



**CASA Forum**  
Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault Inc

ABN 23 677 085 867

# *Annual Report*

*July 2009 - June 2010*

**CASA Forum** Victorian Centres Against Sexual  
Assault Inc A0029013c

## INTRODUCTION

The *Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault Forum (Victorian CASA Forum)* is a peak body of sixteen (16) Centres Against Sexual Assault including the *Victorian Sexual Assault Crisis Line (After Hours)*.

The Victorian CASA Forum advocates structurally to ensure that women, children and men who are victim/survivors of sexual assault have access to comprehensive and timely support and crisis intervention to address their immediate and long-term needs.

CASAs acknowledge that the overwhelming majority of perpetrators of sexual assault are male (National Crime and Safety Study 2002) and overwhelmingly victim/survivors of sexual assault are women and children.

This does not however, deny the incidence of existence of sexual assault perpetrated against men or by women.

CASAs operate from a structuralist feminist analysis of sexual assault. Therefore, CASAs are committed to addressing the gender, cultural, social, economic and class inequalities within society which results in the perpetration of sexual assault and violence against women and children.

CASAs provide an accessible, effective and consistent quality service to victim/survivors of sexual assault with the principles of practice based on an articulated understanding of the causes and consequences of sexual assault.

CASAs operate within the framework of the Victims' Rights Model of service delivery which given centre place to the rights of victim/survivors. The commitment by CASAs to the Victims' Rights Model of service delivery acknowledges the link between the rights, empowerment and long-term healing for victim/survivors of sexual assault.

Knowledge and understanding of the individual, cultural, social and universal context of the lives of women and children is fundamental to enable services to respond consistently and appropriately to the range and diversity of needs of victim/survivors of sexual assault.

The framework therefore acknowledges that CASAs respond not only to the presenting issues of sexual assault, but also to the victim/survivor's individual experience of it. This includes the emotional, psychological, developmental, economic and social consequences relating to the incidence of sexual assault.

## **VICTORIAN CENTRES AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT FORUM PHILOSOPHY**

The Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault Forum is committed to addressing the inequalities within society which result in the perpetration of sexual violence and family violence against women, children and men. The Victorian CASA Forum therefore acknowledges that:

- Sexual assault is both a consequence and a reinforcer of the power disparity existing between men and women and children.
- Sexual assault occurs along a continuum of behaviour which includes: any uninvited sexual behaviour which makes the recipient feel uncomfortable, harassed or afraid: unwanted touching or remarks: sexual harassment: coerced sexual activity: rape with physical violence and threat to life: sexual assault of children and the grooming of children that accompanies this crime.
- The impact of sexual assault and family violence on the lives of victim/survivors is multi-faceted and complex. It includes emotional, social, psychological, legal, health, spiritual, economic and political consequences. To facilitate recovery from sexual and family violence, the Forum recognises the importance of responding to each aspect.
- Recovery from sexual assault and family violence is influenced by a range of factors reflecting positions of men, women and children in society and the power differences between them. These include difference of gender, culture, ethnicity, age, sexuality, religion, ability/disability and socio economic class.
- The entire community and other institutions are responsible for sexual assault and its consequences. Working towards its elimination is the responsibility of all in our society.
- All CASAs work toward the empowerment of service users, through a victims' rights model, informed by the Victims Rights Charter and the Human Rights Charter. The focus of service provision is the needs of recent and past victim/survivors of sexual assault.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- **Direct Service**

CASAs will provide best practice services drawing on evidence based clinical practice, research and evaluation.

- **Education**

CASAs will provide information and education is provided to raise community and professional awareness of the nature, incidence and impact of sexual assault and family violence.

- **Prevention**

CASAs will provide advocacy for prevention programs. CASAs will develop, support and participate in programs that work to prevent women, children and men becoming victims of sexual assault and family violence.

- **Advocacy**

CASAs will advocate for systemic reforms and social change to maximise the outcomes for victim survivors of sexual assault and family violence.

## **STRUCTURE**

### **Membership**

The Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault Forum Inc. A0029013C is comprised of representatives from all sixteen CASAs in Victoria including the Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL). The representatives are the Managers of the Regional Centres and the Sexual Assault Crisis Line.

