



From the Director

One of the greatest challenges for state-wide organisations in Queensland is being able to provide genuine opportunities for our diverse communities to participate in our organisations' activities. This should include participation in planning, identifying emerging issues, and prioritising actions. The QCPDFV is highly committed to inclusion of people across the State and who represent diverse geographic, cultural, professional perspectives. I commend the founding members of the QCPDFV for instituting the three Advisory Groups that inform and support the Centre's three key functions: research, education and evaluation. The Advisory Groups, each with membership including academics, policy-makers and practitioners, continue to meet via teleconference for an hour every two months to share information and discuss and advise on current and emerging issues of relevance to the Centre's work.

Recognising the complexity of including people from diverse cultural backgrounds, I have also initiated formal links between the Centre and the Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS), and established an Aboriginal, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander Reference Group. These initiatives will supplement the Research, Education and Evaluation Advisory Groups and play a number of important roles in relation to the work of the Centre, including collaborating with the Centre on research, education and evaluation projects. More information about IWSS is on page 5 and information about the Aboriginal, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander Reference Group is provided on page 3.

While this level of state-wide involvement is necessarily time-consuming and relatively resource intensive, I strongly believe that it will contribute significantly to high quality outcomes that benefit people affected by domestic and family violence wherever they are in the State, and whatever their particular characteristics. I would like to take this opportunity to publicly and sincerely thank the members of the Advisory Groups, the staff and management of IWSS, and members of the Aboriginal, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander Reference Group for generously agreeing to give their time and energy to supporting the Centre and its activities.

Centre staff have been working on the development of the broad framework for its strategic planning. Included as an insert in this edition of the newsletter is the Centre's Statement of Purpose and goals and objectives related to each of the Centre's three key functions. During the strategic planning exercise, staff also discussed the need for the Queensland Centre for Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence to adopt a shorter name to accompany this descriptive name. More news on this in the next edition.

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Human Rights Report Highlights Link Between Family Violence and Incarceration of Indigenous Women

Heather Nancarrow, Director

Dr William Jonas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, has called on the Federal Government to put reconciliation and native title back on the national agenda.

"The Government has adopted an antagonistic and adversarial approach to Indigenous policy and has undermined bi-partisan support for reconciliation through its limited approach, Dr Jonas said. "While reconciliation was a priority for the second term of the Government, it does not even rate a mention in recent announcements of the Government's strategic long term vision for Australian society. Indigenous issues are no longer treated as a national priority."



Of particular concern to the QCPDFV is the increasing rate of incarceration of Indigenous women, frequently for violence related matters, identified in Dr Jonas' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Report 2002. The Report devotes an entire chapter to the 'landscape of risk' that characterises the relationship between Indigenous women and the corrections system. It states that there is a crisis in the level and type of contact of Indigenous women with correctional systems in Australia, with insufficient attention being given to environmental factors, that is the manifestation of the impacts of colonisation such as substance abuse, poverty and violence, that give rise to their contact with the criminal justice system.

Indigenous women are currently incarcerated at a rate higher than any other group in Australia, including Indigenous men. In the decade from 1991 – 2001, the rate, nationally, of incarceration of Indigenous women in Australia increased by 255.8 per cent. For the June 2002 quarter, Indigenous women were over-represented at 19.6 times the rate for non-Indigenous women, while Indigenous men were incarcerated at 15.2 times the non-Indigenous rate.

In Queensland, Indigenous women represented 28.2 per cent of the female prison population as at February 2001. In the five-year period 1994-1999, the growth of Indigenous female prisoners in Queensland was 204 per cent compared to 173 per cent for all females, over the same period. *"These women live in a landscape of risk and suffer at the crossroads of their race and gender,"* said Dr Jonas. *"They are some of the most vulnerable people in our society and we must try now to address these alarming rates of incarceration."*

It appears that Indigenous women are serving shorter sentences than non-Indigenous women, suggesting that the principle of imprisonment as a last resort is not being applied in cases involving Indigenous women. While there is variation across jurisdictions in the crimes that have led to Indigenous women's incarceration, Dr Jonas' Report identifies fine defaulting as a significant factor. Further, Indigenous women comprise nearly 80% of all cases, nationally, where women are detained in police custody for public drunkenness, which is still not decriminalised in Queensland despite the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody which, Dr Jonas notes, identified the high incidence of such offences in the histories of women whose deaths had been investigated by the Commission.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Report 2002 also reveals that Indigenous women are more likely than non-Indigenous women to be incarcerated for violence. Information from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and the Women's Policy Units of the Queensland Department of Correctives Services, reported in the Social Justice Report, indicates that Indigenous women are often incarcerated for violent offences, particularly assaults. Dr Jonas quotes Carol La Prairie's research regarding similar statistics for Indigenous Canadian women, which suggests Indigenous women are convicted of violent crimes as a direct, or indirect consequence of violence perpetrated on them. La Prairie identifies three ways that Indigenous women may find themselves convicted of violent offences: that they may retaliate; resort to substance abuse to escape; or their victimisation may lead to the



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abuse or neglect of others. This fits with anecdotal information in Australia that Indigenous women use violence in self-defence because they believe that police will not act to protect them. However, the Social Justice Report notes that Indigenous scholars argue that Indigenous Australian women may also be acting in a more culturally structured way than suggested by La Prairie, utilising customary law practices or less formal, physical payback systems commonly used to settle disputes, and which may be applied by Indigenous women subjected to violence themselves.

