



Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault

Annual Report

2013-2014

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)

Pauline Gilbert- CASA House

Karen Hogan – Gatehouse Centre

Jenny Wing - Children's Protection Society

Kerry Burns - Upper Murray Centre Against Violence

Shireen Gunn - Ballarat CASA

Michael Beaumont-Connop - 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, Children's Protection Society and the Victorian Sexual Assault Crisis Line (after hours). Together we work to ensure that women, children and men who experience sexual assault have access to comprehensive and timely support and intervention to address their needs. We also work towards the primary prevention 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 experiencing 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.

During the year, the Therapeutic Services for Children program of Children's Protection Society became a member of the CASA Forum.

CASAs have experienced additional demands for services with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse and the increased media relating to this and other high profile sexual assault stories, ie Rolf Harris. A decision was made to continue providing CASA services to people experiencing institutional abuse, despite being unsuccessful with a CASA forum submission to FACSIA for funding.

In March, 2014 CASAs setup a website royalcommission.casa.org.au to provide resources and support to people wishing to tell their story to, and others impacted by, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The Victorian government is to provide additional funds to most CASAs later in 2014 to address waiting times for sexual assault support services.

CASA Forum has provided extensive media contact across Victoria – The Age, Channel 9, the La Trobe Valley Express, the Ballarat Courier, Neil Mitchell are some examples. Whilst most managers have been involved in media, Carolyn Worth has very capably continued as the media contact for the Forum. The EVAs were also attended by CASA Forum representatives last July.

In 2013/2014 CASA Forum members concentrated their cooperative efforts on a range of endeavours which will be described in this report.

Members wish to thank Matthew Reader and the staff at the Office of Inter Country Adoption for their generous provision of our monthly CASA Forum meeting room.

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. We remain connected through Kylie Hayden, Claire Suckling and Kate Wait and thank them for their ongoing support. A joint quarterly 'Violence Against Women and their Children' forum run with Victoria Police has been attended by various CASA Forum representatives.

Direct Services

Unfortunately the Department of Human Services was unable to provide us with any statewide data for Sexual Assault Services or Sexual Abuse Treatment Services delivered across Victoria in 2013-14.

The Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL)

SACL co-ordinated 544 CCU's overall in the last financial year, with 478 being from Victoria and 66 from South Australia. Of this total figure, 508 victim/survivors were female and 36 were male.

SACL received 13,219 calls over the same period of which 5421 were on the counselling line, 3519 were on the police/emergency line, and 4279 were through the 1800 number, (afterhours figure only).

Sexual Assault Counselling at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre & Tarrangower Prison.

West CASA & Loddon-Campaspe CASA continue to provide a counselling service at both the maximum and minimum security women's prisons with staff attending one day per week. Training is also provided to prison staff to understand the issues associated with sexual assault and its disclosure. This program is funded by the Department of Justice under the Better Pathways program which is currently being evaluated. With increased prison populations both programs are experiencing increased demand for the services. Research shows that most women in prison have a history of trauma experienced both in childhood and as adults. Having access to a therapeutic counselling services gives women an opportunity to engage with a process of healing and recovery.

Joint CASA/Pap Screen Victoria initiative

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.

A survey of counsellor/advocates and Nurse Cervical Screening providers was conducted in 2013 to gain feedback about the use of the information cards for nurses and the flip pads by counsellor/advocates. An indication of the reluctance of counsellor/advocates to give the information to women has led to most CASAs including this information in their info packs.

The work of the joint CASA/Pap Screen Victoria initiative has continued this year with further training planned in rural areas for Nurse Cervical Screening Providers

Primary Prevention

Schools programs

This year has seen us continue to focus on both promoting and utilising best practice approaches to prevention of violence against women and children, and in particular sexual assault.

There are a variety of programs being delivered by CASAs in both secondary and primary schools enabling valuable working partnerships to be developed with schools. These include the Sexual Assault Prevention Program for Secondary Schools (SAPPSS), Respect Protect Connect, Personal Safety for Primary Schools, Personal Safety Success Training.

