

**SOUTH EASTERN CENTRE  
AGAINST SEXUAL  
ASSUALT**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2006-2007**

## Manager's review

In the thirtieth year of operation for the South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault (SECASA), it is astounding to reflect on its origins at the Queen Victoria Hospital. Then, there was one psychiatric social worker providing unpaid after-hours counselling in the Emergency Department. Today the agency has 35 workers and covers the southern metropolitan region.

The past year has seen many changes to SECASA. A number of external developments have provided SECASA with an increased budget leading to unprecedented growth in the size of the agency. This has made an internal restructure a necessity. It has also raised the question of whether the agency should diversify its operations or focus on consolidating its position working with victims of sexual assault, domestic and family violence and children and adolescents with problem sexual behaviours and sexually abusive behaviours.

The agency has moved its service provision to three sub-regions - the Inner and Middle South, Greater Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia, and Frankston and Mornington Peninsula. These three areas have senior social workers providing direction and leadership for the teams working in these sub-regions. In addition, a program manager position was created to provide direction for the agency's problematic sexual, behaviours and sexually abusive behaviours programs. It is hoped that the program manager will assist SECASA to successfully adopt the legislative changes coming into force in October 2007 relating to therapeutic treatment orders.

Having started in 1977 as a service providing counselling and support for victims of recent and childhood sexual assault, SECASA has broadened its focus over the past 30 years. Now, as well as providing individual and group work for victims of sexual assault, the agency also provides a 24-hour service for victims of family and domestic violence. This has broadened our response to victims of violence.

Another change has been the development of services for children and young people with sexualized behaviours. This program now has three streams. There is a specific program for children under 10 with problematic sexual behaviours and two programs, Sex Offender Intervention Program (SOBI), and Sexual Assault and Intellectual Disability (SAID) that deal with young people with sexually abusive behaviours. Of these two programs, SOBI is for mainstream young people, while SAID caters for those with cognitive impairment.

Finally, a new service opened in Frankston. The Peninsula Sexual Assault Centre (PenSAC) began operation in January 2007 providing Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula with -a more accessible service. This service is one of just two Victorian pilot services where a Centre Against Sexual Assault is located with Victoria Police. During all the hard work and challenges of the year, SECASA staff has, continued to be a source of inspiration. They have coped with the service broadening its focus and the need for them to broaden their practice in response. The office managers have maintained their sense of balance and humour and contributed significantly to the smooth running of the organization. Everybody at SECASA has continued to create a supportive, pleasant environment and for this I would like to thank them all wholeheartedly.

## Service History

The Sexual Assault Centre was originally opened at the Queen Victoria Medical Centre, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, in 1977. This was the first centre to provide services to victim/survivors of sexual assault in Melbourne. In 1987 the Centre moved with the Queen Victoria Medical Centre to the new Monash Medical Centre site in Clayton. From 1987 to 1993 the centre was known as the Monash Sexual Assault Centre and sat in the Social Work Department at Monash Medical Centre Clayton. In February 1993 the centre moved to separate premises adjoining Monash Medical Centre's Moorabbin Campus and changed its name to the South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault (SECASA)

The Honourable Minister for Health, Mrs. Marie Tehan, officially opened the new premises at Monash Medical Centre Moorabbin on October 8, 1993.

This site houses SECASA's administrative centre, with SECASA also offering permanent and ongoing services at six additional locations and a visiting service at many more sites.

## Services

SECASA provides services within the southern metropolitan region to male and female children and adults who have been sexually and physically assaulted. The centre also works with non-offending family members, partners, caregivers and support workers and children and young people with sexualized behaviours.

The southern metropolitan region encompasses the south-east suburbs of Melbourne and covers the Mornington Peninsula, Westernport, and the growth corridors of Dandenong, Berwick, Cranbourne and Pakenham.

The Department of Human Services's Protective Services refer their clientele to SECASA for a range of specialist services, including assessment and treatment.

Services for children with problematic sexual behaviour are provided across the general SECASA service. Young people with sexually abusive behaviours are seen in the SOBI, and SAID programs. SOBI provides treatment for mainstream young people and SAID provides a service for young people with cognitive impairment.

