Once again regular education and awareness are key contributors in getting the message out there. There are three sexual offence awareness sessions conducted at Cerberus each month for all new personnel posted here to ensure everyone employed (military and civilian) are made aware of "What is a Sexual Offence",

how to respond and what support is available. Everyone is issued a wallet size card with key contact numbers to activate support and there are posters located in accommodation blocks and work areas with phone numbers to report incidents and for individuals to seek support

**In addition to a structured response process HMAS Cerberus also has a strong commitment to sexual assault prevention within the military. What are some of the initiatives in sexual assault prevention that Cerberus is currently working on/has adopted?**

HMAS Cerberus has an established sexual offence management plan which addresses prevention, intervention and “postvention” of incidents of indecent behaviour, indecent assault and sexual assault. The education and awareness takes place at periodic times during recruit training, Category school and as part of an establishment induction program for Cerberus staff. Each briefing consists of a 20 minute presentation explaining “What is a Sexual Offence” and how to respond to someone who reports they have been sexually assaulted. In addition, wallet size cards are distributed to all attendees, with key phone numbers including those of South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault (SECASA), Victoria Police, our duty officer, Command Equity Adviser and the Command legal officer. It is specifically highlighted to our personnel that assistance is available 24 hours a day. As part of our preventative approach we have addressed security measures which has included installing appropriate lighting across the base, routine patrols by duty personnel, computer generated key locks for all cabins and swipe card access to buildings. In addition, all external doors to the female accommodation block are secure at all times.

Cerberus has a small pool of personnel with an identified link to Command, referred to as the Sexual Offence Support Persons (SOSP) network, that provides immediate response to ensure that:

- the appropriate medical, counselling and other support is provided to the member;
- encouragement is provided to the member to report the incident to civilian police and assists them in making that report;
- completion of all necessary reporting documentation governed by Defence policy; and
- an appropriate case manager is selected for ongoing management of the individual.

A key factor underpinning the effectiveness of the SOSP network is that only a handful of carefully selected personnel are appointed as SOSPs and are networked with the local authorities and support agencies. They are familiar with what sort of investigations, interviews, routines and procedures are used. The importance of confidentiality can't be understated either. Having as few as people as possible aware of the allegations or the support being provided is empowering for an individual.

The overall management plan at Cerberus towards sexual assault recognises that a level of support, guidance and case management also needs to be made available to the “respondant” (the person against whom an accusation is made).

The postvention management or long-term recovery for a member begins with the vital importance of Command acknowledging the wishes of the member in the recovery process. We have recognised that the likelihood of a long-term successful outcome is potentially undermined where a member believes that decisions have been forced upon them. A member will decide on the best way ahead for them, often in consultation with the support of SECASA counsellors or a Defence Force psychologist and ongoing case management is provided to the degree and extent that a member requires. This differs for each individual. There is no mandatory follow-up reviews or consultations as part of a long-term recovery plan, but once again, the needs of the member dictate ongoing requirements.

I'd like to acknowledge the support by SECASA, the Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit (SOCAU) and Victoria Police CIU-Hastings, as it is with their cooperation & support that we have been able to fully support our members.

**On 31 July 2009 Angela Ballard was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to research sexual assault prevention and intervention in military environments in the US, Canada and the UK.**

**Haley Clark** is a Senior Research Officer at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

# Taskforce on the Prevention of Male Sexual Violence against Women

An interview with Sophie Gale, City of Yarra

INTERVIEW BY HALEY CLARK

Sophie Gale, Council Health Planner, speaks with ACSSA's Haley Clark about the City of Yarra's Sexual Violence Taskforce Report and Action Plan.

**There are few city councils that have a plan specifically focused on, and a taskforce dedicated to, preventing sexual violence. Could you tell me how the Taskforce on the Prevention of Male Sexual Violence against Women was established within the City of Yarra Council and how sexual violence prevention has remained on the council's agenda?**

On 23 May 2005, a man raped a woman in Condell Park, just metres away from one of Yarra Council's main municipal buildings, Fitzroy Town Hall. This rape, while not characteristic of most sexual assaults (in that the man was not known to the woman), became the impetus for Council to begin its process of addressing the issue of male sexual violence against women. Championed by a Councillor with relevant expertise, Council made a commitment to establish a taskforce to investigate its role in the prevention of male sexual violence against women in its Council Plan 2005–2009.