### **Register of Members for 2009-2010**

Shireen Gunn	Ballarat CASA
Barbara Henry	Barwon CASA
Linette Harriott (resigned Oct 2009)	CASA House
Pauline Gilbert (April 2010)	CASA House
Judy Flanagan	Eastern CASA
Karen Hogan	Gatehouse Centre
Fiona Boyle	Gippsland CASA
Judy McHugh	Goulburn Valley CASA
Eileen Oates	Loddon Campaspe CASA
Joanne Sheehan	Mallee SAU
Kath McCarthy(resigned March 2010)	Northern CASA
Charmaine Farrell (April 2010)	Northern CASA
Pauline Gilbert (resigned March 2010)	Sexual Assault Crisis Line
Dianne Rokvic (Acting March 2010)	Sexual Assault Crisis Line
Carolyn Worth	South Eastern CASA

Helen Wilson  
Kerry Burns  
Jane Vanderstoel  
Jo-Anne Bates

South Western CASA  
Upper Murray CASA  
West CASA  
Wimmera CASA



### **2009 Planning Day**

Carolyn Worth, Helen Wilson, Karen Hogan, Kath McCarthy, Jo-Anne Bates, Kerrie Burns, Barb Henry, Shireen Gunn, Fiona Boyle, Eileen Oates, Pauline Gilbert, Judy Flanagan, Joanne Sheehan, Jane Vanderstoel

### **Meetings**

In accordance with the rules of the Incorporated Association, in 2009-2010 the Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault Forum met eleven times and, in addition, held the 2009-2010 Annual General Meeting in Warrnambool on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2009, 9.00am. A planning and development day for the CASA Forum was held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2009 where a Forum strategic plan was developed. Separate metropolitan and rural managers meetings were held bi monthly. With an ever increasing CASA Forum workload, the need for a Secretariat continues to be an issue.

In 2009-2010 the Forum met bi monthly with Department of Human Services Office for Children and Families Liz Olle, Madeleine Oakes and Jan Thompson.

Presentations to CASA Forum included

- Meghan Butterfield, Supervisor – SECASA/Springvale Legal Service Joint Legal Clinic – VOCAT/VCAT
- Juliet Summers – Young Earth – CASA Forum On-line Project Worker
- Patsie Frawley – Living Safer Sexual Lives – La Trobe University – Respectful Relationships Project – Federal Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)
- Tania Farha – Senior Manager SOCIT Project Victoria Police
- Jenni Codi – Sentencing Advisory Council
- Louise Akenson – Department of Justice – Model Criminal Code
- Janice Watt, Penny Drysdale, Anna Saw – Department of Justice, Sexual Assault Reform Unit
- Christina Craik – Program Director Social Work, RMIT
- Robert Ridley and Glenn Davies – Sexual Crimes Unit, Victoria Police

### **Public Officer/Convenor**

The Forum appoints a Public Officer in accordance with the rules. The Public Officer is the initial and main contact point for the Forum. In 2009-2010 Carolyn Worth, Manager, SECASA became the Public Officer/Convenor. Barbara Henry, Manager, Barwon CASA continued in the role of Treasurer of the CASA Forum and Jo-Anne Bates Manager Wimmera CASA continued as Co-Convenor of the Forum.

### **Venue**

CASA Forum is indebted to the Inter Country Adoptions Department for the provision of a central meeting place in the CBD, their Board Room 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, 570 Bourke Street, Melbourne.

### **CRISIS CARE:**

- The Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL) manager provided monthly updates of the use of 1800 number.
- SACL coordinated 557 after hours Crisis Care services.
- SACL dealt with 10 337 telephone calls throughout the year
- CASAS recorded 961 Crisis Care Services to recent victims of Sexual Assault 2009-2010.
- The Vincent Report was completed dealing with improvements to the collection of forensic medical evidence in Crisis Care Units. This led to the development of Interim Practice Arrangements for all Crisis Care Units which included revised guidelines to minimise contamination of

forensic samples. This process is ongoing through the Department of Justice Crisis Response Working Group.

## **COUNSELLING SERVICES**

CASA continue to focus on counselling services to victim/survivors of sexual assault. This year there were over 8 000 new referrals. Almost 7 000 adults and over 4000 children received a service.

Additional funding was provided to CASAs to engage with families where a member had been put on the Sex Offender Register (ANCOR) and there were children present in the household.

The Better Pathway program funded by the Department of Justice has a focus on reducing women's imprisonment and re-offending. WestCASA and Loddon-Campaspe CASA have continued to provide sexual assault counseling to women in the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and Tarrengower Prison. Training is also provided to prison staff to understand the issues associated with sexual assault and its disclosure.

