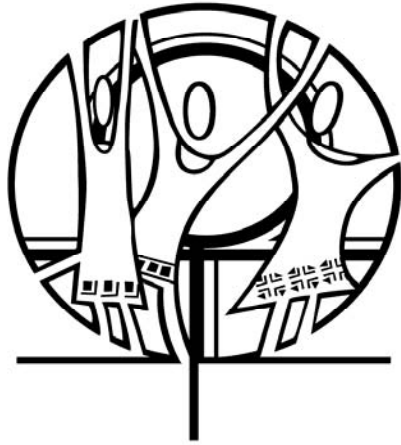


Immigrant Women's Support Service

Newsletter

October 2006



Produced by

Immigrant Womens Support Service

A domestic violence and sexual assault support service for women from non-English speaking backgrounds and their children.

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NOTE FROM COORDINATOR

IWSS Newsletter October 2006 compiles articles that highlight the work undertaken by the service. We have included the country profile of Papua New Guinea kindly prepared by Juana, an IWSS staff member. This profile coincides with Amnesty International's Report on "Papua New Guinea - Violence Against Women: Not Inevitable, Never Acceptable!" (available from Amnesty International website) launched in Brisbane on the 13th of October 2006. It is an opportunity to reflect on the impact of globalisation, immigration patterns, current conflicts in the world and where we could potentially go with what is currently termed environmental migration - the latter, resulting from drastic changes in our environment and the capacity for countries to continue to sustain their population due to climatic changes. Additionally, it highlights for IWSS, the complexity and migration experiences of the women we work with.

Papua New Guinea is only one country however; we know that this country is not unique in its struggles to do with the safety of women and children. In spite of all the world changes, violence against women has not stopped. This is demonstrated by the violence identified in the said report, by the existence of services and organisations – local, national and international – that seek to eradicate this aggression. Women and children continue to be subjected to violence rendering them vulnerable in societies where patriarchy maintains strong holds and legal means to counter them are rare or non-existent. Australia has laws and legal systems, for those who can access them, addressing domestic and family violence that continues to affect women and children thus it is not an issue that is foreign in this country.

Violence against women is not confined to a few 'rare cases', it is a global issue and it is a human rights issue. Those affected by domestic and family violence and those perpetrating violence often cross borders as is evidenced in the work with women accessing the Domestic Violence Provisions (DVP). As we are so well aware domestic and family violence and sexual violence impacts across all cultures, levels of education, religions and creed and remains an ongoing concern in the community. An article is included describing some of the key areas for DVP and the work with women from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB). This is included to continue to raise awareness of the issues experienced and the required understandings by workers.

Further in this issue, you will find information about "A Celebration with a Difference - Share the 20 Year Journey" IWSS FORUM. It is a very exciting time for IWSS to have come to this point in its history. In organisational history, particularly for a multicultural specific service, this is a considerable achievement and the current staff and management committee of IWSS are proud to reach this milestone. I also thank the contribution for this newsletter "A Woman's Experience with IWSS" by a woman who has accessed the service, one of hundreds of women and their children whose personal struggles and courage inspires our work.

An article on "Organisational Consideration for Working with Women / People from NESB" is also included. We consistently support and encourage individual workers to continue to challenge their practice. However, individual work is only one aspect of a responsible and sensitive response to people from NESB. Workers are as effective and as competent as their organisational culture and structure allows them and supports them to be. There needs to be an ongoing reflection of inclusion, access and equity policies, procedures and funding for workers to work appropriately with clients from NESB.

I trust and hope that you will enjoy the content of this Newsletter and invite you to provide feedback, questions and constructive input about the issues examined. I also take this opportunity to wish you well in the holiday break and peace to you and your families and the client group you work with.

Annabelle Allimant

Country Profile: PAPUA NEW GUINEA (PNG)

Although I have lived in Australia for 25 years, my mother is a Tolai woman from Rabaul and my father a New Islander man from Kavieng. I have been away from PNG for a number of years, however my parents have been very committed to teaching myself and my siblings about my country and culture; my country profile is therefore based upon formal studies and recollections from my parents home based history lessons and visits back to PNG. PNG occupies the south-western region of Oceania and makes up the eastern part of the whole island of New Guinea; the western region is West Papua and under Indonesian rule. PNG's capital is Port Moresby where the administrative and business centres are based. Of a population of 5 million, there are more than 1000 different cultural groups and about 850 to 900 individual language groups. Nevertheless the official languages are English, Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu. PNG is predominately rural based with only 15-18% of the population living in the urban areas (Kidu, 1997). As a result, the majority of the population live in traditional communities and practise subsistence based agriculture. These traditional communities and clans are acknowledged within the PNG constitutional framework. Consequently the indigenous of PNG have an absolute tenure over 97% of the land. The rest of the land is either leased from the State privately or Government owned; there is no freehold land in PNG. The absolute tenures are held in the communal hands of the traditional clans, so in order to develop on the land it must be worked out who are the owners before any development proceeds. The terrain of PNG is just as diverse as its people; rainforests form the lowlands and coastal areas, while mountain ranges traverse the inner part of the country forming the Highlands region. Although there are 20 administrative provinces within PNG, on a broader scale there are 4 regions including:- 1) the Highlands region: Simbu, Eastern Highlands, Enga, Southern Highlands, and Western Highlands; 2) the Islands region: East New Britain, Manus, New Ireland, North Solomons (Bougainville), and West New Britain; 3) the Momase region: East Sepik, Madang, Morobe, and West Sepik (Sandaun) and 4) the Papuan region: Central, Gulf, Milne Bay, Northern Province (Oro), Western (Fly), and the National Capital District. The PNG constitution provides that the provincial governments are subject to dismissal by the central government; numerous suspensions of provincial governments have occurred due to corruption and incompetence on the part of Party leaders.

