As the organisation grows, the capacity of the staff to provide an accessible client centred service seems to increase. As well as providing face-to-face therapy for children and adult clients, a wide range of alternate approaches have been offered.

Alternate approaches have included:
- Chi Ball classes
- Mosaic and clay groups
- A weekend retreat for male survivors
- Protective behaviours groups for children
- Heart-strong women’s group.

There have been several ongoing and new projects:
- The Making Rights Reality project has moved into its second year, providing additional support for clients with a cognitive impairment or communication difficulty.
- The Joint Legal Clinic between SECASA and Springvale Monash Community Legal Service has over 100 active files of people applying for compensation.
- Our social media program continues to grow and change and a YouTube Channel has been added to Facebook, websites and Twitter.
- A Sexting Information Pack “Respect Me, Don’t Sext Me” has been produced and distributed to secondary schools in Victoria.

A second Multi-disciplinary Centre is being developed in Dandenong where SECASA will co-locate with Victoria Police, Department of Human Services Child Protection and the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine. The Frankston Multi-disciplinary Centre, PenSAC, will relocate to new premises in Seaford. Plans have been drawn up for the renovation of the East Bentleigh premises. A new service has commenced at Monash University with a worker spending time on both the Clayton and Caulfield campuses.

There have been a number of staff changes with workers going on maternity leave, reducing their hours to spend time with new grandchildren and taking time off to complete study.

As SECASA moves into its 37th year, it continues to evolve and change in order to deliver a first class service to clients.

During all the hard work and challenges the workers continue to be a source of inspiration. They have coped with the service broadening its focus and the requirements for them to broaden their practice in response.

The administration team have maintained their sense of humour faced with constant interruptions and demands on their time and have made the service run smoothly.

Each year I am amazed at the range and quality of the work undertaken by the workers at SECASA.
Our mission
To reduce, and ultimately eliminate, sexual assault and family violence through individual and social change.

Locations
Over the past 37 years SECASA has moved from having one location to being geographically accessible for clients within the southern region of Melbourne. Services are provided in:
- East Bentleigh
- Frankston
- Rosebud
- Clayton
- Dandenong
- Pakenham
- Cranbourne
- St Kilda.

History
The South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault began in 1977 when a service was established at the Queen Victoria Medical Centre, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. This was the first sexual assault centre to be established in Victoria.

It moved to Monash Medical Centre, Clayton when the Queen Victoria Medical Centre moved there. It was known as the Monash Sexual Assault Centre. In 1993 the centre moved into the community and the premises in East Bentleigh were opened by the Honourable Minister for Health, Marie Tehan.

Images: Artwork created by people affected by sexual abuse in art groups run during the year.
On 9 April 2013, SECASA began offering sexual assault and family violence counselling to students at the Clayton and Caulfield campuses of Monash University.

33 students have accessed counselling services across both campuses. Referrals have come mainly through the University Counselling Service and the Safer Community Unit.

Consistent referrals over both semesters highlight an ongoing need for SECASA services at the university.

Students have sought counselling and support for a variety of reasons including:

- Witnessing family violence in their childhood
- Experiencing family violence in a relationship
- Experiencing childhood sexual abuse
- Experiencing a recent sexual assault.

SECASA’s presence at the university has also provided opportunities to deliver workshops to staff and students on the issues of sexual assault and family violence.

Joanne Ronalds, counsellor/advocate.

Our locations

St Kilda

The St Kilda office of SECASA is located in a self-contained flat at the front of the Salvation Army Bridge Centre in Chapel Street.

Counselling services can range from crisis, to short or long term as required.

The space is used primarily by four counsellor/advocates: Mary Mass, Dagmar Jenkins, Jessica Miranda and Wendy Miller. Donovan Pill provides a weekly male counsellor/advocate presence.

Two members of staff also work out of this office on projects; Sarah McGregor on the Workforce Development project, and Dagmar Jenkins on the Making Rights Reality Pilot Project.

