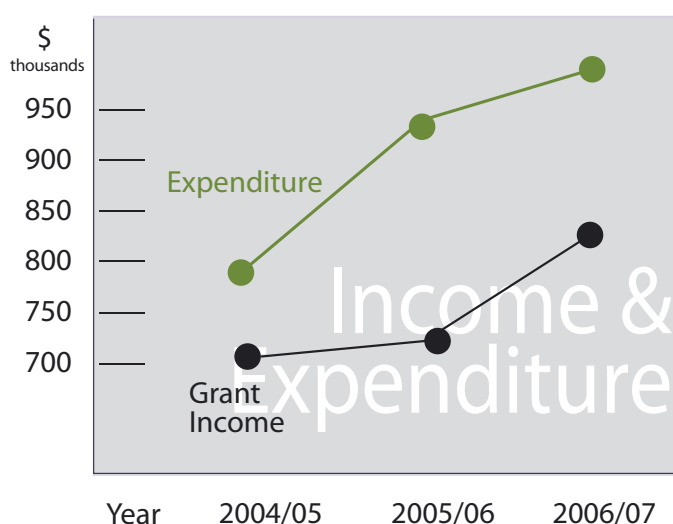
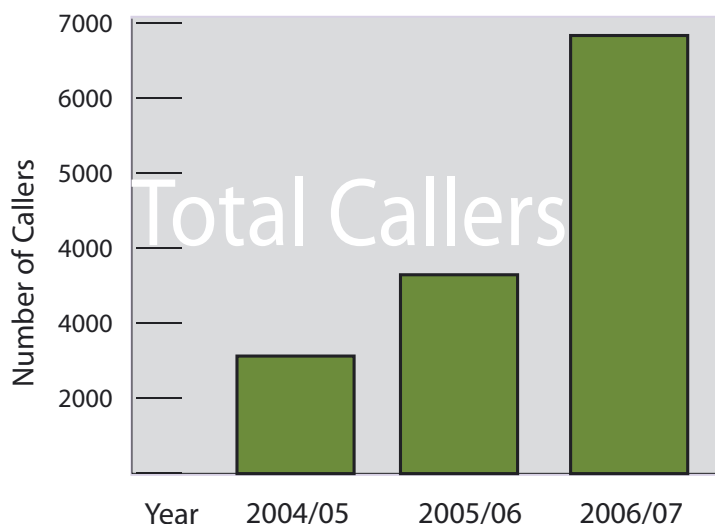


Annual Report 2006-07

NSW Rape Crisis Centre

“I’ve always been a strong believer that women shouldn’t be hurt by men whatsoever so I usually stick my nose in whenever I see an incident that I don’t think is respectful.”

19 year old male from rural NSW



Online contacts and calls to the Centre have more than doubled in three years. This has resulted in a considerable increase in costs which has not been balanced by grants and funding.

55% Increase in Calls

NSW Rape Crisis Centre responded to 6,695 requests for help in the 2006/07 financial year. This is a 55% increase when compared with two years ago.

This is a great outcome for the work being done by many to encourage those who experience sexual assault to seek help. This is also a direction NSW Rape Crisis Centre will continue to support and encourage. It is of great concern that the Centre's telephone records indicate a further 2,000 callers per annum are contacting the Centre and are being diverted to the answering service. A caller is diverted when the counsellor is already online or on the phone. The 55% increase in calls has resulted in a 30% increase in costs. During this same period funding has increased by 7.6%. NSW Rape Crisis Centre is in urgent need of an additional \$180,000 per annum to maintain existing services and a further \$1.2 million to meet demand. Sexual assault is a human rights violation which has a terrible impact on the person, their family and the community. To be responded to by an answering service when seeking help is an insult of the worst kind.

We seek your support in our campaign to expand our service so that the essential first call for help is responded to by a professional, qualified and experienced sexual assault counsellor.



NSW Rape Crisis Centre P.O. Box 555, Drummoyne NSW 2047

Counselling 1800 424 017 Rape Crisis Online and Website www.nswrapecrisis.com.au

Admin 02 9819 7357 Fax 02 9819 6295 Email info@nswrapecrisis.com.au



Key responses to a person who has been sexually assaulted

The first person most people speak to about being sexually assaulted is a trusted family member, friend or front line community worker. If a person tells you they have been sexually assaulted it is important to listen to them and let them express how they feel. It is also important not to tell them what to do or ask why they went there, let him in etc – why questions are blame questions.

There are three crucial things a person who has been sexually assaulted needs to hear:

They are:

I am sorry for what has happened.
What happened to you is a crime.
I will do what I can to help.

