

NSW SEXUAL ASSAULT STRATEGY:

PROGRESS REPORT

DECEMBER 2016



Health
Women NSW

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MINISTER'S INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to present the NSW Government's *NSW Sexual Assault Strategy: Progress Report*. This report outlines the work the NSW Government has undertaken over the past 12 months to develop the NSW Sexual Assault Strategy and the work which will be undertaken over the next twelve months.

The purpose of the NSW Sexual Assault Strategy is to provide a framework for how we prevent sexual assault, support victims, and hold perpetrators accountable. The strategy needs to guide how we can deliver evidence-based quality services to make victims safer and support their recovery while improving the system as a whole.

Sexual assault is a crime. It can occur anywhere, to anyone, at any age. There were more than 11,000 reported victims of sexual offences (including sexual assault, indecent assault, acts of indecency and other sexual offences) in NSW in the twelve months to June 2016. More than two-thirds of these victims were children under the age of 18.

Sexual assault in childhood or adulthood leads to many adverse impacts that an individual may experience over their lifetime. It's critical that victims are believed and supported in securing healing and justice. The NSW Government spends millions of dollars each year to combat sexual assault through services in justice, police, health, child protection and education. And the Government is supporting the work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and supports their recommendation for a single national redress scheme.

An effective response to sexual assault requires commitment and action across all parts of government working in close partnership with victims and survivors of sexual assault, non-government organisations, the private sector and the entire community.

I look forward to continuing a close collaboration with all our partners to improve the response to sexual assault in NSW over the coming years.



Pru Goward MP

Minister for Women

Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault



NSW SEXUAL ASSAULT STRATEGY

STRATEGY FOCUS

The Strategy includes:

- children who are victims/survivors of sexual assault
- adults who are victims/survivors of sexual assault
- adult survivors of childhood sexual assault
- supporters and carers.

The Strategy focuses on:

- sexual assault prevention and education
- supporting victims
- holding perpetrators accountable
- improving the system as a whole.

PHASE 1: GOVERNANCE, EVIDENCE AND GOVERNMENT SERVICE AUDIT

This phase focused on building the evidence base on current responses and effective interventions.

Key activities included:

- establishment of the NSW Sexual Assault Expert Group comprising key NSW Government and non-government stakeholders to provide expert advice on the development of the Strategy
- commissioning a literature review by the Australian Institute for Family Studies to examine Australian and international literature on sexual violence prevention, education, crisis and long-term support; policing and legislative responses; and training and capacity building to provide critical insights and policy learning for possible application within NSW
- an audit of NSW Government policies, programs and services related to sexual assault to establish a clear picture of the NSW Government service system.

PHASE 2: PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND REFORM

In this phase, public consultation will be conducted to inform development of the future direction for system reform, with a focus on sexual assault prevention and education; supporting victims; holding perpetrators accountable; and improving the system as a whole. This phase will:

- ensure the Strategy aligns with recommendations and outcomes from related inquiries, reviews and strategies
- develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure outcomes under the Strategy are measurable.

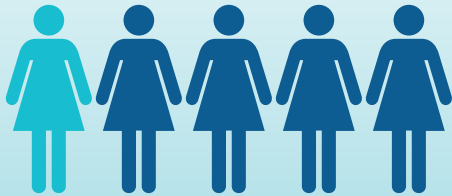
Mapping the audited Government initiatives as well as non-government organisation policies, programs and services related to sexual assault will also be undertaken in this phase, to establish a holistic picture of the service system, identify gaps and ensure appropriate targeting of services and responses. Key activities will include:

- extensive public consultation in partnership with the non-government service sector, NSW Government agencies and the NSW Sexual Assault Expert Group
- development of the future direction of system reform for the sexual assault system across the state to improve the prevention of, and response to, sexual assault.

PHASE 1				PHASE 2
Announcement October 2015	Audit and literature review February-May 2016	NSW Sexual Assault Strategy Expert Group April-September 2016	Stakeholder consultations and progress report October 2016	The timeframes for Phase 2 of the Strategy are being developed in consultation with the Sexual Assault Strategy Expert Group. Phase 2 is expected to be completed by November 2017.



SEXUAL ASSAULT IN NSW



Women are **4.2 times more likely** to be victims of **sexual assault** than men (111.1 per 100,000 for women, compared with 26.7 per 100,000 for men).¹



The rates of sexual assault incidents in NSW have **remained stable over the past two years** as well as over the past five years.²



Indigenous persons comprised 7.6 per cent of the 8,603 victims of sexual assault in NSW in 2015. The **Indigenous victimisation rate** for sexual assault was nearly three times higher than the non-Indigenous rate.³



Nationally, 17.1 per cent of women indicated that they had experienced sexual assault **since the age of 15**.⁴



In 2015, 1,383 defendants had a charge of sexual assault finalised by a NSW court. Of these, **769 defendants (55.6 per cent) had the charge proven against them**. For sexual offences (which includes both sexual assault and non-assaultive sexual offences),⁵ there were **1,630 defendants with a finalised charge**, of which 59.8 per cent (or 975 defendants) had the charge proven against them.⁶

