

Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence Annual Report 2016-2017

President's Report

I wish to pay my respect to the Kombumerri people, the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and to Elders past and present and to emerging community leaders.



It is with great pleasure that I present my 2017 President's Report. Once again I'm compelled to say that the year has proven to be very busy for the staff at the Service, and although it may sound repetitive, I have witnessed the extraordinary lengths the Director and staff have had to go to at times, to step up when required and respond to the increasing demand which has put enormous pressure on the Service.

As part of providing a quality service, the Management Committee supports opportunities for all staff to access professional development. This year staff were able to participate in Strangulation Prevention training; Somatic Experience; Victims Assist Queensland application and eligibility; Advocating Accurately for domestic violence victims in the context of civil and family law; Risk Assessment; Information Sharing and Privacy and Suicide Prevention.

Also in relation to quality service provision, the agency has embarked upon the Human Services Quality Framework Audit which will be completed in the next financial year.

The budget position has not allowed a commensurate increase in staff numbers to meet

the demand which carries an impact on the service. Fortunately this year during a visit to the Service by the Minister, Director General and Executive staff of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services the demand on the Service was convincingly explained by the Director and some much appreciated respite should be forthcoming from the Department. The Management Committee extends its acknowledgement and thanks for the support reflected in that offered respite.

Once again this year there have been innumerable deaths perpetrated by intimate partners often accompanied by sexual violence and the Director is called upon by the media for comment and analysis, which is a very tragic duty but also reflects the high standing of the staff at the Service. The Gold Coast community is very fortunate to have such a highly effective Service run by dedicated and committed staff and administrators, which we should collectively be exceptionally proud of.

Personally I have been dismayed as I've watched the events unfolding in the US which has put the sexual abuse of very high profile women on the international agenda, but aspects of this abuse and much worse is the focus of the work of this agency year in and year out. It is very sad to witness the universality of the shame and secrecy born by women in the public eye or those who seek help privately sometimes over decades, but it is a feature of criminal sexual assault or harassment that the victim is potentially repeatedly victimized physically, emotionally, or through their reputation and future opportunities.

On another level it is typical for an increase in demand to follow such public focus on abusive experiences which often thankfully emboldens people to seek help but will generate increased demand, to which the Agency will have to respond within their current resources. Let us hope though that if any good can come out of this global awareness it will produce a paradigm shift in the sense of entitlement and lack of respect which underpins these criminal actions and over time there will be a dramatic increase in personal safety and respect to women and girls universally.

On behalf of the Management Committee I wish to thank the Director, staff and all those connected to the Service, for their commitment, skill and positive effect on the social justice landscape of the Gold Coast.

Barbara Geoghegan



Director's Report

I am pleased to present the Director's report for 2016/17. Firstly, I would like to thank the members of the Management Committee who voluntarily gave their time contributing to the organisation in the past year. Thank you to Barbara Gaygan as President, Casandra Steer as Treasurer, Terry Goldsworthy as Secretary and to Di Mangan, Louise McOrmond Plummer and Julia Clarke as General Members. Your diverse backgrounds and knowledge assist in the governance role and strategic direction of the agency.

Secondly, I would like to thank and pay tribute to those in the engine room of the organisation this year, – our wonderful staff. Kellie, Narelle, Anne, Isabell, Ana, Cristina, Marjorie, Kerrin, Josie and Thi Thanh Tam Pham (Lucie) your commitment to the cause is very real. I appreciate your knowledge and expertise and am amazed at the work you continue to do in the personally and professionally challenging area of sexual violence. I truly value your contribution and the positive difference you make in the lives of women I witness daily. I also want to thank you for the support, and loyalty you continue to offer me.

Next, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to GCCASV this year. Thank you to Ella our personal trainer, Erin our nutritionist, Jeanette our knitter, Christine our singer, Beth our Art therapist who all generously donated their time to volunteer and provide value-added options for clients on their healing journey.

To the students who contributed to projects a big thank you to Brianna Attard who compiled the 3rd Edition of STEP this year and Florence Knipping who will complete the legal snapshot next year.

Trends

This year we have seen a continuing high level of Intimate Partner Sexual Violence (IPSV); Alcohol and Drug Facilitated Sexual Violence; Sexual Harassment; women raped in share houses by flatmates; the increasing influence of pornography in types of assaults committed and injuries caused; increasingly complex cases with intersecting issues requiring significantly more individual advocacy.