Barwon CASAs work with Nelson Park College resulted in a number of adaptations to the original SAPPSS curriculum to make it more accessible to students with intellectual disabilities, as has ECASA's work with delivery of the program at Worawa Aboriginal College. Barwon CASA is currently working with CASA House to have these adaptations included in a revised version of the SAPPSS curriculum, so they can be used within special schools across the state.

Love, Dating and Other Stuff

In August 2013 a number CASAs partnered to attend the Australian Teenage Expo. Teen Expo ran from the 29th August to 31st August 2013 at the Melbourne Showgrounds. CASA attended under the banner of 'Love, Dating & Other Stuff'.

This event was highly successful. Over the 3 days CASA staff met with hundreds of young people. Each young person engaged with us in a way that met their needs, either participating in activities such as the gender quiz, sound relationships, dying their hair with hair chalk or sharing what they think is important for respectful relationships. Others were happy to have а chat and take some flyers.



CASAs attendance at the Teen Expo was a joint partnership between: CASA House, Barwon CASA, West CASA, South East CASA and DVRC (Partners in Prevention network)

Visitors to CASA Forum during 2013-14

Rod Jouning – Vic Police (Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams)

Jason Walsh - Vic Police

Annette Gillespie – Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service

Catherine Barrett – "Norma's Project" (Sexual assault of older women)

Leonie Cleary – Disability & Family Violence Crisis Response Initiative, DHS

Lynette Etheridge 'Porn is Fake' project

Lynne Wenig - Women's Mental Health Network of Victoria

Sally Grimsley-Ballard – Royal Commission community engagement

History Project

Lesley Hewitt has been commissioned to write the CASA History. She has interviewed all CASA managers and other significant contributors and is finalising a first draft. We are looking forward to having our important journey as CASAs documented.

CASA Forum Annual Planning Day

Managers of Victorian CASA's planning day was held in November 2013 held in Albury, NSW (Upper Murray Centre Against Non-Violence hosting). Each year, this provides an opportunity for managers to review the work of the previous year, celebrate our achievements, and to set goals for the coming year. Given that the work of CASA Forum relies on all managers to contribute to our work, we are proud of our achievements.

<u>From left</u>: Jane Vanderstoel, West CASA; Shireen Gunn, Ballarat CASA; Kerry Burns, Upper Murray Centre Against Non-Violence; Charmaine Farrell Northern CASA; Joanne Sheehan- Patterson, Mallee Sexual Assault Unit; Fiona Boyle, Gippsland CASA; Michael Beaumont-Connop, Loddon Campaspe CASA; Helen Bolton, Barwon CASA; Bonnie Travers SACL; Pauline Gilbert, CASA House; Karen Hogan, Gatehouse. Judy Flanagan, Eastern CASA (photographer) <u>Not present</u>; Carolyn Worth SECASA; Mary Clapham SWCASA and Jenny Wing Children's Protection Society.





Planning Day dinner November 2013

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 initiated by SECASA and included Mary Jadresko, Sue Davidson (Loddon Campaspe 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, a manual produced and training for 2014 via the Workforce Development program planned to support the process.



The pilot phase of the two-year making Rights Reality project was completed in February 2014. The Making Rights Reality project provides additional advocacy and support to SECASA clients with a disability to ensure access to counselling, criminal justice processes and the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal. The project was a collaboration between SECASA, Springvale Monash Legal Service and the Federation of Community Legal Centres.

There is a large amount of evidence for the need for accommodations and adjustments to ensure people with a disability can access the justice system. (Beyond Doubt: The experiences of people with disabilities reporting crime, 2014, p.6). People with a disability, and in particular, women with a disability, experience very high rates of sexual violence. Women with intellectual disabilities experience the highest rates of sexual assault (Voices Against Violence Paper 2, 2014, p. 30).

Over the course of the two years of the pilot 108 clients were identified at intake as eligible for the program. Fifty-eight per cent of the 108 clients identified as having an intellectual disability, 19% an acquired brain injury and the remainder who accessed resources provided through Making Rights Reality included clients with vision and hearing impairments, dementia, psychiatric disability, and cerebral palsy. Sixteen per cent had communication difficulties, including one person who used an aid to communicate.