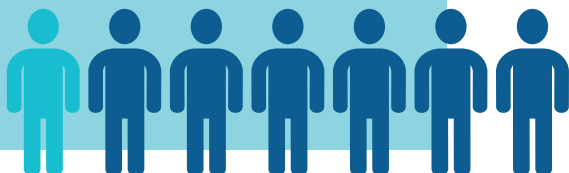
Children/juveniles are **7.5 times more likely** than adults to be the victim of a sexual offence, and 7.5 times more likely to be the victim of a sexual assault.⁷



Approximately **1 in 10 child/juvenile victims** of sexual offences are DV-related, compared to 1 in 5 adult victims.⁷

The five-year trend for child/juvenile victims of sexual offences has **increased by an average of 4.1 per cent per year**, but is stable for sexual assault. The two-year trend for child/juveniles for sexual offences, and the two and five-year trend for adult victims (for both sexual assault and sexual offences), are stable.⁷

Approximately **1 in 7 child/juvenile victims** of sexual assault are **DV-related**, compared with 1 in 3 adult victims.⁷



NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Most of this report uses police data, which divides sexual offences into two categories:

- ‘sexual assault’, which includes the police incident categories of sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault and assault with intent to have sexual intercourse
- ‘indecent assault, act of indecency and other sexual offences’, which includes more than 10 police incident categories (e.g. act of indecency, aggravated act of indecency, incest, carnal knowledge, wilful and obscene exposure, peep or pry, bestiality, and grooming/procuring)

Court data use a different categorisation of offences. Court data divides ‘sexual assault and related offences’ into the following categories:

- ‘sexual assault’, which includes aggravated sexual assault and non-aggravated sexual assault and ‘non-assaultive sexual offences’, which includes: non-assaultive sexual offences against a child
- child pornography offences
- sexual servitude offences
- and other non-assaultive sexual offences.

Domestic violence-related (DV-related) sexual offences are sexual offences categorised as such by the NSW Police. A domestic violence offence, defined under the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 (NSW), encompasses acts of personal violence, including sexual violence, against someone with whom the perpetrator has, or has had, a domestic relationship.

Table 1. Sexual offence statistics NSW, 12-month period ending June 2016^a

Measure (All: Adult, Child/juvenile and unknown)	12 months to June 2016
Number of incidents of sexual offences in NSW	11,837
Number of incidents of sexual assault in NSW	5,019
Rate of sexual assault incidents (per 100,000 population)	66.8
Number of DV-related incidents of sexual assault	970
Proportion of sexual assault incidents that are DV-related	19.3%
Proportion of sexual assault incidents that are alcohol related	15.9% (798 incidents)
Proportion of sexual assault victims that were female	80.8% (4,207 victims)
Proportion of sexual assault victims that were child/juvenile (0-17 years of age)	64.9% (3,377 victims)

Table 2. Sexual offence statistics for adults in NSW, 12-month period ending June 2016⁷

Measure (Adult: 18 years and over)	12 months to June 2016
Number of adult victims of sexual offences in NSW	3,600
Rate of adult victims of sexual assault offences in NSW	61.7 per 100,000 population
Two-year trend for adult victims of sexual offences in NSW	Stable
Five-year trend for adult victims of sexual offences in NSW	Stable
Proportion of adult victims of sexual offences that are DV-related in NSW	19.6% (707 victims)
Number of adult victims of sexual assault in NSW	1,561
Rate of adult victims of sexual assault in NSW	26.7 per 100,000 population
Two-year trend for adult victims of sexual assault in NSW	Stable
Five-year trend for adult of sexual assault in NSW	Stable
Proportion of adult victims of sexual assault that are DV-related in NSW	32.3% (504 victims)
Proportion of offenders of sexual offences who were adults in NSW	87.3% (2014 offenders)

Table 3. Sexual offence statistics for child/juveniles in NSW, 12-month period ending June 2016⁷

Measure (Child/juvenile: 0-17 years)	12 months to June 2016
Number of child/juvenile victims of sexual offences in NSW	7,819
Rate of child/juvenile victims of sexual offences in NSW	464.7 per 100,000 population
Two-year trend of child/juvenile victims of sexual offences in NSW	Stable
Five-year trend of child/juvenile victims of sexual offences in NSW	Increase by an average of 4.1% per year
Proportion of child/juvenile victims of sexual offences that are DV-related in NSW	12.7% (993 victims)
Number of child/juvenile victims of sexual assault in NSW	3,377
Rate of child/juvenile victims of sexual assault in NSW	200.7 per 100,000 population
Two-year trend of child/juvenile victims of sexual assault in NSW	Stable
Five-year trend of child/juvenile victims of sexual assault in NSW	Stable
Proportion of child/juvenile victims of sexual assault that are DV-related in NSW	14.6% (492 victims)
Proportion of offenders of sexual offences who were juveniles in NSW	12.5% (289 offenders)



UNDER-REPORTING AND NON-REPORTING IN AUSTRALIA



Of the **87,600 females** (estimated) aged 18 years and over in Australia who have **experienced sexual assault⁸ by a male** during the last 12 months, **83.1 per cent did not contact police** about their most recent incident of sexual assault.⁹



