



CASA Forum
Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault

Annual Report

2014-2015

Members

Convenor: Jane Vanderstoel - WestCASA

Co-convenor: Fiona Boyle - Gippsland CASA

**Treasurer: Joanne Sheehan-Paterson
Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc**

Media: Carolyn Worth - South Eastern CASA

Carolyn Gillespie - CASA House

Charmaine Farrell- Northern CASA

Di Rokvic – Sexual Assault Crisis Line

Helen Bolton- Barwon CASA (including Wimmera)

Jenna Abbot - Loddon Campaspe CASA

Judy Flanagan - Eastern CASA

Karen Hogan – Gatehouse Centre

Kerry Burns - Upper Murray Centre Against Violence

Mary Clapham- South Western CASA

Shireen Gunn – Ballarat CASA

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.



CASA Forum acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.

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 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. This year Children's Protection Society attends CASA Forum by invitation as recognition of the shared work delivered by the services.

The **Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse** has continued its examination and hearings on failures of institutions to appropriately or adequately respond to disclosures of sexual abuse. What is becoming more apparent to the commission is the lifelong impacts of both the experience of sexual assault and any response that provides safety, belief in the disclosure and treatment of the offender as a criminal.

All CASAs have experienced an increase in client demand from people who have experienced institutional sexual assault. Ballarat CASA has been supporting a group of men who were abused in the Catholic Church and was very involved in supporting them through the Commission hearings in Ballarat. CASA Forum has also responded to the Royal Commission's call for submissions to a number of Issues Papers including Preventing Sexual Abuse of Children in Out of Home Care, Civil Litigation, Redress Schemes and Experiences of Police and Prosecution Responses.

CASA Forum has welcomed the **Royal Commission into Family Violence** established by the newly elected Victorian Government. Both CASA Forum and individual CASAs have made submissions to the Commission. CASA Forum has also been asked to participate in a number of forums that contribute to the knowledge and findings of the commission.

The Victorian government has provided additional funds to most CASAs in 2014-15 to address waiting times for sexual assault support services.

CASA Forum has provided extensive media input across Victoria – The Age, Channel 9, the La Trobe Valley Express, the Ballarat Courier, 774 Melbourne ABC local radio, 3AW with 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.

In 2014/2015 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.

The CASA Forum Conference

Snapshots of Practice: Working with Complexity in Unique & Specialised Ways

The conference was opened by Ken Lay, Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police. There were nine presentations by Counsellor/Advocates from across Victoria exploring the many approaches there are to recovery and healing of sexual assault trauma. Some of the papers are available on the CASA Forum website. <http://www.casa.org.au/professionals/papers-and-reports/>



Relationship with Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS)

Every second month we welcome representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services to consult about legal and policy domains and their relationship to our practice. Through use of the specialist knowledge held in our field we clarify, lobby, raise relevant issues and provide information to State government relating to sexual assault work. We remain connected through Kylie Hayden, Claire Suckling and Kate Waite and thank them for their ongoing support.

The Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL)

SACL coordinated 550 afterhours CCU's in the last financial year. Of these, 489 were for Victoria and a further 61 for South Australia. The bulk of these came from North, West and Southern metro CASA regions (a total of 389 CCU's).

In total SACL received 12,950 calls in the last financial year. SACL is a small service, staffed by 5 part time staff, (including a team leader), and a relief pool. SACL is managed under the Chief Social Work Manager at RWH.

SACL staff work evenings, overnights, every weekend and throughout public holidays.

SACL held a Planning Day in August 2015 and successfully underwent DHHS accreditation in Feb 2015.

SACL presented twice to Victoria University Social work students re crisis counselling & the role of our service.

SACL presented at CASA House Responding to sexual Assault Level 1 workshops with CASA House and provided training to new CASA CCU on call staff.

Sexual Assault Counselling at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre & Tarrengower 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 trauma and its disclosure. This program is funded by the Corrections Victoria in the Department of Justice. With increased prison populations both programs are experiencing increased demand for the services. Research shows that the majority of women in prison have a history of trauma experienced both in childhood and as adults. Having access to a therapeutic counselling service gives women an opportunity to engage with a process of healing and recovery. A highlight this year was the visit to both prisons by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse giving women an opportunity to participate in private hearings with a commissioner.