Jessica Miranda has assisted with SECASA’s Mosaic Art Group and also facilitated the Stars Program Camp for young women.

In 2012 we were fortunate enough to have a Monash University social work student, Sophie Gilmore, doing her final placement at the St Kilda office. Sophie is now employed at SECASA and works from the Dandenong office.

The St Kilda premises offer a homely atmosphere for staff and clients, close to public transport, with onsite parking.

Clients come from a variety of backgrounds and socio-economic status. Some are living a very marginalised or isolated existence, struggling with issues of homelessness, mental health and/or substance abuse difficulties.

Others may appear better resourced externally, including students, young professionals and parents. All share a need for validation, respect and a supportive counselling environment.

While SECASA provides services to both adults and children, the rates of referral for children are lower at St Kilda: once again a reflection of the area.

Mary Mass, Dagmar Jenkins, Wendy Miller, Jess Miranda, Donovan Pill

Monash University

On 9 April 2013, SECASA began offering sexual assault and family violence counselling to students at the Clayton and Caulfield campuses of Monash University.

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Joanne Ronalds, counsellor/advocate.
Pakenham

2012 saw SECASA spreading its wings with a new presence at Pakenham. One might ask “Why Pakenham?” But actually, why not?

The Cardinia Shire is called the growth corridor. With an annual growth of 6.7% and an estimated five families moving in each day, Cardinia is Victoria’s third fastest growing municipality.

In Cardinia, family violence is in the top five main categories of child protection involvement, and sexual assault numbers have increased from 28 to 102 in 2010 – 2011.

SECASA is based at My Place, a popular youth centre in the heart of Pakenham. Collaboration of services is the way of the future, and My Place is a mini hub of services available for young people, including Early Life Mental Health Service (ELMHS), South Eastern Alcohol and Drugs service (SEADS), Youth Support + Advocacy Service (YSAS), Oakwood School and Marillac, among others.

Counsellor/advocates Laurenza Buglisi and Rochelle Pereira have provided counselling and advocacy services to over 30 clients in the last year.

Several information sessions and professional development workshops were run by SECASA staff at Pakenham for over 60 professionals from various organisations including Connections, Windermere, LINK Employment & Training, Youth Justice, MOIRA Disability & Youth Services, Wesley Mission, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), and Pakenham Secondary School.

The information sessions and workshops included ‘Managing disclosures’ and ‘Working with clients who have been sexually assaulted’.

SECASA staff presented service information to general practitioners and schools in the area.

They also attend the Casey Youth Network, Cardinia Family Violence Network and the Cardinia Youth Network. Meetings and members have warmly welcomed SECASA, given the need in this area.

Feedback from clients includes:

“I no longer feel like a freak as there are so many young people around getting help.”

“This is the coolest thing that has happened. I can now be regular with my SECASA appointments as I can actually walk to see my counsellor and don’t have to depend on others for a ride.”

SECASA Counsellor Rochelle Pereira confirms this: “I find it really beneficial from my client’s point of view as I can easily get information from other services, have case consults and make referrals without even picking up the phone.”

“This is good as I can visit my GP, meet my counsellor and get free internet access at the internet café at the same place.”
Our services

SECASA provides services across the Port Phillip, Bayside, Kingston, Glen Eira, Stonnington, Mornington Peninsula, Westernport, Greater Dandenong, City of Casey and Cardinia Shire. Services are provided on a twenty-four hour basis to children and adults, both male and female, who have experienced sexual assault and family violence. 2275 new clients were provided with a service in 2012-2013.

The range of services includes:

- 24 hour crisis counselling and medical care
- Legal service for criminal injuries claims
- Counselling for victim/survivors of sexual assault
- Reports for courts and tribunals
- AWARE program
- Interpreter services
- ANCOR assessment for families living with an offender on the Sex Offender Register
- Secondary consultation
- Professional training
- Creative arts therapy
- Community education
- Making Rights Reality for clients with a cognitive impairment or communication difficulty
- Student supervision
- Research
- Groups and schools programs
- Social media

AWARE program

The AWARE program provides services for children with problematic sexual behaviour and young people with sexually abusive behaviours between the ages of 10-18.

