



Newsletter

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From the Director

The homicides of three small children at Logan, followed by the homicides of two children and their grandfather in Sydney shocked the nation (though seemingly fleetingly). Their deaths were reported widely as terrible tragedies and, seeing the heartrending news reports of the events and the children's devastated mothers, people asked "why—how could a father do this to any child, least of all his own?". Their questions largely went unanswered, because these events were reported in the media merely as isolated, tragic events with little or no analysis of the relationship between these incidents and the many that have preceded them—that is, men's violence against women and children with whom they have an intimate relationship and purport to love. This violence is about power and control and often when women take action to end the violence, such as by ending the relationship, the violence increases in efforts to retain, or regain control. Sometimes, and too often, this violence extends to murder. These murders are not simply isolated tragic events but the extreme end of a continuum of violence and abuse. When these dynamics are evident in foreign relations, such as between the USA and Iraq, it is called terrorism. In my view domestic violence is no less terrorist activity, albeit in a less formalised context. This domestic form of terrorism also often involves the suicide of the partner.

Between 1 July 1989 and 30 June 2002, there were on average 77 intimate partner homicides in Australia. The majority (75%) of these cases involved men killing women. Other research, (Johnson and Hotton, 2003; Hotton, 2001; Wilson and Daly, 1993; and Wallace, 1986), including previous research in Australia, identifies that women who have separated are at higher risk of homicide. Mouzos' and Rushforth's study reported that "a quarter of the intimate partner homicides occurred between separated, former or divorced couples (and) 84 per cent involved women as victims". They also found that for the 13-year period covered in their study, Australian parents killed 25 children, on average, each year. Sixty-three per cent of the child killers were the child's fathers. In three out of five cases the motive was not determined. Where known, however, the most prevalent motives were 'domestic altercation' (21%) and family separation (9%). Mouzos and Rushforth also alert us to recent New South Wales research findings that family breakdown was a precipitating factor in almost one in five child killings. It is clear that where violence in the relationship exists, women and children are at risk of homicide whether the couple remain in the relationship or separate.

Apart from the prevalence of these domestic homicides (three every fortnight) in Australia, one of the most chilling reminders is that men who kill their partners and children are not much different from other abusive men—they just go a step further.

Staff of the QCPDFV extend our sincere condolences to the families and friends of those who have been killed in such circumstances and call on the whole community, and men in particular, to challenge even apparently minor forms of abuse of women and children.

References

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Statewide Domestic and Family Violence Database Begins

On 1 October 2003, domestic and family violence prevention services across Queensland began participating in an ongoing data collection strategy co-ordinated by the QCPDFV, in collaboration with the Department of Families and domestic and family violence service networks. The state-wide strategy involves 27 government-funded, community-based support services systematically collecting information from clients that will be stored and collated in a centralised database at the QCPDFV.

The database will be used to generate monthly statistical summaries to monitor trends in the use of Queensland's domestic and family violence legislation and funded support services. Amendments to the legislation, which commenced on 10 March 2003, extend the State's civil legislative protection against domestic and family violence beyond the spousal and spousal-like relationships that have been covered since 1989. People affected by violence in some dating relationships, informal care relationships, and family relationships are now also protected under the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989*.

Monthly statistical summaries of the statewide client data will be available on the Centre's website. The summaries will include total number of new domestic and family violence matters for the month; percentage of female, male and transgender clients; ethnicity and main language spoken at home; number of children in various age groups exposed to domestic and family violence; type of relationship involved in the matter; and percentage of matters reported to police.

The monthly statistical summaries and specific queries on the database will enable the QCPDFV and other stakeholders to monitor trends in access to domestic and family violence prevention services, and use of the legislation. The evidence available through the database, and further research generated by observable trends, will contribute to future legislative, policy and program development. The Centre's Newsletter will also include a quarterly summary and analysis of the data, beginning in the December issue.

In addition to this data collection the Department of Families will co-ordinate the data collected by government agencies including the Queensland Police Service, Department of Justice and Legal Aid Queensland. A significant feature of the QCPDFV database is the collection of information that is not available through any other source, such as court data, which will be an important contribution to understanding people affected by domestic and family violence who use domestic and family violence prevention services, but who do not access legal intervention. Further, much of the data collated by the QCPDFV, such as number and ages of children exposed to domestic and family violence and number of clients affected by various disabilities, is simply not collected by any other agency, anywhere in Australia.

After extensive consultation and pilot testing of the final 13 items and format for the database, Centre staff provided workshop training around the State. The computer based approach to data storage, statistical analysis and the electronic transfer of data from services to the Centre will enable large amounts of data to be collected, summarised and distributed quickly.

For further information about the Domestic and Family Violence Database visit the Centre's website at www.noviolence.com.au.