## **SEXUALLY ABUSIVE BEHAVIOURS TREATMENT SERVICES:**

The Problem Sexual Behaviour (PSB) and Sexually Abusive Behaviour Treatment Services (SABTS) continue to be provided by the majority of CASAs across the state.

This program has been developed in conjunction with the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005. The Children's Court recommends to the Therapeutic Treatment Board that a young person be placed on a Therapeutic Treatment Order. Treatment is for a period of 12 months unless an extension is applied for.

There were over 400 new referrals for children exhibiting problematic sexual behaviours and adolescents demonstrating sexually abusive behaviour. A service was received by 644 children and young people aged between 4 -14 years of age.

In addition, approximately 40 young people aged between 15 and 17 years received treatment for sexually abusive behaviour.

Submissions have been made to the Department of Justice to extend the number of places for 15-17 year olds.

A Mentoring Program for staff providing these services has been established to enhance practice and learning. In 2009-2010 it has been in the form of a six monthly clinical symposium.

Training to new staff continues to be provided by SECASA and Gatehouse Centre and is now an integral part of the Work Force Development Program.

### **ABORIGINAL CULTURAL COMPETENCIES**

In 2009-10 Northern CASA created a permanent .6 community development position which has been involved in developing a partnership with key local Aboriginal agencies including the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, the Aboriginal Unit at Mercy Hospital for women and the Aboriginal Unit at Austin Health. A counselor/advocate is based one morning a week at the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service Family Counselling Service. A male counselor/advocate has been working with Aboriginal men's workers from the region training them to deliver professional training to Aboriginal workers on responding to disclosure of sexual assault.

Charmaine Farrell  
Manager

All CASAs have developed Cultural Competency Plans with their regional Department of Human Services offices aimed at increasing their involvement with their local Aboriginal communities. CASA Managers also attended the Yarnin' Up Forum which was aimed at exploring new partnership opportunities between sexual assault services, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Family Violence Regional Action Groups and government departments.

Gippsland CASA has allocated two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander portfolios with the aim of allowing time for counsellor/advocates to liaise and develop relationships with the community. The message that we want to convey is that CASAS is a safe place that is culturally sensitive to the people's needs. Whilst as an agency we think we have much more development to achieve in this area, we are hopeful this will be a collaborative process with the community.

We also have three Aboriginal workers on our crisis care after hours response team. The recruitment process has been in place for two years and is proving to be helpful in connecting Aboriginal people that have experienced a recent sexual assault to the service for support. The additional benefit has been having a link to the community that will 'talk up' the issues around sexual assault.

Fiona Boyle  
Gippsland CASA

### **PRIMARY PREVENTION**

The Sexual Assault Prevention Program for Secondary Schools (SAPPSS) continues to be implemented in schools in Victoria and CASAs have



continued to pursue preventive work by providing workshops in both primary and secondary schools.

In February 2010 DEECD commissioned CASA House as the 'lead agency' to develop and implement a Demonstration Project. The purpose of the project is to develop and implement a project that will inform a DEECD approach to gender-based violence prevention within school settings. CASA House has developed a model for secondary schools and delivered professional development and teacher training to four metropolitan Melbourne schools. Classroom trials have begun and evaluation is due to commence September 2010.

Pauline Gilbert  
Manager  
CASA House

A large number of school programs are being run across the State including

- Respect Protect Connect (RPC) being run by SECASA as a peer education program in secondary schools in the Southern Metropolitan Region. RPC provides anti violence workshops for young men and respectful relationship workshops for young women. Primary Schools receive a whole of school advanced personal safety program called Feeling Safe Together. The program was delivered to 9053 young people during the year.
- CASA House's pilot a Respect My Space program for year 7 and 8 which is a complimentary curriculum component that grew out of SAPPSS.
- Wimmera CASA's a Personal Safety Success Training program, using Mallee Sexual Assault Centre's manual, for primary school children. This program consists of one session per week for five weeks. Approximately 1300 students participated.
- Northern CASA delivering the Sexual Assault Prevention Program for Secondary Schools (SAPPSS) in four northern regional schools. West CASA delivered SAPPSS to two schools in the Western Region and trained a group of school nurses in the program delivery. Both Northern CASA and WestCASA received funding from NASASAV (via the federal Respectful Relationship Program) in 2009. These funds enabled the employment of Community Education workers allowing for strong partnerships to be developed with schools in both regions.
- ECASA ran SAPPSS in two secondary schools in the Eastern Metropolitan Region.
- A piloted young men's version of the CASA House 'No Means No' Show. In November 2009 3 young women's and 3 young men's shows were performed at the Trades Hall in Melbourne.
- SECASA writing a whole of school Advanced Personal Safety program for Victorian primary schools for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD).

