

# Newsletter

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## *From the Director*



2006 promises to be another exciting and productive year for CDFVR, working in partnership with a wide range of government agencies, non-government service providers, educational institutions and academics to address domestic and family violence. We look forward to continuing existing partnerships and building more as the year progresses, particularly in our research endeavours.

Significant events in 2005 gave us an opportunity to review the way in which we structure and organise our Centre's research functions. These events were the implementation of the Department of Communities' Research Management Framework; the loss of our Research Fellow, who took up a Senior Lecturer appointment with James Cook University; and the conclusion of the second term of the Centre's Research Advisory Group. As is usual practice, the Research Advisory Group structure was

reviewed to identify if it remained the most effective way to enable sector involvement in identifying research priorities and to contribute to research projects.

As a result of this review, CDFVR has changed the way in which it consults the sector on priority projects and engages academics to undertake CDFVR projects. In planning future projects, CDFVR will consult widely on a list of potential research projects and ask stakeholders to add to the list and/or give each potential project a priority rating. Sector priorities will be considered in light of resources available to CDFVR to undertake specific projects. Once priorities are determined, academics with relevant research expertise, and who have registered their interest in collaborating with CDFVR, will be invited to work on the implementation of specific projects. Further, each project will have a reference group, enabling other academics and practitioners to contribute to projects through reference group membership.

The new arrangement will enable a greater number of stakeholders to advise on priority projects; a greater number of research projects to be undertaken simultaneously; and a greater number of academics to work collaboratively with CDFVR to implement priority research projects.

Academics with relevant research interests and expertise are invited to register their interest in CDFVR membership (for staff of Central Queensland University), or associate membership (for those external to CQU), with a view to collaborating on projects funded by CDFVR. To register, academics should send via email to [enquiries@noviolence.com.au](mailto:enquiries@noviolence.com.au), a resume detailing contact details, qualifications, specific research interests and, preferably a link to a web page detailing relevant publications. We very warmly welcome those who have registered already and look forward to our research collaborations. They include Professor Kathy Daly, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Griffith University; Dr Brian Sullivan, School of Social Work and Applied Human Sciences, University of Queensland; Dr Nik Taylor, School of Psychology & Sociology, Central Queensland University; Dr Lorna Moxham, School of Nursing and Health Studies, Central Queensland University; and Jenny Anastasi, School of Nursing and Health Studies, Central Queensland University.

Dr Brian Sullivan will be collaborating with CDFVR to undertake a three-year evaluation of a perpetrator program in Central Queensland, with developmental work on the evaluation formally commencing in April 2006. Of course, CDFVR is also happy to consider invitations to collaborate on projects initiated by others, such as my agreement to work with Professor Kathy Daly from Griffith University on the analysis of data she has collected on family violence cases dealt with by conferencing in the South Australian youth justice system.

A list of CDFVR members and associate members is posted on our website.

*Heather Ancarrow*

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### Queensland Domestic Violence Prevention Month - May, 2006

May 1 marks the commencement of Queensland's annual Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month (DFVPM). DFVPM is an initiative of the Queensland Department of Communities in partnership with the Ministerial Advisory Council on Domestic and Family Violence. The campaign aims to generate awareness of domestic and family violence by bringing it into the public arena and, in doing so, challenging attitudes that perpetuate violence and identify options to support victims. Over the month, events are conducted throughout Queensland by both government and non-government agencies.

In previous years, the theme for DFVPM has been "There's No Excuse For Abuse". However, this year, two new themes have been developed. The theme "**Domestic and Family Violence. See the Signs. Seek a Solution**" has been created for widespread generic use; and an Indigenous-specific theme "**Every Man Must Take a Stand against Domestic and Family Violence**" has also been developed. The Department of Communities will be distributing a range of promotional materials to individuals and organisations that are hosting DFVPM activities in their regions.

The Minister for Communities, Warren Pitt, will officially launch DFVPM 2006 at a community event at the Picnic Bay Surf Club Headland (opposite the Strand Park) in Townsville between 2pm – 5pm on Sunday, 30 April. This event will feature free entertainment and a community BBQ for the whole family to enjoy. In honour and memory of those who have died as a result of domestic and family violence, a state-wide Remembrance Day candle lighting ceremony is being co-ordinated by the Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network. This event involves the lighting of candles simultaneously in locations across the State at 5.15 p.m. on Wednesday, 3 May.

Nominations for the 2006 Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month Awards closed on 20 March. The six award categories for this year are:

- individual;
- partnership;
- community organisation;
- school-based prevention project;
- Indigenous; and
- government.

Award recipients will be announced and presented during a ceremony in Brisbane on Thursday, 4 May.

For further information about Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month, including how to organise and promote activities in your own regions, visit the Department of Communities' website at <http://www.communities.qld.gov.au>.

## Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum 2006

### Men, Women and Community - Partners

In February this year CDFVR met with three members of its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group: Jackie Huggins, Shirley Slann and Harold Fatnowna to review feedback from our 2005 Forum and commence planning for this year's event, which continues to be our contribution to Queensland's annual Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month. CDFVR's third annual Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum is titled *Men, Women and Community – Partners*, and will be held on May 2 and 3, 2006 in Mackay. The Forum theme was chosen in response to feedback at last year's Forum, where participants advocated for recognition of community partnerships to address violence in Indigenous communities. *Men, Women and Community – Partners*, acknowledges the value of men and women's collaboration within communities to address domestic and family violence, as well as men and women working in partnership with government agencies.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group members Shirley Slann and Harold Fatnowna with Lyndon Reilly at February's meeting.

planning a karaoke evening on the outside deck and hoping to unearth a few Queensland Idols!

Participants will have the opportunity to hear Government agencies discuss how their specific agencies define and implement partnerships within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Other areas of focus in this year's Forum include:

- partnerships with community and courts;
- community justice groups;
- working with male offenders; and
- ensuring effective inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in mainstream services.