The taskforce, which was established in February 2006 and met a total of six times, was made up of professionals from key organisations such as sexual assault services, state government, Victoria Police, community health centres and women's health services. The Taskforce was charged with the task of examining best practice models for local government in sexual violence prevention and recommending strategies for addressing sexual violence prevention in the City of Yarra.

Subsequently, Council endorsed the Sexual Violence Taskforce Report and Action Plan in September 2006, which details initiatives that Council would undertake for a 2-year period to address sexual violence against women. Since then, this action plan has been identified as an objective in Council's Municipal Public Health Plan 2005–2009 under the priority area of Women's Health.

**What role does Council have in preventing sexual violence against women in the local area?**

Councils can play an important role in violence prevention within its municipality through the areas of work it already has responsibility for. Therefore, the plan looks at:

- *planning and policy development*—the inclusion of sexual violence prevention in the development of Council's policies, for example health planning or open space management;
- *representation and advocacy*—the ability to advocate for key services in partnership with agencies in the family violence sector;
- *service delivery*—include a violence prevention focus in the work of Council's Family and Children's Services and Aged and Disability Services, including staff training;
- *the provision of community grants*—providing funding to local organisations to engage in work on sexual violence prevention;
- *management of assets*—investigate in the incorporation of safer design principles into assets management/design where appropriate;
- *community development*—for example, work with local sports clubs to provide welcoming, safe and inclusive environments for women; and
- *enforcement and regulation*—working with sex industry through Council's local laws area, encouraging best practice.

**The taskforce has included "putting our own houses in order" as one of its priorities. Could you tell me why this is a priority and what the City of Yarra is doing within Council itself to prevent sexual violence?**

Getting our own house in order involves Council recognising that it has a leadership role, not just in the municipality but potentially to other Councils and employers. Yarra Council is a significant local employer, with our employees representing a community in itself. Addressing sexual violence necessarily includes reflecting on our practices and the safety of our employees. This year we will be running a White Ribbon

Day campaign promoting the “Violence starts with the wrong attitude—challenge it!” tool kit developed by VicHealth and No To Male Family Violence, raising awareness of how we can be agents in changing violence supportive attitudes by challenging negative attitudes towards women.

**To what extent do you think the importance of preventing sexual violence against women is recognised by residents of the City of Yarra? How is council addressing community awareness of this issue?**

This is a very difficult area to gauge. We recognise that work still needs to be done on the collection of more meaningful and reliable data. Yarra Council has a strong emphasis on community engagement through its Community Engagement and Consultation Policy 2008. As part of our work in this area and the development of our new Municipal Public Health Plan 2009–2013, we will be conducting further research into community attitudes around the importance of this issue.

**The taskforce has framed sexual violence prevention as a public health issue. How has this been useful and what potential limitations do you see in relying on a public health framework in preventing sexual violence against women?**

The taskforce looked at a number of best practice models, acknowledging that while there has been much work done in providing services for those experiencing violence, there is fair less work done in violence prevention. The VicHealth Public Health Model for the Prevention of Violence against Women (2007) provided an excellent framework for aligning prevention work with the roles of Council. In addition, this model focuses on work at the community or population level rather than work with individuals. By positioning sexual violence prevention within a public health framework, Council has been able to engage with the community on issues of the health and economic costs of violence to the whole community.

The taskforce also looked at the Victorian Government’s Women’s Safety Strategy (2002–2007) and drew on its philosophical and strategic strengths, particularly in relation to its adaptability to local settings, its commitment to the importance of showing leadership, mapping and collecting data and the need for a long term commitment to addressing violence against women.

**There is strong national focus on the prevention of violence against women, for example with the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (2009). First, how do you see national strategy objectives working in action on a local level? And secondly, what are some of the benefits in dealing with sexual violence prevention on a more local level?**

This new federal focus on violence prevention is extremely encouraging for everyone working in the field at all levels. Commitment at this level endorses the validity of the efforts put into violence prevention at state and local levels and adds weight to our calls for it stay on our agenda as a local government. In addition, opportunities for partnerships and potential funding can flow on from a national strategy. As the level of government closest to the community, Councils have a unique role in the provision of services and planning for issues specific to the neighbourhoods and communities in our municipality. Yarra’s engagement with local agencies working with newly arrived communities who have settled in Yarra and building on the relationships we have with our local sports clubs in conducting violence prevention work demonstrates some of the benefits of working locally.