Even though traders had known of PNG since the 1500's, the Germans formally colonized the northern half of PNG in 1884 and named it German New Guinea. Under German occupation, Chinese indentured workers were taken to German New Guinea to work the plantations. Prior to 1907, the Chinese labor-

ers were from Singapore, however after 1907 when direct trading routes were open between mainland China and PNG, the Chinese laborers consisted of mainland Chinese from the southern regions of China. The southern part of the island had been colonized since 1884 by the British, who named the area British New Guinea. Nevertheless after World War I (1914-1918) when the Germans lost the war, the Australian Government was given a mandate over German New Guinea by the League of Nations and its name was changed to the Territory of New Guinea. British New Guinea, on the other hand, had been a separate Australian colony called the Territory of Papua since 1905. The two territories were combined after World War II and made into the Territories of Papua and New Guinea, and later this name was changed to Papua New Guinea. While PNG became self-governing (while still under Australian mandate) on December the 1st 1973, PNG finally gained Independence from Australia on September 16th 1975.

Women in Papua New Guinea.

Women have played an integral role in both traditional and contemporary PNG society. Women are the mothers, producers of economic wealth and workers. In traditional patriarchal communities women are the producers of economic wealth, while the men make the decisions concerning the distribution of wealth. This trend is different however in traditional matriarchal communities where women are both the producers and distributors of wealth. However in contemporary PNG society, the lower status of women coupled with their increased economic responsibility have placed an added load on women. In urban areas, women are encumbered with living in two worlds, one being the contemporary workplace where they are employed during the day and the other being the home environment in which traditional perspectives of family and community may prevail. While in rural areas women have to contend with "...the intensification of the gardening system, (making a contribution) to cash cropping, male out migration (to urban areas for work), an increasing number of children in schools unable to help, and larger family sizes due to higher survival rates..... (w)omen (also) have a disproportionately onerous role in the maintenance and improvement of living standards in the Pacific and they receive only a relatively small share of the benefits..." (Kidu, 1997).

Intertwined with the issue of women's low status and increased economic responsibility is violence against women and girls and HIV/AIDS. Although PNG ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), women and girls experience not only domestic and sexual violence within the home and the extended families but also state violence and community violence. For example in the Amnesty

Country Profile: PAPUA NEW GUINEA (PNG)

International 2006 Report "Papua New Guinea: Violence against Women, Not Acceptable, Never Acceptable!" it was reported that especially in the Highlands region of PNG, it was almost an accepted belief that violence is part of domestic relationships. Violence is used to dominate female partners, who are deemed lazy or argumentative. The Report recorded the stories of women who experienced sexual violence when insisting on condom use during sexual intercourse. Furthermore skewed interpretations of traditional practices such as bride price, have allowed men to assume that they "own" their wives; thus permitting them to be violent and sexually promiscuous. Another form of domestic violence is violence amongst co-wives. Amnesty International (2006) found that one third of women in prison are serving sentences for crimes committed against co-wives or the other women in their partner's life.

Women face sexual violence in many situations including rape and gang rapes that are fuelled by drugs and alcohol and opportunistic in nature. Women and girls are also vulnerable to sexual violence perpetrated by the men in their immediate and extended families. Due to the trend of moving to the urban areas to work, biological parents leave their daughters in settlements with neighbors and extended family. As the daughters left in the settlements are dependent upon male relatives for food, shelter and basic necessities, the power differentials between girls and their male relatives creates a space in which sexual violence can occur. Another context in which sexual violence will occur is the formal and informal commercial sex industry. For example women and girls living in poverty may engage in the sex industry to earn an income. Furthermore women and girls are sometimes sold into sex work by husbands or other male family members. Women and girls in the sex industry are especially vulnerable to gang rapes and other forms of violence and unfortunately the police do not serve as sufficient protection. Police officers from the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) are sometimes involved in the perpetration of sexual violence against women and girls seeking their assistance. The Amnesty International Report found that the lack of an appropriate response by the RPNGC to violence against women and girls is exacerbated by the fact that many officers commit domestic violence in their family homes. Lastly women and girls are exposed to further risk of sexual violence during tribal wars and under the traditional system of "pay back".

HIV/AIDS is also a major concern that is directly affecting the lives and futures of women and girls in PNG. PNG had the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS in the Pacific region and the fourth highest rate in the Asia Pa-

cific region (AusAid, 2002). A study conducted by AusAid (2002) found that during the 1990's the rate of HIV/AIDS infection rose sharply amongst women accessing neo-natal clinics. Furthermore it was found that the rate of HIV/AIDS infection amongst the 15-29 year age group was higher amongst women than men. Another report prepared by AusAid called "Potential Economic Impacts of an HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Papua New Guinea"(2002) noted that:- 1) PNG is facing a major HIV epidemic, with annual increases of 15-30% in numbers infected; 2) HIV has the potential to worsen poverty in PNG, with measures of economic welfare falling between 12% and 48% by the year 2020; 3) By 2020 the labour force could be 13-38% lower than expected without HIV and 4) The budget deficit could increase by between 9% and 21% by 2020 because of HIV. A predominantly patriarchal system coupled with skewed interpretations of traditional practice and the subsequent power differentials between men and women lead to women and girls being at a greater risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

My parents descend from matriarchal cultural groups, in which women play important roles within the home and in the community; so I am ingrained with the belief that if any group of people will pull PNG through this time of despair it will be the women. To walk amongst the chatting women in the markets selling and buying produce, one cannot help but reflect upon the industriousness, feistiness and hard working nature of PNG women and know deep within that the once PNG men start to take responsibility for their behaviour and practises, it will be the women who will take PNG forward.

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Providing Practical Support to Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Domestic Violence

Introduction

IWSS frequently receives requests from services for information and resources in assisting women who are on temporary visas in Australia, and who are reporting experiences of domestic violence. A recent survey on the professional development and training needs of workers throughout Queensland found that information on the Domestic Violence Provisions (DVP) within the Migration Regulations was an area of migration law that was rated with the highest interest. In response to these emerging needs this article will:

- Highlight some of the issues for women from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) regarding residential status and domestic violence;
- Outline the purpose of the DVP within the Migration Regulations;
- Present practical strategies in supporting women who are on temporary visas and who are experiencing domestic violence; and
- Provide a list of useful contacts.

Throughout this article we will refer to visa applicants as either 'visa applicants' or 'women' interchangeably. Please note that IWSS is specifically funded to work with women only however we recognise that men may also experience domestic violence and access the DVP.

DVP within the Migration Regulations

The DVP were introduced into Australian migration law in 1991 and have been subject to continued scrutiny. The provisions were intended to protect those people, the majority of whom are women, who have been sponsored for permanent residence in Australia by their spouse (who is a citizen or permanent resident in Australia), and where they or a member of their family, are being subject to domestic violence perpetrated by that spouse.