Once again the Forum will be held at the Windmill Motel and Reception Centre on the Bruce Highway, North Mackay. This venue was very popular last year both for its relaxed setting and ability to cater for our increasing number of participants. It also proved to be an excellent setting for our forum dinner and entertainment. This year we are

Forum registration can be found on CDFVR's website at [www.noviolence.com.au](http://www.noviolence.com.au) or by emailing Annie at [a.webster@cqu.edu.au](mailto:a.webster@cqu.edu.au).

### Reflections

CDFVR's 2005 Forum – *Men and Women, Working Together*, was attended by over 150 participants from government and non-government agencies. In consultation with its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group, CDFVR prepared an Issues Paper based on the Forum 2005 workshops. The Paper was then forwarded with a covering letter from Centre Director, Heather Nancarrow, and Jackie Huggins, on behalf of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group, to relevant Ministers for their consideration.

These issues and the Ministers' responses are provided on Page 4.

## 2005 Forum Issues

## Ministers' Responses

<b>Attorney-General and Minister for Justice</b>	<p>Copy of the Issues Paper for information.</p>	<p>Read with interest and provided a copy of the report to the Strategic Policy area of the Department of Justice.</p>
<b>Minister for Child Safety</b>	<p>Two year protection orders remove children from mothers for long periods of time.</p>	<p>Amendment to <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i> will produce better Indigenous child protection outcomes. Indigenous cultural advice and engagement will be sought in all significant decisions impacting on a child.</p>
<b>Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors</b>	<p>Need to consider removal of perpetrators from family home, rather than women and children, when safe to do so.</p> <p>Request contact details to undertake an audit, and identify training needs of Healing Centres across the State.</p> <p>An adequate training program for staff in remote women's shelters is urgently needed.</p> <p>Community-based perpetrator programs should be widely available.</p>	<p>Violence Prevention Team (VPT) provides training for newly recruited Child Safety Officers to increase their knowledge and awareness of domestic and family violence.</p> <p>Review of healing services scheduled within the Office for Community Support's Business Plan; as part of this the VPT is undertaking an audit of the Healing Centres and will identify training and support needs.</p> <p>This is being addressed through the Department's Strengthening Non-Government Organisations initiative, and supporting Strengthening Indigenous Non-Government Organisations project.</p>
<b>Minister for Education and the Arts</b>	<p>Enable Indigenous education staff by valuing cultural capital.</p> <p>Initiatives such as <i>Koora the Kangaroo: Violence Prevention at Woorabinda State School</i>, should be included in education system.</p> <p>Need to raise the profile of domestic and family violence within schools and to support teachers and teacher aides with information relevant to domestic and family violence.</p>	<p>Department of Education, through <i>Partners for Success</i>, committed to improving education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>Once intellectual property and publishing issues for <i>Koora</i> are resolved, contact Education Queensland to commence process of Curriculum Resource Review – if successfully reviewed and evaluated, the Department can promote, market and use the program in state schools in Indigenous communities across the State, following local customising to suit local context.</p> <p>Representative of Department on CDFVR's Course Development Advisory Group (see <i>page 5 for further details</i>). Encourages specific issues of Indigenous family violence considered in this process for implementation through the Department of Education.</p>
<b>Minister for Corrective Services</b>	<p>Mandated programs for perpetrators should be available state-wide and be funded, delivered and administered by Dept. of Corrective Services in collaboration with domestic violence services.</p>	<p>New projects will be consistent with International best practice and respond to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders.</p>

## Update:

### Accredited Training Course to Co-ordinate Efforts To Address Violence Against Women

By Kass Fenton, Education Project Officer

On February 27, CDFVR was advised that its Course Concept Proposal for the development of an accredited training course on domestic and family violence has been supported-in-principle by the Queensland Department of Employment and Training. This is a major milestone in the course development process and our success in achieving it is largely due to the valuable contributions of a great number of people. These include members of the Course Development Advisory Committee (CDAC), which consists of 12 representatives from government and non-government sectors and a Training Advisory Committee (TAC), which reflects a diverse range of occupational groups and geographic locations and now comprises 84 members.



*Course Development Advisory Committee members ponder the complexities of the course development process. L-R Betty Taylor (Training Consultant); Adrian Robb (Qld. Police); Glenda Sacre (Dept. Communities); and Chris D'Aquino (Qld. Office for Women).*

The accredited training course aims are designed to:

- enhance interagency responses to domestic and family violence;
- focus on issues facing marginalised groups, in particular, working effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and culturally and linguistically diverse families and communities; and
- address gaps in service delivery for rural and remote communities.

A qualification, with the proposed title '**A Course in Responding to Domestic and Family Violence**' is now being developed. This training course will be comprised of three (3) Units of Competency:

1. *Recognise and respond to domestic and family violence (CHCDFV1B), which already exists in the Community Services Training Package;*
2. *Referring appropriately and effectively in response to domestic and family violence; and*
3. *Reflecting on practice when responding to domestic and family violence.*

The latter two Units of Competency are currently being written by the project team, and the proposed elements for the three Units comprising the course are outlined below.

#### Recognising domestic and family violence

1. Develop an understanding of the theories of domestic and family violence.
2. Identify power and gender issues in domestic and family violence.
3. Identify the differences between assault and domestic violence.
4. Reflect and challenge myths and attitudes.
5. Recognise the indicators of domestic and family violence.
6. Develop an understanding of the concept of family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.
7. Identify specific issues facing people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
8. Identify specific issues for people: in same sex relationships; with disabilities; living in rural and remote areas; experiencing elder abuse; and for women who use violence.

#### Responding to domestic and family violence

1. Work within a strengths-based and child-focused framework.
2. Identify the support needs for women and children affected by domestic and family violence.
3. Identify the impacts of domestic and family violence on children.
4. Identify the particular support needs for women and children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities and from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
5. Manage disclosures and non-disclosures.
6. Identify safety issues for women and children affected by domestic and family violence.
7. Develop risk assessment of workplace and safety management procedures for workers.
8. Develop appropriate procedures for dealing with safety risks and critical incidents.