Respect, Protect, Connect and Feeling Safe Together are programs conducted in secondary and primary schools throughout the entire southern metropolitan region. The Respect, Protect, Connect program celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2006.

The Angela Taylor Child Protection Unit caters for a wider area than most SECASA programs, and is available to all children who live south of the Yarra River. Children living north of the Yarra River can attend the Royal Children's Hospital Gatehouse Centre. Medical examinations are conducted by the Victorian Forensic Paediatric Medical Service at these two facilities.

SECASA, in conjunction with the Springvale Monash Legal Service, operates a joint legal service for clients who live within the southern metropolitan region. The service has operated since October 1995.

SECASA provides a counselling program across the region for those involved with family and domestic violence, and also offers an afterhours counselling service for victims of family violence.

Nine years after its creation, the SECASA website continues to provide a wide range of information that is accessible 24 hours a day.

Finally, SECASA provides professional and community education to organisations and primary and secondary schools throughout the region.

## Location

SECASA is auspiced by Southern Health and provides counselling in a variety of settings. The Centre's administration and some counselling services are based in a house at the Moorabbin campus of Monash Medical Centre in Centre Road, East Bentleigh. Five workers are housed in the hospital annex. SECASA staff also operates in permanent locations in Frankston, Clayton, Berwick, St Kilda, Dandenong and Cranbourne.

The Peninsula Sexual Assault Centre in Frankston is staffed by a team of seven and located within a Victoria Police site. The Dandenong site has six staff members who are located at the Visy Cares Centre. The Cranbourne and Berwick teams are located at the City of Casey's Cranbourne and Berwick Family Resource Centres and the staff at the St Kilda site at the Salvation Army Bridge Project.

SECASA also provides a staff member to attend the Specialist Sex Workers' Court at the Melbourne Magistrate Court once a month. SECASA is committed to providing an accessible service. The service will continue to locate staff members in the region, with Moorabbin serving as an administrative base.

SECASA services include:

- 24-hour crisis counselling and medical care
- Crisis counselling (short-term) for victim/survivors of sexual assault and family violence
- Supportive counselling (medium term/long term) for victim/survivors of sexual assault and family violence
- Counselling for children under 10 with problematic sexual behaviour
- Movement therapy
- After Hours Family Violence Counselling Service
- Treatment programs for mainstream young people with sexually abusive behaviours and for young people with cognitive impairment with sexually abusive behaviours
- Medical follow-up
- Groups for adult survivors, children, adolescents and non-offending parents, partners and caregivers
- Legal service for criminal injuries claims
- Legal advocacy
- Reports for courts and tribunals
- Interpreter services
- Secondary consultation
- Community education
- Professional training
- Student supervision
- Supervision for workers in community agencies
- Research

### **SECASA in St Kilda**

The SECASA outpost in St Kilda continues to offer sexual assault counselling to adults and children impacted by both recent and past sexual assault. The clientele group is diverse, reflecting the population in the area. This includes some of the most marginalised members of our community drug users, homeless, those with mental health issues, street sex workers as well as young professionals and students.

A collaborative approach with other agencies such as Access Health, Sacred Heart Women's Service and Rhed enables SECASA to continue to offer a flexible and responsive service that aims to engage disadvantaged clients. We are also connecting with a number of local General Practitioners (GPs) who recognise the importance of sexual assault counselling and referring their patients to the service. We also offer outreach support to Aboriginal women who are involved in the Winja Ulupna rehabilitation program in St Kilda.

The service is co-located with the Salvation Army Bridge program and provides a comfortable and accessible venue for clients.

The St Kilda counsellors, Sarah and Mary, have been joined by Max, who offers sexual assault counseling specifically for males at the St Kilda location one day per week.

The past year has been extremely busy at St Kilda. Counsellors have provided training and information sessions to workers from the Bridge program, District Nurses and family support agencies. SECASA counsellors continue to attend the monthly Street Sex Workers session at Melbourne Magistrates Court, participate in the Middle Southern Integrated Family Violence services, and are involved in a variety of other local networks including an art Mosaic group run at St Kilda for women who have been impacted by sexual assault.