Heather Nancarrow at the first of 15 training sessions around the State, involving 24 domestic and family violence services.



Queensland Magistrates' Attitudes to Domestic Violence

A summary by Michelle Bradford

In 2000, Rachael Field and Belinda Carpenter from QUT's School of Justice Studies undertook Queensland's first research into Magistrates' attitudes to domestic violence. Belinda Carpenter presented the research findings at the DVCAN conference in June 2003. The following is a summary of Rachael and Belinda's conference paper titled **"Issues Relating to Queensland Magistrates' Understanding of Domestic Violence"**.

The research used a survey instrument that was a modified version of the 1998 NSW Judicial Commission's survey of NSW Magistrates. All of Queensland's 96 Magistrates and Acting Magistrates were invited to respond to the survey. 38 surveys were returned, indicating a response rate of 40%.

Of the Magistrates who responded, nine were women (out of the twelve women Magistrates in Queensland) and 28 were male (out of the remaining 84 Magistrates). With respect to age, almost half of the respondents were aged between 51-60 years and another 36.8% were aged between 41-50 years. 47% of respondent Magistrates spent more than half of their time in metropolitan courts and 42% spent more than half of their time in country courts. Further, Magistrates estimated that between 5-40% of court time was spent on domestic violence protection orders.

Several very significant themes and issues emerged from the analysis of the surveys:

1. "Magistrates believe they are adequately trained to deal with domestic violence issues.
2. Magistrates view domestic violence as a dispute between the parties that can be addressed appropriately by informal dispute resolution processes such as counselling and mediation.
3. Magistrates believe that women are using domestic violence proceedings as a tactic in family law matters.
4. Magistrates are reluctant to issue ouster orders except in cases of severe physical violence.
5. Magistrates are concerned about the workload associated with domestic violence matters.
6. Magistrates have a limited understanding of issues of domestic violence for Indigenous women.
7. Magistrates support the work of police in the area of domestic violence – particularly police prosecutors.
8. Magistrates are wary of too much community contact believing this to decrease their objectivity.
9. Magistrates consider their judicial role crucial in their dealings with domestic violence cases" (Field & Carpenter 2003 p3).

Belinda Carpenter's conference presentation expanded on two of these issues in some detail: "first, Magistrates' belief that women are using domestic violence proceedings as a tactic in family law matters; and second, Magistrates' reluctance to issue ouster orders except in cases of severe physical violence" (Field & Carpenter 2003 p4).

71% of respondent Magistrates expressed the belief that "they are adequately trained to deal with domestic violence matters, with many citing life experiences as more important than legal training in this regard" (Field & Carpenter 2003 p4).

71% of respondent Magistrates expressed the belief that "they are adequately trained to deal with domestic violence matters".

74% of Magistrates agreed with the survey's statement: "*Domestic Violence Protection Orders* are often used by applicants in Family Court proceedings as a tactic to aid their case and deprive their partner from contact with the children."

Many Magistrates maintained that women were often advised by their solicitors to apply for protection orders, implying that these applicants may be fabricating or embellishing incidents of domestic violence in order to create disadvantage for their ex-partner in the Family Court.

Magistrates' comments included:

"...My solicitor told me to take out a DV order, is often heard."

"...Parties at times even admit to the above and often they take the above action on the advice of their solicitors. This makes it hard for the genuine cases to gain credibility in the eyes of the court and should be discouraged."

"In my experience the DV Court is abused often on the advice of solicitors, to obtain leverage in Family Law Court – many applications are withdrawn or not pursued with Family Court hearings being finalised before a DV hearing has been determined."

"...This is always in my mind – ulterior motives re: contact and residency" (Field & Carpenter 2003 p4-6).

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These views run contrary to findings from research into family court files and with women. Melville and Hunter (2001) examined a total of 176 family court files and found 95 files (54%) to contain evidence of domestic violence. Of these, 38% reflected cases where a protection order had *not* been obtained. The researchers concluded that:

'Women are often reluctant to take out protection orders and consider such action to be a last resort'

(Field & Carpenter 2003: 7)

"...In cases where domestic violence is an issue, women may in fact be reluctant to take out protection orders. Further, there is a lack of empirical evidence to suggest that women believe that allegations of domestic violence provide an advantage in family law proceedings, or that they fabricate allegations to gain tactical advantage" (Field & Carpenter 2003 p7).

Field and Carpenter refer to other studies that "have found that women are often reluctant to take out protection orders and consider such action to be a last resort" (Field & Carpenter 2003 p7).