This is heard as:

I believe you.
You are not to blame.
You are not alone.

Encourage the person to contact NSW Rape Crisis Centre.

“I get to work with extraordinary, strong, and inspirational women every day - both on the phones and around me in the office.”

Counsellor, NSW Rape Crisis Centre



The NSW Rape Crisis Centre Counselling Service

NSW Rape Crisis Centre provides the statewide, 24/7 telephone and online crisis intervention, support counselling and referral service for anyone who has experienced sexual violence.

24% of calls are from those who have been assaulted in the past seven days. The Centre's response includes providing support, information about injury management, STI and pregnancy screening, accessing face to face counselling, collection/preservation of forensic evidence, reporting to Police and therapeutic intervention in relation to the impacts of sexual assault trauma.

56% of callers have been assaulted in the past. Counsellors talk with callers about the medium term impacts of trauma, information about Police and the criminal justice process and access to other services. Alcohol and other drug use, mental health issues including suicidal ideation, are frequent symptoms of unresolved sexual assault trauma, and therefore are often therapeutic considerations.

The remaining 20% of callers are friends, family or professionals supporting a person who has been sexually assaulted. For friends and family, counsellors will assist them to understand and manage their own emotional response to the trauma and talk them through strategies they can use to assist the person who has experienced sexual assault. For professionals, counsellors offer information, input regarding the therapeutic process, mentoring and debriefing.

The therapeutic response to sexual assault must be empowering and reconnecting for the victim/survivor and underpinned by a feminist perspective: that sexual assault happens, it is a crime and that the perpetrator is always responsible. The feminist framework also locates sexual assault within a power dynamic and identifies patriarchy as the systemic cause.

96.4% of callers contact the Centre on average 3.8 times and are responded to using the following seven stage crisis intervention model:

1. Ensure Safety – from further assaults and from the internal emotional turmoil created by sexual assault.
2. Define the problem – from the caller's perspective thereby ensuring that strategies, actions and resolutions are responsive of the caller's needs.
3. Provide support – the person is traumatised; listening and empathy are essential.
4. Explore alternatives – Counsellors provide information on options the caller may be unaware of.
5. Make plans – what the caller is going to do and how NSW Rape Crisis Centre can help.
6. Obtain commitment – assist the caller to take action on their plans.
7. Make appropriate referrals – in line with the caller's choices.

The remaining 3.6% of callers are impacted by complex sexual assault trauma. Commonly the trauma includes childhood sexual assault and adult sexual assault. NSW Rape Crisis Centre has developed a case management model which is suited to the telephone environment. The model requires Counsellors to negotiate a plan with the caller which has a small number of specific goals to be achieved usually within a time frame. One key aim of most case management plans is for the caller to move to face to face services.

“Any initiative that raises awareness that sexual assault is a crime and that there is help available is supported by the NSW Police Force,” said Superintendent Helen Begg, Head of the NSW Police Child Protection and Sex Crimes Squad.





The NSW Criminal Justice System – some improvements but more is needed

NSW Rape Crisis Centre continues to work to improve the criminal justice response to complaints of sexual assault. In the past year there has been advancement.

The NSW Attorney General has prepared a draft Bill which includes a definition of consent in sexual assault law. The proposed definition says that consent must be given freely and voluntarily, and that the person must have the capacity to consent. The draft Bill also indicates some requirement by the defendant to show why they believed the complainant consented. It is the view of NSW Rape Crisis Centre that further reform is needed so that defendants are required to show what steps they took to ensure consent was given.

In the District Criminal Court sexual assault matters must now move from committal to trial within four months and up to six months for circuit courts. New controls make it more difficult to defer especially on the day of the trial and defendants risk longer sentences if they leave it until the day of the trial to plead guilty. Special lists for sexual assault matters have been introduced which give priority to those hearings.

These measures are welcomed and will assist complainants in taking criminal justice action. There remains considerable need for improvement in other areas including one stop shops for complainants, better training and increased resources for Police, establishment of a specialist sexual assault prosecutorial unit, further law reform and specialist sexual assault courts. All are areas which NSW Rape Crisis Centre will continue to advocate for. For further information please see the Centre's website: "Rape ... it's time for change!"



Sexual Ethics and Rape Prevention Project

NSW Rape Crisis Centre is in the third year of a research partnership with Associate Professor Moira Carmody from the University of Western Sydney. The partnership aims to develop new ways of conceptualising sexual assault prevention education by encouraging ethical decision making in intimate relationships.