Schools program

Respect Protect Connect (RPC) and Feeling Safe Together are programs conducted in secondary and primary schools.

This year, these programs provided workshops and whole of school input to over 6000 secondary and primary school students.

Legal services for criminal injuries claims

For the past 20 years Springvale Monash Community Legal Service and SECASA have run a joint legal service specialising in Victims of Crime Tribunal applications. This clinic is a partnership between Monash Law Faculty, Springvale Monash and SECASA.
In 2004 the Victorian Law Reform Commission concluded that “It is clear that the criminal justice system offers people with a cognitive impairment very limited protection against sexual assault. However, with adequate assistance, many people with a cognitive impairment can tell the police what has happened to them and can give evidence in court.”

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

The Federation of Community Legal Services took the lead and after six years the project reached its target of $400,000.

In February 2012 MRR began as a partnership between the Federation, CASA Forum, Springvale Monash Community Legal Service and La Trobe University.

SECASA provides direct services to victims of sexual assault with a cognitive impairment or communication difficulty.

All SECASA workers and several from other CASAS have been trained by the Office of the Public Advocate (OPA). Training has also been provided by SCOPE on working with clients with complex communication needs.

Springvale Monash Community Legal Service provides an outreach service for SECASA clients, advising them about VOCAT applications.

Several community education sessions have been run with disability services, and a set of easy read resources has been produced with information about sexual assault.

SECASA collaborated with OPA to review and update the protocol between the two organisations, with a launch on 4 March 2013.

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

Dagmar Jenkins Counsellor/Advocate

Judy Flanagan, ECASA; Dagmar Jenkins MRR Project Worker; SECASA; Carolyn Worth, SECASA; Allan Elliott (OPA); Colleen Pearce, Public Advocate at the launch of Making Rights Reality.

...the project has doubled the number of clients seen at SECASA with a cognitive impairment or communication difficulty.
Projects

Calendar

With the assistance of artist Anne Riggs and the women who generously share their art work with the world, SECASA has produced five calendars.

Each year these calendars are distributed to clients, workers and the general public to raise awareness of sexual assault and the amazing women who use their trauma to influence their creativity.

Heart-strong women’s group

An eight week healing and supportive space for mature women impacted by sexual assault and family violence, run by Counsellor Sally Kemplar.

Clients’ thoughts at the end of the program:

“Today was great as usual for me.”

“I realize how being naive left me vulnerable to exploitation.”

“One on one counselling followed by group counselling stops me beating up on myself because I can see others struggling with ‘stuff’ that’s like mine - so it’s not just me or mine anymore - it gives me a holistic context for understanding trauma.”

“Now I know I hadn’t processed my initial rape. Now I am, and so now I can move on into healing and integrity.”

“Now I have the freedom to be me, not what you want me to be, or tried to make me be!”

“So good to hear others’ experience. Now I can allow myself to grow. I can now accept what I cannot change and work on what I can.”

Mosaic and clay groups

SECASA runs, with Anne Riggs, two art groups a year. The art from these groups is used to illustrate the SECASA calendar. Clients who attend the groups find them of great value in assisting them to develop their creativity and address trauma.

We will not go quietly

We will not go quietly is an e-zine of stories from sexual assault survivors. The cost of the printing was paid by for by crowd funding and SECASA.

Identifying and reporting on sexual assault – SRS training workshop

On behalf of the Department of Health and Leading Age Services Australia (Victoria), SECASA was asked to develop and conduct this workshop for proprietors and staff of Supported Residential Services (SRS) establishments.

Counsellors Laurenza Bugisi and Wendy Miller shared the role of lead facilitator, supported by workers from local CASAs for sessions at Ballarat, Bendigo, Dandenong, Ringwood, Geelong and City of Melbourne.