Joint CASA/Pap Screen Victoria Project

CASA Forum and PapScreen Victoria (PSV) aim to support women who have been sexually assaulted to access cervical screening in a safe and comfortable environment. The project began in 2012 with training for CASA workers from PSV and vice versa.

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 and counselling rooms.

The work of the joint CASA/Pap Screen Victoria initiative has continued this year looking at ways in which we can maintain a focus on work to ensure this vital health screening for women is continuing to be encouraged by CASA Counsellor/Advocates. A joint waiting room poster is planned to ensure ongoing promotion of the issue.

Primary Prevention

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), NCASA's Respectful Relationships Program, Respect Protect Connect, Personal Safety for Primary Schools and Personal Safety Success Training.

Love, Dating and Other Stuff

On 28th & 29th August 2014 a number CASAs partnered to attend the Australian Teenage Expo at the Melbourne Showgrounds. The banner of 'Love, Dating & Other Stuff' gave us opportunities to engage with young people about relationships, consent and a range of aspects regarding sex and sexuality.

This event was highly successful where over the two days CASA staff met with hundreds of young people. Activities and resources developed by CASAs to engage young people included a porn fact sheets, gender quiz, postcards, 'consent is sexy' candy as well as making bracelets. 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 a chat and take some flyers.



Visitors to CASA Forum during 2013-14

- Emily MacGuire – Our Watch – Respectful Relationships Education in Schools (RREiS Pilot Project)
- We farewelled Rod Jouning from Victoria Police SOCIT Coordination Unit as a regular visitor to CASA Forum
- Glen Sullivan, Director of Investigations & John Morison from the Victorian Ombudsman's Office.
- Clare Sargent – Director of Professional Services, Anglican Church
- Wendy Sanderson- Independent review into sex discrimination and sexual harassment in Victoria Police
- Paul Linossier – Our WATCH
- Jeremy Cass – Victorian Legal Aid Appeals Review
- Catherine Folgoni – Monash Health
- Steve Wilson- Sex Crimes Squad, Victoria Police

CASA Forum Annual Planning Day

Managers of Victorian CASAs attended the annual CASA Forum Planning Day in November 2014 in Ballarat hosted by Ballarat CASA. 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.



Specialist Assessment Working Group (Children)

Throughout 2015 the current model has been reviewed by the team who presented training in 2014 (Sylvia Andrew Loddon Campaspe CASA, Maria Pisceroni Ballarat CASA and Sarah McGregor SECASA). The current model is being expanded to provide a more comprehensive and accessible guide to specialist assessments. It is hoped that the updates can be reviewed by the CASA forum in November 2015.

The working group have proposed a research project to further ratify the validity of the current model. An updated literature review will begin before the end of 2015. In 2016 training on the updated model will be re-run. Following the delivery of training, research will be conducted across several CASA's begin to evaluate the new model.



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. The pilot phase of the two-year making Rights Reality project was completed in February 2014.

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 evaluation of the project has been completed by Dr. Patsie Frawley from Latrobe University and is available on the SECASA website along with easy read information developed over the course of the project

The next step has been a successful application to ANROWS (Australian National Research on Women's Safety) to look at: What does it take? Making services accessible to women and girls with disability who experience sexual assault and/or domestic violence. This will be a partnership between La Trobe University, CASA Forum and Women with Disabilities Victoria.

Workforce Development

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.

The reference group is made up of representatives across the funded Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS) and Sexually Abusive Behaviours Treatment Services (SABTS) program delivery sector, the sexual assault research sector and the DHHS. Together they guide the development and content of the workforce development program delivery. This includes a regular needs analysis to ensure the curriculum continues to meet both the needs of beginning and advanced practitioners. The Workforce Development Program provides a total of eleven workshops over 22 days). This allows for some training to be organised around visiting overseas or interstate experts. The program also provided 4 days of SABTS specific training overseen by CEASE. The group are also responsible for the maintenance and distribution of the Community Education Package.

In September 2014 CASA managers and senior clinicians participated in training delivered by Elizabeth Shaw with a focus on Clinical Governance: Challenges for senior practitioners. The conversations were rich and provoked interesting conversations about how we support staff and ensure quality and accountability in the work.