*Mary Mass*

*Sarah McGregor*

### **SECASA in Frankston**

Frankston SECASA has experienced great changes and challenges in the past year. Originally a two-person counselling service in rooms in a centrally located medical centre, this year there has been an increase in staff and a whirlwind office move in early 2007 into the newly developed Peninsula Sexual Assault Centre (PenSAC), co-located with Victoria Police members.

With new premises and staff, we have provided a comprehensive counselling service to those affected by sexual assault and family violence.

In April 2007 we facilitated an adult women's support group for those who have experienced the trauma of sexual assault. It was a very creative time using wicker garden chairs from home whilst awaiting new office furniture. Fortunately, the participants in our groups were extremely understanding at a difficult time.

From this group sprang a core group of young women (Christine, Christine, Jodie, Racheal, Trinity) who were active in their efforts to raise money for SECASA clients in Frankston. Their wondrous efforts resulted in a food extravaganza dubbed "Feast for Funds" (overflowing with delectable goodies, thank you also to Ashkara), a chocolate drive and the raffle of a mosaic masterpiece created by Trinity. Trinity has donated and hung six mosaic wall pieces for SECASA Frankston, and there have been requests for her to run a Mosaic Workshop Day for adolescents and adults.

The staff members at Frankston are continuing to adapt to challenges and enjoy working with the SOCIT police to provide the best possible service for our clients. Our aim for the coming year is to continue to improve our working relationships with other services in the Frankston-Mornington Peninsula region.

*Susan McDougall*  
*Senior Social Worker*

## **Mission Statement**

To reduce, and ultimately eliminate, sexual assault through individual and social change.

## **Aims**

SECASA aims to provide:

- A comprehensive service which responds to the needs of those who have been sexually assaulted and physically assaulted, including crisis care, counselling, medical care and advocacy
- Information and education to raise community awareness of the nature and incidence of sexual assault, family and domestic violence
- Awareness and prevention focused programs

## Services

### After Hours Sexual Assault Service

SECASA provides a 24-hour crisis care service from the Crisis Care Unit within the Emergency Department at Monash Medical Centre, Clayton. This service helps victims/survivors during the initial crisis following a recent sexual assault. Counsellors provide support, information and advocacy enabling those using the service to make informed choices in relation to reporting to police, legal action and medical care.

Follow-up counselling is offered at East Bentleigh, Clayton, Frankston, Dandenong, St Kilda, Berwick or Cranbourne as well as a number of locations catering for clients with special needs.

From 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007, 212 people aged 18 years and over attended the Crisis Care Unit. Clients under the age of 18 were seen in The Angela Taylor Crisis Care Unit. This is a change in age range. Until this year, 17-year-olds were seen in the adult service. With the advent of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, the service age for our units were changed to bring them into line with the legislation.

### After-Hours Service For Victims Of Family Violence

From 1 February 1999, SECASA was funded to provide an enhanced after hours service for victims of family violence. This service is provided to single women, women with children and same sex couples. Several services cooperate to provide this service - SECASA, WAYSS, WAYSS Domestic Violence Outreach Service and the Salvation Army Crisis Service. SECASA provides the after hours counselling, referral and accommodation in the MediHotel at Monash Medical Centre Clayton or local motels. WAYSS also funds accommodation for people needing emergency accommodation overnight and, along with the Salvation Army, provides a range of support services at 9am the next business day.

Follow-up counselling is provided by SECASA in the outer south. In the inner and middle south, although SECASA provides a partial after-hours service, the follow up counselling is provided by a coalition of Inner South Community Health Service, Connections and Family Life.

From 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007, 49 women and their children attended for after-hours assistance and 34 women and their children were given support over the telephone.

### The Angela Taylor Child Protection Unit

The Angela Taylor Child Protection Unit provides a medical service for all physically and sexually abused children who live south of the Yarra River. Those who live north of the Yarra River can access the Gatehouse Centre at the Royal Children's Hospital. During business hours paediatric forensic medical examinations are conducted in sessions run by the Victorian Forensic Paediatric Medical Service. After-hours medical examinations are provided by an after-hours doctors' roster for sexual assault cases or the Emergency Department Paediatric Registrar for physical abuse cases.

## **Counselling**

SECASA provides free medium to long-term confidential counselling for male and female adults and children who are victims of both recent and past sexual assault and family violence.

Male clients are able to choose either a female or a male counsellor.