The 1996 changes to the *Family Law Act* made provisions for the court to consider domestic and family violence relevant to determining the best interests of children. Despite recent growing acknowledgement within the court that children are deleteriously affected by domestic and family violence, women continue to express a range of reasons for their reluctance in using domestic violence as a tactical issue in the family court proceedings:

- Historical and current evidence that the legal system in fact often discounts or excludes evidence of domestic violence and "the Family Court often does not give proper weight to the existence and effects of violence"
- Practices where the court has made orders for residence or contact "even when future violence was a real possibility"
- Family Reports (which assist the court to determine best interests of the child) often understate allegations of domestic violence and do not fully examine the violence in terms of its dynamics, effects on children and women
- The court's failure to consistently recognise and appropriately respond to clients affected by violence sends a message that "violence is not important, and that there are no serious legal consequences in the Family Court context for perpetrators of violence"
- The Family Court's prioritising of the principle of children's rights to regular contact with both parents over the child's interests to be protected from the effects of ongoing violence from their parent. This prioritisation effectively silences women on issues of violence. *"...Women who raise the issues of violence in proceedings risk appearing as though they are not prioritising the rights of the children to contact with the other parent. They also risk appearing difficult and uncooperative, issues which potentially impact on their credibility in proceedings in terms of their being a parent with whom it is in the best interests of the child to reside"* (Field & Carpenter 2003 p10-11).

The *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989* provides for a condition to be placed on a protection order "which prohibits the perpetrator from remaining in, entering (or attempting to enter) or approaching within a stated distance of, a particular premises". These orders are known as Ouster Orders.

The survey asked the Magistrate respondents "Do you feel comfortable ousting a violent person from their home?" 79% of Magistrates responded in the affirmative to this question. However, Magistrates accompanying comments indicated that an ouster order would only be considered when:

- The violence is sufficiently severe or "bad enough"
- The respondent is present and heard by the court when the order is made
- There is an absence of suitable alternative accommodation for the applicant and children

The problems in this approach are numerous and obvious. Firstly, circumstances where there is evidence of physical violence and a continuing danger to the woman are "precisely those circumstances in which ouster orders are likely to be most inappropriate" (Field & Carpenter 2003 p15). Where a woman is frightened for the physical safety of herself and her children, she is more likely to need the security and safety of refuge accommodation.

Secondly, requiring a perpetrator to be present in the court potentially encourages him to deny or minimise the violence in order to stay in his home – thereby failing to encourage the perpetrator to take responsibility for his violence.

Thirdly, the availability of refuge accommodation becomes a disincentive for making ouster orders and supports the view that women are responsible for ending the violence by leaving the family home.

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“...Women who raise the issues of violence in proceedings risk appearing as though they are not prioritising the rights of the children...”

(Field & Carpenter 2003 p10-11)

Field and Carpenter (2003 p14) assert “the reality of the misogyny that is present in the men’s rights lobby must be acknowledged as a strong force in promoting the myth that women are using domestic violence for tactical advantage in the Family Court”. These and other myths that support “the societal and legal assumptions that perpetuate a culture of violence against women” appear to be in play in some Magistrates’ positions. “Such attitudes serve

to markedly decrease the justice available for women who are victims of domestic violence”. (Field & Carpenter 2003 p23) Therefore, despite Magistrates’ assertions that they are adequately trained to deal with matters of domestic violence, the evidence suggests that justice for victims of domestic violence would be improved by raising awareness within the Magistracy through more and specific training.

References

Melville, A. & Hunter R. 2001, “As everybody knows: countering myths of gender bias in family law”, *Griffith Law Review*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 124–127.

Visiting Scholar—Associate Professor Kathleen Daly 10–12 November 2003

The Centre is delighted to be hosting a visit from Associate Professor Kathleen (Kathy) Daly. We would like to thank the Faculty of Arts, Health and Sciences for facilitating Kathy’s visit to CQU Mackay Campus, through the Visiting Scholars’ Program.

Kathy is Associate Professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Griffith University in Brisbane, and Director of a Program on Restorative Justice. She is a member of the Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance, and the Socio-Legal Research Centre, Griffith University. She is also Vice-President of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology (ANZSOC), and was Program Chair and Co-Convenor for the 2002 Annual Meeting of ANZSOC in Brisbane.

Originally from the United States, she received her PhD in Sociology from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst in 1983. Between 1982 and 1995 she held posts at State University of New York, Yale University and University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. In 1995, Kathy was awarded a Senior Fulbright Scholarship to work with John Braithwaite at the Australian National University (ANU) and was based in the ANU’s Law Program in the Research School of Social Sciences, before taking up her current position at Griffith University in June 1996.

Kathy is an international expert in intersectional analyses of gender/race in the field of criminology. Her research experience and areas of expertise is of particular interest to those interested in:

- gendered crimes such as domestic violence and sexual assault;
- the relationship between race, crime and justice responses – or as Daly asks “How do we do justice in unequal societies?”; and
- the emergence of ‘new justice’ processes as an alternative to the formal criminal justice system.

