

Media Release

White Ribbon Day - Violence Against Women

Dear Editor

November 25 marks White Ribbon Day which highlights the continuing issue of violence against women. According to the ABS Safety Survey 2006, in Australia 40% of women had experienced violence in adult life, 29% physical assault, 17% sexual assault and 16% violence from current or previous partners. This violence takes many forms - physical and sexual violence including rape, hate crime, emotional abuse and murder.

Women are most at risk from men they know and the most common location for assaults is their home. The most frequent perpetrators are partners followed by male family members and friends. Women continue to be most at risk in the very place where they should be safe.

Despite attempts to support women;

- shelters continue to turn women and their children away because of lack of space
- support services are underfunded and coverage is limited
- prosecution rates for sexual assault are among the lowest for all offences
- education programs about respectful relationships are still sadly inadequate

Violence must be seen as unacceptable whatever the circumstances and there are no excuses. Apart from the cost in human misery, family violence is cyclical, as those who experience violence as children, are more likely to suffer from or commit violence later in life. Violence against women has long term effects on men, women, children and communities.

Solutions will only be found when communities as a whole work together to eliminate violence. This will require each of us to condemn this abuse of power and to urge our governments to act strategically using preventive measures such as education, the provision of services and in the prosecution of those who violate human rights by committing these criminal offences.

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