Respect Me, Don’t Sext Me anti-sexting pack

Funding was provided by the Victoria Law Foundation to produce a kit for schools which included ‘Dicing with Danger’ and ‘Sexting Fast Forward’ board games, poster, story cards with questions, 30 post cards, ‘Fortune Teller/Chatterbox’ activity sheet, teacher’s resource with activities and background information about sexting and information sheets for parents and students.

The kits were assembled by staff and volunteers and sent free of charge to primary and secondary schools in Victoria. Specialist legal advice was given by Victoria Legal Aid and Youthlaw.

Victims no longer weekend workshop

In March 2013 SECASA organised the 7th annual Victims No Longer weekend workshop in Maldon, Victoria. These intensive three day workshops provide an opportunity for male survivors of sexual abuse to come together in a safe and supportive environment with experienced practitioner Mike Lew.

Mike is the author of Victims No Longer: The Classic Guide for Men Recovering from Sexual Child Abuse. He travelled from Boston, USA to facilitate the workshop.
Students at SECASA

SECASA contributes to the education of undergraduate and postgraduate students by offering placements, with counsellor/advocates or other nominated workers acting as placement supervisors. This year SECASA offered a placement to student social work student Kara Hanson.

Two second year medical students were also with us from Monash University as part of their Community Based Program. These students undertook a project on cognitive impairment and online safety called ‘Dealing with Danger’. They produced cards with messages about staying safer online to use with clients with a cognitive impairment.

Gay Pride March and Midsumma Festival

As part of SECASA’s commitment to the Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Intersex (GLBTI) community, we ran a stall at the Midsumma Festival and we walked in the Gay Pride March.

Say No to Violence

SECASA joined the Southern Middle Region Inner Middle Family Violence partnership, led by Joanne Moss, Program Manager, Primary Health Division. This was the fifth year of this walk, which aims to raise awareness and provide information to the general community about zero tolerance to violence against women and children. A list of the names of women and children killed in family violence this year was very moving.

One Billion Rising

February 2013

One Billion Rising is a global day of action on 14 February 2013 to fight back against the violence experienced by women around the world. SECASA financially supported this event which was held in Federation Square and attracted hundreds of women, who danced and listened to speakers.

Information about the SECASA mobile phone app Sexual Assault Report Anonymously (SARA) was displayed in Federation Square.

Community events

SECASA workers and clients attended several community events in support of our mission.
What the clay and mosaics group has meant to me...

“The group at Cranbourne ran for 12 weeks which didn’t rush us through the emotions we needed to work through. It gave us plenty of time which is important as I have done counselling and groups before and never seemed to get down to those deep feelings like I did with this group.

I also felt comfortable very quickly as we didn’t speak about what had happened to us, we just shared working our feelings out with clay and then mosaics. Both have their own way of working out emotions with your hands and creativity.

I thought I wouldn’t be able to do them, especially clay, as I had been told when I was a child that I was no good at anything.

I have realised that’s part of the abuse: to degrade and demoralize and blame the child. (I was 3 years old when it started by a close relative that I trusted and loved). I protected myself by not ever being alone with him by the time I was eight. When I was 22 years old I was raped by a stranger.

Most important to me was not to ever let any of this affect my children. While they were growing up I focused on being a good mum and being there for them. I had lots of counselling so I didn’t warp them with the anxiety etc caused by my experiences.

Then in 1998 when my father died (who had always been there for me to talk to) my daughter was being raped and sexually abused by a neighbor’s older son. She didn’t tell me till she was 12 years old because she thought he would kill her family if she told. When I found out I was devastated. I thought I had protected my children. Then my oldest daughter was date raped and also didn’t tell me for a few weeks as she thought it was her fault.

This affected me more than when it had happened to me as I believed that the one thing I had done well was to be a good mum and protect them. So much for that, I hadn’t even done that so I wasn’t even good at being a mum which reinforced everything I had been brainwashed with as a child.

