



A word cloud for the CASA Forum, featuring various terms related to violence against women, community, and empowerment. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with some larger and more prominent than others. The colors used are primarily purple, green, and grey.

**STRENGTH**  
**community**  
**equality**  
**power**  
**relationships**  
**survivors**  
**crisis care**  
**gender equity**  
**respect**  
**freedom**  
**prevention**  
**STRENGTH**  
**prevention**  
**empower**  
**health and wellbeing**  
**primary prevention**  
**control**  
**Sexual Assault**  
**challenge**  
**Advocates**  
**violence**  
**equity**  
**empowering**  
**gender violence**  
**sexual assault prevention**  
**safety**  
**children**  
**Victorian**  
**counselling**  
**advocacy**  
**advocate**  
**happiness**  
**EMPOWER**  
**women**  
**family**  
**families**  
**Prevention of Sexual Assault**  
**violence against women**  
**gender**  
**Speaking out to end Violence Against Women**  
**Speaking Against Sexual Assault**  
**respectful**  
**CASA FORUM**

Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault

# Annual Report

2012-2013

Members

Convenor Judy Flanagan Eastern CASA

CoConvenor Fiona Boyle Gippsland CASA

Treasurer Joanne Sheehan-Paterson  
Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc

Media Carolyn Worth South Eastern CASA

Bonnie Travers – Sexual Assault Crisis Line

Helen Bolton- Barwon CASA (including Wimmera)

Joanne Bates – Wimmera CASA (till February 2013)

Pauline Gilbert- CASA House

Karen Hogan – Gatehouse Centre

Kerry Burns - Upper Murray Centre Against Violence

Shireen Gunn – Ballarat CASA

Eileen Oates- Loddon Campaspe CASA

Charmaine Farrell- Northern CASA

Mary Clapham- South Western CASA

Jane Vanderstoel- WestCASA

***We acknowledge the first owners of this land and pay our deep respect to elders past and present as we conduct our work in the State of Victoria.***



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## **CASA Forum's vision, mission and philosophy**

### **VISION**

A world free of sexual assault

### **MISSION**

CASA Forum brings together the collective expertise of Victoria CASAs to lead and inform policy, practice and research.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

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

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

## **Introduction**

The Victorian CASA Forum is the peak body of 14 Centres Against Sexual Assault and the Victorian Sexual Assault Crisis Line (after hours). Together we work to ensure that women, children and men who are victim/survivors of sexual assault have access to comprehensive and timely support and intervention to address their needs. We also work towards the elimination of sexual violence through community and professional education, informing government policy, advocating for law reform and facilitating research to increase community understanding of the nature and incidence of sexual assault. This work is our common foundation.

There is diversity among our services, demonstrating independence in service delivery model developments and responsiveness to the unique geographic and community needs of our regions. Some CASAs respond to women and children seeking support when affected by family violence. Some CASAs are providing services for children under 10 with problem sexual behaviours and young people 10-14

with sexually abusive behaviours. Also a small number of CASA's work with young people with sexually abusive behaviours through to 18 years of age.

From 01/3/13 Wimmera CASA ceased to exist and became part of Barwon CASA following a tender process when Wimmera Health Care returned funds to the Department of Human Services.

All CASAs have experienced additional demands for services with the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Institutional Abuse, followed by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse. Not only are clients accessing CASAs looking for support to access these inquiries, but the general media publicity around these events and the heightened awareness of sexual assault as an issue in our community has led to more referrals. Unfortunately CASAs were unsuccessful in securing additional Commonwealth governments funds to meet increased demands.

The Victorian government provided additional funds to most CASAs late in 2012 to address waiting times for both sexual assault support services and sexual abuse treatment services, which enabled a much needed expansion of services.

In 2012/ 2013 CASA Forum members chose to concentrate their cooperative efforts on a range of endeavours which will be described in this report.