The links between the impact of colonisation (manifested in social disintegration, poverty, substance abuse and violence), and the over-representation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system has been raised in numerous previous reports, including the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Taskforce on Violence Report, released in 2000 and the Fitzgerald Cape York Justice Study. Discussion of progress in responding to these reports will be included in the next edition of the Newsletter.

In the meantime, each one of us shares responsibility for working with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters to bring about just and appropriate responses from criminal justice agencies and domestic and family violence prevention and support services.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Report can be found at www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/sjreport_02/89 and is highly recommended reading.



Centre News

Centre Welcomes New Staff Members

The Centre welcomes Michelle Bradford to the position of Education Officer, Associate Professor Helen Waite to the position of Senior Research Officer, and Dr Susan Rees to the position of Post Doctoral Fellow. In February, Sharon Conway, a CQU Mackay student, was also employed on a short-term contract as a research assistant for 20 hours per week.

Michelle's formal qualifications are in Social Work and she has worked extensively with children, women, families and community services around the issues of domestic and family violence. Michelle's 14 year career includes clinical practice in both government agencies and private practice; consultancy to government, community agencies and industry; and education and training.

Associate Professor Helen Waite has enjoyed working as a sociologist and social scientist in five universities over the past 20 years. Her teaching, research, and activism have all concentrated on social transformation and the well-being of women and young people. Helen is well

placed to support an exciting research program from which strategies and resources can be developed to prevent domestic and family violence in diverse communities and settings.

Dr Susan Rees' strong commitment to social justice has led her to work over the past 10 years in areas of women's rights and well-being, Indigenous well-being, child welfare, gender and development, asylum seekers and refugee policy. Susan has a particular interest in social policy, and through the position of Post Doctoral Fellow, she is making significant contributions to the Centre's functions in research, policy advice and prevention strategies.

Statewide Research and Practice Forums

Following the success of Ellen Malos' recent forum presentation, the Centre, in consultation with the respective Advisory Groups, is developing a program of visiting scholar forums and practitioner forums as part of its research and education functions. The aim of these forums is to share knowledge and promote learning and debate to enhance responses to domestic and family violence. Consistent with the Centre's commitment

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to include people from across the state in its' activities, these forums will be broadcast state-wide via video-conferencing facilities. This will enable a greater number of people in the field to participate in and contribute to forum discussions.

Central Queensland University (CQU) has video-conferencing facilities in Mackay, Rockhampton, Emerald, Bundaberg and Gladstone, and members of the public are welcome to join CQU staff on campus when the Centre is offering video-conferenced forums. Location details will be provided along with announcements of forums on the Centre's website, in the Centre's Newsletter and via email to people registered on the Centre's email list. If you are not on the list and would like to be, please email your details to enquiries@noviolence.com.au for inclusion in the register.

The Centre is also keen to hear from people about possible, and preferred, sites for video-conference links, in addition to the CQU site locations, which would ensure maximum participation and state-wide coverage. If you would like to suggest locations where there are video-conferencing facilities and potential to work collaboratively with organisations operating these facilities, please let us know.

Prevention of Indigenous Family Violence a Priority

In recognition of the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in domestic homicide and other data related to domestic and family violence, the Centre will give priority to addressing Indigenous family violence in its work.

Centre Director, Heather Nancarrow, has established an Aboriginal, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander Reference Group to guide and support her in directing the Centre's research, education and evaluation activities.

"The Reference Group is a mechanism aimed at ensuring that the Centre is inclusive of Aboriginal, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander people and that its activities are responsive to their needs regarding domestic and family violence" Heather said.

"While there are some common issues for these communities relating to minority status within a dominant Anglo-Celtic culture, the Centre recognises that Aboriginal, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander cultures are distinct from each other and that the Centre's work needs to be informed by each of their unique contexts" she continued. "The Reference Group will also play an important role in encouraging Aboriginal, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander people to be directly involved in the Centre's activities, including seeking paid positions within the Centre and scholarships with the University", Heather concluded.

The Reference Group includes people from various parts of the state and who bring state-wide and national perspectives. A meeting of the Reference Group will be held in Mackay mid year, and will contribute to planning the Centre's forward agenda for the next two years.



Collaboration with Woorabinda Community on Children's Violence Prevention Program

In keeping with the Centre's priority of addressing Indigenous family violence, Heather and Michelle Bradford, Education Officer, recently visited Woorabinda, an Aboriginal community west of Rockhampton. The visit was at the invitation of the community's women's shelter co-ordinator, Ailsa Weasal, who sought a partnership with the Centre in the development of an early childhood violence prevention program, based within local culture. Heather, Michelle and Ailsa met with the Principal of the Woorabinda State Primary School, Ms Angela Douglas, who offered her full support for the project and advised that the project should extend from the preschool through to Year 7 children at the school.