## Referring appropriately and effectively in response to domestic and family violence

1. Utilise risk assessment and safety planning tools.
2. Apply principles of effective referral.
3. Develop referral process for women and children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
4. Establish a database of relevant referral agencies and referral protocols.
5. Identify appropriate legal processes.
6. Establish and maintain networking and community development opportunities and interagency responses/initiatives to domestic and family violence.

## Reflecting on practice when responding to domestic and family violence

1. Identify own professional boundaries and limitations.
2. Reflect on values, attitudes and experiences and assess how these impact on practice.
3. Establish and maintain self care strategies, professional and/ or peer supervision.
4. Recognise the indicators of vicarious trauma.

The possibility of the course being granted credit transfer into higher study such as the newly recognised Vocational Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma is being explored by the course developers.

To date, the concept and proposed content of an accredited course in responding to domestic and family violence has received enthusiastic support, with government Departments such as Corrective Services and Department of Child Safety expressing interest in using the accredited course in their training programs with staff. CDFVR has up to 12 months to submit the course for accreditation. The next two stages of the project will focus on writing the new Units of Competency for submission for accreditation approval and the development of an implementation strategy for course delivery. Those wishing to view updates of the project can download the 'TAC-TILE' E-Bulletin from the "Training Consultation" sub-menu on the Centre's website at [www.noviolence.com.au](http://www.noviolence.com.au).

## Conference Opportunity...

### ***Sharing our Information, Keeping our Women Strong*** **North/Far North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Education Conference**

**Date:** June 14 & 15, 2006.

**Venue:** Townsville Plaza Hotel, Townsville.

**Inviting:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women from the Townsville/ Thuringowa region, communities north to the Cape region, the Torres Strait Islands, south to Mackay, Palm Island, west to the Northern Territory border and the Gulf region.

The conference aims to develop knowledge and understanding of the law and legal system as they affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women; strengthen networks and partnerships between participants and community legal service providers; enhance opportunities for women accessing the legal system; and highlight issues that contribute to the disempowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and work together to identify solutions.

### **Keynote addresses and workshop topics include -**

- Family Violence
- Family Law
- Child Protection
- Discrimination
- Criminal Compensation
- Murri Court

**Other activities and workshops -** dancing, weaving, massage and gallery tours.

**Conference dinner and entertainment:** Wednesday, June 14 at the Townsville Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre, Reef HQ building, Townsville.

Registration forms will soon be available on line at [www.nqwls.com.au](http://www.nqwls.com.au). Delegates may obtain a registration form by contacting Sharni or Ann at the Indigenous Women's Unit on 1800 082 600 or by email to [cdwtsv@nqwls.com.au](mailto:cdwtsv@nqwls.com.au).

## Life stages and roles within the family as locations of vulnerability to intimate violence

By Kay Gray (Social Worker) & Michelle Bradford (CDFVR Education Officer)

The January 2005 and September 2005 editions of the Centre's newsletter featured articles by Kay Gray and Michelle Bradford, which examined the literature on intersections of gender, race, class, disability, rurality and lesbianism in women's experiences of domestic and family violence. The following article is the final in this series and it focuses on constructions of life stages and roles within the family as locations of vulnerability to intimate violence. Implications for practice and policy are discussed, based on the series' review of intersectional dimensions that frame women's experiences.

### Stages of Life

Stage of life is another factor that influences women's experiences of violence and ability to enhance wellbeing. Traumatic events experienced during various stages of life may be critical to interpreting meaning and understanding of self and relationships, potentially stunting one's ability to claim freedom from abuse.

Childhood experiences of sexual, physical and emotional abuse magnify the emotional trauma and identity confusion that some women experience. Such abuse intersects with gender to influence women's understanding of self and relationships, potentially creating anxiety, depression, guilt, self loathing, and low self-esteem (Browne & Finkelhor, 1986; De Luca, Boyes, Grayston, & Romano, 1995; Grayston, De Luca & Boyes, 1992). Various studies (Mullen, Martin, Anderson, Romans & Herbison, 1996; Tong, Oates & McDowell, 1987; Widom & Ames, 1994) identify that many children living with these impacts are at risk of entering a cycle of negative social and relationship experiences in adulthood, further shaping their understanding of domestic violence and their capacity for transformative action (Mears, 2002).

In relation to risk of partner violence for young women, Graycar (2000) reports that international research indicates this risk to be three to four times higher than for women overall. A national study based on retrospective self-reports by women between 18 and 25 randomly selected throughout Australia revealed that 12% of women in the age group had experienced significant partner violence (Young, Byles and Dobson, 2000). The data provides a picture of young women's vulnerability to violence. The qualitative significance that this life stage represents for young women in intersections with gender and other dimensions, is their relative lack of experience in relationships from which to evaluate and understand their situations. These factors, together with limited awareness of community services and legal options and the idealism of young love, intertwine with internalised acceptance of dominant constructs of masculinity to disempower and damage young women in violent relationships (Seuffert, 1999).

Mears' (2002) action research project invited older women to articulate their experiences of current and past domestic violence and the pain and meanings they attributed to it. This approach empowered older women by offering space and opportunity to explore and validate their cognitive and emotional experiences in relation to the violence. This research demonstrated the profound and persistent impacts of women's experiences of violence on their emotions and life choices. Moral and social attitudes promoted and perpetuated by men and women of past eras contributed immensely to these women's internalised acceptance of abuse.

Older women reported that they employed diverse coping strategies to survive and some expressed relief at their partner's death. Mears' (2002) study clearly demonstrated that many older women wanted to contest and change their situations, but were constrained by a range of social and economic forces. Some constraints often experienced by older women include: internalised assumptions that lead to the acceptance of abuse; reluctance to be disloyal to spouses; ignorance of services; and inadequate material resources. These factors are compounded by depleted emotional reserves, self-esteem and self-confidence to seek help.

Validation of the difficulties and psychological and practical challenges that older women face to change their situation enhances their capacity to take transformative action with mutual support and provision of information and resources being vital ingredients in the process. Giving voice to their thoughts and feelings about violence and creating strategies to act against it can strengthen women's capacity to become empowered and independent.

Traumatic events experienced during various stages of life may be critical to interpreting meaning and understanding of self and relationships, potentially stunting one's ability to claim freedom from abuse.