**In 2006, the taskforce developed an action plan. What are some of the key priorities and activities that the taskforce has been engaged in and what else is planned over the upcoming year?**

Work in the prevention of sexual violence requires a long-term vision and commitment. Part of our work at the moment is to ensure that while we deliver on the actions included in the Report and Action Plan, we ensure that our efforts are sustainable, going forward. Council’s health planning area is engaged in an evaluation project which will include an evaluation of the Action Plan and will ensure that violence prevention work will be mainstreamed into our new Municipal Public Health Plan 2009–2013. Apart from these high-level actions, we are currently involved in White Ribbon Day events for November and will be looking into staff training needs and engaging key partners in the sourcing and analysis of data and evidence in the coming year.

**Contact:**

Sophie Gale, Health Planner, City of Yarra. Phone (03) 9205 5093 or email [sophie.gale@yarracity.vic.gov.au](mailto:sophie.gale@yarracity.vic.gov.au)

**Reference**

VicHealth. (2007). *Preventing violence before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria*. Melbourne, VIC: VicHealth.

**Haley Clark** is a Senior Research Officer at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

## LITERATURE HIGHLIGHTS

The following are a selection of resources addressing current issues in the sexual violence field. The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA) receives many of these resources. Print resources are available via the interlibrary loan system. Contact your local library for details. Electronic resources are available directly via the web address. The inclusion of a publication in this list does not necessarily mean that it is endorsed by ACSSA.

### Sport and sexual assault

**Thank God for El Masri: Madame Defarge is alive and well and living in Australian sport. (2008)** Hickie, T. In: T. Hickie (ed.) *Essays in sport and the law*. Melbourne: Australian Society for Sports History (pp. 285–306).

The author considers whether the legal rights of individuals were compromised by the media coverage of the allegation of sexual assault made against members of the Canterbury Bulldogs Rugby League Club. He also addresses the larger issue of the relationship of the media and politics to sport in a robust democracy and asks whether sport is being used as the platform to undermine many fundamental freedoms.

**Towards champions: A better culture, a better game. (2005).** Football Fans Against Sexual Assault, Australia.

This submission aims to inform the AFL's and NRL's development of: codes, rules, charters, and procedures to deal with sexual assault and harassment complaints and sexual misconduct; training and education programs; recruitment and player development processes; and initiatives for including the broader football community in cultural change. Where recommendations mirror those currently being pursued by the AFL and/or NRL, the submission demonstrates the extent of support and demands real follow-through and commitment in their implementation.

**Respect and responsibility: Creating a safe and inclusive environment for women at all levels of Australian football. (2005).** Australian Football League. Melbourne: AFL. Available online at <<http://tinyurl.com/mx3apj>>

The Australian Football League Commission, with the support of the 16 AFL Clubs, has adopted a policy to address issues of sexual harassment, sexual discrimination and violence towards women. This paper outlines the policy, which includes: an introduction of model anti sexual harassment and anti sexual discrimination procedures across the AFL; the development of organisational policies and procedures to ensure a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for women; changes to AFL rules relating to "Conduct Unbecoming";

education of players and other club officials; the dissemination of model policies and procedures at community club level; and the development of a public education program. It defines "Conduct Unbecoming", and discusses sexual assault as a major community health issue and outlines steps taken by the AFL since March 2004 to combat sexual assault.

**Zeroing in on violence against women. (2006).** Jacobson, S. *Law Institute Journal*, 80(3), 82

Ways that the international framework of human rights can be used more effectively in Australia to address issues of violence against women are discussed. The article considers anti domestic violence strategies for public awareness campaigns, and anti sexual harassment and anti sexual discrimination procedures for the Australian Football League.