The provisions were introduced in response to community concerns at the incidence of violence occurring in relationships within this context. Prior to the provisions being introduced, there were few options available to women to remain in Australia if they chose to leave a violent or abusive relationship.

The provisions are relevant to partner visas and other visas, (in particular business and skilled visas), where the visa applicant is dependant on his/her relationship for the grant of permanent residence in Australia. Requirements of the DVP are:

- The relationship with the sponsoring partner has broken down;
- Domestic violence has been perpetrated against the visa applicant or in some cases her children and/or members of the family unit by the sponsoring partner; and
- The relationship is determined to be a genuine and continuing partner relationship up until the time of separation.

Temporary Visa Holders

There are many categories of visa which offer people temporary residence in Australia and who may be eligible to access the DVP. For this article we will focus on the partner visa and the prospective partner visa which are two of the principal visa types under the Family Migration Program.

Partner Visas – subclass 309 and 820

Applications for a partner visa are made by people who have married a citizen or permanent resident of Australia. Partner

visa applicants are generally granted a two year temporary spouse visa with permanent residence being granted after this time if they satisfy the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) that their relationship is genuine and continuing.

Permanent residence may be granted without waiting the two years if the couple has been in a long term relationship. A long term relationship is where:

- The relationship has been in existence for five years or more; or
- The relationship has been in existence for two years and there is a child/ren from the relationship.

Prospective Partner (Fiancé) Visa – subclass 300

Applications for a prospective partner visa are made by people who are preparing to marry a citizen or permanent resident of Australia and who are effectively 'sponsored' by that person to come to Australia. Prospective partner visa applicants are generally granted a provisional visa that enables them to gain entry into Australia and to reside in Australia for nine months (from the date of the visa being granted). During this time it is expected that the applicant will marry and are then able to lodge an application for the partner visa (subclass 820).

At IWSS we have observed many women who have come to Australia on a prospective partner visa and who have experienced domestic violence perpetrated by their sponsoring partner within this nine month period. Prospective partner visa applicants may be entitled to access the DVP *so long as they have married the Australian citizen or permanent resident*. Some women choose *not* to marry their violent or abusive partner and have chosen to leave the relationship. They may have very few options to allow them to continue to reside in Australia.

We often learn that women have invested significant financial and emotional resources in their preparations to marry, leaving family, friends, permanent employment and all that is familiar in their country of origin to move to Australia with the intention of creating a shared life with their partner. For many women the prospect of returning to their country of origin after separation is unfathomable and is often accompanied by significant challenges and hardship. Some women face serious discrimination, rejection and even human rights abuses in returning to their country of origin where they may be blamed for the breakdown of the relationship and/or for causing shame to their families.

Barriers for Women from NESB

Knowledge of Their Rights

Women from NESB often experience significant barriers in accessing information and reporting their experiences of domestic violence. Women from NESB are often unaware of their rights, relevant support services, and legislation in relation to domestic violence. This information is not always accessible/available in community languages.

Women on temporary visas are often intentionally misinformed by their sponsoring partner or spouse. We frequently hear women report that they have been told by a violent or abusive partner that if they choose to leave the relationship they will be deported and forced to return to their country of origin, or that they will lose residency of their children in Australia. These lies serve to instil fear, anxiety and confusion in women and may lead women to believe they have no choice but to stay in a violent relationship where their personal safety is at continued risk.

Providing Practical Support to Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Domestic Violence (cont'd)

Recognising Domestic Violence

Women from NESB may also lack an understanding of what constitutes domestic violence in Australia especially sexual violence within an intimate relationship. In some traditional cultures there may not be a concept of sexual violence occurring in marriage and no definitions of consenting sexual activity. Anecdotal evidence suggests that sexual violence is often experienced by women where other forms of domestic violence are present as women's capacity to negotiate intimacy is diminished within a relationship where there is unequal power and use of violence by a partner.

Isolation

Women from NESB often experience isolation as there may be an absence of immediate and/or extended family and community support in Australia. Social and cultural abuse may also be a feature of the domestic violence experienced within the partner relationship effectively isolating women from accessing support. Women may also be geographically isolated, living in rural or remote areas. Additionally women from NESB may also face social marginalisation and discrimination in Australia and/or exclusion from family and community as a result of domestic violence or following separation.

Cultural Barriers

There may also be cultural barriers for women in reporting their experiences of domestic violence. Many communities minimise or deny the incidence of violence against women and children, and women may experience significant pressure from their family or community to not disclose their experience of domestic violence. Women may have a strong sense of responsibility to protect their family/community identity and reputation.

There may be cultural values and traditions that foster violence against women and children that remain unchallenged, and gender related roles that may result in restrictive behaviours, beliefs and institutional arrangements. In some cultures women may not have shared rights nor have life experience and skills in many areas (e.g. finance, employment, and independent living) which may present challenges for women in being able to live independently in Australia.

Systemic Barriers

Additionally, women from NESB often experience systemic barriers when accessing appropriate information and support. These barriers include:

- Unwelcoming or intimidating presentation of service, or service image not reflecting cultural diversity;
- Lack of cross-cultural awareness and training of service providers;
- Experiences of discrimination and racism when accessing services;
- Inappropriate or inconsistent use of professional interpreters; and
- Service providers failing to provide relevant information in appropriate community languages, and not assisting women with relevant referrals to necessary services.

Providing Practical Support

Having highlighted some of the barriers that may be experienced by women from NESB there are many ways in which services can provide practical support to women from NESB who have been subjected to domestic violence and who are on temporary visas in Australia. It is important to be mindful however, that we do not 'overstep' our area of expertise when assisting

women. It is a Criminal Offence under the Migration Act (1958) to provide 'Immigration Assistance' if you are not a Registered Migration Agent, although it is lawful to provide 'Administrative Assistance'.

'Administrative Assistance' is defined in Section 276 of the Migration Act (1958) as being:

- Clerical assistance in the preparation of an application or other document;
- Translation or interpreting services to help an application or other document;
- Advising someone that they must apply for a visa without advising them of the specific visa type; and
- Passing on to another person information produced by a third person, without giving substantial comment on or explanation of the information (e.g. passing on advice received from a Registered Migration Agent).