## **Relationship with Department of Human Services**

Every second month we welcome representatives from the Department of Human Services to consult about legislative and policy domains and their relationship to our practice. Through use of the specialist knowledge held in our field we may be clarifying, lobbying, initiating or informing State government with reference to various developments. This year we were sad to say goodbye to Madeleine Oakes, Jan Thompson and Jenny Willox who have been hard working and supportive. We remain connected through Marita Nyhuis, Clare Suckling and Kate Wait and thank them for their ongoing support.

## **Service Delivery Statistics 2012 - 2013**

### **Sexual assault support services**

CASAs provide individual counselling and advocacy services to children, young people and adults and their parents, partners and significant others. This includes crisis care, a 24 hour response to those experiencing recent sexual assault (up to two weeks) and therapeutic group work, which is provided for a variety of target groups, including adult women, young women, adult males etc.

CASAs provided counselling and advocacy services to 8005 adults and 4,390 children and young people (totalling 12,395 cases) during the 2012-13 year.

### **Sexually abusive behaviour treatment services (SABTS)**

Children and young people under 15 who exhibit problem sexual behaviour and sexually abusive behaviours are able to access Sexually Abusive Behaviour Treatment Services from thirteen agencies nine of whom are CASAs. Referrals can be made directly by family or carers, Child Protection workers or the Police. Therapeutic treatment orders are also available for 10-14 year olds where it is necessary for a court direction to ensure the child's access to or attendance at the therapeutic treatment program. Two services in Victoria are funded to provide therapeutic treatment to the older adolescent cohort. These service providers are South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault and the Children's Protection Society.

The nine CASAs with funding for SABTS provided services for a total number of 643 cases in 2012-13 (0-17 year olds)

### **The Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL)**

SACL co-ordinated a total of 574 after hours Crisis Care Units including Yarrow Place in South Australia. The figure for Victoria was 483.

**Of the 483 Crisis Care Units: 453 female(93.8%);28 male(6%) victim/survivors**

#### **Contact with Police:**

366(76%)

#### **Assault type(most prevalent categories)**

Rape as adult: 312(65%)

Child Sexual Assault : 65 (13%)

Drug or Alcohol Facilitated Sexual Assault : 67(14%)

SACL received 4022 calls on the Police/Emergency line and 5498 calls on the general line, a total of 9520.

7201 calls came through the 1800 line with 3798 coming through afterhours (53%)

### **Primary Prevention**

CASAs have continued to pursue preventive work by providing programs and workshops in both primary and secondary schools across the state.

- Respect Protect Connect (RPC) being run by South Eastern CASA as a peer education program in secondary schools. RPC provides anti violence workshops for young men and respectful relationship workshops for young women. Primary Schools receive a whole of school advanced personal safety program called Feeling Safe Together.
- CASA House, Eastern CASA, Northern CASA, Gippsland CASA & Barwon CASA ran Sexual Assault Prevention Program in Secondary Schools (SAPPSS) in numerous secondary schools across the state.
- Mallee Sexual Assault Unit provides joint school education programs with Victoria Police in the Mallee region.

### **Joint CASA/Pap Screen Victoria initiative**

Over a third of women in Victoria do not have regular 2 yearly Pap tests. Research shows that some women who have encountered sexual assault are reminded of the experience by gynaecological procedures such as the Pap test, and are therefore more likely to avoid participating in regular cervical screening. To help support victim/survivors of sexual assault in accessing cervical screening in a safe and comfortable environment, CASA Forum and Pap Screen Victoria (PSV) have established a partnership.

CASA Forum and PapScreen Victoria aim to support women who are victim/survivors of sexual assault to access cervical screening in a safe and comfortable environment.

The work of the joint CASA/Pap Screen Victoria initiative has continued this year with further training provided for Nurse Cervical Screening Providers and CASA counsellor/advocates including cervical screening as part of a client health assessment. The flip pad of tear off information sheets for clients

provide counsellor/advocates with information with which to refer. Further evaluation of the project is being undertaken in 2013.