**Playing by the rules—off the field. (2005).** Lumby, C. *University of New South Wales Law Journal Forum*, 11(1), 41–42

The National Rugby League commissioned research on player attitudes and behaviours to women and the role and status of women across the game. Among the research findings were: many of the player attitudes and behaviours towards women are not markedly different from those of other young men; players were unanimous in denouncing sexual assault; and many were asking for more support in managing social and sexual encounters with women. However, a key issue identified in the research is the ongoing double standard according to which women are regarded as "sluts" if they are sexually active and assertive—an attitude which not only leads to women being "punished" for having sex and treated with contempt but one which can lead women to rely on non verbal cues instead of clearly communicating their wishes. Masculine cultural beliefs about the inevitability of some men offending are discussed, along side a refusal by some sectors in the sport to have faith in education and mentoring as a preventative measure.

**Sport and the law. Sex and the team player: When a team becomes a gang. (2005).** Kift, S. *Alternative Law Journal*, 30(3), 136–137

The sexual assault scandals of Australian football in 2004 and 2005 are discussed in this article in

relation to male sporting celebrity culture and the sexual mistreatment of women. The article asks what is so difficult for these men about complying with minimal standards of acceptable off field behaviour. It discusses the role of power, dominance and ritual humiliation in many male sports.

**Dereliction: women, rape and football. (2004).** Philadelphoff-Puren, N. *Australian Feminist Law Journal*, 21, 35–51

In the last year, there have been numerous sexual assault allegations against Australian footballers, yet not one case has been brought to trial. This article asks: why is it so difficult for women to signify as credible witnesses in sexual assault crimes, particularly when the accused is a footballer? It suggests that the symbolic organisation of sport and sexual difference in the national Australian imaginary automatically extinguishes the possibility of women testifying to rape against sportsmen. The article discusses sexual citizenship, relations between men, rape complainants in the national imaginary, and relations between women.

**The right to play safely: A report on violence against women in sport and recreation. (2003).** Morrone, A. Melbourne: CASA House .

This report investigates the prevalence and attitudes to sexual assault and violence against women in sports environments. It reviews current research and attitudes and interviews 44 women to assess attitudes and self perception in relation to sexual violence and sport. It is recommended that education programs be conducted in sporting clubs, secondary schools, and other sports service areas, directed at both men and women.

**Playing by the rules project. (2004).** Lumby, C., McCarthy, W., Willis, K., & Flood, M. Sydney: University of Sydney.

The aim of this project was to investigate attitudes and behaviours towards women amongst players in the National Rugby League and to make recommendations about education and mentoring programs, codes of conduct and other approaches to ensuring fair and respectful treatment of women. Interviews were conducted with players, CEOs, Chairs, senior management, coaches, trainers, administrators, welfare officers, and women working in rugby league. This report summary lists the project's key findings and recommendations.

### CALD communities and sexual assault

**Adult sexual violence in Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Australia. (2007).** Taylor, N., & Putt, J. (Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice, No. 345). Canberra, ACT: Australian Institute of Criminology. Available online at <[www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi2/tandi345t.html](http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi2/tandi345t.html)>

Knowledge about sexual violence against women from Indigenous and culturally and linguistically

diverse backgrounds is scant. While many of the reasons for not reporting sexual violence to police are likely to be similar to those for mainstream women, women from diverse backgrounds can face additional cultural and related factors affecting their ability and/or willingness to report violence. This paper reports on findings from a multi dimensional study investigating these issues. Participants indicated the need for appropriate interpreters when reporting sexual violence, a preference for female police officers to handle the case, protection of complainants, and more effective dissemination of information on how the criminal justice system processes sexual assault cases. There is a clear need to address fundamental attitudes and beliefs within particular communities about sexual violence and this will require strong community leadership and the support of local community members.

**Responding to the complex and gendered needs of refugee women. (2009, June).** Deacon, Z., & Sullivan, C. *Journal of Women and Social Work*.

Refugee women's experiences and needs are qualitatively different from those of men. However, women's experiences have long been overlooked in favor of a male-centered paradigm that governs the response to survivors of warfare. To close this gap in science and practice, a needs assessment was conducted with 31 refugee women. The findings revealed the importance of considering the impact of refugee women's sociodemographic characteristics on their experiences in resettlement and the significance of their need for basic resources. Meeting these needs may facilitate the resettlement process and ameliorate the gendered effects of resettlement on refugee women.