### Roles within the Family

Roles of motherhood and daughterhood are inherently complex with boundaries that often shift and blend as many live the identities of both. These positions intricately intertwine with social constructions of gender to interact with family and community contexts and influence each woman's experience of and capacity to take action against oppression.

Motherhood, as a social construct of gender, is an intersecting dimension that elevates the complexity and implications of domestic and family violence. Thomson and Thorpe (2003) discuss the oppressive contribution of gender-blindness and mother-blaming in the removal of children from families where women are made culprits for inability and immobility to protect children from male-partner abuse. Scourfield (2001) highlights the scrutiny of mothering based on assumptions about the gendered division of household labour, rather than male abuse, as the focus of child protection assessment.

Laing (2000) reports evidence that many mothers seek to provide children with protection from abuse in their families. While significant research has been undertaken on mothers' contribution to impacts of domestic violence on their children through stress and incapacity to care, little research has focused on the contribution to harm in children by a violent spouse. Laing (2000) highlights the dichotomy between feminist strategies to inform and empower mothers exposed to domestic violence in the choices they make and the approach of child protection systems where statutory mandates may deprive women of opportunities to participate in decision-making.

Fear of having children removed is an immense deterrent for mothers to report domestic violence, thus multiplying the danger to themselves and their children (Laing, 2000). Threats of abuse to children, together with Family Law sanctioned avenues for further threats and actual violence to children are also significant inhibitory factors influencing women's decisions (Laing, 2000). Incapacitation through fear, loss of identity, economic insecurity, limited access to employment and the perceived need for children to have a relationship with their father often feature as disincentives to separate from a violent partner.

Child sexual abuse reflects its gendered nature and interconnection with gendered domestic violence that frequently occurs.

Hume (2003) contends that separating from a violent partner is often a catalyst for the abuser to reinforce control more strongly and violently. Indeed, various studies (Strang, 1996; Mouzos and Rushforth, 2003; Carcach and James 1998; Kayle, Stubbs and Tolmie, 2003) identify the extreme dangers that separation presents for many women and children. Carcach and James (1998) found that approximately 30% of Australian women are killed by male partners after separation. Strang (1996:3) identified that 35% of child homicide victims between July 1989 and December 1993 "died as a consequence of a family dispute, usually relating to the termination of their parents' relationship". Kayle, Stubbs and Tolmie (2003: 35) found that 97.5% of the participants interviewed in their study had experienced violence or abuse since separation, and 36.6% indicated that the violence had escalated since separation. Not surprisingly, threats and fear of escalating violence operate as extremely powerful inducements for women to remain with the abuser. In this context, a mother may perceive that remaining in the violent relationship affords her a better chance of protecting her children, as her vigilance and monitoring may enable her to predict violent episodes and remove her children from the path of direct harm.

For lesbians, motherhood for either or both partners adds a significant and complex intersection of marginalisation and prejudice regarding their legal rights and opportunities; and the relational dynamics they encounter within their sexual partnerships and associated family structures (Easteal, 2001). Non-nurturing stereotypes and assumptions of aberrant sexuality frame the prejudice that many lesbian mothers

experience and internalise (Easteal, 2001). Lack of legal status regarding their same-sex and parent-child relationship may manifest tensions and insecurity not experienced in the same way by other mothers. Clouds of confusion regarding identity and rights cast by social and legal judgments and impediments may destabilise and threaten relationships with concomitant anger and frustration.

By way of a different set of assumptions, physical or intellectual challenges to fulfilling constructed child caring and domestic roles may be used as a rationalisation for violence against disabled women. Thus for disabled women, motherhood is an intersecting dimension conferring immense vulnerability regarding domestic violence.

#### *Motherhood, domestic violence and sexual abuse of children*

Child sexual abuse reflects its gendered nature and interconnection with gendered domestic violence that frequently occurs (Hume, 2003; Goddard & Hiller, 1993). Women living with domestic violence and whose children are being sexually abused by their partners are located in positions of complex powerlessness. Child protection policies and Family Law contact decisions make mothers extremely vulnerable to victimisation (Hume, 2003). Post separation disclosures of sexual abuse are often met with incredibility and suspicion in child protection and Family Law systems, and when considered in this light, women's reluctance to disclose the existence of violence and abuse within their relationships has an understandable basis (Hume, 2003). Denial of domestic violence and child sexual abuse go hand in hand and reflect the hidden nature of family violence in the legal and welfare systems (Hume, 2003). Family Court decisions that do not act upon claims of child sexual abuse place mothers in an untenable position of maintaining family relationships, according to legally imposed and socially accepted practices, in the face of continued exposure of their children to sexual abuse, or exposure of themselves and their children to escalating violence and abuse.

The complex disadvantage women experience as mothers in domestic violence situations underlines the imperative for policies and practices to validate the violated woman as an individual and as a responsible family member who genuinely loves her children (Thomson and Thorpe, 2004). Apparent disengagement and disablement in protecting children from abusive male partners does not substantiate punishment of mothers by removal of their children. Rather, it provides cause to identify and facilitate the support and resources they need as women and mothers and to actively locate accountability for the abuse with the person perpetrating the violence (Thomson and Thorpe, 2003).

Clearly, motherhood places women in extremely vulnerable positions at intersections with other disempowering constructs that inscribe their family and community contexts and locations. Other dimensions of difference such as race, class, disability, sexuality and age compound the complexity and shape the unique nature and meaning of each woman's experience of domestic and family violence. They also intensely influence opportunities and capacities of women to challenge those constructs that interact with domestic violence and maintain the oppression of women and children affected by violence.

### *Daughterhood*

Daughterhood reflects the other side of the coin in patriarchal societies, as socioeconomic contexts and family expectations can place daughters in invidious positions of making choices between their own desires and representing the family in caring for aged or disabled parents. Various authors such as Draper (2000), O'Connor, Wilson and Setterland (1999) and Payne (1997) note the way that constructions of 'family' broadly align women's roles with providing family care.