Counselling and support is also available to non-offending parents, partners, caregivers and support workers. Some home visits are undertaken and residents of the Queen Elizabeth Residential Complex receive a 24-hour response to any request for counselling.

From 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 there were 9039 counselling sessions. There were 1965 new contacts with the agency. Of the new registrations, 1240 were adult females and 370 were females under the age of 18. A total of 182 adult males were seen, as well as 173 clients under the age of 18.

## **Telephone Counselling And Information Service**

A SECASA counsellor is on duty from 9am 5.30pm each weekday to provide telephone counselling, case consultation and an information and referral service for victims/survivors, their partners, close friends, family members and other agencies.

After hours, at weekends and on public holidays, services are provided by the statewide Sexual Assault Crisis Line. From 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 there were 3775 calls dealt with by the duty workers. There were also 508 secondary consultations with regional agencies, professionals and the Department of Human Services.

## **Problematic Sexual Behaviours/ Sexually Abusive Behaviours Programs**

SECASA provides services for children and young people between the age of four and 18 who have problematic sexual behaviours and sexually abusive behaviours. The under 10s service and the Sex Offending Behaviour Intervention (SOBI) program for children with sexually abusive behaviours covers the southern metropolitan region.

The SAID program is a statewide program which is based at the East Bentleigh site. In 2006 the Sexual Abuse Intellectual Disability (SAID) program was awarded an Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Award Certificate of Merit.

## *SAID program*

### **Group program**

*It has been another busy year in the Sexual Abuse Intellectual Disability (SAID) program. A large number of referrals and some identified client issues led us to introduce a third group program to complement our already established groups on Thursday (12-14 year olds) and Friday (15-18 year olds). The Monday group program focuses on a small group of adolescents who presented with specific attachment disorder issues. Russell, Gael and John facilitated the groups, with Mary contributing where required to cover staff absences. Ongoing development*

*We continued with our model development, with the most notable change being the integration of the New Zealand based 'Good Way Model' (Ayland & West). This model effectively enhances the 'Old Me New Me' model we began in September 2005. A sub-group of our clients has also benefited from the use of 'Love and Logic' principles. In addition, most clients have been undertaking 'Brain Gym exercises with some quite startling anecdotal results. None of these techniques are particularly new, but we have found them to be effective with the client group at whom the program is aimed.*

*The SAID program was fortunate to engage the services of a number of international practitioners, including Kevin Creeden, Rob Longo and David Prescott, during 2006/2007. These therapists are undertaking very exciting work, particularly with clients with an intellectual disability and sexually abusive behaviours. They advocate a child developmentally appropriate framework model. They focus on the impacts of trauma and attachment on brain development. We will continue to develop our thinking along these lines of inquiry and consultation.*

### **Training**

*In late 2006, Gael attended Gail Ryan training at the Kempe Medical Center, University of Colorado. Five SECASA workers have now attended this training over the past three years. Gael found her time there interesting and worthwhile.*

*In February 2006, Russell attended the NAMASTE program in New Mexico, which specialises in working with attachment disordered children in foster, residential and home care situations. A number of client issues were identified in consultation as being common to both the Australian (SAID) and US (NAMASTE) context. Therapists at NAMASTE provided some helpful insights into working with our client groups.*

*Russell, in conjunction with Jo Hatch (Gatehouse Centre), provided training to the CASA forum over four days in late 2006 and early 2007, with approximately 30 workers attending each session. Further training programs were provided for Victorian Offender Treatment Association (VOTA) as well as the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) training calendar by Russell and Gael.*

*Russell was a member of the Department of Human Services Therapeutic Treatment Model working group which commenced in late 2006.*

### **Conferences**

*The work of the SAID program was presented at the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abuse (ANZATSA) conference in Queensland in November 2006 and at the National Adolescent Perpetration Network (NAPN) conference in Albuquerque, NM USA in February 2007. Details can be found in the relevant section of this report.*

### **Grants**

*We wish to acknowledge and thank The Foundation for Young Australians for their continued support (\$10,000 grant in 2005) and the Helen McPherson Smith Trust for providing \$21,600 in May 2006. These grants enable us to continue to develop and run innovative treatment programs.*