### Intimate partner violence among Asian immigrant communities

**Health/Mental Health Consequences, Help-Seeking Behaviors, and Service Utilization. (2009).** Lee, Y-S., & Linda Hadeed, L. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 10(2), 143–170

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a serious epidemic among Asian immigrant communities. Yet little is known about the scope, nature, and related contextual, cultural, and social factors among this population. In particular, the lack of research has been evident in examining health and mental health outcomes of IPV and service utilisation, revealing notable gaps in health disparities which result in a failure to provide relevant services and law enforcement protection for battered Asian immigrant women. This article examines critically the growing body of literature on IPV among Asian immigrant populations in several areas, and future directions for practice, policy, and research are discussed.

**People of Color with Disabilities: Intersectionality as a Framework for Analyzing Intimate Partner Violence in Social, Historical, and Political**

**Contexts.** (2009). Cramer, E. P., & Plummer, S-B. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 18(2), 162–181.

The authors use the conceptual framework of intersectionality to deconstruct the help-seeking and help-receiving behaviors of abused persons of color with disabilities. Two case examples illuminate the complex interplay of race, gender, accent, immigration status, sexual orientation, disability, and socioeconomic status in women's help-seeking decisions. The case examples highlight the women's perceived experiences based on their decisions to seek assistance from formal helping systems. The authors note limitations in some existing models of system response to persons of color with disabilities, as well as describe programs that are more attentive to intersectionality. The article concludes with implications for various stakeholders. (Abstract, edited)

**Violence Against Women: Vulnerable Populations.** (2009). Brownridge, D. A. New York: Routledge.

This book investigates under-researched and under-served groups of women who are particularly vulnerable to violent victimisation from an intimate male partner. In the past, there has been an understandable reluctance to address this issue to avoid stereotyping vulnerable groups of women. However, developments in the field, particularly intersectionality theory, which recognises women's diversity in experiences of violence, suggest that the time has come to make the study of violence in vulnerable populations a new sub-field in the area. This book identifies where violence on vulnerable

populations fits within the field, develops a method for studying vulnerable populations, and brings vital new knowledge to the field through the analysis original data (from three large-scale representative surveys) on eight populations of women who are particularly vulnerable to violence.

**No room: Homelessness and the experiences of women of non-english speaking backgrounds.** (2008, May). Allimant, A., & Anne, S. Paper presented at 5th National Homelessness Conference, Adelaide, Australia. Available at: <[www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/UserFiles/File/Allimant%20and%20Anne.pdf](http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/UserFiles/File/Allimant%20and%20Anne.pdf)>

Women from NESB experience a heightened risk of homelessness due to multiple barriers in reporting their experiences of domestic violence and in accessing relevant information and support services. Women from NESB are often unaware of their rights in Australia and lack an understanding of what constitutes domestic violence and what protection is available to them. Working with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, particularly women from NESB, requires workers to engage in continuing professional development and self reflection to ensure the development of ethical, sensitive and responsive practices. This paper will critically examine service responses to women from NESB who have experienced domestic and family violence and address specific barriers that may be experienced. Factors leading to and compounding experiences of homelessness will also be addressed.



## We welcome your feedback

### Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault

Help to shape the work of the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault. We are interested in hearing your views on the best way to meet the needs of our stakeholders. If you have any comments on services that could be offered, possible topics for publications or areas of research, please fill in the section below and return it to the Institute. Comments can also be provided on-line via the ACSSA website, or email us at: [acssa@aifs.gov.au](mailto:acssa@aifs.gov.au)

**What other services would you find useful for your work?**

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**What topics would you liked covered in ACSSA's publications, or considered for research projects?**

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Membership form overleaf ➤

## ACSSA services

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault is funded by the Office for Women, Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, through the National Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault in Australia. ACSSA provides stakeholders with a variety of services (see below) and 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.

### Research and 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](mailto: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, the ACSSA Wrap (short resource papers) and newsletters, which are mailed free of charge to members of the mailing list. Publications can also be received electronically.

### Promising Practice database

ACSSA is continuing to build its Promising 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 list

*ACSSA-Alert* keeps members posted on what's new at the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault and in the sexual assault field generally.

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

### Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault

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.

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