A poster presentation of the project was made at the first National Sexual and Reproductive Health Conference 20-21 November 2012 in Melbourne



## **Specialist Assessment Working Group (Children)**

Karen Hogan, Helen Wilson and Mary Jadresko formed a working group to support the further investigation and understanding of the practice of specialist assessment in Victorian CASAs and to develop recommendations for future practice. The working group were supported by the endeavours of Sophie Burford, Bachelor of Social Work student on placement at SECASA, supervised by Mary Jadresko. Sophie informed us through her report titled "Specialist Assessment Practice in Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault" that there are several models operating internationally and this is reflected in CASA practice. It was recommended that a uniform specialist assessment model be implemented across the CASAs which is informed by the development of CASA Specialist Assessment Practice Guidelines.

An expanded Working Group met for three days in August 2013 to develop a process, identify a minimum suite of tools and suggest an implementation approach. This group was led by Mary Jadresko and included Sue Davidson (Loddon Campapse CASA), Maria Piscioneri (Ballarat CASA) and Lisa Richardson (Gatehouse Centre). Mary Lancaster (Project Worker SECASA) facilitated the process.

A process for Specialist Assessment has been produced and confirmed by those present. A potential minimum set of tools has been identified and confirmation work is being done to ensure that proper citations are included. Recommendations have been made for staff training via the Workforce Development program to support the process.

## **Making Rights Reality**

The Victorian Law Reform Commission concluded in 2004 that “It is clear that the criminal justice system offers people with a cognitive impairment very limited protection against sexual assault...However, with adequate assistance many people with a cognitive impairment can tell the police what has happened to them and can give evidence in court.”

This was the start of the Making Rights Reality (MRR) project. A number of agencies cooperated, including the CASA Forum, to access funding to run a pilot project aimed at providing a better experience of reporting sexual assault for people with a cognitive impairment or communication difficulty.

Eventually the Federation of Community Legal Services took the lead with the project. After six years the project reached its target of \$400,000. In February 2012 MRR commenced as a partnership between the Federation, CASA Forum and Springvale Monash Community Legal Services. SECASA is the CASA providing a direct service to victims of sexual assault with a cognitive impairment or communication difficulty.

The project provides a specialist, comprehensive service. All SECASA counsellor/advocates, and a number in other CASAs, have undertaken Independent Third Person training provided by the Office of the Public Advocate. In addition, training has been provided by SCOPE on working with clients with complex communication needs.

Springvale Monash Legal service provides an outreach services for SECASA clients to provide advice about VOCAT applications.

A number of community education sessions have been run with disability services, and a set of Easy Read resources has been produced providing information about sexual assault.

SECASA has a two year contract from Leading Age Services who are contracted by DHS to provide training for a number of sectors to provide workshops on Identifying and Reporting on Sexual Assault for Supported Residential Services. The target audience for these workshops is personal support workers, personal support co-ordinators, managers and proprietors.

CASA collaborated with the Office of the Public Advocate in reviewing and updating the protocol between the two organisations, with a launch held on 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2013 (see photo).

To date the project has doubled the number of clients seen at SECASA with a cognitive impairment or communication difficulty. It is anticipated that this project will be rolled out across the state in the future.

## **Workforce Development**

2013 marks the seventh year of the Workforce Development Program. CASA Forum, with SECASA as the lead agency and Sarah McGregor as the Workforce Development Training Coordinator continue to work in partnership to implement, manage and monitor the Sexual Assault Workforce Development program. ACSSA (Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault) continues to assist the program by providing information on current research and developments across the field of sexual assault.

In November 2012 Dr Suellen Murray RMIT facilitated a focus group with managers and senior counsellors to review the project and reflect on the ongoing needs of staff across the sector.

A Reference Group continued to meet quarterly to oversee the operation of the program.