Government policies and family expectations manoeuvre to pressure female family members into taking responsibility for whole of family welfare. While family role expectations may be unconscious and unintended, the tenor of aged care policy clearly reinforces assumptions that particular family members (usually female) freely choose to be carers, rather than feel coerced through lack of other family support and lack of government provision of care.

Intergenerational patriarchal structures and attitudes, internalised by female family members, also reinforce and naturalise these expectations and practices. Intersectional dimensions of compassion inherent to many women, powerlessness manifested through women's life experiences and coercion arising through policy, social and family expectations are often highly effective in constructing daughters as carers of aged family members. Women in these situations often encounter emotional and cognitive confusion and guilt in trying to understand their situation and challenge oppressive assumptions, expectations and judgements, in order to gain self-determination and capacity to recreate their life meanings (Bricker-Jenkins 1991).

There is enormous need for policy makers to listen to people with different angles of vision and experiences to formulate strategies that empower both aged and younger family members to make informed and self-determining choices. In an age of escalating longevity, older and young female family members need permission and support to nurture mutually non-abusive relationships and empowerment that allows them to create their own lives without blame or guilt.

While governments pay lip-service to providing the funding required by elderly pensioners to live relatively independently and to provide for possible nursing home costs, the realities are vastly different (Draper, 2000). Radical transformation of patriarchal dominance to promote shared family responsibility and appropriate funding for essential needs such as health, transport and housing is intrinsic to non-violence being a reality for many contemporary families. While community social capital provides valuable support in some instances, many elderly people expect reciprocal family help. Resettlement on retirement to unfamiliar environments or areas with limited services, escalating aged residence and nursing home costs and increasing longevity may all contribute to demands on family - especially daughters. The need for research on family contribution to aged care and effects of government policies and services is imperative.

### Conclusion

Women's lives inherently embrace intersectional and multi-dimensional purposes and foci. Given the opportunity to

participate and engage in transformative action, these intersectional locations may be re-interpreted as possessing and embodying strengths and agency that women express to gain the freedom from violence that is their right.

Policies and strategies that narrowly define battered women's realities fix women in powerless positions and maintain their intersectional locations of vulnerability to violence.

Structures and processes that impede women's capacity and opportunity to formulate and articulate their realities and aspirations serve to silence, repress and suppress women's voices. Analysis of external processes of intersecting mechanisms of oppression exerted through societal and family structures and dynamics deny and distort women's space to understand, express and create their life meanings. Intersectional forces of structural and intimate relational violence that disempower and disorient women fragment their internal agency to understand and influence their own circumstances and their ability to mutually nurture each other, manufacturing perceptions of self-betrayal that compounds their disempowerment and disorientation. Institutional environments and perspectives symbolise sources of power that are not emotionally and cognitively accessible and congruent with their experiences.

Policies and strategies that narrowly define battered women's realities fix women in powerless positions and maintain their intersectional locations of vulnerability to violence. Space, time and opportunity for women to form and express their experiences and explore and transform their perceptions of their identity and interpretation of their locations as loci for agency and creativity are not provided by many institutionalised practice models such as medical models and child protection models. Holistic accountability and intervention are critical to empowering women to experience healing and nurturing to recreate their life meanings and to identify and grasp new life options.

Frameworks that are sensitive and responsive to intersectional contexts of women's experience aim to facilitate women's empowerment to transform their understanding and attitudes towards valuing and claiming their personal and psychological integrity. For each practitioner, space and opportunity to continually shape and create their individual practice is intrinsic to authentic and empowering practice. Intersectional dimensions that workers encounter between government policy, needs of women in the community and organisational procedures, represent critical challenges for responsive practice. Maintaining and developing self-awareness of feelings, thoughts, weaknesses and strengths, threats and opportunities through reflection and supervision are critical for practice with women affected by domestic and family violence.

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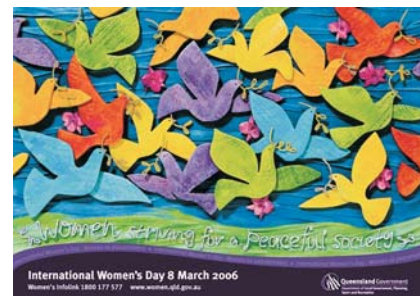
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## International Women's Day

The United Nations declared "Women in Decision Making" as the theme for International Women's Day 2006. U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said

"...there is no policy more effective in promoting development, health and education than the empowerment of women and girls... and no policy is more important in preventing conflict, or in achieving reconciliation after a conflict has ended" (United Nations News Centre URL).

The Queensland Government's theme "Women Striving for a Peaceful Society" recognises the very current concerns of global conflict and community violence and seeks to remind and inspire all women to actively build peace from the ground up by reaching out to others in their communities.



Of course, these two themes are inextricably linked. Peaceful conditions can only be brought about if women represent a critical mass in the political arena at the highest levels of decision-making. While women are the most vocal and active in calling for an end to war, they are least visible at negotiations.

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In a speech to the Mackay Campus staff and students from Central Queensland University, CDFVR Director Heather Nancarrow spoke of how women and their children continue to disproportionately suffer consequences of war such as dislocation, rape and poverty as well as gender-based violence in the home. She reminded the audience of several confronting facts such as: "80% of all refugees and displaced persons globally are women and children; rape is consciously used as a tool of genocide and weapon of war; 500,000 Rwandan women and girls, some as young as 5, were systematically tortured, physically abused and raped during the 1994 genocide; 20,000 Bosnian women were mass raped, forced in to prostitution and sexual slavery during the Balkan war between 1992 and 1995; and 70% of the 1.2 billion people living in desperate poverty, much of which is caused by war, are female".

The global struggle for peace is connected to our local struggles against racism and gender-based violence. "We can, and must, all play a part in challenging the attitudes and values that contribute to the perpetuation of violence, whether it is: domestic violence, which a quarter of Australian women suffer; racism that Indigenous Australians and Muslim, Lebanese and other immigrants suffer; or acts of aggression between countries".

