

# Annual Report 2011-12

# NSW Rape Crisis Centre

Incorporating 1800RESPECT the National Sexual Assault, Domestic & Family Violence Counselling Line

*After 9 years of marriage I have left. There is a 2 year protection order on him and the locks have been changed. I want to give a huge, huge, huge thank you to all the people I have spoken with. I can't believe the support out there. 1800RESPECT is a fantastic service. If it wasn't for 1800RESPECT I would probably still be sitting here worrying he's going come home drunk".* **Client**

*Promoting awareness is the first step in stopping sexual assault and domestic violence. I am proud to support NSW Rape Crisis Centre and to be part of this essential work.*

**Lauren Jackson, Patron**

## Why a Gender Analysis

In 7% of sexual assaults the victim is an adult man, this means that 93% of those who experience this violence are women and children. Women are the offenders in about 2% of sexual assaults. This means that 98% of sex offenders are men.


Sexual offences are crimes in which the offender seeks to hurt, dominate, humiliate and terrorise. Underlying this is a sense of entitlement by the offender and a lack of regard for the rights or feelings of the person they are assaulting.

The only societal context in which such violence can occur is one in which one gender is dominant. In our societies today, the male gender remains dominant (this is referred to as patriarchy). Where this domination creates a belief, by a minority, that such behaviour is their right, sex offences occur.

Understanding the gendered nature of sex offending is crucially important if we are to prevent sexual assault. To achieve change in the first instance the attitudes, beliefs and culture that support inequality between women and men must be challenged and

neutralised. This cultural change must include reframing our understandings and use of power. The belief by some that they have the right to behave criminally towards others may then be reduced and ultimately eliminated.

The task of reducing and eliminating sexual assault is one which will be achieved over the generations. Much work to eliminate this terrible crime has been done, unfortunately there is still much to do. Together and with determination the changes that are needed can and will be made.

Regardless of their gender, anyone who experiences sexual assault is entitled to compassionate, professional supports and a swift response from the criminal justice system. The role of gender in sexual assault is not stated to demonise men. In fact most men are highly ethical in their relationships with women. It is a minority of men who are responsible for this extremely destructive criminal behaviour that appals us all. 

**NSW Rape Crisis Centre is a centre of excellence in the provision of services to anyone who has experienced sexual, domestic or family violence. We will work until we achieve a society free of violence.**



NSW Rape Crisis Centre P.O. Box 555, Drummoyne NSW 2047  
Counselling 24/7 NSW Rape Crisis Centre 1800 424 017, **Online** [www.nswrapecrisis.com.au](http://www.nswrapecrisis.com.au)  
National Sexual, Domestic & Family Violence 1800 737 732, **Online** [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au)  
Admin Tel 02 9818 7216 Fax 02 9555 5911 **Email** [info@nswrapecrisis.com.au](mailto:info@nswrapecrisis.com.au)

# Chairperson's Report



**Phillippa Dimakis**  
Chairperson

2012 has been a year of consolidation and expansion. Telephone and online services for people in NSW and Australia who have experienced sexual violence, family and domestic violence have been extended and targets exceeded. Additionally, Centre staff visited interstate and rural areas nationwide to extend network and referral services.

A major undertaking in 2012 was the successful re-accreditation of the NSW Rape Crisis Centre under the Australian Quality Improvement Council for another three years.

A highlight of the year was the award of an Order of Australia Medal to Karen Willis for outstanding work in the sexual assault

area. This was instigated by a staff member and is a tribute to the regard in which Karen is held by staff, the board, the women's sector and wider community.

Membership of the board remains stable and the inclusion of Dixie Link-Gordon of the Mudgin-gal Aboriginal Corporation marks the fulfilment of a long-held goal; to have indigenous representation.

Board members represented the Centre at a number of functions, and attended an NCOSS seminar, 'The Buck Stops With The Board', which highlighted increased governance responsibilities and provided insights into how successful boards operate. These matters informed our board planning day, where we completed a review of NSW Rape Crisis Centre policies and planned future directions and projects.