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Immigrant Women's Support Service

The Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS), which commenced in 1986, is the only service of its kind in Queensland. Its' multicultural staff are professionally qualified, bilingual crisis support workers and counsellors, who speak more than nine languages. IWSS offers free culturally sensitive and confidential advocacy, counselling and practical support to women and their children from non-English speaking backgrounds who are affected by domestic violence and sexual assault. IWSS provides court support to women from non-English speaking backgrounds and assists them with legal, health and welfare matters as well as providing access to safe accommodation.

IWSS also provides information services and produces pamphlets and resources on the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault in a variety of community languages, as well as delivering quality community education and training for other service providers working with immigrant and refugee women. Telephone debriefing and advice to rural domestic and sexual assault services working with women of non-English speaking backgrounds is another aspect of IWSS' role.

IWSS Co-ordinator, Ms Zia Song, said "IWSS is pleased to have a formal link with the QCPDFV, which plays a pivotal role in informing, promoting and supporting the actions of the wider community through research, education and evaluation". Ms Song said that she particularly valued the close connection with QCPDFV, because it will complement IWSS' service delivery. "We hope to initiate joint projects with QCPDFV and work in close collaboration assisting women from non-English speaking backgrounds dealing with issues of violence," Ms Song concluded.



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"This is an exciting project and an example of the initiative within Indigenous communities to address domestic and family violence" Heather said. "Documentation of the development, implementation and evaluation of the project will provide valuable learnings that can be shared with other communities, in addition to the learnings from a range of innovative projects that have been implemented but not yet documented" she continued.

Further updates on both the Reference Group and the Woorabinda project will be posted on the Centre's website and in the next edition of the Newsletter.

Domestic Violence, Research and Policy into Practice: Children's Perceptions and Coping Responses Community Forum

Ellen Malos, Bristol University senior lecturer and researcher and co-author of the book "Children's Perspectives on Domestic Violence" (2002, Sage UK), recently visited the Centre to speak at a community forum. This forum was video linked to eleven sites across Queensland and was attended by a large number of workers from the domestic and family violence, legal and child protection sectors.

Ellen shared information about: the development of domestic violence research and policy in Britain; findings of her research (1997 – 1999) into children's perceptions of and coping responses to domestic violence; and opportunities and dangers regarding funding for domestic violence related services and research.

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The research findings highlighted a range of understandings and coping responses in children aged 9 years to 16 years, including:

- Only 9% of primary school children and 28% of secondary school children understood domestic violence as being between parents and adults at home
- In younger age groups, fear featured strongly as reported reactions to domestic violence;
- in older age groups, anger was reported more frequently as a reaction
- Both age groups (girls and boys) identified 'talking' as valuable and helpful
- Children consistently reported experiences of being ignored or discounted by helping professionals
- Differences in attitudes of boys and girls by the age of 12 years were noticeably different, with boys placing blame for the violence on the woman

These findings suggest significant implications for directions in coordinated community responses, prevention programs and therapeutic services delivery.

For copies of all the overheads presented by Ellen, visit our website at www.noviolence.com.au and follow the links from the home page.

Visiting Scholar —Associate Professor Jude Irwin (June 2003)

Associate Professor Jude Irwin is the first of a number of distinguished scholars who will spend time working at the Centre this year, as part of the program to ensure the work of the Centre is related to the latest work on domestic and family violence from around Australia and across Queensland.



Jude is one of Australia's leading researchers and activists in the area of domestic and family violence. Her applied research has been very influential in informing policy and professional practice in areas such as child protection and homelessness, particularly in New South Wales. Jude has been at the University of Sydney for the past 10 years and is the Head of the School of Social Work and Policy Studies in the Faculty of Education and Social Work.

She will be visiting the Centre during the first week of June and will present a workshop on researching for changes in policy and professional practice as well as a public seminar on Domestic Violence and Child Protection.

She was appointed to the New South Wales Council on Violence Against Women in 2002, is on the Advisory Group for the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, the NSW Commission for Children and Young People, and has held executive positions at the Australian Lesbian and Gay Research Centre since its inception in 1996.

Jude has organised major conferences such as "*Expanding our Horizons: understanding the complexities of violence against women - meanings, cultures, difference*", held in Sydney in February 2002, and "*Workers Out: an international conference of trade unionists*".

Her many publications include: *Community Work or Social Change?*; *The Pink Ceiling is Too Low*; *Domestic Violence - Criminal Assault in the Home*; *Women and Violence: Working for Change* and several monographs for Barnardo's Australia.

There is a good deal of excitement about Associate Professor Irwin spending time at the Centre and sharing her knowledge and commitment to practice informed by research.

Other scholars participating in this 2003 program are Professor Lois Bryson, a principal researcher on the Women's Health Australia project, who will visit in early May; and Moira Rayner, a senior Fellow in the Law School, Melbourne University, who will be visiting in mid-September.

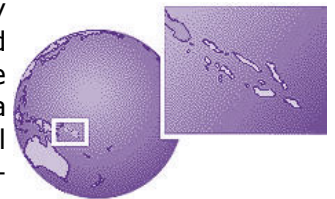
Story Trail

Staff of the Centre recently spent a Sunday morning together touring Mackay's South Sea Islander Heritage "Story Trail". This absorbing, confronting and informative tour of Mackay South Sea Islander history and culture is an initiative of the Mackay and District Australian South Sea Islander Association (MADASSIA).