Eighty per cent of the clients accessing the pilot project were female, and 20% male. In 75% of cases, the alleged offender was known to the victim. In at least sixteen percent of cases the alleged offender was in contact with the client in a place or relationship that is associated with the person having a disability. If transport (ie. taxis, public transport etc.) is included this increases to 21%.

Clients were able to access a range of additional services through SECASA and the Springvale Monash Legal Service. These included SECASA staff attending as Independent Third Persons when clients made statements to

police; provision of transport; outreach counselling at community residential units; brokerage for a carer during a court hearing; and outreach appointments by SMLS. Training has been provided on sexual assault to disability services and specialist school staff and clients. Four clients so far have had an award made by VOCAT.

The Making Rights Reality project worker has also participated as a CASA representative on project advisory groups for the Voices Against Violence research project and the Gender and Disability Workforce Development Program.

The evaluation of the project has been completed by Dr. Patsie Frawley from Latrobe University and will be available on the SECASA website in late 2014. Easy read information developed over the course of the project regarding a number of sexual assault related issues is available on the SECASA website www.secasa.com.au/articles/tag/easy-read

The Making Rights Reality Project will continue at SECASA, with the current project worker responsible for coordinating an ITP response, continuing to update resources and arrange training for staff, providing information for counsellor/advocates regarding individual cases, along with secondary consultations for staff from other CASAs, and continuing liaison with the disability sector. A recommendation of the project evaluation report is that the model be rolled out across all Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault.

The pilot project was funded by The William Buckland Foundation, The Reichstein Foundation, Portland House Foundation, Victorian Women's Benevolent Trust, Department of Human Services and Private Donors.

Dagmar Jenkins presented on the pilot project at the 2013 Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability Conference.

Workforce Development

Background

The state-wide Sexual Assault Workforce Development project (SAWD) is a Victorian government funded program to improve the quality and consistency of responses to victim/survivors of sexual assault. The program aims to develop sexual assault workers' competence and confidence and improve service quality and consistency. SAWD is developing and delivering training to new and existing sexual assault workers on a range of topics. In 2011 the project was awarded recurrent funding

2014 marks the eighth year of the Workforce Development Program. CASA Forum, with SECASA as the lead agency, continues to work in partnership to implement, manage and monitor the Sexual Assault Workforce Development program. ASCCA (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.

Members of the reference group throughout the 2013/2014 financial year have included Angela Weller (Australian Childhood Foundation); Antonia Quadara (ASCA); Carolyn Worth (SECASA), Jane Vanderstoel (WEST CASA, joined Feb 2014); Judy Flanagan (ECASA left 2013) Jenny Wing (CPS left 2014); Joanne Sheehan-Paterson (Mallee SAU); Kylie Hayden (DHS); Pauline Gilbert (CASA House, left 2014); Karen Hogan (Gatehouse Centre); Marita Nyhuis (DHS left 2013); Sarah McGregor (SECASA).

Throughout 2013 and 2014 many of the recommendations coming from a focus group of managers and senior staff in 2012, have continued to be implemented.

The Program Management Group and the Program Reference Group meet on a regular basis and continue to support and resource the Workforce Development Coordinator.

The Workforce Development Program

There are two major responsibilities of the Workforce Development Program for 2013-2014;

- 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.
- To distribute and maintain the Community Education Package

Tailored working groups

When introducing new workshops the project has continued to use tailored working Groups. These working groups comprise facilitators and the Workforce Development Training Coordinator.

Several of the workshops planned for 2013/14 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 included; Engaging in cyberspace, Appearing as a witness and court reports, Keeping
mothers in the loop, Art Therapy, Working with refugees and asylum seekers

We have continued to include one day workshops in the training calendar. This was in response to the most recent needs analysis (managers needs analysis October 2012), acknowledging the difficulties for smaller agencies and part time workers committing to two days of training.