*Finally, I would like to thank all SECASA workers for their support of the SAID program, SECASA Manager Carolyn Worth for her continued support, John Bergman for his supervision and group work and Gael and Mary for their hard work. We look forward to another busy and productive year.*

*Russell Pratt  
Manager & Senior Clinician  
Sexually Abusive Behaviours Programs*

## **Work in schools**

### **Secondary Schools Anti Violence Workshops - Respect, Protect, Connect**

The Respect, Protect, Connect program is a joint venture between Women's Health in the South East (WHISE) and SECASA. It has been funded for the past 11 years by the Department of Human Services. The program provides interactive workshops in secondary schools principally in the southern region to participants in Years 7-12. The workshops are conducted as single-sex sessions using young adult peer educators. The broad aims of the program are to reduce violence, promote consent and mutuality in relationships, and to affirm positive and respectful ways for young people to relate to others and themselves.

The program serviced 8102 students in 54 schools during the year. In addition, the program was involved in a number of interesting projects. These included collaboration with the AFL's Respect and Responsibility Project to develop material and deliver presentations to young players in the AFL development leagues, a five-week program with students at Minaret Islamic College, and contributing material for the establishment of a peer education program at West CASA, based on the Respect Protect Connect (RPC) model.

In September 2006, the Respect Protect Connect program celebrated the tenth anniversary of the SECASA and Women's Health in the South East partnership. The project was also formally evaluated. Lara Fergus completed the report, 'An Evaluation of the Respect, Protect, Connect Program', at the end of 2006. The report was launched by Bernie Geary, Child Safety Commissioner and an Executive Summary of the Report was distributed in June 2007.

### **Primary schools protective behaviours workshops - Feeling Safe Together**

The Feeling Safe Together program utilises the successful skills for safety from protective education programs that existed in the 1980s in Australia and overseas. SECASA has enhanced these programs with material strategic to the needs and personal and social difficulties facing Victorian children, their families and teachers today.

The program was implemented by the Mt Eliza South Primary School in late 2006. In other schools, parts of the program have been used to target specific grade levels where child clients of SECASA have benefited from their peers undertaking the Feeling Safe Together program and being exposed to the respectful messages within the program.

## Website

The SECASA website went online in 1999. It was officially launched by the then Minister for Women's Affairs, The Honourable Sherry] Garbutt, in 2000. Since then, the website has been continually improved and extended. This year, the website was given a completely new look and a new website sticker was produced to advertise the address.

Statistics have shown that an average of 12,700 unique visitors use the site per month. There are more visitors to the site on weekdays, with Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays the most popular. The most popular times are 2pm, 1 10am and 11 am. Most visitors come from Australia but there are a significant number of visitors from Canada, UK, India, NZ, USA and Denmark. The information sheets, in PDF format, are downloaded an average of 1400 times each month.

The survey feature of the website has been used continually with new surveys each quarter. Current surveys being conducted are Community Attitudes About Sexual Assault, Why Sexual Assault Is Not Reported and Sexual Abuse and Oral Health. There are also evaluation forms for consumers of SECASA services.

There has been a major site overhaul this year. The look and feel of the site, as well as the back-end software, has received major upgrades. The new site graphics have been designed to give the site a fresh, friendly feel with a distinctly Australian theme.

The navigation has been enhanced to make it easier to locate current location and relevant information rapidly. The database software has been upgraded to cope with the increased demands on the site.

New sections this year include a "K- 12" section which has replaced the children's section. This section hosts resources for children, teenagers and teachers. There is also a 'Workshops' section with information about currently available workshops and support materials that can be downloaded for workshop participants. The 'Cafe' section continues to be popular, with survivors donating many poems, artwork, stories and personal narratives.

Thanks to several community development students who did their placements at SECASA, both the 'Contacts' and 'Books' databases have been updated. The web team has also been looking into new ways to engage youth by utilising emergent technologies such as SMS and chat. This research is to continue. The team is also investigating ways to deliver sexual assault information within the internet community by utilising existing networks.

## Professional education

Professional education is an important activity for SECASA. During 2006-2007, the agency maintained its commitment to this activity and provided training and information in the south east region.

Regular presentations were given to the Emergency Department nurses, residents and paediatric registrars at Monash Medical Centre Clayton, and Emergency Department staff at Frankston and Dandenong Hospitals.