Inform Women of Their Rights in Australia

- She can *at any time* leave a violent or abusive relationship;
- There are support services that can assist her;
- She can access free migration advice; and
- She *may* be eligible to access the DVP and apply for permanent residency following separation.

It may also be helpful to provide women with concrete examples of what constitutes domestic violence. Sensitivity is required here as women may not be ready to identify their experiences as domestic violence.

Support Women to Access Migration Advice

Issues regarding residential status are often complex and require more than a basic understanding of migration law. Access to Registered Migration Agents is important in each case to determine what options may be available to her. (See list of Contacts).

Support Women to Gather Relevant Documentation

Inform women who are separating from their spouse to leave with relevant documentation where possible or support women to retrieve or gather relevant documents after separation. *Safety for women and their children is a priority when women are leaving a violent relationship* and it may not always be possible for women to gather their belongings before leaving. It is often possible to retrieve important documents later if necessary. It is important to note that there may be instances where partners have destroyed documents or where women have arrived in Australia without documents (e.g. refugees or refugee claimants). Relevant documents include:

- Woman's passport;
- Children's passport;
- Any correspondence with DIMA;
- Marriage certificate; and
- Children's birth certificate.

Additional supporting documentary evidence that the woman was in a genuine and continuing relationship until separation, include:

- Evidence of shared accommodation (e.g. joint mortgage or rental agreements);
- Evidence of joint income and financial obligations (e.g. joint

Providing Practical Support to Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Domestic Violence (cont'd)

- bank account statements, investments or utility bills);
- Evidence of joint participation in social or cultural events (e.g. photos);
- Evidence of a declaration of the relationship to any government bodies (e.g. Centrelink, ATO, or Austudy); and
- Evidence of correspondence between the woman and her partner (e.g. letters or emails).

Support Women to Inform DIMIA of Change of Circumstances

Once women have accessed migration advice, you can support them to write to DIMIA notifying them of a change in their circumstances following separation. The letter should outline that they have recently separated from their partner due to domestic violence and that they are seeking migration advice and will supply DIMIA with appropriate documentation as soon as practical. The letter must be signed by the woman and include her name, date of birth and DIMIA file number if known. The letter should also include a new postal address so that the woman may continue to receive correspondence from DIMIA.

The Role of a 'Competent Person'

You may be asked in your role to undertake an assessment of domestic violence and to write a Statutory Declaration as a 'Competent Person'. A 'Competent Person' is defined within the Migration Regulations as being one of the following:

- Doctor;
- Psychologist;
- Registered Nurse performing the duties of a registered nurse;
- Social Worker performing the duties of a social worker and eligible for membership of AASW;
- Court Counsellor under the Family Law Act;
- Manager or coordinator of a women's refuge, or domestic violence crisis or counselling service;
- A person with certain responsibilities in refuges and crisis centres with collective decision making structures; and
- State and territory government child welfare and protection authorities (in cases involving children).

The role of a 'Competent Person' is to provide non-judicial evidence that domestic violence has occurred. This evidence is in the form of a Statutory Declaration and should be based on the assessment with the woman.

The Statutory Declaration must be completed using DIMA Form 1040 and must state:

- The basis of your claim to be a competent person for the purposes of assessing an allegation of domestic violence (e.g. attach certified copy of your qualifications);
- The name of the woman who, in your opinion, has suffered relevant domestic violence as defined in the Migration Regulations;
- The name of the person who, in your opinion, has committed the domestic violence;
- Whether, in your opinion, domestic violence has been suffered by the woman; and
- The evidence on which you base your opinion.

IWSS has developed a tip sheet titled '10 Tips for Writing a Statutory Declaration as a Competent Person' which is also featured in this newsletter. Additional copies are available to workers/organisations by request.

Contacts

Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS)

IWSS is a specialist domestic violence and sexual assault service that provides a free and confidential support service to women and their children from NESB who have experienced or are experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence. The Domestic Violence Program provides information, referral, crisis support and ongoing case management with women who have or are experiencing domestic violence perpetrated by an intimate partner or spouse.

Telephone: (07) 3846 3490

Email: mail@iwss.org.au

Website: www.iwss.org.au

Refugee and Immigration Legal Service (RAILS)

RAILS provide free migration advice to women throughout Queensland. In some cases RAILS are able to represent women as Registered Migration Agent.

Telephone: (07) 3846 3189

Email: admin@rails.org.au

Website: www.rails.org.au

Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA)

MARA is the national registration authority for all registered migration agents and ensures that they have high level knowledge of Australian migration law and procedures, as well as meeting high professional and ethical standards. MARA can assist in locating a migration agent and advise on costs that agents may charge. MARA can also assist with any complaints or disputes with regards to a migration agent.

Telephone: (02) 9299 5446

Website: www.themara.com.au

Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA)

The DIMA website provides useful information on visas and access to download forms. DIMA can provide information to visa applicants however they cannot provide migration advice.

Telephone: 131881

Website: www.immi.gov.au

10 Tips to Writing a Statutory Declaration as a 'Competent Person'

1. Conduct at least two assessment interviews with the woman applicant:
 - One for the initial assessment of domestic violence, and
 - One to check the accuracy of your report with the woman.
2. Allow adequate time for each assessment interview and be aware that this will need to be lengthened if an interpreter is required or requested.
3. Use a professional interpreter when required or preferred. Women may find it easier to speak about their experiences of domestic violence in their first language even if they have some proficiency in English.
4. Allow the woman to have a support person present and be mindful of the woman's needs throughout the interview process.
5. Inform the woman of the purpose of the interview i.e. to carry out assessment; your role as a 'Competent Person' to make an assessment as to whether or not her

Providing Practical Support to Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Domestic Violence (cont'd)