*"After talking with your counsellor I found the courage to go to the Police. Thank you".* **Client**

## Sexual Assault Reporting Options

NSW Rape Crisis Centre was proud to play a small part in the establishment of the Sexual Assault Reporting Option (SARO) developed by the NSW Police Sex Crimes Squad earlier this year. The option allows those who have experienced sexual assault to provide information to Police. While filling in the form is not the same as making a formal complaint the information may assist Police in other investigations. Alternatively if Police feel they may be able to investigate they may contact the person, if details are provided, to discuss options. The SARO can be found at **[www.police.nsw.gov.au](http://www.police.nsw.gov.au)** click on: Community Issues/Adult Sexual Assault.

When considering accessing the SARO, NSW Rape Crisis Centre recommends discussing the plan with a counsellor as completing the form may raise many emotions and memories that can be difficult to manage.



## RCC Social Club

In 2012 NSW Rape Crisis Centre formed its first social club. The social club was responsible for organising the **Grand Final Winning** RCC Netball team and entering a team in the City to Surf fun run. The fun runners, as well as having a great day raised \$2,308 for the Centre. Congratulations all.



Left:

The RCC Netball Team – September 2012



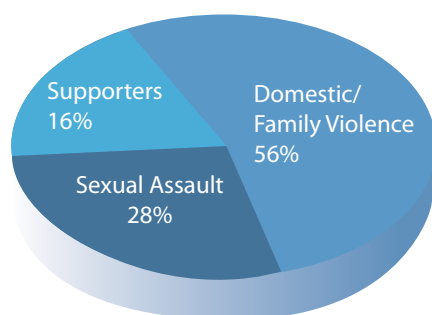
# Counselling Service

In 2012 there was an overall increase of 28% in occasions of service. This includes an increase of 8% to the NSW Rape Crisis Centre's 24/7 telephone and online counselling service. 71% of those contacts had experienced sexual violence, 15% were supporters and 14% were requests for non counselling assistance. In its first full year of service delivery occasions of service provided by 1800RESPECT, the national sexual assault, family and domestic violence telephone and online counselling

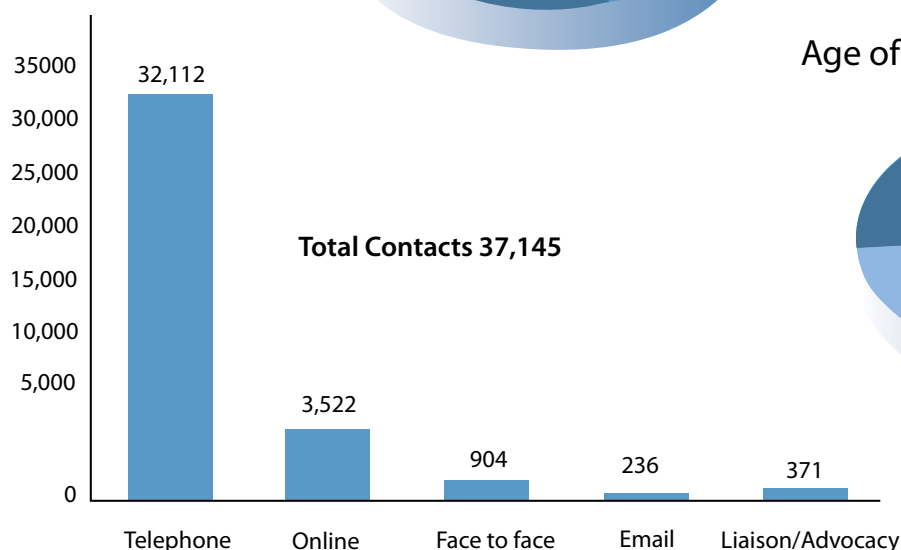
service totalled 20,465. Contacts were proportionally higher than population for Queensland and South Australia reflecting service provision partnerships in place with both of those States. The Community Based Counselling Service, which provides counselling for adults who experienced sexual assault in childhood from 6 Women's Health Centre's across NSW, increased its occasions of service by 7%.