South Sea Islander people were originally brought by force to New South Wales in 1847 and to Queensland in 1863, to work as "indentured labourers" or slaves in the sugar plantations and sugar mills. Mackay is believed to have the largest population of descendants of these South Sea Islander people in Australia (approximately 6000 people).

The Commonwealth Government in 1994, and the Queensland Government in 2000, formally recognised Australian South Sea Islanders as a distinct cultural group who has made major contributions to Queensland's economic, cultural and regional development. Until this formal recognition, Australian South Sea Islander people were generally and inaccurately referred to as indigenous Australians.

The Story Trail visited many special places of significance, highlighted key events in Australian South Sea Islander history, and emphasised the broad range of impacts that legislation such as the *Immigration Act* (White Australia policy) and the *Pacific Island Labourers Act* created for South Sea Islander identity, culture and society. Staff were treated to traditional foods, music and artefacts and many stories about the histories of well-known Mackay South Sea Islander families.



Ms Rowena Trieve, who is a South Sea Islander Elder and a member of the Centre's Reference Group, accompanied the Story Trail tour as a special guest. Rowena's stories and her very presence epitomised the remarkable grace and dignity of a people who have travelled a journey of dislocation, disadvantage and discrimination to empowerment, recognition and strength.

The Story Trail experience has enabled a deeper appreciation and understanding of Australian South Sea Islander history and culture. This, combined with regular consultation with members of the Australian South Sea Islander community, offers valuable information and opportunities to understand how effective responses to domestic and family violence can be developed.

Further information and bookings for the Mackay South Sea Islander Story Trail can be made by telephoning (07) 4953 0788.

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

Thinking About Men as Victims of Domestic Violence

Helen MacDonald

Helen is the Publications Coordinator, Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre (DVIRC), Melbourne, and we thank her for this contribution.

When we think about the term 'domestic violence', the image that springs to mind is likely to be that of a man inflicting abuse on a woman with whom he lives, in a heterosexual relationship. This is a form of violence that seems gendered to its core. As Chris Atmore argues in a recent Discussion Paper published by Melbourne's Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre, this image operates as a kind of default position on domestic violence.¹ However research has always revealed that some men, too, are victims of violence in their domestic relationships, whether those are heterosexual or same-sex in nature.

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This has been a difficult issue for those of us who work in feminist organisations to think about and discuss. We often briefly acknowledge that male victimisation is a fact, then move quickly on to discuss the larger problem, which is one of female victimisation in the home. It is feared that talking about men as victims of domestic violence will detract from the work that has gone into foregrounding the more common, gendered form of such violence, for these conversations take place as governments seek ways to cut social service budgets, and there is always a risk that establishing means for dealing with male victims will have deleterious effects on the funding of services for women and children.

An additional concern relates to the way male victimisation has been taken up by activists in the 'men's movement' who promote a message that is often aggressively anti-feminist (indeed, anti-woman). These men have a much larger purpose in mind than sympathetically acknowledging some men's experiences of domestic violence. Their most vocal spokesmen list perceived grievances that appear to be based on a sense that men in western societies have lost a level of control over women to which they feel entitled by history and right. Many seem to have been attracted to the men's movement after experiencing this in their own relationships with particular women. In Martin Amis's memorable phrasing, the men's movement seems obsessed with 'Male wounds. Male rights. Male grandeur. Male whimpers of neglect.'²

Men influenced by this movement charge that feminists see domestic violence selectively, ignoring the fact that women, too, are violent in relationships.³ They have latched onto a particular form of social science research, mainly emanating from the United States, that seems to reveal a host of male victims and female perpetrators of domestic violence that has previously been hidden. This research uses a methodological tool called the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS) to capture incidents of violence in the home, with 'violence' being defined as the actual use of physical force. Published studies based on the CTS appear to fly in the face of the default view of domestic violence and, indeed, of all other research findings. They present an image of men being *as likely* as women to be victimised in this way by their partners in a heterosexual relationship, and women being slightly *more* likely than men to perpetrate it.⁴

Several reasons for this seemingly strange difference are explored in Atmore's paper, three of which I will flag here. It seems that the CTS is a particularly blunt instrument for measuring domestic abuse. Firstly, this is because it only 'counts' acts of physical violence. Sexual abuse in the home (for which women and children are almost always the victims, and men almost always the perpetrators) is left out of the picture. Secondly, studies based on the CTS are not good at offering any deep understanding of the particular context in which acts of violence take place. The studies use a quantitative methodology, posing 'closed' questions to a large number of people.⁵ Such methods are not ideal in seeking to understand complex social problems like violence. Compounding this problem, a further important criticism of the CTS relates to the fact that those who participated by answering questions about violence, did so both on their own behalf, and also on behalf of their partners.

This means that one person in the relationship reported both their own experience (as perpetrator or as victim), and then also reported their partner's experience. The opportunities for error in a database compiled from these answers are obvious. Arguably, it is only at the micro level of individual relationships, with input from both members of the relationship, that we can learn anything particularly meaningful about domestic violence.