- experience is consistent with the definition of domestic violence and the requirements of the DVP.
6. Provide the woman with concrete examples of what constitutes domestic violence.
 7. What to include in the Statutory Declaration:
Information you must state:
 - a. The basis of your claim to be a competent person for the purposes of assessing an allegation of domestic violence (e.g. attach certified copy of your qualifications).
 - b. The name of the woman who, in your opinion, has suffered domestic violence.
 - c. The name of the person who, in your opinion, has committed the domestic violence.
 - d. Whether, in your opinion, domestic violence has been suffered by the woman.
 - e. The evidence on which you base your opinion.*Other information you might include:*
 - f. How, when, and where woman met spouse/partner, and how they initially communicated (e.g. by email, telephone).
 - g. Details of when and where they were married and any celebrations of this event.
 - h. Details of all forms of violence experienced (e.g. verbal, physical, emotional, sexual, financial, social, and cultural/spiritual). If known, include dates and times and any witnesses to the violence. Include any violence that dependent children may have witnessed or experienced. If violence was also perpetrated by extended family members you may include this however, it is important to concentrate on violence perpetrated by the spouse/partner.
 8. Use numbered statements when completing Form 1040, Part D, Question 11 and 12.
 9. Ensure that each statement reflects accurately what the woman has stated. A Statutory Declaration is a legal document and you can be summoned to give evidence in Court. You may wish to request feedback from the Migration Agent involved with regard to your Statutory Declaration.
 10. Provide a copy of your Statutory Declaration to the woman for her own personal records.
- Observations of the client during the assessment interviews (e.g. 'she recalled in tears...')
- i. The impact of the violence experienced by the woman and/or her dependant children.
 - j. Supporting literature and references if available and relevant.

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'Domestic Violence Provisions within the Migration Regulations' Training Workshops

For those who missed the opportunity to attend recent training workshops on the '*Domestic Violence Provisions within the Migration Regulations*' held throughout the South East Queensland region. You are invited to attend another training workshop on one of the following dates:

15th of February 2007

21st of June 2007

18th October 2007

These workshops will be facilitated by the Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS) and the Refugee and Immigration Legal Service (RAILS) in Brisbane.

Organisational Considerations for Working with Women / People from NESB

Workers are restricted by their working environment and the organisational culture that supports or not appropriate access and equity to people from NESB. This needs to be acknowledged by funding bodies and organisation's policies in place. Some of the following aspects when working with multicultural communities need to be considered.

- organisational culture that perpetuates a particular stand on service delivery;
- affirmative action in processes of recruitment and employment of staff from diverse backgrounds and supporting them in staff teams;
- organizational priorities of inclusion should not be driven by individual's with 'special interests' or as 'add on to existing roles';
- organisational culture that is inclusive of diversity of all kinds e.g.. age, ability, sexuality, levels of education, cultural, religious, race as well as language competency;
- resourcing adequately to ensure training and understandings of diversity; provision of adequate access to professional interpreters; provision of and cognisant of the need for additional time;
- ensuring a line item in the organisational budget that ensure costs related to working with NESB clients are met;
- consistent and regular messages being delivered to all staff of both processes and policies within an organisation;
- accountable management and leadership that ensures policies in place encompass diversity in the community;
- ensuring that evaluative processes are in place to consistently ascertain and recognize the gaps;
- ensuring processes address diversity in a proactive manner;
- proactive responses to identified gaps are consistently addressed – What do we do when we know a situation is not working out?
- ensuring diverse views and expertise of different professions are equally valued within an institution e.g.. social workers, counsellors, team leaders, bilingual / bicultural workers;
- ensuring the specialized knowledge of community based organizations working with migrants and refugees is sought;
- ensuring consultation to voice the needs of marginalised CaLD communities;

Finally, the issue of power differentiation between the recipient of service and the organizational culture providing the service. We have the power as workers with increased awareness around issues to have effective interactions that would, potentially, lead to successful outcomes. It is critical that organisations and individual workers question this aspect of a working relationship with clients from NESB. Active advocate is a critical aspect of the work with clients from NESB for systemic and individual changes within the organisation and the funding body. Some questions can be:

- How are we utilising our power when we do not engage in the language that is the client's only way of communicating with us?
- How empowering is it when we don't know what the client needs to tell us?
- How effective are our strategies if the client has not participated fully?

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Migrant Women's Emergency Support Service Inc. operating as the Immigrant Women's Support Service will be held on:

7th of December 2006 with start at 1.30 pm

**Yungaba
' Centre Room '
120 Main Street, Kangaroo Point**

RSVP by Thursday 30th of November (for catering purposes)

Phone: 07 - 3846 3490

Email: mail@iwss.org.au

Welcome by Chairperson

AGENDA

Confirmation of Minutes of AGM 2004

Report from Heather Nancarrow - Chairperson

Report from Marguerite Cameron - Treasurer

Election of Management Committee Members

Appointment of Auditor

**Guest Speaker
*To be confirmed***

Entertainment & Refreshment

If you require the renewal membership and / or nomination form, please contact IWSS on 07 3846 3490 or mail@iwss.org.au. Financial members only are able to vote.

We appreciate your membership and support of MWESS Inc.

Immigrant Women's Support Service Forum

A celebration with a difference – Share the 20 year journey of IWSS
Forum

***“Moving Beyond Rhetoric to Diversity in Practice:
a Human Rights Framework to Address Violence Against Women”***



© www.keithmallett.com

Who should attend?

- * Domestic violence and sexual assault workers.
- * Workers in the multicultural field – managers, settlement workers, counsellors, support workers, interpreters, bilingual / bicultural workers and volunteers.
- * Workers across the women's sector.
- * Government and community organisation representatives working with people from CaLD and NESB in: housing, child safety, Legal Aid, child care, health, Police, education, immigration, and other key services.
- * Academics, researchers and policy makers.
- * Hospital emergency services and social workers.
- * Individuals committed to improving women's safety and the status of women in the community.
- * Survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence.

Topics to be covered

- * IWSS 'her-story' - service delivery and shared stories from survivors and/or workers
- * Human Rights – Due Diligence and accountability
- * Diversity / Multicultural / Cross-cultural - Access and Equity
- * Violence against women - intergenerational, state, domestic and family violence, serial sponsorship, pawns of war, sexual assault, sexual slavery, mail order brides, rape in marriage and prostitution.
- * Migration experience and violence - refugee, displacement and settlement
- * Systemic issues - barriers, structures, advocacy, policies and lobbying
- * Implications for legislation - policy, research and practice

If you are a former staff member / project worker of IWSS / MWESS or have been involved in the Management Committee at any time in the last 20 years please email us with your contact details. We would like to hear from you.