## Client Profiles

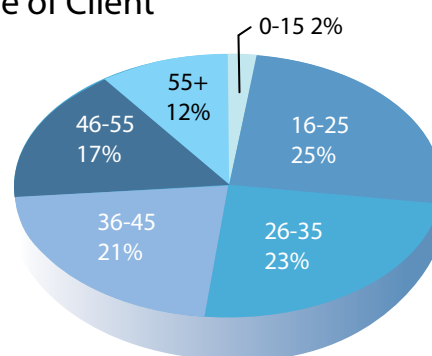
Reason for Contact



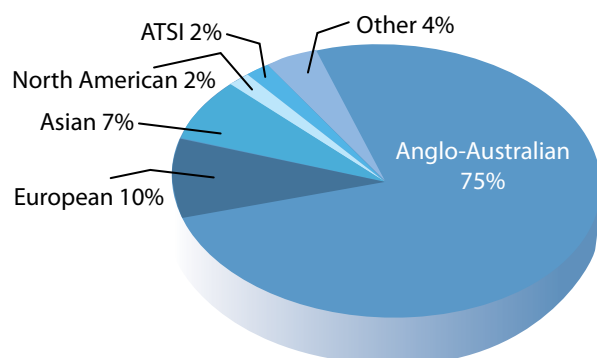
Manner of Contact



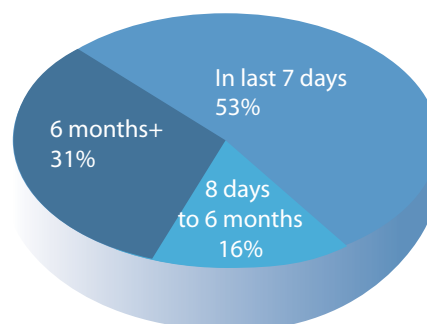
Age of Client



Cultural Background



Last Assault Occurred



*"I am doing OK and my PTSD symptoms are more manageable. Thank you for being there when I am not doing well. Knowing that you are there and I can have immediate contact helps lift my stress and helps me be more independent".* **Client**



# Trauma Counselling


Since establishment in 1971 NSW Rape Crisis Centre's counselling services concentrated on services to people who had been affected by sexual violence. In October 2010 the Centre became the clinical services provider for the National Sexual Assault, Domestic and Family Violence Counselling Service (1800RESPECT) resulting in an extensive exploration of the literature relating to best practice service provision in the areas of domestic and family violence. As best practice is an ever changing goal post the Centre continues to revise and update.

Domestic and family violence are crimes that often give rise to traumatisation for those who experience it. Women and children are predominantly the victims of such crimes, with men being the dominant group of offenders. Using a trauma based counselling framework that utilises a feminist analysis is crucial when working with people affected by such violence.

Domestic Violence is more prevalent than sexual assault and family violence portrays a slightly different picture of who may be the offender in Aboriginal communities. These differences require the counsellors' to hold comprehensive knowledge around culturally sensitive service provision and prevalent ideas in society about domestic and/or family violence. People affected by domestic and/or family violence will often contact the service seeking to understand what is happening but may not name it as domestic and/or family violence. Counsellors support clients to reflect on their experiences and their right to a life free of violence. This facilitates the clients growing understanding of the

problem they are facing. Prevalence rates and different models of service provision across Australian states and territories in response to domestic and/or family violence also present challenges e.g. the Northern Territory mandates reporting of all domestic and family violence to Police, and in some areas pilot projects relocate the offender rather than relocating the person who has experienced the violence.

The expansion in service delivery and the differences that were noted in the research, lead to an extensive training program for frontline and supervisory staff. The training program included topics such as understanding domestic and family violence, ethical decision making processes, reflective practice and culturally sensitive service delivery focussing specifically around working with family violence and suicidality. Some adjustments were made to the Centre's stage based trauma model to ensure accurate conceptualisations of how to work with people who may be ambivalent about naming their experiences. This training has been included in the Centre's orientation program for new staff.