A number of working groups have occurred throughout the 2013/2014 financial year. These have been an integral part in the smooth presentation of workshops.

Graduate Certificate

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

The Graduate Certificate recognises the existing skills of workers as well as further developed skills in direct practice with clients. In addition it has engaged participants in a practical community education project to promote awareness of sexual assault prevention and support. Participants are developing 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.

Sheryl Musgrove from SECASA has been the project worker for the Graduate Certificate and the field is indebted for her work and SECASAs commitment to making this possible.

Eight workers from across the field enrolled in the course in 2013. In the 2013/2014 financial year, participants were enrolled in five Workforce Development workshops, as part of their course requirements. Below are the workshops they attended.

- Trauma processing Part 1
- Legal training
- Facilitation and presentation skills
- Trauma and complex presentations
- Engaging in cyberspace:
- Trauma focused cognitive therapy: helping sexual assault survivors process beliefs that stop them from recovering

• Appearing as a witness and court reports Seven participants will complete the course at the end of 2014.

CASA Forum Website

During the 2013/14 financial year, 23,939 unique visitors viewed 85,499 pages on the CASA Forum website. Monthly 1,995 people viewed 7,125 pages. In addition an average of 4,435 PDF information sheets were downloaded each month.

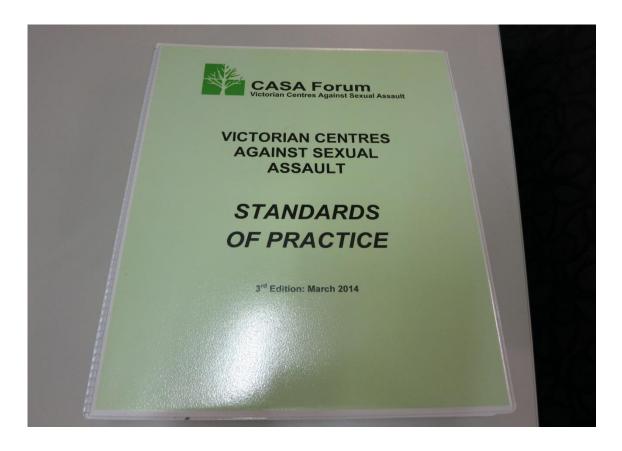
This year 26% of our visitors were using either a mobile phone or a tablet.

Miles Summers has been working on upgrading the website software to the latest version of Silverstripe and updating the design to streamline how people access the information. The new version of the website should be available by December 2014.

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

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. The CASA Forum Standards of Practice have been reviewed and the 3rd edition produced in March 2014.



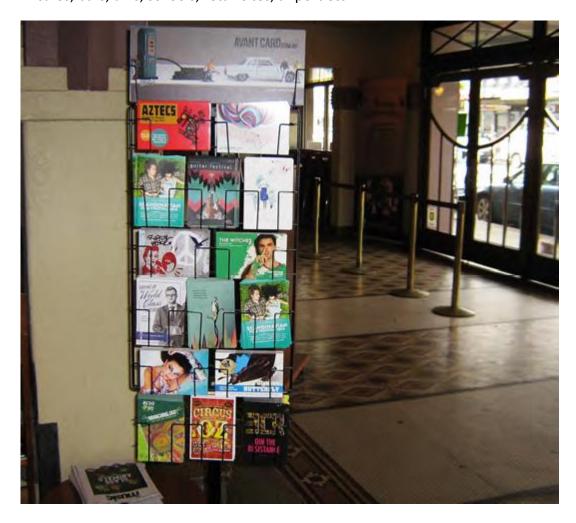
DHS Standards

All CASAs are required to be accredited against new DHS standards by the end of June 2015. CASA Forum representation on a departmental advisory group has enabled feedback to be provided as CASAs are reviewed.