#### Reference

United Nations News Centre URL: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=17730&Cr=women&Cr1>

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## **Women - Creating history, forging the future**

By Annie Webster

International Women's Day 2006 celebrates 97 years of women's contribution to history. In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women's suffrage and the right to participate in public office were two of the key issues of the women's movement. Women were standing for their right to have a voice, to participate in shaping the nation, and to influence the national identity and the rights and freedoms of its citizens.

International Women's Day presents an opportunity to remember women from around the globe who fought and gave their lives for women's suffrage and the right to make choices that affect us all.

This year, it is worth reflecting on a current issue that has been raging through the Australian media – the passing of one of the most historic conscience votes seen in Federal Parliament, which ultimately resulted in the approval of the controversial abortion pill, RU486. Readers will remember the media uproar, fuelled by key players such as Tony Abbott, Peter Costello, Nick Minchin and Barnaby Joyce, however, no reference was made to another and more significant key player, Dr Caroline De Costa.

Caroline is a Professor of Obstetrics at James Cook University in Cairns, North Queensland. She also practices as an obstetrician in a field dominated by men. Caroline was the person who initiated the entire RU486 debate. A conference in San Francisco in 1995 brought to Caroline's attention that RU486, listed as an essential drug by the World Health Organisation, is distributed to 35 countries around the world. Caroline's experiences in working in rural and remote areas heightened her awareness of the lack of choices available to women due to hospitals in remote areas being unable to perform abortion procedures. Women in these locations are forced to travel hundreds of kilometres and face huge expenses, practically preventing them from making choices that directly affect their lives. In these circumstances, Caroline saw that RU486 could provide these women with a much needed alternative.

Like suffragettes before her, Caroline was determined to make changes. She started writing letters, 1000 in all, to Federal and State politicians; she wrote a paper on RU486 for The Medical Journal of Australia and she met with Parliamentarians, four of whom sponsored a private members' bill to remove restrictions on the drug being brought into Australia. The debate arrived in Parliament and, after considerable personal revelations and ethical considerations by Parliamentarians, the responsibility for approval of RU486 was removed from the Minister for Health and Ageing and transferred to the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

There are still battles to be fought, with pharmaceutical companies now deciding that they are not interested in importing and marketing RU486, based on the limitations associated with drug's use (it has to be used in the first eight weeks of pregnancy) and the high cost of importation. However there is still hope. Caroline is negotiating with New Zealand doctors who have set up their own company to import the drug based on their belief that women deserve choices.

On International Women's Day 2006 we can look back over the past 97 years and be grateful for the battles fought and won on our behalf and we can look around us and value the progress that is made by women like Dr Caroline De Costa each day - women whose passion and belief provides women with greater choice.

## ANZSOC's Criminology and Human Rights Conference: CDFVR's contribution

By Heather Nancarrow

Since the mid-1990s a number of Indigenous Australian scholars, such as Melissa Lucashenko, Jackie Huggins and Judy Atkinson, have drawn attention to the limitations of mainstream feminist theory as a basis for responding to Indigenous family violence and have argued for an Indigenous standpoint to be the central standpoint in the development of public policy and programs. Specifically, Indigenous women call for strategies to end family violence that locate the violence within a context of racial, as well as gender, inequality and that unite, rather than divide, Indigenous men, women and communities.

Given that Indigenous Australians are greatly over-represented in family violence statistics, including domestic homicide, the development and implementation of appropriate and effective responses to Indigenous family violence is critical. With this in mind, CDFVR convened a panel discussion at the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology (ANZSOC) conference, held in Hobart in early February. The Conference theme was *Criminology and Human Rights*, and CDFVR was pleased to be able to present at the conference through the panel discussion, titled "*Men and women working together to end Indigenous family violence: Current Queensland research and practice*". Panellists described some of the innovative research and practice being conducted in Queensland by Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and women working together to address Indigenous family violence. The panellists were Lyndon Reilly, CDFVR's Indigenous Research Worker; Annette Hennessy, Rockhampton Magistrate; Carole Willie, from the Department of Corrective Services in Rockhampton; and myself. Ailsa Weasel, Co-ordinator of Gumbi Gunya Women's Safe House at Woorabinda, had also planned to participate in the panel discussion but health considerations prevented Ailsa from making the long trip to Hobart.

Lyndon presented an overview of his Masters research, through which he is exploring the disposition, function and significance of existing Queensland Indigenous men's groups and their attempts to improve individual, family and community health and well-being.

Annette and Carol presented the results of their collaboration to deliver a court-mandated, Indigenous-specific rehabilitation program (*Ending Family Violence*) for family violence offenders. This collaborative initiative focuses on treatment of offenders in the community to lessen the adverse impact on the family, and reduce the over-representation of Indigenous offenders in prisons. On behalf of Ailsa and CDFVR, I presented an overview and evaluation results of *Koora the Kangaroo: Violence Prevention at Woorabinda State School*, a concept created by Ailsa and implemented in partnership between Ailsa, CDFVR and the Woorabinda State School. In 2005, this initiative, which utilises traditional story-telling, dance and other art forms, won a Queensland Domestic Violence Prevention Award and an Australian Heads of Government Crime and Violence Prevention Award.

The panel discussion was well received by our audience of criminologists from across the country and overseas. They seemed particularly pleased to hear from, Lyndon and Carole, who were notably the only Indigenous Australian presenters at the conference. It was not only a great opportunity to present our work, but also to meet like minded researchers and to develop and strengthen networks.



Panellists, L-R (back row) - Lyndon Reilly, Heather Nancarrow, Annette Hennessy and Carole Willie (Front row) - Professor Kathy Daly, ANZSOC President and Panel Chair.

### Training Opportunity...

#### Attention all Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Service Providers and Helping Professionals

Training workshops on the Domestic Violence Provisions in Migration Law are being conducted throughout Queensland between March and December 2006, by Lesley Hunt for the Refugee and Immigration Community Legal Service (RAILS). Funding has been provided by the State Department of Justice and Attorney General. Commencing in Brisbane, the workshops are also scheduled to be presented in Logan, Caboolture, Gold Coast, Maroochydore, Toowoomba, Mackay, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Townsville and Cairns.