There are many differences between therapeutic work with people affected by sexual assault and people affected by domestic and/or family violence, however, similarities are more often noted. In particular many people who experience sexual assault do so within a context of domestic or family violence, and those who are subjected to domestic violence in their relationships seldom enjoy safe, consensual ethical sexual engagement with their partners. 

## Vicarious Trauma Management



### Consultations in US – 5 January 2012

**Left to Right:** Janet Yassen and Dr Judith Herman, Victims of Violence Program, Somerville Hospital Massachusetts and Jackie Burke, Clinical Director, NSW Rape Crisis Centre

Since winning the 2007 Workcover Award for the Best Solution to an Identified Occupational Health and Safety Issue, the effective management of Vicarious Trauma (VT) continues to be an area of significant endeavour at the NSW Rape Crisis Centre. The award recognised the Centre's multimodal Vicarious Trauma Management Program which supports counselling staff who were detrimentally impacted by their contact at work with traumatic stories.

The Clinical Director has provided consultations and training to various organisations, supporting and resourcing them to develop their own VT management programs. This includes ensuring that frontline, supervisory and management staff have the knowledge and skills to effectively manage VT. Agencies from NSW to the Northern Territory including out of home care providers, women's refuges and

men's violence prevention programs have contracted the Centre resulting in approximately \$50,000 for the Centre. The Centre's program ensures that the detrimental impacts of vicarious trauma are viewed as normal and inevitable but seeks to identify them early so that staff members can be supported before the impacts manifest into more serious psychological and emotional disorders.



# Maintaining Partnerships

NSW Rape Crisis Centre continues to prioritise developing and maintaining partnerships with services across Australia. This year the Centre also consulted with Judith Herman at her Trauma Centre in Massachusetts.

In the first year of being the clinical service provider for 1800RESPECT it was important to make contact with the key state, territory and regional

services that the national service would be referring to. In 2012 the Centre sought to review protocols that were established the previous year and make contact with some of the more regional and remote services.

These visits enabled the national service to better understand how support to services, workers and clients in some of the more isolated areas of Australia can be provided.



## Karen Willis OAM



**OAM Medal Presentation 2012** Karen Willis, Executive Officer and Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, Governor of NSW

**NSW Rape Crisis Centre Executive Officer, Karen Willis, was recognised for her tireless work against sexual and domestic violence, with an Order of Australia Medal.**

Karen has dedicated more than 30 years to working with women who have experienced violence, beginning work in the community sector in 1976 at a health centre in Liverpool. Coordinating the Liverpool Neighbourhood Centre from 1984 represented a progression into domestic violence work, which was a precursor to working in roles such as Administrator at WILMA Women's Health Centre, and Deputy Chair of the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence (NASASV).

She presently sits on the NSW Premiers Council to Reduce Violence Against Women, the NSW Victims Advisory Board, the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (ACSSA) reference group, and the White Ribbon reference group.

Karen's advocacy for the rights of women, and the rights of all people to live a life free of violence has remained constant

throughout, and her leadership of the NSW Rape Crisis Centre is certainly no exception. In her words, "those who have experienced sexual, domestic or family violence have the right to receive nothing less than the highest standard of professional assistance in their recovery, and full redress for the crimes through the criminal justice system".

On working for so long against sexual and domestic violence, Karen says "you hear stories about the worst that humans can do ... but working with the those who experience this violence, walking with them in their recovery, seeing them become strong and take a stand is seeing the best that humans can be, that's the stuff that keeps us all doing what we do".