The major responsibility of the Workforce Development Program for 2012 – 13 was:

- To provide a total of eleven workshops (22 days). This allows for some training to be organised around visiting overseas or interstate experts. The program also provided 4 days of SABTS (Sexually Abusive Treatment Services) specific training overseen by CEASE.

Several of the workshops planned for 2012/13 were repeats of successful workshops well attended and evaluated in the previous two years. Many of these workshops are considered as core training by workers across the field. These include: Engaging in Cyber Space, Working with children, Legal Training, Trauma Processing Part 1(Formerly Trauma and the Body).

### *Graduate Certificate*

In 2013 RMIT/CASA Graduate Certificate in Community Services Practice – Sexual Assault Support Workers began. It is being conducted over two years part-time and will include specialist workshops provided by RMIT and incorporate professional practice programs conducted by the State wide Workforce Development Program.

The Graduate Certificate will recognise the existing skills of counsellor/advocates as well as further develop skills in direct practice with clients. In addition it will engage participants in a practical community education project that will be negotiated with managers to promote awareness of sexual assault prevention and support. Participants will develop skills in program design, consultation, management and evaluation, in addition to academic and community based research skills. Reflection on professional practice is a key part of this program.

Eight counsellors from across the field have enrolled in this course. In the 2012/2013 financial year, they have been enrolled in three workshops and have an additional four Workforce Development workshops to attend as part of their course requirements. A SECASA counsellor/advocate, Sheryl Musgrove works two days a week coordinating this program with RMIT.

### *Community Education Package*

The community education package was most recently utilised in the Facilitation and Presentation Skills workshop in July 2013.

The package has been distributed to CASA's and other sexual assault agencies across Victoria and is to be reviewed in the second half of 2013.

The Workforce Development coordinator has continued to evaluate the training workshops with post evaluations. The evaluations continue to reflect the importance of Workforce Development training to the sexual assault field. A needs analysis will be conducted in November 2013 to ascertain worker's future learning requirements and to assist with planning for 2014 and beyond.

The addition of the Graduate Certificate Program has injected some vibrant and experienced workers into the workshops, enhancing learning for both new and more experienced workers.

## **Casa Forum Website**

During the 2012/13 financial year Miles Summers has changed statistics packages to Google Analytics which measures differently to previous years. This year 20,265 unique visitors viewed 81,963 pages on the CASA Forum website. Monthly 1,688 people viewed 6,830 pages. In addition an average of 4,120 PDF information sheets were downloaded each month.



This year 19% of our visitors were using either a mobile phone or a tablet. To this end we created a mobile friendly version of the website that detects mobile phone or tablet and displays a simpler interface.

We also integrated an interactive map of CASA office and outreach locations and created new pages for Standards and Protocols, CASA Projects, and Papers and Submissions.

A CASA Forum website sub committee meets quarterly with Miles to work with him on web-site developments.

## **National Association of Services Against Sexual Assault (NASASV)**

Eileen Oates and Jane Vanderstoel represented CASA Forum on NASASV.

NASASV Executive met in Hobart in November 2012 for its AGM and planning meeting.

Eileen resigned from her position on NASASV and was replaced by Shireen Gunn.

The annual work plan included:

- Constitutional change to include each state having a representative who is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander woman working in sexual assault.
- Update the NASASV Standards of Practice
- Promote recommendations from the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Women's Roundtable.
- Increasing membership.
- Researching emerging issues.

Over the past year NASASV has been active in:

- Two NASASV representatives attended the 57th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW57) in New York. Its priority theme was the "Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls" with a focus on prevention of violence and the provision of support services/responses to survivors of violence.
- Sending a letter of congratulations to Julia Gillard for establishing the Royal Commission.
- Consulting with the Royal Commission in relation to how NASASV and sexual assault services could provide specialist support to both the commission and victim/survivors of sexual assault.
- Having three representatives on the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA), one of six National Women's Alliances funded by the Australian Government. NASASV representatives ensure issues regarding sexual violence are raised in relation government policy & planning as well as the implementation of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022.
- Applying for funding on behalf of sexual assault services to support people making contact with the Royal Commission.
- Having members attended a reception for Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, Ms Michelle Bachelet on 23 August 2012

## **History Project**

Lesley Hewitt continues to work on the CASA History project , consulting with staff, managers and board members and examining documentation held by CASAs in Victoria. The aim is to produce a history of CASAs in Victoria. This is a two year project and we look forward to its conclusion in 2013 - 2014.