CASA Forum Website

A CASA Forum website sub committee meets quarterly to work on website developments. This year the website has been re-developed and updated. <http://www.casa.org.au/>

DHHS Quality Standards

All CASAs have participated in and been accredited against new DHHS standards by the end of June 2015. CASA Forum representation on a departmental advisory group has enabled feedback to be provided about particular aspects of quality reviewing in relation to service delivery to children and adults who have experienced sexual assault.

National Association of Services Against Sexual Assault (NASASV)

CASA Forum recognises the importance of a national approach to addressing sexual violence and is represented on the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence (NASASV) the peak body for organisations which work with people experiencing sexual violence. Joanne Sheehan-Paterson took up the role of chair and along with Helen Bolton as the current Victorian representatives.

NASASV launched the recently redeveloped *National Standards of Practice for Sexual Assault Services*.

CASA Forum, and all States and Territories have contributed joint effort in developing the National Standards that act as a guide and point of reference to define and promote quality sexual assault services across Australia.

Victoria Police

CASA Forum participated in the review of family violence training for general police members. The invitation came from the new Assistant Commissioner for Family Violence, Dean McWhirter and Assistant Commissioner Kevin Casey, People Command.

The review of the Police Code of Practice for the Investigation of Sexual Assault – Victoria 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 continued to be facilitated regularly by CASA managers at the police academy.

Regional Police/CASA liaison meetings are held quarterly.

Multi Disciplinary Centres (MDC)

MDC's involve multiple agencies working collaboratively to provide an integrated and holistic response to victims of sexual assault from a single location. Better integration and co-location of various agencies has the capacity to significantly improve the response to sexual offending. The MDCs include specialist police investigators (SOCIT), CASAs and Child Protection. Across the state there are four MDCs operational and another two by the end of 2015 they have now become a model for a best practice response to both children and adults who have experienced sexual assault. MDCs now operate at Mildura, Geelong, Morwell, Bendigo, Seaford and Dandenong.

The MDCs aim to:

- Improve and integrate the investigation of sexual offences and child abuse
- Improve the quality of evidence in sexual offences and child abuse cases
- Improve support for victims
- Increase reporting of sexual offences and reduce attrition
- Improve the capacity of agencies to work collaboratively

Just in Case Medical Examinations

The Just In Case medical (JIC) examinations continue as at SECASA as the pilot site. The pilot limit of 20 presentations has now been reached. All CASAs look forward to being able to provide this option for victims of a recent assault access to this option as recognition of the difficulties some people have in making reports to police.

Nurses in MDCs

CASA Forum participated in a consultation about the role of nurses based in MDCs to enhance the provision of specialist health service to clients. It has been disappointing that the role has not been rolled out with a focus on client needs or flexibility to meet different needs in different communities.

Partnering/Collaborations

CASA Members have contributed to the following:

- Regular training provided to Child Protection staff
- IRIS Users working group
- SOCIT training
- ANROWS Practitioner Engagement Group
- Establishing the Connection project – ANROWS research partnership with AIFS, CASA Forum and Alcohol and Other Drug services
- Research partnership with Women's Disability Victoria & La Trobe University
- Royal Commission Project Advisory Group
- Our Watch Respectful Relationships Education in Schools (RREIS)
- Improving Hospitals responses to VAW Working Group
- Violence Against Women and Children Forum

A snapshot of the work being done by some individual CASAs.



Northern CASA has had another very busy year. Like other Victorian CASAs, we successfully prepared for accreditation against the DHHS Standards and were granted certification early in 2015. NCASA has experienced increased client demand across all areas including male referrals, referrals of young people and crisis care. Advocacy by NCASA for people who have experienced sexual assault has included:

- supporting several clients to tell their stories to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Childhood Sexual Abuse
- NCASA involvement in the preparation of submissions to the Royal Commission into Family Violence, both independently and in partnership with other key agencies
- supporting several clients to tell their stories to the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

In 2015, NCASA developed and trialed a new respectful relationships program in secondary schools in the northern metropolitan region. The NCASA Respectful Relationships Program builds on the amassed knowledge from 10 years of NCASA work in delivering the SAPPSS program in schools including, most importantly, student and staff feedback. The new program is responsive to the cultural needs of the northern region and includes a lot more focus on Information & Communication technologies such as the internet, mobile phones and online social networking sites, so commonly used by young people. NCASA has run a number of support groups, including a women's yoga group, a men's group, a young women's group and a support group for parents of young women/teenagers who experienced sexual assault as a result of meeting someone online. NCASA outposts at the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service Family Counselling Services in Preston, at Plenty Valley Community Health in Whittlesea and at Anglicare in Lalor were all well utilised.