*"Victims of domestic violence who are on temporary visas in Australia may be able to leave the abusive relationship without losing any entitlement they may have to permanent residence in Australia. The domestic violence provisions in the Migration Regulations govern who can apply, how to apply, and the evidence required. To find out more and increase your skills in this area, you are invited to attend".*

For further details, contact Lesley Hunt, RAILS DV Project Worker on telephone: (07) 3846 3189 or email: [lesley.hunt@rails.org.au](mailto:lesley.hunt@rails.org.au).

## Older People and Mandatory Reporting of Abuse: *Rights Vs Protection*

By Les Jackson, Senior Project Officer, Elder Abuse Prevention Unit  
Guest contributor

Recently there has been a number of media reports relating to the rape of older women in an aged care facility. This has led to a call for mandatory reporting of elder abuse. The question I raise is why a worker failed to report a criminal incident after witnessing one rape some two months earlier? One has not only a moral obligation to protect residents in their care but also a direct duty of care to respond. With or without capacity, residents have a right to be protected in aged care facilities. Among the most vulnerable groups, they are often unable to physically defend themselves, access help or be able to articulate fears and concerns about abusive situations. Ageist attitudes and often failing memory may also lead to disregarding stories that are brought to the attention of staff and other key people in their lives. Perpetrators will often exploit these vulnerabilities and abuse is more likely to remain undetected. Women with impaired capacity, whatever age, are at much greater risk of abuse and exploitation. The Elder Abuse Prevention Unit (EAPU) receives many calls from family, friends and workers involved with an older person who is in an abusive situation. In all cases where the person has impaired capacity there is a clear referral path to the Office of the Adult Guardian (or similar in each state) that has legislation to respond to these situations of abuse. In the case of rape, as occurred in the Melbourne aged care facility, this is the responsibility of the police. It should be noted that the Queensland Police Service has included in its updated Family Violence training material, a rape scenario involving an older woman at an aged care facility.

The EAPU finds that most calls to its Helpline are in relation to an older woman living at home, *who has capacity to make decisions* and is experiencing some form of abuse by another family member, usually a son or a daughter. Most are not a carer but are living with the older woman. Sexual abuse remains the least reported, often due to shame or fear of possible retaliation from the abuser. Reports to the EAPU Helpline about sexual abuse have involved older men with dementia sexually assaulting their partners and a small number of reports involving adult sons and grandchildren involved in various sexually abusive behaviour. Internationally there has been an alarming increase in reports of adult sons as sexual abusers. There are usually factors of alcohol and drug dependency in these reports. However, most reports to EAPU Helpline involve other forms of abuse such as emotional abuse and financial abuse while physical abuse remains relatively low.

The EAPU believes that the argument for mandatory reporting of abuse is more applicable to people with impaired capacity. While reporting is not explicitly legislated, responses to incidents of abuse are covered in the *Commonwealth Aged Care Act*, state & territory guardianship legislation, family violence legislation as well as offences under the Queensland Criminal Code. Advocacy services such as the Queensland Aged and Disability Advocacy will also respond and advocate for residents' rights in care facilities. The fault lies in the implementation of policies and procedures which are required for all aged care facilities. Staff in these facilities can sometimes be inadequately trained in how to respond to abuse. Potential 'whistleblowers' to the EAPU Helpline speak of a culture of bullying and intimidation from senior staff when attempting to have issues addressed. Risk of losing employment may be less of a feature in metropolitan areas however those in more rural settings where there may only be one facility are less likely to follow through with formal reporting. Although the *Aged Care Act* is the key piece of legislation pertaining to residential facilities, some workers report that spot checks and accreditation processes are ineffectual in responding to abuse.

Many frustrated service providers who deal with abusive situations where people live at home *and have capacity*, can be strong advocates for introducing mandatory reporting in Australia. This raises a range of issues which have been briefly discussed in the EAPU Newsletter (June 2005). The EAPU believes that this is a separate issue to those with impaired capacity. For example the current response in the United States where mandatory reporting is legislated will see a child protection response where (if the person does not have capacity) they are removed and placed in a place of safety, e.g. an aged care facility (in Queensland there already exists a waiting list of several months to get a placement in a facility and that placement does not guarantee a location that is close to the family network). If the older person *has capacity* to make decisions, they may (and often do) reject the intervention and remain in their home with the perpetrator. Consider also the implications for Aboriginal Australians if their older people are removed from the community and placed in aged care facilities, as the majority of these people are already part of the stolen generation.

The above examples are basically the family violence response in Australia without using mandatory reporting. However the US experience with mandatory reporting has shown that older people with capacity will hide the abuse from their doctors and other health workers knowing that they will report it. Certainly the service provider should report family violence under their duty of care if their client's safety is at risk.

To date the EAPU experience has shown that service providers (particularly health workers) will maintain an ongoing involvement in the protection process such as monitoring and supporting the older person under the existing family violence response. However, under mandatory reporting, a service provider can argue that they have fulfilled their duty of care by reporting the abuse, and opt out of further involvement. Valuable resources can be ploughed into a model that ends up duplicating the existing response and, in the process, burying it deeper by people hiding the abuse even more than they already do.

Educating service providers in how to recognise and report family violence affecting older people would appear to be a better use of resources. This includes access to legal services for older people. The implications and expectations for service providers about mandatory reporting needs more discussion, particularly about what older people want.

If you have any comments on this subject please put them onto the EAPU forum which can be found on the EAPU website: [www.eapu.com.au](http://www.eapu.com.au) or email me at [les.jackson@lccq.org.au](mailto:les.jackson@lccq.org.au) and I will place them on the forum.

**The Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research welcomes articles from guest contributors. Publication of the articles will be at the discretion of the Director of the Centre. Views expressed in published guest contributions are not necessarily the views of the Centre.**

## Website Update...

### Domestic and family violence statistics

CDFVR's website now features a number of links to statistics about domestic and family violence in Australia. Visit the "Statistics" sub-section of the "Resources" section on the homepage menu to find links to the following reports and related websites.