Immigrant Women's Support Service

Domestic Violence Program Phone 3846 3490 Fax 3844 8467

Sexual Assault Program: Phone 3846 5400 Fax 3846 5619

www.iwss.org.au email: mail@iwss.org.au

PRELIMINARY FORUM PROGRAM – Day 1: Thursday 9th of November 2006

Time	Topic
8.30 – 9.00	Registration
9.00 – 9.05	Welcome to Country – Aboriginal Elder, <u>Carol Curry</u>
9.05 – 9.20	Opening Address (TBC)
9.35 – 9.45	Welcome and Forum Overview Heather Nancarrow, Chairperson, IWSS MC
9.45 – 10.30	Key Note Speaker <u>Georgina Perry</u> , President, Amnesty International - Australia
10.30 – 11.00	Morning Tea
11.00 – 11.45	IWSS 'Her-story' Past/current IWSS Coordinators and MC member
11.45 – 12.15	IWSS Service Delivery IWSS Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Programs
12.15 – 12.45	Shared Stories of Resilience and Hope A woman's observation from the middle east
12.45 – 1.45	Lunch
1.45 – 2.45	Hypothetical/ In conversation - "Is human rights the way to go?" <u>Raquel Aldunate</u> (Women's Legal Aid), <u>Nora Amath</u> (Al-Nisa) <u>Meeta Iyer</u> (policy implications), <u>Di Fingleton</u> (Magistrate) , <u>Ian Muil</u> (Director ECCQ); Facilitated by <u>Pauline Woodbridge</u>
2.45 – 3.00	Questions and Feedback
3.00 – 3.30	Afternoon Tea
3.30 – 4.30	Discussion Panel Legal and Policy Implications <u>Ana Maria Allimant Holas</u> (Interpreters – policy and practice), <u>Hurriyet Babacan</u> (Access and equity), <u>Di Fingleton</u> (new specialist DV Court), <u>Lesley Hunt</u> (Immigration – DV Provisions), <u>Meeta Iyer</u> (policy and research)
4.30 – 4.45	Questions and Feedback
4.45 – 5.00	Conclusion (Heather Nancarrow)

PRELIMINARY FORUM PROGRAM – Day 2: Friday 10th of November 2006

Time	Topic
8.30 – 9.00	Registration
9.00 – 9.15	Opening Address Director General, Department of Communities, Linda Apelt
9.15 – 9.30	Welcome and Forum Overview Heather Nancarrow, Chairperson, IWSS MC
9.30- 10.15	Key Note Speaker Artist, <u>Sasi Victoire</u> , 'Through the Looking Glass' Analysis of power dynamics and violence against women from a multicultural perspective
10.15 – 10.45	Shared Stories of Resilience and Hope A woman's experience in Papua
10.45 – 11.15	Morning Tea
11.15 – 12.00	Discussion Panel Research and Practice Implications <u>Lesley Kraemer</u> (settlement), <u>Rashida Joseph</u> (cross cultural perspective), <u>Christina McGuire</u> (sexual assault research) and <u>Annabelle Allimant</u> (women without income)
12.00 – 12.15	Questions and Feedback
12.15 – 1.15	In Conversation - Future directions - "Where to from here?" <u>Shirley Woods</u> (trafficking), <u>Annabelle Allimant</u> (IWSS Coordinator), <u>Stephanie Ann</u> (IWSS Domestic Violence Program); other panellist[s] TBC; Facilitated by <u>Zoe Rathus</u> (Senior lecturer in law at Griffith University and the Director of the Law School's Clinical Program).
1.15 – 1.30	Questions and Feedback
1.30 – 1.45	Conclusion (Heather Nancarrow)
1.45 – 4.30	Light Refreshments (20 year celebration/networking)
2.30 -3.30	Laughter Therapy with Susan Welch – if enough interest

Service Profile:

Brisbane Rape & Incest Survivors Support Centre (BRISSC)

Brief history/ background to your organisation:

BRISSC is a feminist support service that operates from Women's House, 15 Morrisey Street Woolloongabba. Women's House has auspiced support services for women affected by domestic and sexual violence for the past 30 years. BRISSC is a women's only space. We offer information and support in a safe, friendly and empowering environment. The support we provide is based on the belief that you have the right to:

- be listened to, believed and supported;
- be treated with respect, dignity and understanding;
- deal with your own life, in your own way and at your own pace;
- choose who you tell and when;
- confidentiality and privacy;
- receive practical information including reporting, legal and medical options;
- interpreter support and disability support.

There are no right and wrong ways to feel. Everyone is different. Each woman finds her own way to cope with rape and incest and violence.

What services does your organisation offer?

BRISSC is a free feminist and confidential service for women survivors of sexual violence and their supporters. We welcome women from diverse cultural backgrounds. We offer:

- Phone support, information and referral;
- Individual support and counselling;
- Support groups;
- Community education and development;
- Library and free computer and internet use for community women.

Is there any cost that clients incur when accessing your services?

No, BRISSC services are provided free of charge to community women. Women are responsible for their own transport costs in attending services however women can negotiate this with workers if necessary.

Does your organisation have a specific target group? Women over 15. We prioritise women on the South side of Brisbane (QEII Hospital district) for our face to face support but support women through phone support and groups Brisbane wide.

Given that IWSS works specifically with women from NESB it would be of great value to know how your service works with women from NESB?

We work from a feminist perspective that values women as the experts of their own lives. We work in a way that is sensitive to diverse cultural values and perspectives. We

value relationship building and valuing women's culture, knowledge and expertise and use cross cultural communication principles and arrange qualified interpreters where requested. All support workers have received training in culturally sensitive feminist practice and are committed to continuing this area of professional development.

Do you provide / organise women's groups – who can access them?

Yes, BRISSC provides free support groups and workshops for women affected by sexual violence. We provide a range of groups including 12 week therapeutic groups for women who have experienced rape, incest or sexual violence, 4 week workshops that run based on expressions of interest from women, for example we have run workshop on topics such as anger, self esteem, assertiveness and our next four week workshop to be run in late May is called RISC-relationships, intimacy, sexuality, and communication.