SECASA participated in the Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Units training courses at the Police Academy, the Detective Training courses, and provided secondary consultations to a wide range of local agencies.

Information and education were provided at workshops for the following organisations:

- Victorian Aids Council
- Sexual Assault Reference Committee Department of Justice
- Spa Guy Staff
- City of Casey Maternal and Child Health Nurses
- City of Kingston Youth Services
- Monash University Student Association Women's Officers and Queer Officers
- Monash University Social Work Students
- Open Family Workers
- Out The Door
- Resident Advisors Monash University
- CASA Workers - Working with Young People With Sexually Abusive Behaviours
- Social Workers, Social Welfare Department, Hong Kong
- Pine Lodge Staff
- Frankston Hospital Psychiatric Staff
- Greater Dandenong Community Health Service
- Casey-Cardinia Community Health Service
- Menzies Home Staff
- Casey Hospital Psychiatric Inpatient Unit Staff
- Independent Third Party - Office of Public Advocate
- AASW Workshop A - Forming a Foundation for Working With Clients Who Have Been Sexually Assaulted
- AASW Workshop B - Building Blocks to Safer Sexual Assault Counselling
- Monash Medical Centre Midwives

### **Building blocks to safe sexual assault counselling**

In June 2007 Melinda Dows and Sarah McGregor facilitated their fifth advanced workshop for professionals entitled Building blocks to safe sexual assault counselling.

This full-day workshop has been accredited by the Australian Association of Social Workers for Continuing Professional Education. The workshop is designed for social workers, psychologists and other helping professionals who have contact with clients who have disclosed sexual assault. The workshop aims to provide a theoretical framework for understanding trauma, the impact of sexual assault, and treatment interventions. During the workshop, participants are introduced to treatment techniques drawing mainly from somatic trauma therapy. The facilitators draw from years of experience at SECASA by weaving case studies throughout the workshop.

*Over the past three years we have continued to update and refine our presentation in response to feedback from previous participants. The workshop has received overwhelmingly positive feedback in terms of content and facilitation.*

*Participants have appreciated the use of live demonstrations and practical techniques for supporting survivors of sexual assault. As facilitators, it has been a wonderful opportunity to both reflect upon our practice and share our experiences and learning with colleagues. We look forward to our next workshop in December 2007.*

*Melinda Dows  
Sarah McGregor  
Counsellor/Advocates*

## Group work

In 2006/2007 SECASA facilitated a range of groups. These groups included:

- Dance therapy workshops
- Sexuality workshops
- Mosaic group
- Non offending parents/carers group
- Adult female survivors of childhood sexual assault
- Young women's workshop
- Adult male survivors of childhood sexual assault
- Parents group

*On Wednesday 7 March 2007, SECASA ran its first evening group for the year. Initially it was to be an eight-week support group for female survivors of childhood sexual assault, but it ran for 10 weeks due to the participants' request for an extension. The group was a difficult and challenging journey for both the participants and the facilitators. Issues discussed included trust, betrayal, intimacy and survival. It was a truly inspirational group, during which the women gave each other support and provided the facilitators with many wonderful experiences.*

*As facilitators, the highlight of the group was observing each woman's growth, with the women growing closer week by week. The experience of the group was incredibly rewarding and provided us with strength and inspiration.*

*Melinda Dows  
Harriet Pliakos  
Counsellor/Advocates*

## Community education

Community information sessions are held regularly at Moorabbin, Frankston, Cranbourne and Dandenong. Bi-annual information sessions continue to be conducted for the Frankston, Dandenong, Cheltenham and Box Hill offices of the Department of Human Services and the Frankston, Dandenong, Moorabbin, Blackburn, Melbourne and Knox offices of the Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Units.

SECASA was also involved in Community Safety Week, the Gay Pride March and the Midsumma Festival, where services for the gay and lesbian communities were promoted.