- Access Economics - The Cost of Domestic Violence to the Australian Economy: Parts 1 and 2.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics: Women's Safety Australia.
- Australian Statistics on Domestic Violence: *Jane Mulroney, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse.*
- Family Homicide in Australia. Trends and Issues in crime and criminal justice: *Jenny Mouzos and Catherine Rushforth.*
- Homeless people in SAAP 2004-05: SAAP National Data Collection Annual Report 2004-05 (*This report provides data about supported accommodation assistance given to people, including women and children escaping domestic violence*).
- Measuring violence against women: a review of the literature and statistics: *Information/E-links, Social Policy Section, Parliamentary Library.*
- Men as Victims of Domestic Violence: *Jane Mulroney & Carrie Chan, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse.*
- Queensland Police Service Annual Reports.
- The health costs of violence: Measuring the burden of disease caused by intimate partner violence. A summary of findings: *Department of Human Services, VicHealth.*
- Violence in Indigenous Communities, Full Report: *Paul Memmott, Rachael Stacy, Catherine Chambers and Catherine Keys.*

### Website update alerts

The Centre's website now also includes an electronic mailing list alert for subscribers to be notified of any major updates to the CDFVR website including newsletter and data collection summary releases. Subscription to this mailing list can be completed by visiting the "Subscribe" section on the homepage menu and entering your email address. Please note that your email address will remain private and you may unsubscribe at any point.

**Visit CDFVR online at: [www.noviolence.com.au](http://www.noviolence.com.au)**

## Workshops, Conferences and Date Claimers

30-31 March, 2006

Compassionate, Collaborative, Confrontation  
Centacare, Gold Coast, Qld.  
Enquiries: PO Box 173 Morningside QLD 4170  
Mobile 0402538158

3 March - 14 December, 2006

Domestic Violence Provisions in Migration Law  
Commencing in Brisbane on March 23 and travelling to 9  
other centres before reaching Cairns on December 14  
Contact: Lesley Hunt, RAILS DV Project Worker  
Ph: 3846 3189  
Fax: 3844 3073  
Email: [lesley.hunt@rails.org.au](mailto:lesley.hunt@rails.org.au)

5 & 7 April, 2006

Compassionate, Collaborative, Confrontation  
Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service  
135 Abbott Street, Cairns  
Enquiries: PO Box 173 Morningside QLD 4170  
Mobile 0402538158

6 April, 2006

Is Child Protection a Public Health Issue?  
Adelaide SA  
<http://www.unisa.edu.au/hawke/events/2006events/UNIFEMapril06.asp>

24 April, 2006

Parental Mental Health Needs and Child Welfare: Working  
Across Boundaries  
Glasgow, Scotland  
<http://www.baspcan.org.uk/>

1 May, 2006

Contact and Relocation - focusing on the children  
Byron Bay, NSW  
<http://www.cyp.scu.edu.au/>

2-3 May, 2006

Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum  
Mackay, Qld  
<http://www.noviolence.com.au>  
Email: [a.webster@cqu.edu.au](mailto:a.webster@cqu.edu.au)  
Phone: (07) 49407834

3 May, 2006

Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month  
Remembrance Day Candle Lighting Ceremony  
Co-ordinated by Qld. Domestic Violence Services Network  
in various locations throughout Queensland  
Email: [office@dvcairns.org](mailto:office@dvcairns.org)  
Phone: (07) 40406100

18-19 May, 2006

International Interdisciplinary Conference on Children's  
Rights - An Appraisal of the Children's Rights Convention  
Ghent, Belgium  
<http://www.law.ugent.be/>

21-23 May, 2006

Strengthening Practice: The First National Australian College  
for Child and Family Protection Practitioners Professional  
Development Conference  
Sydney NSW  
<http://www.croccs.org.au/>

14-15 June, 2006

Sharing Our Information Keeping Our Women Strong  
North/Far North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander Women's Legal Education Conference  
Townsville Plaza Hotel, Townsville  
Ph: 1800 082600  
<http://www.nqwls.com.au>

9-12 July, 2006

NCADV Conference - Organising for Collective Power  
Atlanta, Georgia  
[http://www.ncadv.org/conferences/NCADVConferences\\_117.html](http://www.ncadv.org/conferences/NCADVConferences_117.html)

9-12 July, 2006

International Family Violence and Child Victimization  
Research Conference  
Portsmouth, NH USA  
<http://www.unh.edu/fri/conferences/2006/>

24-27 July, 2006

International Conference on Children and Divorce  
Norwich, UK  
<http://www.iccd2006.com/>

3-6 September, 2006

XVIth ISPCAN International Congress on Child Abuse and  
Neglect - Children in a Changing World: Getting It Right  
York, UK  
<http://www.ispcan.org/congress2006/>

16-18 October, 2006

Strengths-Based Practice Conference  
Brisbane  
<http://www.lighthouseresources.com.au/>

19-20 October, 2006

Sonoma Wine Country's 1st Annual Family Violence  
Conference 2006 - Eliminating Racism, Empowering Women  
Santa Rosa, CA  
Email: [twarner@srcity.org](mailto:twarner@srcity.org)  
<http://d.santa-rosa.cal.us/pd/pdf/FVC%20reg.pdf>



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We encourage readers to contribute to the Centre's Newsletter. If you have any information or articles you wish to publish, please contact Centre staff.

### HAVE YOUR CONTACT DETAILS CHANGED?

We have become aware that some recipients of the CDFVR newsletter have relocated or changed contact details, including email address. To enable us to update our records and ensure that you receive our quarterly publication, please contact us at the above phone, fax or email address with your change of details. Please be assured that the Centre does not release your details to any third parties without your permission.

If you would like to be included on, or removed from, the Centre's mailing list, please ring us on (07) 49 407834.

The Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research (CDFVR) receives triennial funding from the Queensland Department of Communities to undertake research, education and evaluation activities pertaining to domestic and family violence. CDFVR is located within the Centre for Social Science Research in the Faculty of Sciences, Engineering and Health at Central Queensland University, Mackay Campus.

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Queensland Government, Central Queensland University, or Centre for Social Science Research.

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