We also run a self facilitated art group called Art space which is an informal open group for women affected by sexual or domestic violence weekly on Wednesday 3.30- 5pm. Women can call 3391 2573 to join waiting lists or gain further information about groups. Art supplies are provided and women are invited to explore their creativity and meet other women.

BRISSC also supports social action groups such as Reclaim the Night Collective that meets to organise annual protest march and festival to raise awareness of sexual and domestic violence. These meetings are held regularly at Women's House before the Reclaim the Night Event on the 27th October.

Where do you get your funding?

Queensland Health Sexual Violence Support and Prevention Funding.

Are there any persisting and/or emerging issues that your organisation faces?

BRISSC faces persistent challenges in meeting community needs for sexual assault support and prevention services due to limited funding. BRISSC is staffed by three part time support workers and operates Mondays to Thursdays. We welcome donations from community members as well as future funding increases to assist us in providing free services to women and addressing waiting lists that women often face.

What are your contact details:

07 3391 0004 (Support line Monday to Thursday 9am—1pm)

07 3391 2573 (Administration)

Website address: www.brissc.com.au

Email address: info@brissc.com.au

A Woman's Experience with IWSS

I first heard of IWSS sexual assault program when I was receiving counselling at the Greek Welfare Centre. I was having seizures of crying. I was unsure of whether to go back to my husband. The counsellor found out I needed more than just basic counselling. She then referred me to IWSS.

I decided to contact IWSS. At the beginning, the crisis officer helped me with my case to obtain PACE ALERT (to stop my daughter from leaving all ports of Australia). Prior to contacting IWSS, I already began court proceedings by myself, without Legal Aid help. I felt I had no choice to wait for help due to fear of my daughter being taken away, out of Australia. I felt a lot of confusion, I was having flash backs to early abuse. The crisis officer was wonderful with her speed of helping and giving emotional support. At that point, the crisis officer felt the need for the sexual assault program to take over my counselling. I now look back at this point in time. It was a wonderful new chapter of my entire life.

Looking back at the beginning of my counselling, it's amazing – it gives me goose bumps; moving from feeling like I wanted to drive myself down the river feeling angry, frustrated and scared – to now feeling secure and happy with myself and my life. It was a very special turning point seeing my counsellor at IWSS. Working with my counsellor, I learned the theory. I understood the grieving process. Knowing and understanding the emotional state, listening to myself, and accepting myself was reassured at the sessions, that I was not crazy, I was OK and that I would get through this period – And I have!! I felt very safe with my counsellor. Sometimes I did not understand things but my counsellor's explanation was so simple that it really made sense.

My counsellor helped me in setting goals about moving forward in my life. This was so helpful because the goals gave me a sense of direction. I have achieved these goals. I now have another set of goals of which I have nearly reached half of them.

I attended every Thursday special sessions like painting and yoga with a group of women. I also attended a program set for the entire year. All these activities have played part in how I am now although I do not attend anymore. I learned how to care about myself. It opened up possibilities of how I can think about myself and love myself. I am using these principles to bring up my daughter. I learned to spend time with myself and look after myself which was very helpful. I needed someone to tell me the importance of looking after and nurturing myself. It is a very important lesson to learn for me, because all I did is only look after my daughter. I found that when counsellors took part of attending the programs of activities with the group and facilitator was a great approach because the counsellors know where the women attending are at and know how to respond to their needs.

Seventeen months after my separation from my ex-husband, I met my current partner. It was not an easy step for me to accept any male in my life after the rough time I had with my ex-husband. My partner has really helped me gain practical experience at the theory taught by my counsellor. I used to feel uncomfortable speaking about relationships, intimacy and sexuality. I used to even switch off. However, now I am able to talk and even joke about it. I used to hear my ex-husband's voice, I can remember the awful times. It is so different to my relationship and life now. My current partner is a great man. I felt loved for the first time in my life. I understand that sex is not for men's satisfaction. I now know, women can experience pleasure as well as men. I do not feel threatened by the mere fact that I am being loved with my consent and not taken advantage of. The important key which helped me move forward was whatever I discussed at counselling session I felt free to discuss it with my partner. He knew I was attending counselling sessions and did not stop me from going. In comparison to my ex-husband, I took the first step to go counselling and he forced me not to attend anymore, fearing that the counsellor discover he is abusing me. So he made it very difficult for me to attend. I guess what I want to say is attending the sessions made me stronger and made me determined to do what I want to move forward in a positive way.

Finally, I know I am very lucky and fortunate to have such a wonderful counsellor. She is straightforward and to-the-point. She is very warm and has a great open style. When I was feeling down, her smile made me feel at ease – that is what I really like about my counsellor. Above all, at the end of each session, I used to leave feeling as though the weight has been lifted off my shoulders. I go home feeling comfortable and relieved.

« No more feeling pain, no more headaches. The program gave me strength and I now love myself. »

Women's Group

As you all might be aware IWSS is holding yearly women's group activities open for all women who have been in contact with IWSS. The aim of these activities is to facilitate social, educational and therapeutic support for NESB women who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault. This year's activities began in March with a "Supporting Yourself Emotionally" group which was organised in collaboration with the Brisbane Rape and Incest Survivors Support Centre (BRISSC) and was also held at their premises. The aims of bringing the women's group to BRISSC were to facilitate more opportunity for women from NESB to get to know services other than IWSS, and for IWSS to enrich its experience of collaborating with other, mainstream services. The group activities focused on exploring emotions and had been a forum for sharing women's experiences and their expertise in coping strategies. The main themes that women brought up for discussions included:

- ✦ Domestic violence
- ✦ Sexual abuse
- ✦ Stress
- ✦ Financial issues
- ✦ Immigration issues
- ✦ Accommodation
- ✦ Anger
- ✦ Panic attacks
- ✦ Depression
- ✦ Coping strategies
- ✦ Spirituality
- ✦ Courage and strength
- ✦ Issues and solutions
- ✦ Faith
- ✦ Cultural differences
- ✦ Emotional strength
- ✦ Decision making
- ✦ Grief
- ✦ Emotional expression through sound
- ✦ Religion and issues of abortion
- ✦ Relationships breakdown
- ✦ Issues of children's contact and residency

The activities included a session of laughter therapy facilitated by Susan Welch from the Empowerment Institute that was followed by a special lunch to celebrate women's growth. Women and IWSS staff found this experience very positive and enriching. We look forward to more collaboration in the future.