A third reason for the different findings of CTS-based research and other studies lies in the fact that the former, by counting specific physical acts, misses what it is that makes domestic violence distinctive from other forms of violence. Domestic violence is a patterned kind of behaviour. Physical acts are only one aspect of a much broader range of conduct which is performed with the intention of controlling the other person in the relationship. A one-off shove in the heat of an argument might not be domestic violence, yet in the CTS studies it is.

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Research that is not based on the CTS has consistently found that men are much less likely than women to be victimised by domestic violence. In Australia, such research has been drawn from records of notifications to police, presentations to hospital emergency departments, and crime surveys.⁶ However, relatively low figures for male victimisation should not be used to trivialise or ignore the fact that some men are indeed victims of violence in the home. As Atmore argues, to do that would be an uncomfortable reminder of an earlier time in which those women who spoke of the violence inflicted on them by their partners were treated in that way.

In seeking to understand the different images of domestic violence emanating from CTS studies and other research, she is sympathetic to the argument that it is useful to disaggregate violence in the domestic sphere into the different forms it seems to take. Johnson and Ferraro have offered a set of distinctions.⁷ They suggest there is a real difference between 'common couple' violence – the kind that is infrequent and takes place in a particular argument – and 'intimate terrorism', the distinguishing feature of which is that it is part of an ongoing effort to control a partner, and that men are more likely to perpetrate intimate terrorism. Reviewing a decade of literature on domestic violence, these researchers suggest that the different findings of CTS and other research might be that the CTS is good at capturing common couple violence, in which both men and women are likely to be situated as 'perpetrators' (depending on the circumstances of the argument), but less effective than qualitative research in exploring intimate terrorism.

All of which is to say that yes, men can be victims of violence inflicted upon them by women in the home; and this is a matter about which feminists need to be knowledgeable. If we are not engaged in debates about this issue, the uninformed voices of the radical men's groups will fill the void.

References

¹ Chris Atmore, *Men as Victims of Domestic Violence: Some Issues to Consider*, DVIRC, Melbourne, 2001.

² Martin Amis, 'Zeus and the Garbage', pp.3-9 in his *The War Against Cliché: Essays and Reviews 1971-2000*, Vintage, London, 2002, on p.3.

³ There is some truth to this charge. Rather than exploring women's agency in violence, it can be more comfortable to explain it away. This happens, for example, when women's violence against children is put down to the fact that women are more frequently in their children's company than are men. For a recent feminist contribution to the debate about women's violence, see Belinda Morrissey, 'Crises of Representation, or Why Don't Feminists Talk about Myra?', *The Australian Feminist Law Journal*, Vol. 16, June 2002, pp.109-131.

⁴ See Atmore's discussion of CTS studies, *Men as Victims*, pp.32-39.

⁵ Questions are closed when respondents are offered a limited number of choices in answering them, for example choosing between ticking boxes offering 'yes', 'no', or 'not sure'.

⁶ Atmore, *Men as Victims* pp.26-32.

⁷ Michael P. Johnson and Kathleen Ferraro, 'Research on domestic violence in the 1990s: making distinctions', *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62:4, 2000, pp.948-963.

Resilience in Children Living with Domestic Violence

Michelle Bradford, Education Officer

Practice wisdom tells us that domestic and family violence is psychologically traumatic and damages a child's emotional development and mental health.



To date, research has not identified a single pattern of responses to domestic violence, but rather, a wide variety of responses that span all ages and areas of childhood development.

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These responses can be grouped into two categories:

- Behavioural and Emotional functioning
- Cognitive functioning and Attitudes

Numerous studies conclude that child witnesses of domestic violence exhibit more aggressive and antisocial behaviours (externalised behaviour), as well as posttraumatic stress symptoms, fearful and inhibited behaviours (internalised behaviour) and show lower social competence than other children. Such children are also more likely to adopt an accommodating cognitive appraisal of the violence, and develop an attitude that justifies and normalises the use of violence in relationships (Edleson 1999).

Other studies suggest that witnessing domestic violence during childhood directly contributes to adjustment problems in adulthood resulting in depression, low self-esteem and victimisation or perpetration of violence (Carlson 2000).

Mental health research widely documents a range of critical risk factors for mental health problems in children and young people. Of these factors, five have a direct relevance and relationship to domestic and family violence. They are: family discord; violence in the family; psychological trauma; unstable relationships with parents / caregivers; inadequate parenting skills; and lack of social support. Further, "risk factors can have a cumulative effect over time with disadvantage leading to further disadvantage and setting up a cycle of adversity that may be difficult to break" (Raphael 2000 p16).

In spite of the evidence, many children who are affected by domestic and family violence do not go on to develop poor mental health. Many child participants of the research "showed no negative development problems and some showed evidence of strong coping abilities" (Edleson 1999 p866).



What then, are the factors that assist children toward more positive mental health outcomes in the face of domestic and family violence? Factors that appear to influence and moderate the strength of a child's response to domestic and family violence include: the frequency

and severity of the violence; the child's age and gender; experience of other forms of abuse such as physical or sexual abuse; and the presence of protective factors that may provide a buffering effect for the child (Carlson 2000).