The first year involved seeking the views of young people around NSW and developing the sexual ethics program. The program creates an experiential learning environment in which participants become skilled at understanding ethical concepts and are encouraged to explore their personal and emotional responses to a range of non threatening situations. The aim is to lead participants to an evaluation of their intimate relationships and an understanding of how they can be ethical in their sexual practices.

During the past year youth leaders have been trained in presenting the program and have subsequently offered the training in a number of locations in NSW.

Crucial to this work is assessment of the impact of the program on participants' intimate relationships six months after completion. This assessment will occur in the third year of the partnership along with conclusions and recommendations for sexual assault prevention work.

"When I look back now I don't know how I had the strength to do it all – go to Police, get through Court and rebuild my life. It's such a big thing but I did it. I've finished Uni and got a really good job. I'll never forget what happened. It changed my world, but now I am changing it again for the better." Survivor 25 years old.



Rape Crisis Online

Rape Crisis Online provides one to one, real time, access to a sexual assault counsellor via the Centre's website. As at the 30th June 2007, 696 people had made online contact with the Centre. 84% of them had never spoken to anyone about what happened. 40% are aged 11 to 16 years and many are currently living with the perpetrator. A further 39% are aged 16 to 25 years and 46% of all contacts had been sexually assaulted in the past seven days.

Experience in the online environment has shown that therapeutic support and intervention is possible although duty of care continues to be a focus for counsellors. For this reason a key aim continues to be to encourage the person to make telephone contact with the Centre, or in person contact with appropriate services or a safe adult. Considerable work has also occurred with Police and the DoCS Helpline to develop processes for tracing children 'at risk'.

"Today I have proposed new laws which will mean there is a legal definition for consent. This will further protect victims of sexual assault, help lessen confusion for jurors and introduce an "objective fault test" for defendants," said the NSW Attorney General John Hatzistergos, 29 May 2007.





Centre Activities

The vision of NSW Rape Crisis Centre is to be a Centre of excellence in the provision of services to anyone who has experienced sexual assault.

In working to achieve this vision the Centre works closely with individuals, organisations and government in a range of ways and on many projects. In March 2007 the Centre, with other Women's Health Centres and Women's Health workers, participated in organising the highly successful NSW Women's Health Summit in Sydney Town Hall and in November 2006 the Centre worked with the NSW Strategy to Reduce Violence Against Women on the 16 days of action against violence. NSW Rape Crisis Centre is a member of the NSW Police Adult Sexual Assault, and Child Protection and Sex Crimes Squad Interagencies and regularly attends a range of meetings and networks in relation to sexual assault.

The Centre's training attracted 132 people to the NGO training and 83 Counsellors completing the Centre's Crisis Intervention Training. Quality assurance continues to be a high priority for the service with a range of indicators being developed to measure outcomes. Funding is being sought to further this work.

The monitoring and management of vicarious trauma experienced by counsellors as a result of the work they do is always in the forefront of Counsellor supervision and support. The work being completed in this area is certainly best practice, and has been short-listed for the 2007 WorkCover NSW Safe Work Awards.

"It is the view of the workers and Management Committee members of NSW Rape Crisis Centre that it is every person's human right to a life free of violence and when violence occurs it is their right to receive compassionate professional assistance in their recovery and full redress for the crime through the criminal justice system." **NSW Rape Crisis Centre**

Below: Sexual Ethics Project

Left: Karen Willis, Manager, NSW Rape Crisis Centre,

Right: Associate Professor Moira Carmody, University of Western Sydney



Korean Delegation with Centre staff, June 2007

Statistics

New callers	1,750
Repeat callers	4,945
Total callers	6,695

Most common presenting issue

Sexual assault	41%
Childhood sexual assault	24%
Drugged and assaulted	3%
Gang rape	3%

When assault occurred

Last 7 days	30%
8 days to six months	22%
Over 6 months	48%

Disability

Physical	30
Intellectual	18
Both	3

Supporters

22%

Age

Under 15	4%
16 to 25	33%
26 to 35	25%
36 to 45	22%
46 to 55	10%
Over 55	6%

Cultural background

Australian	79%
ATSI	2%
European	8%
Middle Eastern	2%
North American	2%
South American	1%
African	1%
Asian	3%
Pacific Islanders	2%

Finances

Income

Grants	886,388
Donations	29,604
Other	50,655
Total	966,647

Expenditure

Wages and on costs	742,179
Administration	114,911
Maintenance, equipment and IT	64,022
Professional development	30,428
Resources and travel	15,562
Total	967,102

Balance

-455