During 2006/2007 the agency was involved in public education forums and information days for:

- Bayside Quilters
- Joy FM
- African Post Natal Group
- Monash Student Association
- Monash University Student Orientation
- Carnival - Midsumma
- Pride March
- Monash University - Student Counselling Staff
- Geelong Law Week - Geelong Grammar
- Kingston Youth Services Health and Wellbeing Expo

## Conference papers/Workshops

"*Working with Children who have been Sexually Assaulted*" - **Sexual Assault Awareness Treatment and Prevention in a Rural Context**, Warrnambool, Victoria - Susan McDougall. Conference Paper.

"*On Our Way to Where. Victoria Police and SECASA Co-location*" - **Australasian Women and Policing Conference**, Melbourne, Victoria - Carolyn Worth. Conference Paper.

"*Intellectually Disabled Adolescents who Exhibit Sexually Abusive Behaviours: What Research into Trauma and Neurobiology is Telling Us*" - **ANZATSA 2006**, Gold Coast, Queensland - John Bergman and Russell Pratt. Workshop.

"*SAID: A Community Based Treatment Program for Intellectually Disabled Adolescents*" **ANZATSA 2006**, Gold Coast, Queensland - Russell Pratt. Poster Presentation.

"*Starting a 'Brain/trauma/attachment' Treatment Program for Intellectually Impaired Adolescents: New Treatment Approaches, Problems and the Role of the Carer/parent*" - **National Adolescent Perpetrator Network (NAPN)**, Albuquerque, New Mexico, US - John Bergman and Russell Pratt. Three-hour pre-conference seminar.

## Special projects

### Peninsula Sexual Assault Centre, (PenSAC)

PenSAC is one of two pilot projects in Victoria of Multi Disciplinary Centres. These centres are co-locations between Centres Against Sexual Assault and Victoria Police. There is a centre in Mildura and the other one in the southern metropolitan region in Frankston.

SECASA staff moved into the new premises in Frankston in January 2007. Victoria Police moved into the building in February. The centre was launched by the Attorney General Rob Hulls and the Chief Commissioner Christine Nixon on 26 April 2007.

It is hoped that the new approach will encourage victims to report sexual assaults to Victoria Police, develop closer relationships between CASA staff and police officers, and increase conviction rates.

### Hong Kong social workers

A group of social workers from Hong Kong's Social Welfare Department, Ms Suk-Fan Man, Ms Hon-Ngor Lau and Ms Wai-ling Lau, spent three days at SECASA where they gained information about services for abused children and toured the new multi-disciplinary centre in Frankston.

### Australian guidelines for the treatment of adults with acute stress disorder and post traumatic stress disorder

SECASA was involved in the development of the Australian guidelines to assist health practitioners to determine the right time for professional intervention and the best approach for helping people affected by trauma. Our involvement specifically related to victims of sexual assault and family violence. These guidelines have since been approved by the National Medical Health and Research Council. The guidelines were launched on 23 May 2007 by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Honourable Bruce Billson MP, at Parliament House, Canberra.

### Mike Lew visit

Mike Lew is the author of 'Victims No Longer', which is the classic guide for men recovering from sexual assault. Mr Lew was brought to Australia by SECASA, where he conducted a workshop for professionals on 'Advanced skills: Working with Male Survivors of Sexual Assault' and hosted a two-day residential weekend for male survivors of sexual assault.

*Over the period I have been working with male survivors of sexual assault one of the main reference books I use is Victims No Longer by Mike Lew. In 2005, I started communicating with Mike about visiting Melbourne for a residential weekend for male survivors of sexual assault. This event took place on the weekend of 16 March 2007, with 26 men traveling to Maldon in country Victoria. The men attended from all over Victoria and southern New South Wales. Mike and I were assisted by Shaun Goldberg, a psychologist from the Victims Assistance Program.*

*Following the residential weekend, Mike ran a professional development day for 70 people in Melbourne's CBD. Workers in the field were impressed by Mike's natural way of presenting and his respect for everyone's expertise.*

*SECASA is planning to make these visits a regular event.*

*Max Clarke  
Counsellor/Advocate*

## **Black Rock**

Black Rock, a play by Nick Enright, was produced by 9minds at the Gas Works Theatre. The production company donated a proportion of each ticket to support the work of SECASA.

## **Mosaic Groups**

Visual artist Anne Riggs ran two mosaic groups with SECASA counsellors for Frankston and St Kilda clients. The purpose of the groups was to provide participants with the opportunity to work through their trauma by utilising a visual arts medium.