She has authored (or co-authored) two books, three edited collections, and 50 articles in journals, edited collections, and law reviews. She has written on sentencing, prostitution, media and crime, feminist and anti-racist challenges to criminology, domestic violence, women and gender in crime and the criminal justice system, and most recently, restorative justice. She published an edited collection (with Lisa Maher), *Criminology at the Crossroads: Feminist Readings in Crime and Justice* (1998) and is editor of *Crime and Justice: An Australian Textbook in Criminology* (2003) (with Andrew Goldsmith and Mark Israel of Flinders University). She received the Michael J. Hindelang award in 1995 from the American Society of Criminology for her book, *Gender, Crime and, Punishment* (Yale University Press 1994) and a Teaching Commendation for Excellence in the Supervision of Honours and Higher Degree Research Students from Griffith University in 2002.

During her visit, Kathy will present a paper on Restorative Justice and Sexual Assault, which arises from her research on the South Australian Juvenile Justice Project. This presentation will be video-linked to various sites around the state. For further information about community video-link sites, please email enquiries@noviolence.com.au, or check our website for details at the end of October.

Caregiver Abuse: Power and Control of People with Intellectual Disabilities

Michelle Moss, Specialist Services Advisor, Department of Families

Empowerment, self-determination, informed choice, and a life free from abuse are the underpinning principles of service provision within the disability sector. However, for some people with intellectual disabilities, this is not always the reality of their life experiences. For some people with intellectual disabilities, the relationships they have with people in their lives is one based upon power and control. The vulnerability of this client group is widely recognised, and has significant impact upon their life experiences, and this vulnerability is heightened where ever an individual requires support to be able to function in their daily lives. The nature of the dynamics of the caregiver – person with a disability relationship can be based upon an unequal balance of power. Caregiver abuse occurs when people choose to use this power in an abusive way. The Duluth Model of the Power and Control Wheel (see page 8) provides a effective framework to be able to understand caregiver abuse. The model has been adapted to examine the behaviours that caregivers use to maintain power and control. Service provision to people with intellectual disabilities has changed and evolved over the years. Previous models and approaches to caring for people with intellectual disabilities may have advocated and instructed staff and caregivers to utilise punitive and abusive methods. However, the human rights movement has ensured that we are all working towards supporting people with intellectual disabilities to achieve empowerment, self-determination, and informed choice. It is therefore essential that we continue to challenge practices and ensure that we are working towards supporting people to live free from abuse.

International research has highlighted the alarming statistics about the abuse of people with intellectual disabilities. Because of the nature of people's disability, they require people to be part of their lives to provide support and 'care' in many areas. Statistics suggest that caregivers are the highest offenders of abuse of people with intellectual disabilities. Baladerian (1991) found that 97-99% of abusers are known and trusted by the victim who has developmental disabilities. While in 32% of cases, abusers consisted of family members or acquaintances, in 44% of the cases studied, the abuser had a relationship to the victim that specifically related to the person's disability. For example, residential care staff, transportation providers and personal care attendants. Sobsey's research (1994) also supports this, finding that only 7% of sexual abuse of people with disabilities is perpetrated by strangers.

People with intellectual disabilities require support in many aspects of their lives, from preparing meals, accessing the community, personal hygiene, transportation, even putting on some music. Often this support is provided by many different people and many different service providers, which increases people's vulnerability and the access and opportunities for offenders. However, by having many different people in one's life can also have a positive effect as more people have the opportunity to notice any changes in behaviour or warning signs of abuse. Whilst every measure may be taken to ensure that the relationship between the caregiver and the person with an intellectual disability is based upon equality and empowerment, the reality is that power differentials exist. The underlying factor is whether caregivers are using their power 'with' or 'over' the person with an intellectual disability. Often because of people's lack of training, experience and their own values and beliefs, power 'over' is the approach that some caregivers take. This takes the form of physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse, and neglect.

Language is a very powerful tool, and can provide us with insight into people's values and beliefs, and practices. In working with caregivers in various settings, highlighting the use of language is an important starting point. The issues of power and control appear to be significant when examining the language of caregivers. Words such as 'command', 'make them', 'allow', 'comply' and 'tell them what to do', are used frequently when talking about people with intellectual disabilities. By 'allowing' people to do something implies control to 'not allow' them to do something. These words are used in many different contexts such as 'I command the person to sit in their chair and wait until everyone has finished eating', or 'I allow them to watch Home and Away if they have been good and done all of their chores'. Some caregivers have a lack of understanding and training about their role, while others choose to ignore the fact that they are supporting adults with intellectual disabilities.