Achievements

This past year, on behalf of the agency, I have engaged in numerous consultations, workshops, roundtables, senate submissions, parliamentary committee enquiries to increase women's safety.

This **structural advocacy** has contributed to some positive outcomes such as sexual assault counselling notes will now have protection in line with other Australian jurisdictions; victims of sexual assault will automatically be recognised as a special

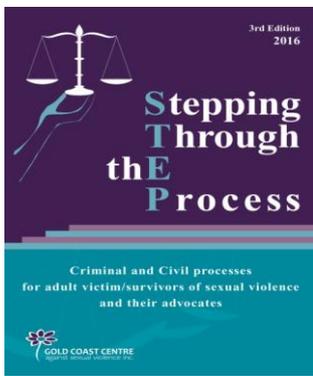
witness in court proceedings; domestic and family violence victims will be informed if perpetrators are released on bail or from prison; a new Charter enhancing Victims Rights; reversing the presumption for bail in serious domestic violence-related crimes; notifying victims and families when someone with a DVO is being considered for parole, introduction of urgent appeal rights to the bail application process, allowing GPS trackers to be fitted to certain offenders as a bail condition. Great to get this legislation through with bi-partisan support.



This year through our **Sexual Assault Linkages Initiative** (SALI) we achieved: enhanced awareness of the work of GCCASV; the nature and impact of sexual violence; IPSV and the intersection of DV and SV through education, cross agency training; outreach to other agencies; participation in state networks such as Queensland Sexual Assault Network and Ending Violence Against Women Queensland and partnering with a range of stakeholders for specific projects leading to better outcomes for clients. GCCASV is represented on the Board of the Red Rose Foundation and was a sponsor of the Strangulation prevention training.

In 2016 **Sexual Violence Awareness Month** was very successful and included the annual community breakfast at Sharks attended by over 120 people; a survivor speak out; GCCASV open day; Teal Sock Day; orange day morning tea and education awards; school education; candle lighting event; clothesline project, forum on pornography and launch of STEP legal resource.





The 3rd edition of our comprehensive **STEP legal resource** was launched on 26/10.2016. Thanks to contributors Kellie Wilk, Brianna Attard, Mitchell Clark & Terry Goldsworthy. Thanks to Sarah P. who shared her story and to Sid Cramp for launching the resource.

The **Problem with Porn Forum** was a great success engaging over 50 members of our community in a dialogue on this issue. Thanks to Gold Coast Sexology for co-sponsoring the event. A big thank you to keynote Melinda Tankard-Reist, thank you to MC Narelle Poole and speakers Snr Sgt Troy Penrose, Kerrin Bradfield and Ross Tyler. Pornography remains one of our greatest challenges and this community conversation must continue.

In-house, we **upgraded** our external lighting and completed the refurbishment of three upstairs rooms giving them a fresh, bright look.



Challenges

Apart from pornography, the abuse of technology and social media in the area of sexual violence remains a challenge with stalking, multiple dating apps, the sharing and on-sharing of sexually explicit material all too common.

Domestic Violence homicide was again a concern this year. Red Rose Rallies were held on the Gold Coast, Brisbane and outside the supreme court to raise awareness of and commemorate each life lost.

A big challenge again this year was keeping pace with demand for counselling, information and support with scant resources. Despite this situation there was no waiting list during the year and due to priority scheduling of crisis appointments, all clients were responded to within their requested time frame.

Funding and donations



I would particularly like to thank the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services who provide core funding that allows us to delivery vital services to victim/survivors of sexual violence.

I would also like to thank all of our supporters in particular state politicians Ros Bates, Sid Cramp, Ray Stevens and our local member Rob Molhoek, GCC Councillors in particular Cr Dawn Crichlow and Kristyn Boulton. Also thanks to our donors for their assistance in terms of money and goods in kind - My Friend's Place; Share the Dignity; Renee Peterson; Gold Coast Cabs; Friends with Dignity; Maree Welch; Gold Coast Mayoress Charity Foundation and to Jamie Addlestone who ran a desert marathon to raise funds for the agency.

In conclusion, I look forward to the next year with optimism, confident that as an agency we can continue to deliver high quality services and contribute to a safer Gold Coast.

