

SPEAKING NOTES 27 October 2009
AGM NSW Rape Crisis Centre
Libby Lloyd
Chair
Violence Against Women Advisory Group (VAWAG)

- Thank you for the great privilege of being invited to speak with you this evening
- I have always greatly respected and admired the work of NSW RCC and of its achievements
- I believe this to be an optimistic moment in Australia for all of us working in the field of preventing or reducing violence against women
- We know that all countries in the world have a problem
 - Very difficult to get accurate information
 - Globally we use the figure 1 in 3 women are or will be a victim of domestic or family violence in their lifetime
 - We have some evidence of this figure in Australia and also that 1 in 5 women will be a victim of sexual assault
- Is there anything we can do to change this? Or do we reconcile ourselves to accept it? Or maybe even allow it to become worse?
- I personally feel very positive about our chance to improve this situation in Australia and very privileged to have been able to be involved in some recent initiatives
- My personal interest started from the international end - human rights and particularly women's human rights
- Having worked in the field of refugees where it became evident that that communities needed to change to ensure that women (and their families) were safe
 - I personally became convinced that women in particular must increase their role in leadership - women to support women - but there's also an equally important role for men to take
 - We need to initiate and support these essential changes
- This led me to become involved with UNIFEM (the United Nations Development Fund for Women) and to help re-establish the Australian White Ribbon Campaign
- which gained the support of many in Australian Parliaments especially the incoming Federal Labor Government in 2007
 - they agreed to support the White Ribbon Campaign
 - establish a National Council to advise on Reducing Violence Against Women
 - develop a National Plan to reduce violence against women
 - commission research and many other things in this area
- The National Council with 10 members was established in May 2008 and I was delighted to be asked to chair this Council

- It focussed on developing a strong evidence base to guide the advice it would give Government
- *'Time for Action - The National Council's Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and the Children'* was delivered to the Prime Minister in April of 2009
 - To develop this we consulted over 2000 Australians
 - Reviewed more than 370 submissions
 - Consulted individuals, groups and organisations in all States including in regional rural areas and with the sector
- The Plan identified six areas (almost equally weighted) where the Council believed significant action was required - these were:
 - Communities must be safe and non-violent
 - Relationships must be Respectful
 - Services must meet needs
 - Outcomes need to be just
 - Perpetrators must be accountable and
 - It is essential that Systems work effectively together
- It was a large and well-documented report
- The Government response has been very positive and there has been very little dissent
- It has been taken to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in order to engage all States where much of the policy and program (and budget) lies
 - Almost the largest ever inter-department working group has been formed at the Commonwealth level to coordinate the implementation
 - It is being worked on at great speed at both the Commonwealth and State levels
- I encourage the sector to play an active role in this stage
 - Watch and respond to ensure we all get the very best possible outcome
 - We are aware that speed of roll-out may seem to sometimes jeopardise the quality of some of the initiatives - we should find ways to suggest improvement if we believe this to be necessary
- I am convinced this is a moment in history when change for the better is absolutely possible
 - We must make the most of this opportunity
 - We must encourage our Governments to seize the moment
- We have a chance right now to use the best of our knowledge and our wills to bring about the necessary change to
 - Reduce
 - Prevent and
 - Stop violence against Women
- Thank you very much for this chance to speak with you this evening