The Power and Control Wheel as developed by Duluth, Minnesota has proved an effective tool to examine the abusive behaviours and tactics that are used by perpetrators within a domestic violence relationship. The wheel has been adapted for use in training as a tool to give caregivers an opportunity to critically examine their practice and gain understanding about the ways in which they use these tactics to maintain power and control.

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The reality for people with intellectual disabilities is that they continue to experience abuse in their lives, most often perpetrated by the people who they know and trust. The vulnerability of people with intellectual disabilities ensues that caregivers are the group with most access and most opportunity. It is essential that we recognise the nature of this relationship, and understand the dynamics of power and control which exist, and continue to work towards ensuring that caregivers demonstrate power 'with' rather than power 'over.'

References

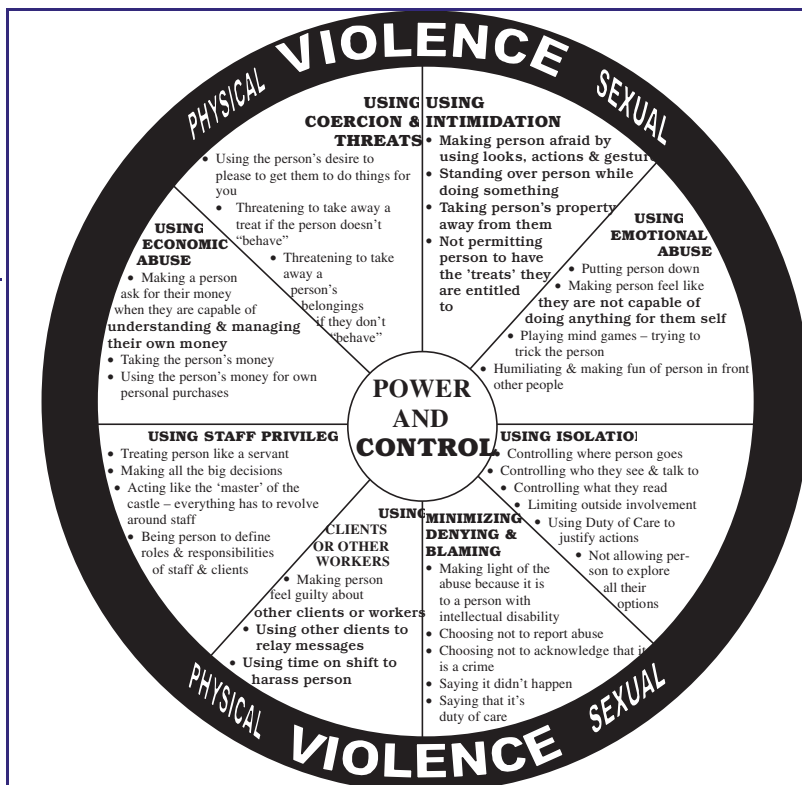
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Sobsey, D. (1994) Violence and Abuse in the Lives of People with Disabilities: The End of Silent Acceptance. Paul. H. Brookes Publishing Co. Maryland, USA.

The Roeher Institute, (1994) Violence and People with Disabilities: A Review the Literature. National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, Family Violence Prevention Division, Health Canada.

(right)
The Duluth Model of the Power and Control Wheel



The Queensland Centre for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence ('the Centre') welcomes articles from guest contributors. Publication of the articles will be at the discretion of the Director of the Centre. Views expressed in published guest contributions are not necessarily the views of the Centre.

Indigenous Summit on Family Violence

**Jackie Huggins, Co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia
Member, QCPDFV Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Reference Group**

The statistics on Indigenous Family Violence have been quoted so often, they sometimes seem to have lost their impact on the Australian community. In the last few months, however, it would seem that for the first time, national attention is being paid to the horror of Indigenous family violence in this country. For the first time, an Australian Prime Minister has held a summit in the national capital to listen to concerns and ideas on this issue from a group of Indigenous leaders.

This spark of national interest came after an address at the National Press Club in Canberra a couple of months ago by Professor Mick Dodson, a fellow director from Reconciliation Australia. In essence, Professor Dodson's speech incorporated three key messages about Indigenous family violence:

1. That violence has reached epidemic proportions in Indigenous communities, so entrenched that child victims become perpetrators themselves in a cycle that is destroying our people.
2. That this violence was never a part of Aboriginal culture and that any suggestion it was, or is, constitutes either a desperate excuse by perpetrators or else a shameful cop-out by those who continue to look on while this scourge is killing fellow Australians each and every day.
3. That only strong, committed leadership, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, across the nation, can turn the situation around.

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The media responded to Professor Dodson's speech as though these desperate calls had not been made before by Indigenous women who, in reality, have been raising the alarm for decades.