NCASA Crisis Care Counsellor Advocate Andrea Guest completed her Masters thesis this year, focussing on the extent of vicarious trauma in a sample of 96 sexual assault counsellors across Australia and New Zealand. Her study found that vicarious trauma levels in this sample were significantly higher than normed averages of trauma therapists. As hypothesised, supervisory relationship and self-compassion were both inversely and significantly correlated with vicarious trauma. It was concluded that, in order to minimise their extent of vicarious trauma, sexual assault counsellors require both internal (i.e., self-compassion) and external support (i.e., a positive supervisory relationship), thereby promoting positive outcomes for counsellors, supervisors, sexual assault agencies and clients.



Dr Cameron Boyd

Counsellor Advocate

Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault

I attended the second conference of the South South Institute on Sexual Violence Against Men and Boys- 'Addressing the Long Shadow', held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from May 25th-29th 2015. The conference was attended by around 50 overseas participants from over 30 countries, in addition to many local Cambodian social workers, doctors, students and activists. I was lucky enough to be one of three Australians in attendance (along with Gary Foster and Patrick O'Leary).

There were some really moving and impressive presentations, particularly from the Ugandan peer support groups (Men of Hope, Men of Peace, Men of Courage). They spoke about the extent of sexual violence against men and boys in the context of civil conflict and the cultural silencing that prevents people from speaking out. (Clearly the focus of the conference was sexual violence against men and boys: it was acknowledged that sexual violence against women and girls also occurs on a massive scale in these contexts). Hearing about the great work they are able to do in such challenging circumstances was really inspiring and also made me appreciate some of the relative comforts of my situation. For example, in the Ugandan refugee camps, due to the extreme levels of homophobia (itself partly a colonial import- another layer of complexity), there is a general suspicion that men who report sexual assault are gay. The workers offering support are therefore seen as being supportive of gay men, and can then be the targets of homophobic abuse, to the extent that workers have received death threats for doing their work.

There were also really delicate gender politics to negotiate, especially with UN funding agencies. A repeated theme from workers (both women and men) working in conflict zones and refugee camps was that it has been very difficult to gain any UN support for providing services (or indeed to gain any recognition) to men and boys who have been subjected to sexual violence. I felt that the Victorian sexual assault service sector really stood out in that regards: a service that has its origins in feminist activism around men's violence to women, now provides excellent quality of service to men who have been sexually abused. It was clear that this has not been the case in a lot of other contexts (both in Australia as well as other countries).

A really notable aspect of the presentation was the creative responses of people and organisations across vastly different contexts, in terms of cultural dynamics, funding arrangements, local political situations, gender relations, the impacts of colonisation, histories of state sanctioned violence (e.g. the Khmer Rouge), and so on. Hearing about the way people did their work in these contexts really put to rest any pre-conceived assumptions (conscious or unconscious) that 'our' responses in wealthy countries are especially advanced or sophisticated.

The next SSI conference is scheduled for New Zealand 2017.

Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc.

Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc. enjoys the collaborative working partnership within the Multi-Disciplinary Centre with Victoria Police and Child Protection Services.

Outreach clinics were conducted in Swan Hill, Robinvale, Ouyen, Dareton, Wentworth, Balranald, Kerang, Sea Lake, Wycheproof, Manangatang, Donald, Birchip, Nyah and Lake Boga and the Mallee Track Districts.

Specialist education programs were conducted for professionals across multi-disciplinary field, including legal services, health services, welfare services and educational organisations.

In collaboration with Victoria Police, the Safety Hints for Adolescents (SHARP) educational program was provided to secondary school students within the region, raising awareness in relation to sexual assault.

The Special Needs Awareness Program (SNAP) was delivered to a number of specialist schools and groups across the region.