Specific research on the role of protective factors in buffering children exposed to domestic violence is very limited. Most of the research on childhood resilience has focussed on those factors which protect children and young people against stress and mental health problems.

The term 'resilience' refers to the capacities within a person to promote positive outcomes such as mental health and well-being and provide protection from factors that might otherwise result in adverse health outcomes (Raphael 2000).

Findings from the literature examining protective factors against stress indicate that: nurturing, affectionate and secure relationships with adults and at least one parent; positive environments and a sense of 'connectedness'; personal mastery; participation in pro-social peer groups; and a positive temperament, all contribute positively to a child's capacity to cope with adversity (Raphael 2000).

In relation to protective factors for children exposed to domestic violence, Wolak and Finkelhor's (1998) study indicated three categories of protective factors for children:

- Child factors – eg adaptability, outgoing temperament, intelligence or optimism;
- Family factors – eg sound relationship with a parent, siblings, family members; and
- Extra familial factors – eg support from peers, teachers, other adults and involvement in community activities.

O'Keefe's study (1994) found that low emotionality and high sociability, high self-esteem, school competence and a positive relationship with the mother were protective

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factors against adverse mental health outcomes. Further, Kolbo's (1996) findings indicated that social support for boys, who were exposed to high levels of domestic violence, created a buffering effect which protected their self-worth from the effects of witnessed abuse. Edleson (1999, p866) cautions us against defining domestic violence as always another form of child abuse. He states that doing so ignores the experiences of large numbers of children who show evidence of strong coping abilities and no negative development problems. Further, "automatically defining witnessing as maltreatment also may ignore battered mothers' efforts to develop safe environments for their children and themselves."

"Current literature offers only glimpses of children's resilience and the factors in their environments that lessen or heighten the impact of the violent events swirling around them." (Edleson 1999 p865). Service providers are likely working with children and women whose resilience and protective resources are strained. In the face of limited research and information, workers are challenged to further develop interventions that promote children's resilience and effectively minimise the impacts of violence.

The Centre will be producing a Fact Sheet on the effects of domestic and family violence on children.

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New Violence Prevention Laws

Michelle Bradford, Education Officer

On 10 March 2003 changes to the *Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Act 1989* commenced. This Act has been retitled the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989* and now covers a broader range of relationships. Relationships now covered, in addition to spouses, include: some dating relationships; family relationships and informal care relationships.

The legislation recognises that some dating relationships involve bonds that cannot simply be broken, because of the degree to which the lives of the individuals are 'enmeshed'. Where there is a need for a protection order in such relationships, Magistrates will need to be satisfied that enmeshment exists. The Act provides guidance for the courts in determining the existence of enmeshment. For example the court may consider the length of the relationship, frequency of contact, the level of intimacy, and the degree of commitment. A sexual relationship is not necessary for enmeshment to exist.



The Act recognises family relationships as including people 18 years and over who are considered to be relatives of each other by blood or marriage or where the person is reasonably regarded as a relative, such as in the wider concept of relative used by Aboriginal people, Torres Strait Islanders and some non English speaking background communities.

The category of 'informal care relationships' includes relationships where one person is providing personal care to another due to disability, illness or

(Continued on page 12)

impairment; the care involves an activity required for daily living such as bathing or eating; and the care arrangement has been made informally rather than through a formal care agency.

People under 18 years can apply for a protection order to prevent further violence in spousal or dating relationships. However, the Child Protection system applies to situations where violence or abuse is occurring between people under 18 and her/his parents or family members (other than spouses).



The *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989* recognises a wide range of actions as constituting violence. These include:

- Wilful injury to the other person – eg punching, slapping, hitting, strangling, kicking, pushing
- Wilful damage to the other person's property – eg hurting pets, breaking furniture, punching holes in the walls, breaking belongings
- Intimidation or harassment of the other person – eg repeated verbal or emotional abuse, name calling, insults, humiliation; repeatedly telephoning, stalking/following; or in the case of a carer, threatening to withdraw care from the person who is disabled
- Indecent behaviour towards the other person without consent includes, but is not only, unwanted sexual behaviour

Protection orders are made under civil law and aim to prevent future acts of violence in relationships by restricting the behaviour of the person using violence (named as the 'respondent'). However, some of the behaviours listed above (eg wilful injury, wilful damage, stalking and sexual assault) also constitute criminal offences, which could also be prosecuted under the Criminal Code.

Further, breaking a condition of a protection order is a criminal offence. The maximum penalty under the domestic violence legislation is one-year imprisonment for first breaches and two-years for repeat offenders, where two or more offences have occurred within a three-year period.

Under the provisions of the *Weapons Act 1990*, a person who is named as a respondent in a protection order will have all weapon licences revoked and will not be able to apply for another licence until five (5) years have passed since the making of the order. Respondents who have access to weapons in the course of their work and do not require a weapons licence for this (eg Queensland police personnel, those involved in the manufacturing, assembling, transporting and warehousing of weapons, or experimental / scientific work with weapons) will not be permitted to possess weapons for the duration of the protection order (usually two years).