Di Macleod



In recognition of our expertise, GCCASV was sought out multiple times over the past year to comment, present, educate and train in the area of **Intimate Partner Sexual Violence**. Apart from the delivery of student lectures and 2 day training for professionals, a highlight was delivering the keynote speech to a full house at the Cairns Annual Domestic Violence Breakfast.



Mayor Bob Manning, Di Macleod, Justice Henry, CRDVS President Mark Whitnall, CRDVS CEO Amanda Lee-Ross, Acting Superintendent Rolf Straatemeier, Arna Brosnan and Magistrate Spencer

GCCASV appeared multiple times in the **media** on topics such as reporting to police, bail, domestic homicide, IPSV, pornography, healthy relationships, sexting, lack of convictions, counselling privilege etc.

Counselling & Education Manager's Report

The core business of the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence continues to be providing high quality professional counselling, information, advocacy, support through the legal process and group work to women and young women on the gold coast who have experienced sexual violence at some time in their lives. Other services consistently offered have included; short term counselling for the supporters of victim/survivors, community education through diverse mediums and training of other professionals.

Utilising an eclectic range of strategies and therapies, underpinned by a feminist framework, the counselling team conducted 2984 centre based face to face counselling sessions in this last financial year. A further 100 outreach appointments were delivered in local high schools, courts, community centres and other not for profit organisations. The year also saw 3387 hours of telephone counselling and support provided by staff to survivors of sexual violence, their supporters and other community members.

During 2016-2017, 125 group sessions were conducted with a total of 495 attendances. The diversity of groups offered ranged from; painting and other creative arts, knitting, singing, journaling, yoga, nutrition, healthy relationships, personal training and the ongoing peer support group. These groups are made possible by a number of partnerships and dedicated volunteers and we thank them for their support. In addition, 61 massage appointments were provided through our safe touch program and 10 individual health sessions were completed with the volunteer nutritionist.

In total, 3203 individual women, young women and their supporters participated in counselling, which comprised of 782 new clients and 2459 clients who had previously engaged with the agency. This highlights the complexity of issues facing women who experience sexual violence and their need for ongoing counselling and support to address the many adverse impacts of the violence on their lives.

Staff are increasingly required to undertake an advocacy role for women intersecting with other services and systems. This is to ensure that the needs of women are met and the most appropriate support is in place for them. During this year, the centre provided 1308 hours of advocacy while supporting women in their interactions with police; the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions; Victim Assist Queensland; other legal services; educational facilities; Centrelink; the Department of Housing; refugees; mental health services; domestic violence services; alcohol and other drug services; GP's; psychologists and psychiatrists; the Department of Child Safety; youth focused services and the Royal Commission.

In addition to counselling and intervention services, the agency has always maintained a strong commitment to lobbying, awareness raising and prevention work in the area of sexual violence. During the last year, educative information and resources were disseminated to 25,000 individuals through the agency's website and other social media platforms. A further 4867 individuals participated in 25 education and training sessions. These sessions included, handling a disclosure; Intimate Partner Sexual Violence; the co-existence of violence, consent and healthy relationships; the influence of pornography; referral pathways and the #whatdoyouexpect program.

A specific highlight for me personally this year was the opportunity to present at the Australian Institute of Criminology's Crime Prevention and Communities Conference: Innovative Responses to Traditional Challenges, with my colleague Kerrin Bradfield. Our presentation was based on the development, implementation and scope for potential future use of the innovative #whatdoyouexpect program. This program includes a website and interactive workshops for young people exploring issues such as sexual violence, sexting, sexting as a selfie and the socialisation of gender norms. The presentation was well attended and received positive feedback, which lead to follow up media coverage.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank all of my colleagues for their passion, commitment, humour and support. Thank you also for your empathy, professionalism and dedication to the many women you work with. To those women, your courage and resilience continually inspires us.

Kellie Wilk

Financial Report

The Special Purpose Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2017 were prepared by R.L. Martin and Associates and are managed in compliance with funding legislative requirements.

Agency fiscal position remains stable with recurrent funding for the agency secured until 2021. A Summary is as follows;

Gross Income		\$673,530
DoCS	\$658,969	
Self Funding	\$ 14,561	
STEP	\$ 0	
Gross Expenditure		\$674,084
DoCS	\$667,381	
Self Funding	\$ 6,499	
STEP	\$ 204	

The complete audited statements for the 2016 – 2017 Financial Year are available upon request.

Cassandra Steer