Finding out the Beauty Within

Dates: *Thursdays 19 October, 2 November, 16 November and 23 November 2006 From 9:30 am to 12 noon.*

We would like to invite you to come and join us on Thursdays morning when Zoe will share with us different ways to reclaim our power, building up our self esteem and to create healthy boundaries around us, through the use of movement, breathing exercises, art, laughter, singing, dancing and fun.

And on *Thursday 26 October 2006* join us for a lovely and relaxing Yoga class at 9:30 am.

If you have any questions call Beatriz on **3846 5400**

IWSS Library

The main focus of the collection is on domestic violence and sexual abuse issues, particularly in relation to women, children and young people from non-English speaking backgrounds. There is also material dealing with cross-cultural issues, counselling, multiculturalism, feminism, family relationships, housing and legal matters. The library resources consist of books, articles, conference proceedings, annual reports, newsletters, periodicals, audiocassettes, videos and CDs. There is also a series of country profiles giving general background information on many countries, as well as information on social, cultural and religious practices and women's issues in those countries

The library resources are available to the following:

- IWSS staff and committee members
- Staff of women's refuges and domestic violence and sexual assault services in Qld
- Students and other interested persons
- IWSS staff can access the collection at any time, but others need to make arrangements as the library is staffed by a librarian on Thursdays only, from 9am to 1pm.

A selection of resources available in the library can be found on the Web at: www.iwss.org.au

Child Abuse Statistics & Myths and Facts

Child Abuse Statistics

- One child is abused and/or neglected every 13 minutes (substantiated) (AIHW 2002-3)
- Research by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows that 96 per cent of children abused physically, sexually or emotionally knew their abusers.
- As child abuse is a secret crime, notification statistics profoundly under-estimate the size of the problem.
- In Australia, child abuse is reported every two and a half minutes.
- NSW figures (2003-4) show a report is received every 35 minutes of a child being abused, and the vast majority of these complaints are verified upon investigation.
- NSW police estimate that an offence against a child is reported to police in NSW at the rate of around 58 children a day.
- In 2003-2003, 263,800 children were living with victims of domestic violence.
- In 2002-2003, 181,200 children witnessed domestic violence
- All children are at risk regardless of social class, race, religion, gender, economic circumstances or geography.
- In 2003, the Brisbane-based Abused Child Trust calculated the cost of 38,700 cases. Medical treatment alone amounted to \$1.3 billion. Foster care and other out-of-home care cost \$797 million. Social and psychological costs came to \$1.9 billion, justice system, \$794 million. The overall cost to the taxpayer of 38,700 cases, was reported to be almost \$5 billion. With 150,000 cases of child abuse being reported last year and the number increasingly annually, the projected cost of that abuse is estimated at \$19.5 billion per annum.
- In Victoria, for example, 36,996 notifications were received in 2000-2001, with only 13,205 investigations being conducted in the same period. This represents 36% of notifications leading to investigations (Victoria Department of Human Services: DHS 2002:13).

Source:
Advocates for Survivors of Child Abuse (ASCA). (2004). *Child Abuse Figures*. Accessed from http://www.asca.org.au/childabuse/ca_figures.html

Myths and Facts about Child Abuse

Myth: Incest predominantly takes place in 'dysfunctional' families.

Fact

Incest occurs in families of every description. Research

indicates there is little which markedly distinguishes between the families where incest takes place and the families where incest does not occur. The only distinction between 'offending' and 'non-offending' families is the degree to which the 'normal' nuclear family roles are enacted. For example, in those families where incest takes place, the male breadwinner is likely to be undisputed as 'head of the household' with the wife and children under his dominating command.

Myth: Children lie about incest.

Fact

Consistent with the findings of relevant research, those who work with sexually abused children strongly support the view that children rarely lie about incest. The facts show that children are more often reluctant to disclose what is happening to them. When they do disclose, they tend to underplay the effects of the incestuous abuse in an attempt to protect their family.

Myth: Sibling incest is not harmful

Fact

Wherever there is an imbalance of power, its abuse is always an option available to the more powerful. This is as true for sibling incest as it is for adult-child incest. The power difference may be reduced in sibling incest but it is still the product of differences in age and gender. The subject of sibling incest has received minimal attention and the fact that it so under-reported is directly linked to attitudes that it is merely a part of normal developmental sexual exploration between siblings. In his study of college students, Finkelhor [1980] found cases of sibling incest in 13% of the population

Myth: Incest is accepted in other cultures

Fact

Incest is not acceptable anywhere, under any circumstances. Hewitt (1986) found no evidence 'either in available literature or from individuals from a range of cultural backgrounds' to support this belief.

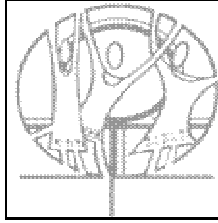
Source:

Adapted from *Breaking the Silence: A guide to supporting victims/survivors of sexual assault*. Produced by the Centre Against Sexual Assault.

DiGiorgio-Miller, J. (1998). Sibling Incest: Treatment of the Family and the Offender, in *Child Welfare*, 77 (3), 335 – 346.

You can make a difference

Donate to Immigrant Women's Support Service



2006 is the 20th year of quality multicultural service for IWSS: the Immigrant Women's Support Service providing support and referral to women and children from a non-English speaking background escaping from or living with domestic and sexual violence.

You can make a difference to their lives with your tax-deductible donation!

(Tax deductible in Australia - over \$2)

To make your donation: Print this page and fill in the details.

Mail: Make **cheques/money order** payable to the Immigrant Women's Support Service and post to: PO Box 5490 West End Qld 4101

To Donate directly to IWSS:

Account Name: Migrant Women's Emergency Support Service Inc

BSB: 034- 013 **Account:** 156720

For enquiries:

Telephone: (07) 3846 3490 **(Domestic Violence Program)**

(07) 3846 5400 **(Sexual Assault Program)**

Email: mail@iwss.org.au www.iwss.org.au

I would like to support the valuable work of IWSS

Name:.....

Address:.....

..... **Post Code:**.....

Telephone:..... **Date:**.....

Email:.....

(Details so we can thank you for your Donation and provide a tax-deductible receipt)

Thank you for your generous support!