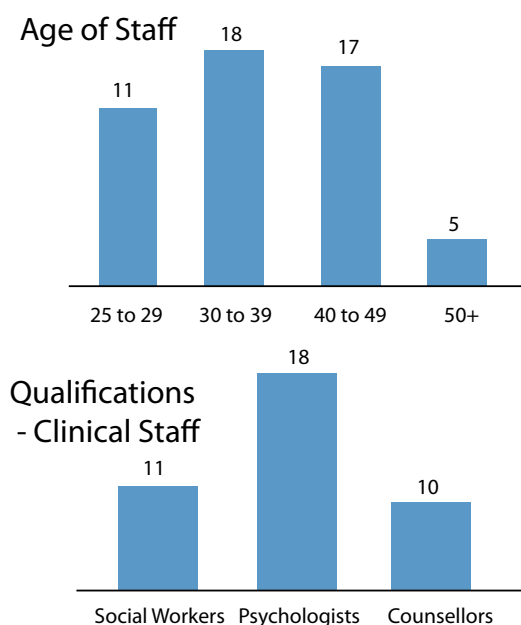


# NSW Rape Crisis Centre Staff Profile

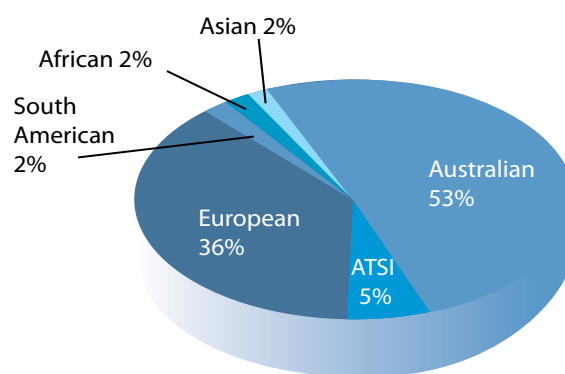
NSW Rape Crisis Centre currently employs 51 staff who work a full time equivalent of 32.5 positions. The Centre holds contracts with five providers in IT, accountancy and maintenance. All clinical staff are tertiary trained and have considerable counselling experience. The Centre provides intensive orientation for new counsellors which includes working from a trauma and feminist perspective and working therapeutically in telephone and online environments. All file notes, referral information, statistical and quality improvement data, and sexual assault and domestic and family violence systems information is recorded and retrieved electronically.

The counselling roster is organised to provide 24/7 coverage with a concentration of counsellors available from 3.30pm to 10.45pm each day, when call volumes are at their highest.

In the past financial year counsellors participated in a range of professional development courses including Reflective Practice, Communications Privilege, Mothering through Domestic Violence, Working with Rumination, Sexual Ethics, Sexual Harassment, Attachment Styles, Effective Management of Difficult Clients, Working with Clients with Personality Disorder and Manipulative Behaviours, Treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Biofeedback in Working with Trauma Survivors, Integrating Trauma into a Counselling Framework, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, Frontiers of Trauma, Treating Complex Trauma in Adolescents and Young Adults, Crisis Intervention and Relapse and Creating the Environment for Ongoing Success.



## Cultural Profile of Staff



*"Thank you for a fantastic training session yesterday. Staff feedback has been very positive and all have attested a feeling of increased confidence and understanding of meeting the needs of women affected by complex trauma. Many thanks!"* **Service Manager**

## Financial Report

Income to NSW Rape Crisis Centre increased by 32% in this financial year. Wages accounted for 75% of expenditure and 14% of expenditure was allocated to administration. Information technology (IT), equipment and travel accounted for 7% of expenditure, which reflects the high use of IT and the national partnership work. 4% of expenditure was allocated to professional development reflecting the Centre commitment to high quality evidence based service provision.

Income	\$
NSW Government	1,124,241
Australian Government	3,625,431
Donations/Consultancy/Training	53,483
Interest	100,172
Other	4,829
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,908,156</b>

Expenditure	\$
Wages & on costs	3,651,319
Administration	738,313
IT and Maintenance	221,521
Professional Development	173,867
Resources and Travel	113,733
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,898,753</b>

**Funded by:**  
 NSW Ministry of Health  
 Australian Government Department of Families, Housing,  
 Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Operating Surplus	9,403
Transfer to Reserves	9,000
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<b>403</b>