## **The EVAs 2013**

The development of The EVAs Media Awards is a project partnership between Domestic Violence Victoria, No To Violence Male Family Violence Prevention Association and CASA Forum.

The EVAs are made possible through current project funding provided by the Victorian State Government; the initial project funding came through VicHealth under the *Respect, Responsibility and Equality: Preventing Violence Against Women* initiative.

The EVAs project advisory committee includes representation from:

- ☐ Domestic Violence Victoria (DV Vic)
- ☐ No To Violence Male Family Prevention Association (NTV)
- ☐ CASA Forum
- ☐ Department of Human Services
- ☐ Domestic Violence Resource Centre (DVRCV)
- ☐ The Office of Public Advocate
- ☐ Vic Health
- ☐ Victoria Police
- ☐ Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service (WDVCS)

The EVAs Media Awards honour journalists for excellence in the reporting of violence against women, in print, television, radio and online media; and celebrate media contributions to the prevention of violence against women. Entries are judged on journalistic merit with emphasis on the promotion of community awareness and understanding of violence against women, and inspiring community interest and action.

The 2013 EVAs Media Awards were held on the 19th July 2013 at the ANZ Pavilion. Nominees from print, television, radio and online media joined distinguished guests to honor journalists for their excellent reporting and to celebrate media contributions to the prevention of violence against women.

Among the night's winners: Nicole Brady (former) The Sunday Age journalist won the **GOLD EVA** for her exceptional series 'Lifting the Lid'.

**Judge's remarks** Nicole Brady's series is an original, measured and insightful exploration of violence and its impacts. The extensive research, coverage of issues and people interviewed is near unparalleled

on this topic within the print media. The pieces link gender roles, inequality between men and women, and the attitudes that support violence against women. Victim blaming is explored, as is the role of the media and the need for prevention initiatives. Nicole's series includes stories of men who use violence, exemplifying their need to take responsibility for their behaviours, whilst also breaking down the myth that violent men are inhuman monsters. A statistical map demonstrates the spread of violence across all socio-economic groups. Great statistics are used, as are the right contact services and over a two week period, the audience has time to absorb the content and information. The elements covered in this series, are accomplished excellently.

- Nicole Ferrie from the Bendigo Advertiser won **Best News Report in Print** for her brilliant series 'Real Action Needed'.
- Daily Life's Clementine Ford won **Best Opinion/Commentary in any Medium** for her thought-provoking piece 'Can we please stop the victim blaming?'
- The ABC's Guy Stayner won **Best Television Current Affairs/Feature** (less than 15 mins) for his impressive piece 'Restraining Orders'.
- Madison Magazine's Clair Weaver won **Best Magazine Report/Article in Print** for her commanding piece 'Silent Witness'.
- Moreland Leader's Tessa Hoffman won **Best Suburban Report in Print** for her important piece 'Stop the Violence'.

## **Inquiries/consultations**

Members undertake to respond to inquiries conducted by the State Government of Victoria. This year responses have been submitted to –

- Practical Lessons, Fair Consequences – Improving Diversion for Young People in Victoria 2012.
- Royal Commission funding submission 2013
- Sentencing Advisory Council consultation for Contravention of Family Violence Intervention Orders and Safety Notices, May 2013.
- Inquiry Into Sexting July 2012
- Towards a More Effective and Sustainable Community Service System; Shergold April 2013-10-09
- Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Organizations, Nov 2012
- Victim Impact Statement Reforms – review by Dept of Justice 2013

## **Conferences/Launches**

- Carolyn Worth was the Keynote speaker at 'Pathways to Change – Hobart Sexual Assault Support Service' – December 2012 – The Fourth Wave. Incorporating sexually abusive treatment services into a feminist victim service.
- Karen Hogan spoke at the 'Partnerspeak' launch April 2013
- Carolyn Worth spoke at the Iguana launch May 2013
- Men's Shed Association conference (CASA Forum ad and resources provided)
- Carolyn Worth (SECASA) at the launch of 'We Will Not Go Quietly' a publication written by and for survivors which CASAs contributed to the printing and distribution of to clients.