In hosting the 23 July summit at Parliament House, the Prime Minister offered the possibility of a fresh start.

While there were clearly some problems associated with the organisation of such a meeting, including difficulties in achieving appropriate representation on the Indigenous side, the meeting provided a chance for both sides to show leadership.

Following the summit, a small group was formed to put together a paper for the Prime Minister to take to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in late August. The paper acknowledged the influence of alcohol and drugs, a factor which has been given great emphasis by the Prime Minister and within the national media.

However, the role of history and the legacy of dispossession were also identified, as they should be, and suggestions were put forward about how jurisdictions needed to address violence in a holistic manner if long-term solutions are to be found.

It was deeply disappointing that the COAG meeting was aborted by State and Territory leaders before delegates had the opportunity to discuss the issue of Indigenous family violence. We can only hope that the postponement will be used to good effect so that serious, well-considered action can be taken when the leaders next meet in November.

In applying what we call the "Reconciliation Test", it is essential that words and positions are backed up with solid action to improve the lives of Indigenous Australians. In relation to Indigenous family violence, these actions must be founded on real resources – and not resources which have been taken from existing, effective projects in this area.

The Commonwealth's \$20 million "downpayment" is a welcome first step. It is not satisfactory if the Western Australian Government's allocation following the Gordon Inquiry continues to stand alone as the benchmark State response.

The Prime Minister must continue to take the leadership on this issue and support the development of a comprehensive, nationwide response to a problem which continues to worsen across the country and which represents a horror for fellow citizens that is wholly unacceptable to the Australian people.

Workshops, Conferences and Date Claimers

4 October

Australian Family Association National Conference

Adelaide, SA

Further details: Mark Posa

Tel: (08) 8379 0246

Email: nccafa@picknowl.com.au

14 October

Violence Against Women with Disabilities Project

Melbourne, Vic

Further details: DVIRC, Melbourne

Tel: (03) 9486 9866

15 October

World Rural Women's Day

Temora, NSW

Web: www.rural-womens-day.org/origin.html

18–26 October

National Children's Week

Further details: email qld@childrensweek.com.au

20–23 October

Third Australasian Women and Policing Conference: Women and Policing Globally

Canberra, ACT

Web: www.aic.gov.au/conferences/policewomen3/

22–23 October

Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow—Gippsland Family Violence Conference

Sale, Vic

Further details: Sarah Corbell

Tel: (03) 5143 1600

Email: fvnetworker@gwhealth.asn.au

23–24 October

INNOVATION: Promising Practices for Victims and Witnesses in the Criminal Justice System

Canberra, ACT

Further details: The Office of the Victims of Crime Coordinator

Tel: (02) 6217 4381

Fax: (02) 6217 4501

Email: jane.caruana@act.gov

24–27 November

9th Australasian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect

Sydney, NSW

Further details: Jeanette Morgan, NSW DoCS

Tel: (02) 9209 6229

Fax: (02) 9209 6233

Email: jeanette.morgan@community.nsw.gov.au

Web: www.community.nsw.gov.au/acan/

25 November

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

Website: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/news/vawd.html

25 November

'End of Equality' Book Launch (Anne Summers)

Brisbane, Qld

Phone: (07) 3217 2405

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault International Conference

Michelle Bradford

Centre Director, Heather Nancarrow and Education Officer, Michelle Bradford recently attended the second International Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Conference at the Gold Coast. Organised and hosted by the Combined Women's Crisis Services Gold Coast Inc., the conference was attended by over 500 people.

A number of keynote addresses and training sessions emphasised the importance and value of a strong, co-ordinated criminal justice responses to domestic violence. San Diego's model of treating domestic violence as a serious crime through pro-arrest policies and evidence-based prosecution (with or without the victim's participation), was showcased as an approach that has contributed to the reduction of domestic homicides in San Diego by some 75% over ten years.

In presenting this model, San Diego City Attorney Casey Gwinn, outlined a broader context that included coordinated responses from those providing policing, prosecutorial, medical, forensic, para-legal, welfare, housing, counselling, advocacy and protective (child and adult) services. From a single location, San Diego's Family Justice Centre provides these services to adults and children experiencing domestic violence.

The principles and priorities underpinning the San Diego model include:

- Making victims safer
- Holding abusers accountable – accountability can be defined by culture, eg: faith, professionals, criminal justice, restorative justice etc
- Stopping and preventing the violence (and measuring whether this works)
- Never letting a victim die in vain (reviewing and learning from the events leading to the death)
- Making misdemeanours (low level violence) matter.

The approach seeks to contribute to primary prevention of domestic violence through challenging cultural norms; educating the community; re-educating society and breaking the cycle of inter-generational violence with children.