AVANT CARD



CASA Forum produced an Avant card "We Believe You," featured as the front cover of our annual report, with funds donated by fundraisers of an event with the Sharon Shannon Band held in Melbourne in memory of Jill Meagher. 20,720 cards were distributed across Victoria in regional areas and Melbourne in cafes, bars, unis, schools, retail sites, airport etc



The distribution report describes it as: "A visually appealing card on the displays, which caught the eye with its simple and empathetic message. Good pickup rates everywhere we placed it. The independent Cinemas like Sun theatre and Cinema Europa and the Palace cinemas were very good."

The card featured statistics about sexual assault to deliver key messages about sexual assault and promote CASAs in Victoria

National Association of Services Against Sexual Assault (NASASV)

CASA Forum is represented on the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence (NASASV) which is the peak body for organisations which work with people experiencing sexual violence. Shireen

Gunn and Joanne Sheehan-Paterson are the current representatives after Jane Vanderstoel stepped down after three years on the NASASV Board. The following are recent NASASV achievements:

- NASASV have redeveloped the National Standards of Practice for Sexual Assault Services.
- Work to improve Aboriginal Representation on the NASASV Board.
- Review of the NASASV Constitution, including reviewing membership of the Board, processes to support Aboriginal Board Members and broader membership to the NASASV Association.
- Update and development of the NASASV website.
- NASASV has taken responsibility for distribution of all important dates nationally for Sexual Assault Awareness Raising.
- Consultation with the National Centre for Excellence (NCE), incorporating the National Research Agenda
- National Consultation with the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA), Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- National Consultation with the Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children.
- National Consultation with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses for Child Sexual Abuse.

Finances

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.

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 (now Seaford), an MDC site was established in July 2012 with Barwon CASA. Further MDC roll outs are being planned for Gippsland and Loddon Campaspe CASAs. SECASA is also a partner in an additional MDC with a 'Principal centre' site now established in Dandenong.

SECASA has been implementing the first stage of the Just In Case medical (JIC) examinations. 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.

Heather Wellington DLA Medico Legal consultant was engaged by DHS to develop the nurse role and the Principal MDC at Dandenong will have the co-ordination role with the other nurses. We look forward to having nurses working from the MDCs to enhance service provision to clients.

Partnering/Collaborations

Members have contributed to the following:

- Victim Impact Statement Reforms with the Victims Support Agency, Department of Justice.
- Review of the 'Sexual Assault the Law Your Rights" booklet with Brimbank Community Legal Centre (a work in progress following Victorian legal Aid's decision to no longer produce and distribute)
- Sentence Advisory Council consultation (Family Violence Intervention Orders)
- 'Rising to the case for change' submission
- "Sexual Abuse of Children" in Psych article, Gatehouse Centre
- National Action Plan consultation re "Perpetrators stop violence and are held accountable"
- Stakeholder Engagement and the research agenda roundtable participation at the 'National Centre for Excellence'
- Sexual Offences review submission to Department of Justice
- Victorian Legal Aid Jury empanelment processes review
- 1800 Respect sponsored Webinar "Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Assault"
- Regular training provided to Child Protection staff
- 8th Australasian Women and Policing Conference 'Making it happen Making it last!' International conference Arresting behaviours sexual assault, cyberspace and reporting (August 2013).
- DEECD (SSSO's and teachers 'Sexting and online safety'
- (Principals networks Ballarat (May), Bendigo (July) 'Online issues for young people and future challenges'
- 'Children a Resource Most Precious' Conference held in Perth November 2013. "Follow the Yellow Brick Road" about CASAs being part of MDCs and working with the Police and Child Protection.
- 'Walk the Talk' Soroptimists International of Victoria, event, Federation Square 1st December 2013. (Organisation which aims to assist women and girls to be the best that they can). A walk on Sunday 1st December was part of a wider range of activities being held across the south west Pacific region aiming to raise awareness about violence against women and girls. Carolyn Worth was the speaker.
- AASW 'Making connections Learning and Leadership' national symposium (Nov 2013) "Social media and service delivery"
 - "Social media and ethics. Working together practice wisdom vs new technology."

Conclusion

The CASA Forum provides the 15 member services, 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 people who have experienced sexual assault in 2014 - 2015.