In 2008 I found out I had breast cancer and had to fight for 4 years to stay alive. I realised I was a good mother because I wanted to stay alive for my family. I fought like hell to just live a day at a time.

Learning to mould clay to work through my feelings of anger and low self-esteem has helped me so much. In working out that anger, I then decide what to do with my creation at the end: I can either destroy it, bury it or when it goes in the kiln it will all be burned up. Then you can create something beautiful from something ugly and cruel.

Now I know I cannot protect anyone but I can be there and listen and show them how to work through their feelings in a positive way, and this way their life will be good most of the time. Because I’ve learnt how to at this group.”

Margaret
Funding

Sexual Assault Support Services – Department of Human Services 2,692,623
Mental Health – PDSS – Department of Health 155,008
Sexually Abusive Treatment Services – Department of Human Services 821,216
Principal Multi Disciplinary Centre – Department of Human Services 577,902
Statewide Workforce Development 142,427
Family Violence Support Services/ Enhanced After Hours Response 487,571
Federation of Community Legal Services – Making Rights Reality 126,039
TOTAL: $4,082,391

Our supporters

Each year the Moorabbin Lions Club and the Moorabbin Ladies Auxiliary make a generous donation to SECASA to help us restock our clothing and other items in the Crisis Care Unit.

We thank all our supporters:
Moorabbin Ladies Auxiliary 1,000
Lions Club of Moorabbin 1,000
Anonymous Client 1,000
Janine Rowan 200
Fiona Tirelli 500
Linda Nayna 100
Anonymous Donor 200

Donations

SECASA has received many items to help our clients, from several organisations. The Bay Quilters have again donated beautiful quilts, which bring comfort and pleasure to some of our most damaged clients, both children and adults.

We thank everyone who made donations to SECASA:
Yarra Valley Country Women’s Group Trauma dolls
Monbulk Country Women’s Group Calico dolls, quilts, hand knitted children’s clothes, trauma teddies
Sai Organisation of Australia & Papua New Guinea Care packs
Helen Heiman Friendship Group Toiletries/toilet bags
Salvation Army Doveton Gifts for clients
Lions Club of Clarinda Blankets, trauma bears
Meg Watkins Overlocker, sewing machine, material
Lorraine Grey Material
Grace Pavone Material
Ellen Mason Comfort dolls
Bay Quilters Quilts
Mums Supporting Families in Need Inc Gifts for clients

Mums Supporting Families in Need Inc

This is a group of mothers who accept donated items and give to them organisations that deal with disadvantaged families. It is a not-for-profit organisation, formed in 2012, with drop-off locations across Mornington Peninsula, Rosebud, Dromana, Tyabb, Hastings, Mornington, Frankston South, Seaford, Carrum Downs, Aspendale Gardens, Noble Park, Wonga Park, Cranbourne, Langwarrin and Mt Evelyn.

Flower details on quilts by Bay Quilters
Marilyn Lissenberg and Jessie Brent from Moorabbin Lions Club hand a cheque to Carolyn Worth
Melissa Webb and Jodie Harris: Easter and “Christmas in July” donations to SECASA
Contact us

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Web: www.secasa.com.au

Mail

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East Bentleigh, 3165
Victoria, Australia

Service locations

East Bentleigh
SECASA
11 Chester Street
East Bentleigh

Frankston
PenSAC
374 Nepean Highway
Frankston

Rosebud
Community Information and Support Service
878 Point Nepean Road
Rosebud

Cranbourne
Cranbourne Community Information Service
156 Sladen Street
Cranbourne

Cranbourne Integrated Care
150 Sladen Street
Cranbourne

St Kilda
Salvation Army Bridge Project
12 Chapel Street (between Alma Road &
Dandenong Road)
St Kilda

Dandenong
YSTOP
39A Clow Street
Dandenong

monashhealth.org