“We Will Not Go Quietly” launch



One Million Rising – Federation Square

## **CASA Conference 18<sup>th</sup> October 2012**

The CASA Forum biennial conference was held in October 2012, enabling the showcasing of our work across CASAs. Presentations were diverse and generated a great deal of interest .

### **Presentations included:**

- “Retaining a feminist philosophy while incorporating the neurobiological paradigm: can we have it all? Bree Weizenegger (CASA House)”
- “The development of the MDC (Multi Disciplinary Centre) is the greatest change to the traditional CASA movement...or is it? Diane Jones (Barwon CASA)”
- “Shared counselling: ‘A safe place to new growth so we can soar and fly’ Heather Clarke (NCASA) and Pauline Gilbert (CASA House)”

### **Snapshot of comments about expectations:**

- Forum was of very high calibre
  - Conference was excellent, great diversity in content and delivery
  - There was a good variety of presentations on different issues by different CASAs
  - Was great to see what other orgs are doing
  - ideas out to be discussed – could have been opened up to debate
  - conference was excellent but disappointed that session on sexual assault + family violence didn’t end up happening
  - Only new so didn’t know what to expect but I thought it was great
  - Great opportunity to share ideas/initiatives etc



Antonia Quadara ACSSA chaired the conference

## **Finances**

CASA Forum was fortunate to receive a donation from fundraisers of an event held in memory of Jill Meagher with the Sharon Shannon Band. An Avant card is being produced to deliver key messages to raise awareness about sexual assault and promote CASAs in Victoria.

As CASA Forum was dissolved as an Incorporated Association, all financial management is with Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc, and MSAU Inc is independently audited annually. The Independent Auditor is One 2 One, Accountants and Business Advisers, Mildura Business Centre, 148-150 Pine Avenue, Mildura.

## **Standards of Practice in Victoria**

Excellence in practice standards and the provision of quality of services for victim/survivors of sexual assault and for children/young people with problem sexualised behaviour/sexually abusive behaviour is one of the priorities of CASA Forum. To this end 2012/2013 has been a year of review.

- Cease Standards of Practice 2012
- CASA Forum Standards of Practice – 2008 have been reviewed

### **DHS Standards**

All CASAs are required to be accredited against new DHS standards. CASA Forum representation on a departmental advisory group has enabled feedback to be provided as CASAs are reviewed.

## **Victoria Police**

- Review of the Police Code of Practice for the Investigation of Sexual Assault – Vic Police 2005 has had CASA Forum representation on a working group formed to undertake the work.
- Workshops for officers entering (Sex Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams) SOCIT have been facilitated regularly by CASA Managers.
- Regional Police/CASA liaison meetings are held quarterly

## **Reform Progress - Multi Disciplinary Centres and Just in Case Medical Examinations**

Following the initial pilot sites at Mallee Sexual Assault Unit and at Frankston in partnership with SECASA, a new MDC site was established in July 2012 with Barwon CASA, with further MDC roll outs planned for Gippsland and Loddon Campaspe CASAs. SECASA is also a partner in an additional MDC with a 'Principal centre' site being established in Dandenong.

SECASA has been confirmed as the site for the implementation stage of the Just In Case medical (JIC) examinations. The delivery of JIC medical examinations was to commence in early 2012 but has been stalled until late 2013. The slow start to this work has been disappointing, but all CASAs look forward to being able to provide recent victim/survivors access to a seamless forensic medical service.