The Queensland Government is in the process of allocating further funding for community support services to respond to the anticipated increase in demand for services to address violence in relationships now covered by the domestic violence legislation.

National Indigenous Domestic and Family Violence Conference

Report from Barbara Hearl, former Research Assistant who attended the Conference

Approximately 100 representatives from throughout Australia attended the National Indigenous and Family Violence Conference, held on 20-21 October 2002 at the Greenmount Resort Gold Coast. This was followed by the Indigenous Men's Issues Conference.

The purpose of the Conference was to network with Indigenous and non-Indigenous service providers who work in the areas of domestic and family violence prevention; learn about other programs through workers' experiences and look at successful methods, and look at the reasons for the perceived rise in family violence in Indigenous communities.

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Information given to the audience was varied and broad, however, the question of why many services are unable to cope with the rise in family violence was paramount. Participants at the Conference expressed concerns about funding cuts on programs, non-compliance of Government to address and act on issues raised by Indigenous communities' representatives on family violence and also the types of family violence that are occurring in Indigenous communities, eg rape, incest, abuse of older people and homicide.



Other issues raised include the high rate of victims who are hospitalised due to domestic and family violence, particularly in remote areas. Discussions around the facts that contribute to this high rate of hospitalisation included lack of safe houses, transport, policing, telecommunication, appropriate services and lack of counsellors experienced in dealing with family violence.

Discussions on the use of alcohol and family violence revealed the general agreement that those people who drink and have underlying problems use violence. These underlying problems may include stress from work, unemployment, home situations, children and financial commitments. It was ascertained that children who are exposed to violence often abuse when they are older.

Senior Sergeant Leslie Hamilton from the Queensland Police Service informed the Conference of the amendments to the domestic violence law that would come into effect in March 2003. Senior Sergeant Hamilton specifically talked about the inclusion of family members and relatives in the Act, which would include those recognised as relatives in Indigenous context.

The Conference also featured discussions of the following programs:

- 'Walk Away/Cool Down', which is being delivered to Indigenous communities in Cairns;
- Ricki Pool from Woarlunga Health Service explained a strategy whereby police remove perpetrators, and not victim(s) from family homes. The perpetrator is either then jailed or not permitted to enter the family home until further notice by authorities. Centrelink is then contacted for financial assistance for the victim. For further information, contact Ricki on (08) 8384 9266. Ricki's mother (Mrs Pool) is a court support worker in Perth whose role is to assist the magistrate during court hearings and assist in the sentencing process for Indigenous clients. Further information can be obtained from Mrs Pool on 0412 702 533.
- 'Reclaim the Future', a program produced and implemented by The Black and White Consultancy, and presented at the Conference by David Branson. The program is aimed at addressing the underlying causes of Aboriginal deaths in custody, and is delivered to Indigenous men in prison sentenced as a result of family violence. The key themes of the program are trauma and grief, cultural appropriateness, care and consideration capacity to learn, trust, and participation. The four modules of the program are Cross Cultural Information; Peer Group Pressure; Coping Strategies; and Self-Relationship and Growth.

The Black and White Consultancy has also done major reviews of the Aboriginal Home and Community Care Program which aims to pave the way for minimising the institutionalisation of Aboriginal people requiring special care services across the State. To find out more about these programs contact David Branson, South Australia Aboriginal Lands Council.

Overall, the Conference revealed several success stories. However there was no doubting the feelings of participants regarding concerns about funding, and in particular their frustration towards bureaucratic protocols and the lack of co-operation from government towards Indigenous family violence and related issues.

Papers presented by Keynote speakers Jackie Huggins AM (Co-Chair, Reconciliation Australia) and Dr Mick Dodson (Chairman, Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre) are available on the Centre's website, at www.noviolence.com.au.



News from Around the State

SCOPE (Suncoast Cooloola Outreach Prevention and Education)

The new Regional Domestic and Family Violence Services 4 Safer Communities, SCOPE, was funded in April 2002 by the Department of Families following extensive regional research, consultation and lobbying. It aims to reduce the occurrence and impact of domestic and family violence using a unique and innovative outreach model, across the Cooloola, Noosa, Maroochy and Caloundra Shires.



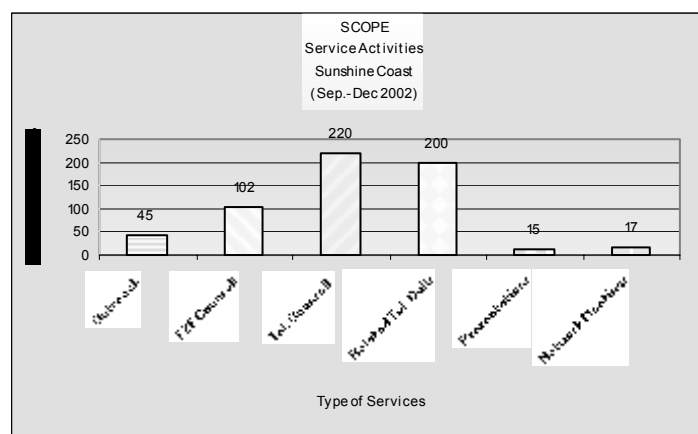
The SCOPE model relies on existing services and strong partnerships in rural and remote areas to host and support the outreach counsellors. The concept of collaborative 'external' host agencies meant a broader and cost effective service delivery for SCOPE and an additional service provision for the host agency. The SCOPE outreach counsellors provide support, counselling, group facilitation, information and referral; community education and prevention, referral to 'Pathways' Men's Program throughout the region, and a Child Counsellor in Noosa.