Other presentations from members of the San Diego delegation focused on: Investigation and prosecution of strangulation cases (by Assistant City Attorney, Gael Strack and emergency physician, Associate Professor Dr George McClane); Drug facilitated sexual assault, and Recognising and responding to sexual assault (by retired Detective Sergeant Joanne Archambault).

Jackie Huggins, Co-chair of Reconciliation Australia, Chair of the Queensland Domestic Violence Council and member of the Centre's Indigenous reference group, presented the conference's opening keynote address, titled "Now or Never. Our chance to tackle Indigenous Family Violence". Jackie's address challenged service providers and policy makers to consider the implications of imposing a standardised pro-arrest criminal justice response to family violence on members of Indigenous communities. She counselled on the potential threats such an approach would create for an already disempowered and traumatised culture; and on the wisdom of recognising the diversity of contexts in which Indigenous family violence occurs.

Further keynote addresses focused on: Same sex violence (Dr Lori Girshick); Feminist critique of the willingness of mainstream psychology to be used in the justification of men's violence (Dr Betty McLellan); Family Law reform (Associate Professor Ruth Busch); and Policing domestic violence and sexual assault (Queensland Police Commissioner, Bob Aitkinson).

Numerous presentations were delivered concurrently over the three days, which showcased a wide variety of partnerships, practice models, resources and innovative programs related to domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

Training sessions focusing on a broad range of domestic and family violence and sexual assault practice interventions, investigative strategies and community strategies were also conducted concurrently across the three days.

The conference proved to be an invaluable opportunity for networking, learning about various practice and prevention models and connecting with those who continue to confront the challenges of responding to domestic violence and sexual assault.

'World Congress' on Family Violence, Prague

Ines Zuchowski, NQDVRs

Ines Zuchowski is a social worker employed at the North Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Service as a Resource/ Support Worker. She has been working in the position since 1994 and a large focus of her work is focussed on developing and presenting violence prevention programs.

In June I attended the alternative program organized in Prague after the World Congress on Family Violence was cancelled. The program consisted of two days of condensed and intensive presentations on a wide range of topics relating to Family Violence and two days of agency visits. It was an exhausting, but inspiring program that went without interruptions as people held short 15 or 30 minute presentations about topics they had initially thought to present full workshops about.

Two of the presentations I particularly found helpful for my work were presentations about a peer education model to violence prevention in a small Canadian Town. Lynda Laushway, the program co ordinator presented the model and talked about issues of practice and lessons learned. The second presentation was by Judith Stevenson, the independent program evaluator. 500 Canadian students have so far participated in this whole school program dealing with a combination of personal growth, anti-violence and healthy relationships issues. The objective of the program is to engage all students in series of 12 workshops per year through peer education. Features of the program include the use of young people as male/ female co-facilitators, training, support, guidance and payment of the peer educators and a parallel research and education project. Gender is one of the issues that didn't fall off the agenda and the young people engaged to present the program are also involved in developing further ideas and resources.

The program is in its third year and early results of the research and evaluation project show that only now, after three years of consistent education sessions to the whole school population, there is strong coherent data emerging showing a statistically significant improvement on the outcomes for young people participating in the program. Positives outcomes are achieved for both the young people who are taught the materials, but also the peer educators, who for example, speak how the process of presenting the type of information has challenged and enhanced their own behaviour and relationships. I think that this is definitely a program to watch out for and look for options of transferability.

The agency visits were all interesting, one worrying fact was that women seeking help from women's shelters often have no other housing options available to them due to high private rental costs in Prague, combined with low income. It also seemed that the police did not really see violence against women as an area they should be involved in. I enjoyed visiting a Wellness Centre for older people in Prague, that seemed to not only provide activities and social opportunities and access to services for older citizens, but saw its role in social engagement and addressing issues such as violence.

The Prague experience- feminist perspectives are still relevant.

Associate Professor Helen Waite, Senior Research Fellow, QCPDFV, CQU

Due to an enormous amount of work and goodwill on the part of several terrific people from the Czech Republic, the *Exchange Experience...solution sharing to prevent family violence* in Prague was held June 21-24 in place of the cancelled Second World Congress on Family Violence. Despite the late alterations to this event, there were speakers and participants from over 30 countries, including around 20 from Australia. The 4 days of presentations and site visits provided a wonderful interdisciplinary and multicultural learning opportunity for practitioners and researchers from governmental and non-governmental agencies. The topics covered a very extensive range of areas including health care, education, law, child and adult protection, social services, policy, human rights advocacy and public health. The exploration of the different dimensions of family violence and the diversity of the theoretical perspectives in the presentations were definitely some of the most valuable and exciting aspects of the conference for me. There was a good mixture and balance of papers dealing with education strategies, service provision and theoretical understandings of family violence. The influence of feminist theories and practices was strong and apparent in many, many of the 'sharings', often in combination with either a health or human rights framework

One of the first keynote addresses was an outstanding presentation by 4 of the people from Melbourne working on the integrated response to family violence for Victoria. It certainly set the scene for the numerous examples during the conference, of what can be achieved across sectors and disciplines when there is sufficient political will. The significant number of researchers working in the area of elder abuse indicates how well advanced this area is, particularly by some gerontologists from Europe and the US. Contact with these people will be particularly useful from the point of view of the broader domestic violence legislation in Queensland.