- SWCASA is working in primary schools using an American program 'Three kinds of touching'.
- Mallee Sexual Assault Unit provides joint school education programs with Victoria Police in the Mallee region.

GV CASA is presenting the 'Ditto's Adventure Prevention Program' in Day Care Centres, Kindergartens and Primary Schools. This is a fun, interactive, stage presentation that teaches young children the body signs that they are feeling unsafe or unsure and when that happens to tell an adult they can trust. The cast is Ditto a lion cub, who is like a movie world character, and a presenter. Whilst our focus is sexual assault, the messages are equally useful for children who are experiencing bullying or any other distress.

The children are given an activity book which reinforces the messages of the show. Teachers are encouraged to work through the book in school during the weeks following the presentation. The Ditto team provide an information pre-session for parents and teachers prior to presenting the show.

The program began operating in February 2006 and has been well accepted in schools and by parents across the West of the Hume Region. In the six months February to June 2009 the show played to 2458.

Dr Judy McHugh  
Manager, GVCASA

### **CASA FORUM WEBSITE**

The CASA Forum website has been expanded to include generic job opportunities at CASAs, a generic training and workshops section and an information pack for students.

The online survey had 242 responses. Most respondents are aged 19-55 (86 percent) and were from Australia (90 percent). For most respondents the survey was their first visit to the website (74 percent) and the majority were victim/survivors of sexual assault (62 percent).

There are plans for creating generic pages of text for all sites covering topics such as relevant legislation, what is a CASA and mandatory reporting criteria.

SECASA recently launched SECASAKids, MySpace and Facebook sites as well as having a presence in Yahoo Answers and Somazone. The purpose of the involvement with the social networking sites is to engage with young people whose main mode of communication is the internet.

Carolyn Worth  
Manager  
SECASA

## **MULTIDISCIPLINARY CENTRES FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT**

In the 2006-07 State Budget, the Victorian Government allocated \$34 million to a Sexual Assault Reform Package. This package built on the recommendations of the landmark 2004 Victorian Law Reform Commission report **Sexual Offences Law and Procedure**, and aimed to bring about reform across the criminal justice system.

As part of the Sexual Assault Reform Package, \$6 million was provided for the creation of two Multi Disciplinary Centres (MDC). One based at Frankston and one at Mildura. The aim of the MDCs is to facilitate responses to people who have experienced sexual assault to be able to get help in one location from a team of staff from different agencies.

These two MDCs have been in existence for almost four years and have proved to be extremely successful with close collaboration between Victoria Police, CASAs and the Department of Human Services. A new MDC is planned in collaboration with Barwon CASA.

Victoria Police commissioned a specific evaluation of the MDC by Deakin University which has not yet been made widely available. Feedback is that the MDC are seen as successful enabling victims to move between services in an effective and efficient manner.

## **EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

2009-2010 has had a strong emphasis on the Evaluation of projects and programs of services to victim/survivors of sexual assault. The Department of Justice released three evaluation reports undertaken by SuccessWorks on the

- Sexual Assault Reform Strategy Second Evaluation Report 2010
- Forensic Nurse Network Initiative – First Evaluation Progress Report
- Additional Voluntary Treatment Places for 15-17 year olds who engage in sexually abusive behaviour – First Evaluation Progress Report

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

- Family Violence Statewide Advisory Committee
- National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence
- Coroner's Reference Group on Family Violence
- CEASE

- Specialist Assessment Working Group
- AASW Special Interest Group
- Child Safety Commissioner Sector Consultation Group
- Workforce Development Reference Group
- Statewide Advisory Committee to Prevent Sexual Assault
- Victorian Women and Mental Health Network
- Victorian Police University Research Advisory Committee
- Department of Justice Crisis Response Working Group
- Framework and Practice Guidelines for Strengthening Risk Management Across the Integrated Family Violence Services Reference Group
- Advisory committee on the Development of Victims Charter – Disability Strategy
- Disability Resource Reference Group

## **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

CASAs provide Training and Community Education to numerous and varied audiences across the State. These audiences include:

- Universities
- Vic Police – Detective training  
- SOCIT training
- Department of Human Services Child Protection
- Education facilities
- Community groups
- Regional professional groups
- GP Divisions
- Health professionals

This year CASA Forum, The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) and the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA) continue to provide training to the Sexual Assault field across Victoria via the **Sexual Assault Work Force Development Project (SSAWD)**.