*Funding for Health Nurses attached to each of the MDCs has been provided with Heather Wellington DLA Medico Legal consultant engaged by DHS to develop the nurse role. We look forward to having nurses working from the MDCs to enhance the service provision to clients.*

## **Protocols**

Members have contributed to development or updating of protocols with colleagues including

- Victim Support Agency – Victims Assistance Counselling Program Protocol
- Responding to allegations of sexual assault in Special Residential Services Protocol
- Office of the Public Advocate/ CASA protocol
- Partnerspeak.com referrals to CASAs for partners of men charged /convicted with offences related to child exploitation material.



Judy Flanagan (ECASA), Dagmar Jenkins (SECASA), Carolyn Worth(SECASA), Allen Elliott (OPA), Colleen Pearce (Office of the Public Advocate) at the 4/3/13 OPA protocol launch

## **Visitors to CASA Forum during 2012-13**

Catherine Barrett – La Trobe Uni ‘Norma’s Project’ (sexual assault of older women over 65)

Jeannie McIntyre – Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)

Lee Fitzroy & Sandra Gibson (RHED)

Hetty Johnson, Leza Sullivan & Carol Ronken - Bravehearts

Annette Gillespie Women’s Domestic Violence Crisis Service

Lynne Fountain - Victorian Forensic Paediatric Medical Service

Deb Bennett – Vic Police re ‘Cold Cases’

Gerard de Leon – Vic Pol Sex Industry Coordination Unit

Jason Walsh & Trevor Rowe – Vic Police

Julian Silverman RMIT & Sheryl Musgrove (SECASA) – Graduate Certificate in Community Services.



## **Further Work**

CASA Forum members play important roles in advocacy to ensure that policy, protocol and practice outcomes are meeting standards that provide quality service and caring environments for victim/survivors of sexual assault and for children/young people with problem /sexually abusive behaviours. During 2012-13 we have participated in –

- CASA History Project Work
- DHS standards reference group
- Planning CASA Forum Conference 2012
- National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence
- Ministerial Advisory Committee
- Violence Against Women Forum (DHS/Vic Police)
- Vic Health Preventing Violence Against Women Advisory Committee
- CEASE
- AASW Sexual Assault Special Interest Group
- Workforce Development Reference Group
- Department of Justice Family Violence Stakeholder Reference Group
- MDC Advisory Committee and Service delivery Working Group
- Pap Screen/CASA Forum project reference group
- EVAs
- Coroner's reference Group
- CASA Forum website sub committee



### **- Managers of Victorian CASA's planning day November 2012**

Foreground from left: Eileen Oates Loddon Campaspe CASA, Pauline Gilbert, CASA House, Jane Vanderstoel, West CASA, Fiona Boyle, Gippsland CASA; Carolyn Worth, South Eastern CASA; Karen Hogan, Gatehouse; Joanne Sheehan- Patterson, Mallee Sexual Assault Unit, Shireen Gunn, Ballarat CASA;

At rear; Helen Bolton, Barwon CASA; Judy Flanagan, Eastern CASA ; Charmaine Farrell Northern CASA

Not present: Kerry Burns, Upper Murray CASA, Bonnie Travers SACL, Mary Clapham, South Western CASA manager



## **Conclusion**

The CASA Forum provides the 15 Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault, whether community based or health network auspiced, with a peak body which can facilitate service development, influence and develop policy and procedures related to practice, and contribute to the development of national and state wide policy in relation to sexual assault services. To achieve this, members provide representation on state-wide and national committees to contribute to robust examination of decisions leading to policy and legislation. Collaboratively, members participate on particular working parties constructed to achieve agreed goals within the sector. We aim to influence the development of best practice in our field and to be influenced by those around us who can offer knowledge and skill to our sector. With a great sense of achievement, we present our year's work and forecast that we will continue to focus on the needs of victim/survivors in 2013- 2014.