It was also really inspiring for this older woman to see the number of younger people committed to taking up the immense tasks of violence prevention. The passion of Aisha Gill, a young woman from the Centre for Social Justice, Coventry, United Kingdom, particularly impressed me. Her presentation, "Challenging Silence:



'Kino', the interesting movie theatre venue for the conference in Prague. Not seen in this shot were over one hundred participants!

South Asian Women Talking About Domestic Violence' discussed how the

meanings and experiences of domestic violence can 'look different' when seen from the perspective of South Asian women and how particular social, cultural and historical contexts shape their experiences.

Her research on honour killings and domestic violence demonstrated the importance of understanding the concept of 'honour' from a non-European perspective. She argued that while the honour of the group can be gender neutral in a community context, domestically it is male kin who are the custodians of family honour and that frequently honour killings and domestic violence are not considered by community members as violence against women. In addition she emphasised ethical issues such as the need for a participatory research approach when establishing services for women from minority cultural groups to ensure services were developed from the needs of

the women rather than the needs of the services or funding organisations.

Another theoretically challenging research presentation was on 'Sexism, male gender role stress and violence' by Bonnie Robinson from Pittsburg. Her study of 261 men in batterer treatment programs, demonstrated the importance of finding ways to reliably test feminist based assumptions about the origins and expression of male violence in the field. She called for increased collaboration among feminist researchers and theorists and those working on masculinities. Her main conclusion concerned the practical value of combining the theoretical insights from work on masculinities with existing feminist theory in order to improve feminist theories and understandings of male violence and therefore more effective interventions with men.

Another high quality presentation that was especially informative also focussed on perpetrators, 'The effectiveness of programs for men who batter: what do the outcomes studies tell us' by Daniel Saunders, a professor of social work, from Michigan. Through a synthesis of the now extensive research literature, he classified all the programs according to six sets of basic assumptions, from skills training based on social learning assumptions to trauma based approaches founded on the belief that men need to resolve their childhood traumas. Some are clearly derived from feminist assumptions and others were not. The conclusions from his comprehensive analysis included the following:

- There is a high attrition rate in most programs
- There are few studies with rigorous methodologies
- There is an over reliance on official records of recidivism as the main measure of the success of the program
- The lack of rigour means no firm conclusions about effectiveness can yet be made.
- The highest priority needs to be the reliable identification and tracking of the most dangerous offenders.

However, perhaps the most controversial conclusion was his final comment that the best hope for ending violence against women is from primary prevention strategies and not perpetrator programs.

Finally, the most emotionally moving session for me was the presentation by Lois Herman that included a 20 minute video on the Silent Witness International Initiative. The video shows the extraordinarily powerful but simple strategy of constructing and displaying life sized red wooden figures of women who have been murdered by their partners. The figures with a breastplate shield of the woman's name and her story, are used in public places in ways that honour the woman's life. The program operates in all 50 states of the US, and in 40 countries, as a strategy for data collection on domestic homicides as well as to raise awareness in local communities and amongst national politicians of the extent of domestic violence. This session really expressed the sense of hope that was present in many of the presentations throughout the conference. That hope frequently drew on the feminist commitment to greater respect and justice for women everywhere. I greatly appreciated the opportunity to be part of this almost overwhelming experience in a stunning city with perfect weather.

Note: For a comprehensive list of papers and presenters for this conference please go to the Centre's website.



(right) Assoc Prof Helen Waite presenting her paper on Social Capital and Family Violence in Prague, June 2003

About this Newsletter

In our quarterly newsletter we will be encouraging you to participate by contributing to the various sections. If you have any information that our statewide readers may want/need to know (eg events, updates, research, projects, comments) please contact us at the Centre.

If you would like to be included on our mailing list for this newsletter, please ring Aithne on (07) 4940 7834, or email a.archibald@cqu.edu.au. Also let us know the most convenient way (email or print) for you to receive the Queensland Centre for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence Newsletter. Please tell others about the newsletter and invite them to subscribe. We are happy for you to reproduce and distribute this newsletter.

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