Within 8 months of receipt of funding SCOPE has:

- Formed strong relationships with other related agencies and organisations through extensive involvement in local networks
- Initiated and guided the formation of a regional peak body "The Alliance " to the point of launch in February 2003
- Conducted collaborative meetings to discuss quality improvement strategies for the current spousal domestic violence court support program with sector and NCC
- Developed informative web page at www.scopedv.org as a vehicle for information dissipation and access through information technology
- Designed and distributed agency owned resource brochures and cards
- Facilitated domestic violence awareness training in local university and schools
- Perpetrator Program "Pathways" has started intake of group members across the region
- Initiated service activities for the Domestic Violence Prevention Week in May: ie. Creative Writing workshop and "Play"
- Outreach Counsellors have provided counselling and support services across the Region of Caloundra, Noosa, Nambour and Maroochydore (see chart)

Scope's services are ensuring service delivering with a focus on:

- Client need
- A continuum of care
- Clear and supportive client pathways
- Flexible and responsive support services
- Community capacity building
- Community development
- Community capacity building
- Empowerment of clients and communities
- Social justice principles



The **Domestic Violence Court Assistance Network (DVCAN)** will host a conference in June 2003 (date to be confirmed), which will include training components. Day 1 will be for court assistance workers only and Days 2 and 3 will be open to the broader sector.

The program will showcase models of service delivery and highlight key issues for the sector. Legal issues will be prominent covering areas such as 'ouster orders', a criminal law perspective on domestic violence, domestic violence appeals, the legal response to children, the legal implications of 'counselling notes' and there will be a panel of speakers addressing issues concerned with the new legislation. A flyer will be distributed in the next few weeks. Expressions of interest in attending the conference can be made to:

Conference Organiser,
C/- Women's Legal Service
PO Box 119, Annerley, QLD 4103
Phone 3392 0644
Email: wlsi@gil.com.au

Workshops, Conferences and Date Claimers

March - April

'I Have a Secret' Workshops

Gympie, Pomona, Caloundra, Maroochydore
Further details: SCOPE, PO Box 5350, Maroochydore, QLD 4558

Tel: (07) 5479 5911

Email: scoperegdv@centacarebrisbane.net.au

30 March - 1 April 2003

Australian WomenSpeak: Second National Women's Conference

Canberra

Further details: Office of the Status of Women

Email: AWS@pmc.gov.au

Web: www.osw.dpmc.gov.au/resources/conference2003.html

4 April 2003

'Safety First for Children': The need for Family Law reform in Australia

Brisbane

Further details: Veronica Wensing

Tel: (02) 6247 1616

Email: wesnet@wesnet.org.au

13 - 15 April 2003

No Fear Within Our Family: National Indigenous Domestic Violence Conference

Brisbane

Further details: Indigenous Conference Services

Australia (ICSA) PO Box 152, Emu Park Qld 4710

Tel: (07) 4938 7558

Email: icsa2@bigpond.com

16-17 April 2003

'We Are Sisters': National Indigenous Women's Network Conference

Brisbane

Further details: ICSA

Tel: (07) 4938 7558

Email: icsa2@bigpond.com

28 April - 4 May 2003

Lifeline Awareness Week

Further details: Lifeline

Tel: (07) 3250 1900

1 May 2003

International Women and Work Day

4 - 10 May

Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Week

Queensland

Further details: Department of Families Queensland

Tel: (08) 3405 6445 or (07) 3224 2229

6 May

The Alliance against Domestic and Family Violence

Noosa

Further details: SCOPE, PO Box 5350, Maroochydoore, 4558

Tel: (07) 5479 5911

Email: scoperegdv@centacarebrisbane.net.au

11 - 17 May 2003

National Families Week

Further details: Families Australia

Tel: (02) 6273 4885

Web: www.familiesaustralia.org.au

15 May 2003

International Day of Families

Further details: United Nations Organisation

Tel: (02) 9262 5111

About this Newsletter

In our bi-monthly 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.

Staff of the Centre, from left to right:

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Clinton Rawsthorne, Susan Rees,
Sharon Conway, Heather Nancarrow and
Helen Waite.*



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Please put the Centre on your regular mailing list. We are happy to receive your newsletters and information in electronic format.

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Queensland Government, Central Queensland University, or Centre for Social Science Research.

Whilst all reasonable care has been taken in the preparation of this publication, no liability is assumed for any errors or omissions.

The Queensland Centre for the Prevention of Domestic & Family Violence is linked to the Centre for Social Science Research, based at the Central Queensland University Faculty of Arts, Health and Science.

Funded by the Queensland Government Department of Families, supported by the Central Queensland University and Centre for Social Science Research, to inform an integrated statewide approach, to develop a culture of intolerance of domestic and family violence in Queensland communities.