## **Sexual Assault and Oral Health Project 'Bridging the Gap: The Impact of Sexual Assault on the Oral Health of Adult Victims/Survivors'**

This project was undertaken by Allison Payet during her student placement at SECASA. The purpose of this project was to expand on the current body of literature around the impact of sexual assault on the oral health of adult victim/survivors, gain an understanding of it in an Australian context, investigate adult survivors' access to dental care, examine their experiences of dental treatment and explore the awareness of dental professionals around sexual assault and the implications for their practice. The project has been extremely successful and has provided recommendations on the best ways to work with clients who have experienced sexual assault.

These recommendations were based on the data collected from both survivors and dental professionals. The research project had two main objectives:

- 1) To develop a sexual assault information series for dental professionals
- 2) To produce a resource pamphlet encouraging oral health care. The pamphlet will be informed by dental professionals and dental patients who contribute to the research project.

As part of the study, Allison collected 90 responses from victim/survivors, dental professionals and counsellor advocates. The main findings were that some victim/survivors do fear dental treatment due to their experiences of sexual assault and therefore need for their dental professionals have a greater awareness and provide support in a dental setting. It was concluded that dental professionals are largely unaware of the impacts of sexual assault on oral health and have indicated a need for training and support in this area.

The Australian Dental Association is now involved with this project. They are advertising the report in their journal and will publish an editorial to raise awareness of this issue amongst their membership.

## **Springvale Monash Legal Service/ Secasa Joint Legal Service**

This service has provided a high quality legal service for SECASA clients for the past 11 years. The legal service provides assistance in relation to the following:

- Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal
- Appeals to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal
- Action Against Religious Bodies
- Civil Actions Against Offenders where appropriate
- Family Law and Wills issues related to sexual assault
- Liaison with Medical Practitioners Board
- Assistance with Complaints to the Health Service Commission
- Sexual assault in a therapeutic relationship
- Advocacy/support for complainants required to give evidence in criminal proceedings
- Family violence issues and Intervention Orders arising from sexual assault
- Workplace pressure to provide sexual services
- General advocacy in relation to the above with Housing Authorities, Police, Department of Social Security, Department of Human Services and Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Law Institute

The legal service maintained this focus when the Bracks' amendments to the Criminal Injuries Legislation brought pain and suffering back as a category from 1 January 2001 in relation to compensation for victims of sexual assault. The legal service continues to provide an amazing service to SECASA's clients. Meghan Butterworth, the Clinic Supervisor, has been on leave for 12 months. During this time Gayathri Paramasivam has ably provided supervision and support to all the students and volunteers.

## Meeting Representation

- Frankston Paediatrics Meeting
- Bayside Youth Network
- Cardinia Shire Youth Services Network
- Casey Youth Services Network
- Westport Family Violence Network
- Cunningham Dax Committee
- Dandenong Regional Welfare Group and Springvale Workers Coalition
- SECASA/Police Liaison Meeting
- Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault Forum
- Dandenong Youth Network
- South Eastern Migrant Women's Health Network
- Early Interventions Response Pathways SSCRSA Sub Committee
- ECASA Advisory Committee
- Glen Eira Youth Services Network
- Inner South Family Violence Network
- ISEPICH PCP Executive
- Jewish Taskforce
- Joint Legal Clinic Steering Committee
- Kingston Bayside Youth Network
- Primary Care Partnerships Peninsula, Greater Dandenong
- Peninsula Indigenous Action Group
- Visy Cares Tenants Meeting
- Victorian Institute of Forensic Services/CASA Forum Liaison Meeting
- Vic Safe Committee
- Victoria Police SOCA Units Frankston, Dandenong, Moorabbin, Knox, Box Hill
- Southern Collective Against Violence and Abuse
- Westport Counsellors Group
- Statewide Steering Committee To Reduce Family Violence
- Statewide Steering Committee To Reduce Sexual Assault
- Same Sex Attracted Youth Workers Network Rainbow Group
- CEASE
- Victorian Offender Treatment Association
- Violence Against Women Community Attitudes Project. Vic Health
- WHISE/SECASA Reference Group Respect Protect Connect
- Sexual Assault Women and Cognitive Impairment Reference Group