Essential Foundation and Advanced workshops continue to be run and a 12 month training calendar is provided to all services.

A Community Education Package is complete and will be available for general use as well as for CASA training programs in 2010-2011.

Evaluation conducted by Dr Suellen Murray RMIT is continuing with participant evaluation, follow up interviews after 3 months, focus groups and evaluation by managers and senior clinicians. This program is also being evaluated by SuccessWorks as part of the wider evaluation of the Sexual Assault Reform Strategy.

Topics covered in the workshops have included:

- The legal system
- creative therapies
- train the trainer
- traumatic attachment and brain development
- working with people with complex mental health issues
- working with CALD communities
- disability and sexual assault
- working with children
- working with mothers and daughters
- working with Aboriginal communities
- working with adult male victims
- CASA Forum Research and Clinical Practice

## RESEARCH

Collaborative research projects undertaken or being considered this year include:

- ARC linkage Project with Human Rights and Bioethics Monash University  
Liz Bishop – in discussion phase – yet to commence
- Review of Current CASA publications  
CASA Forum sub-committee
- ACCSA:  
“Giving Voice to Victim/Survivors’ Knowledge of Sexual Offending”  
The impact of ethnic identity on the effects of childhood sexual abuse for women over 18 in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane: University of South Australia.
- South Australian Research – impact of sexual assault on women, CASA victim/survivors to participate.
- Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault: Conceptualising feminist practice – comparison of CASA activity across the decade 1998/9 – 2008/09
- With Department of Social Work Monash University – Robin Mason
- DHS Masters Student: Snapshot survey of Crisis Care services provided in CASA over 2 month period in 2009.

- Towards understanding of children and young people (10 – 15) who exhibit SAB. The implementation of TTO in Victoria. Gatehouse Centre Vicki Quinton and Swinburne University.
- CASA Mapping with Child Protection and Victoria Police re EFT and Outreach locations.
- Women’s Centre for Health Matters ACT – best practice in partnerships and joint training between domestic violence, sexual assault and disabilities sectors with CASA Forum.
- Living Safer Sexual Lives: Respectful Relationships funded by FaHCSIA for people with an Intellectual Disability at the Australian Research Centre in Sexual Health and Society. Latrobe University – Patsie Frawley with CASAs
- “Gender Leadership and Social Sustainability (GLASS)” Research Unit Monash University, Department of Social Work round table discussion.
- The Use of Social Networking Sites to Facilitate Disclosure of Sexual Assault – SECASA. Australian Catholic University, Quality of Life and Social Justice Research Centre
- Demographic Data Adolescent Displaying Sexually Abusive Behaviours. A Comparison of Therapeutic Treatment Orders and Voluntary Placements. SECASA. RMIT Social Work

## **THE MEDIA**

CASA Forum has had a very busy year liaising with a responding to requests from many media outlets throughout Victoria (and Australia).

Over 30 media outlets have contacted the CASA Forum this year including

- Herald Sun
- The Sunday Herald Sun
- The Age
- The Sunday Age
- Border Mail
- New Idea
- Madison Magazine
- Melbourne Leader
- Advertiser
- MX News
- Sunraysia Daily

- ABC Radio
- 3AW
- JJJ
- RRR
- Joy FM
- SEN Sport
- SBS Insight
- Ch 10

Topics included court outcomes and appeals, drink spiking, the arts, government policy and legislation, recent abductions, general information, community attitudes to sexual assault, football codes and media outlet responses to sexual assault.

### **DATA COLLECTION:**

All CASA are now recording their data on the DHS IRIS program. Data collected included client data, assault data, clinical work practices data and service provision. This has enabled DHS to pull together Annual Sexual Assault Services data for Victoria.

CASA Managers had a IRIS joint information and training day to improve service responses to this data collection.