The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has continued to keep us very busy with its case study in Ballarat this year in May. We supported a number of our clients who gave evidence to or attended the hearing. We commend their bravery. The Royal Commission is expected to continue its case study in November. Since 2013 we have facilitated a support group for men who have experienced sexual abuse in institutions as well as other forms such as familial abuse. The men are a great source of support to each other and receive much support from the community. The group continues to grow, so much so that we have now put a hold on the numbers to ensure manageability (around 25) and made a few modifications to accommodate this number and have started a wait list.

Group work is also featuring with some of our other clients through our Art Therapy Groups for Adults and Children. One of our experienced counsellor/advocates, [Rebecca Norris](#) was supported through our agency to follow her interests and talents and complete her Masters in Art Therapy. She is now utilising her talents with staff as well as clients.

[Shireen Gunn](#), Manager, and Senior Clinician [Andrea Lockhart](#) presented at the Rural and Remote conference in Shepparton in July on working with men.

South Eastern CASA

Centre Against Sexual Assault & Family Violence

This year SECASA has opened a new Multidisciplinary Centre (MDC) in Dandenong which is the Principal MDC for Victoria. The Frankston pilot Multidisciplinary Centre relocated to Seaford into larger premises having outgrown the original site. We finalised the Easy-read Resources created during the pilot Making Rights Reality project. They are available as a set of eight dealing with sexual assault issues. Our group program has expanded and this year included art therapy, reflexology, yoga, body awareness and employment assistance.

Our social media presence has also continued to expand. We have reformatted our 4 websites to make them mobile phone friendly and have another two sites in development. We have continued to expand our use of Google Plus, Facebook and Twitter. The SARA anonymous reporting facility has been converted from an app to a mobile friendly website. Finally we have continued to work with family violence agencies in the region to improve collaboration and service provision.



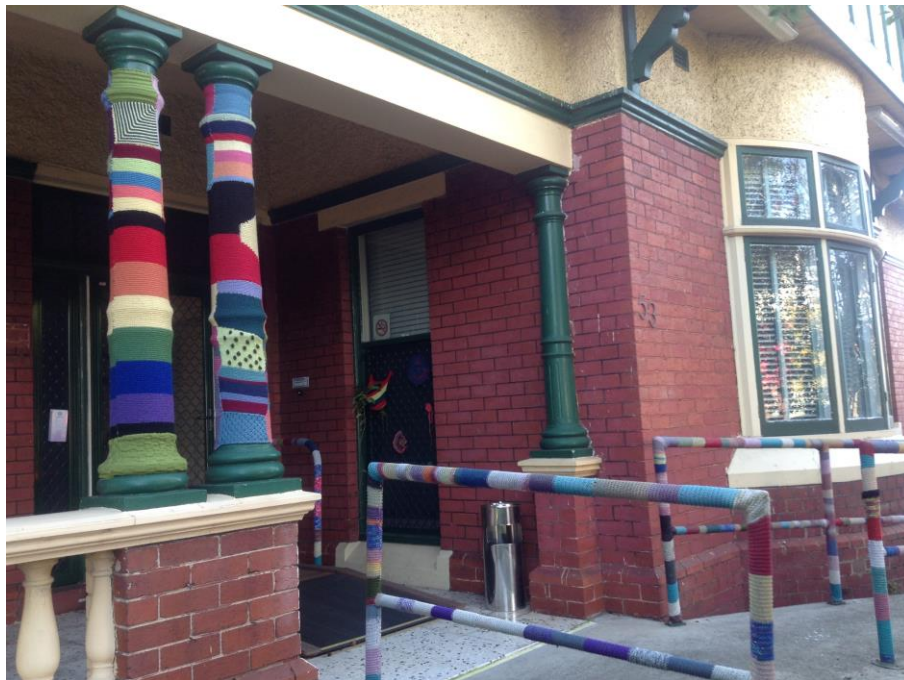
Eastern CASA

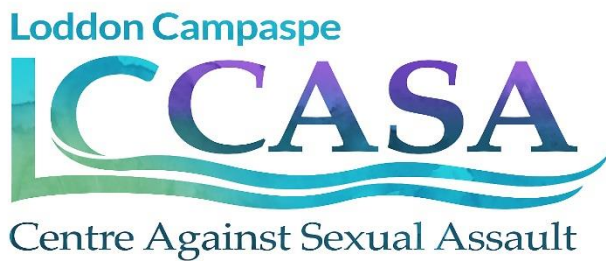
- ECASA, the youngest CASA in Victoria is celebrating its 20th Birthday in 2015.
- ECASA provided counselling and advocacy, crisis care and therapeutic group work for 918 women, children and men in 2014-15.
- The Trauma focused Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (TACT) program, developed by three ECASA counsellor/advocates has been published as a facilitator's manual and client handbook, and a train the trainer program developed and delivered to other professionals, including other CASA counsellor/advocates by way of the statewide workforce development program
- ECASA staff co-facilitated the 'Personal Safety Program for Primary Schools' in two schools and delivered staff and parent education sessions.
- 'Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Assault' and 'Building Foundations for Working Safely with Adult Survivors' workshops have been facilitated for many professionals.
- ECASA's partnership with Women's Health East and Eastern Domestic Violence Service in a media advocacy program has seen another group of sexual assault advocates recruited and trained. These women have been speaking to the media and at public events, giving voice to their experience and challenging misconceptions about sexual assault.



The highlights for the past year has been the development of our Knit into Action project. Launched last year we have run monthly knitting groups for both clients and community members to attend and knit or crochet squares to yarn bomb our own building and in other public spaces. We plan to yarn bomb trees in Footscray Mall during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gendered Violence. Yarn bombing is a way of using a benign traditional women's activity as a peaceful protest tool and to be a little bit subversive.

We have great participation from a Year 9 textiles class from Gilmore Girls High School, knitters who attend the Craft Café in Keilor and women on Community Corrections orders. Our staff also knit and crochet during meetings and lunchtime to add to the pile of squares.





The Loddon Campaspe Centre Against Sexual Assault (LCCASA) provides services across the Loddon Campaspe and provides outreach services to Echuca, Kyneton, Kyabram, Maryborough and the Tarrengower Women's prison. Services are delivered on a twenty-four hour basis to children and adults, both male and female, who have experienced sexual assault and family violence. LCCASA provided a service to 853 clients during the 2014 – 2015 period.

The range of services that LCCASA provide include:

- Counselling for victim/ survivors of sexual assault and their friends and family
- Crisis telephone counselling and 24 hour crisis care for recent sexual assaults and family violence victims
- Medical care support
- Research on the incidence and impacts of sexual assault
- Information and secondary consultation to professional and community members regarding sexual assault
- Professional training and community education
- A program which assists children up until the age of seventeen years old who exhibit problem sexual behaviours and sexually abusive behaviours (SABTS)
- Student supervision
- Reports for courts and tribunals

LCCASA expect to move into the new Multidisciplinary Centre (MDC) in August 2015. The MDC is a co-location of Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT), the Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection and LCCASA. The MDC is focused on supporting people who have been impacted by sexual assault creating a specialist response to sexual offences and child sexual abuse to ensure clients can access comprehensive, timely support and intervention to address their needs in one location.

GIPPSLAND

Gippsland CASA has continued to focus on planning and transitioning to the multidisciplinary centre in Morwell with a number of inductions involving Victoria Police (SOCIT), Child Protection, Latrobe Community Health Service and Victoria Legal Aid. We were also successful in a full accreditation review. Our Clinical Manager, Alison Fonseca, was successful in her application for the ANROWS practitioner engagement group and along with, Joanne Sheenan-Patterson (Mallee Sexual Assault Unit, and will represent CASA forum at the Commonwealth level in respect to research informed practice. We have participated in supporting people in relation to the Royal Commission into Institutional Sexual Abuse and research generated from the commission. Our team have continued to be responsive and agile to community needs and this has involved consistent presence at Lake Tyres Trust and local Aboriginal controlled organisations and residential unit staff support. We were asked to be the lead agency for a Family Violence indigenous strategy planned camp for women and children, it was a great experience. This year has been one characterized by change as we moved our principle site to temporary premises due to organisational growth associated with the MDC. We have ran some successful groups are community wellbeing; some client specific and other a mixture of wider community participation. These have ranged from support craft groups, yoga, comedy nights and the program Living Safer Sexual Lives. Lastly, we restructured the organisation with the intention of future growth and agility in response to the changing political landscape.

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 2015 - 2016. We hope that with the funding of a policy officer who can support the forum and improve and strengthen the contribution we make to the community in raising awareness, ensure access and appropriate service and system responses to our clients.