Of the **852,800 women** (estimated) who have **experienced sexual assault by a male since the age of 15, 80.9 per cent did not contact police** about their most recent incident of assault.¹⁰



Of the **25,400 women** (estimated) who have **experienced sexual assault by a female since the age of 15, 95.7 per cent did not contact police** about their most recent incident of assault.¹⁰



Of the **130,600 men** (estimated) who have **experienced sexual assault by a female since the age of 15, 94.6 per cent did not contact police** about their most recent incident of assault.¹⁰



POLICY CONTEXT

The NSW Sexual Assault Strategy is being developed in accordance with a number of national and NSW-led policy documents and initiatives related to sexual violence. It will not replicate or disrupt initiatives already underway.

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

The *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* (the Royal Commission) was established in 2013 to investigate how institutions such as schools, churches, sports clubs and government organisations have responded to allegations and instances of child sexual abuse. In its *Redress and Civil Litigation Report*, the Royal Commission made recommendations to ensure justice for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse. In February 2016, NSW passed legislation to remove limitation periods for child abuse claims. In November 2016, the Commonwealth Government announced an opt-in redress scheme for victims of institutional child sexual abuse to be rolled out in 2018. The NSW Government supports the Royal Commission's recommendations for a single national redress scheme. NSW is actively engaged in discussions with the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions in relation to the details of a national scheme to ensure the best outcomes for victims. NSW is also continuing to consider the Royal Commission's other recommendations in relation to civil litigation.

The Royal Commission will also release a report on criminal justice issues which is likely to make recommendations about measures to support victims of child sexual assault in the criminal justice system. The Royal Commission's final report is due to be released in December 2017 and is likely to deliver significant and extensive recommendations on the appropriate responses to child victims and adult survivors of child sexual abuse in institutions. The Strategy will be guided by the outcomes of the Royal Commission. The Government is already working on a strategy to strengthen the safety of children in NSW-based non-government organisations. The project's sole focus is preventing child sexual assault.

NATIONAL PLAN TO REDUCE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN 2010-22

The *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-22* is a national platform for action by all Australian governments. The *Third Action Plan* sets out an ambitious agenda for reducing violence against women and their children by addressing six priorities, including tackling sexual violence. The NSW Government continues to address local needs and priorities as part of its response to the Plan.

NSW SEXUAL OFFENCES REVIEW

The Department of Justice is currently undertaking a review of child sexual offences review which will be finalised in 2017. The review will consider any relevant research and recommendations of the Royal Commission. In the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Pilot, the Department of Justice employs children's champions to assist in communication between children and the court in sexual assault trials. The initiative seeks to reduce re-traumatisation of children and supports children in providing robust evidence throughout all stages of the trial, including assistance during police interviews and pre-recording of evidence in advance of the trial.

'REVENGE PORN' LEGISLATION

The NSW Government is currently considering legislative measures to adequately address non-consensual sharing of intimate images, colloquially known as 'revenge porn'. As part of this process, the Government is considering the introduction of new criminal offences to specifically address the non-consensual sharing of intimate images in NSW.

CLINICAL ADVICE LINE

NSW Health will be launching the *Child Abuse Sexual Assault Clinical Advice Line* in 2017 to build the capacity of clinicians to better respond to victims of sexual assault in NSW. It will guide clinicians in the delivery of high-quality, timely and accessible medical and forensic examinations for young victims of sexual assault and abuse.



PHASE 1: GOVERNANCE, EVIDENCE AND NSW GOVERNMENT SERVICE AUDIT

The first phase of the Strategy involved establishing the governance structure for the Strategy; building the evidence-base on current responses and effective interventions to guide development of the Strategy; and auditing of current NSW Government sexual assault policies and programs.

GOVERNANCE

Women NSW is leading development of the Strategy with the following governance bodies providing expert guidance, advice and oversight.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE REFORM DELIVERY BOARD

The Domestic and Family Violence Reforms Delivery Board provides NSW Government oversight of the development of the Strategy.

The Domestic and Family Violence Reforms Delivery Board was established as the key governance mechanism responsible for the delivery of the NSW domestic and family violence reform agenda, including projects under *It Stops Here*. The remit and membership of the Board has recently been expanded to respond to matters relating to sexual assault and the development and delivery of the NSW Sexual Assault Strategy.

The Board comprises senior representatives of Justice and Human Services departments and is chaired by NSW Health.

NSW DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT COUNCIL

The NSW Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Council provides high level strategic advice to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and Women NSW on the key directions for the Strategy.

The NSW Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Council is an expert forum established to form an alliance between government and non-government services, providing the basis for an integrated response to domestic and family violence and sexual assault in NSW.

The NSW Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Council comprises academics, representatives from non-government organisations, and representatives from NSW Health, the Department of Family and Community Services, NSW Police Force, Department of Justice, Department of Education and Aboriginal Affairs.

NSW SEXUAL ASSAULT EXPERT GROUP

The NSW Sexual Assault Expert Group has been established as a sub-group of the NSW Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Council to provide regular expert advice on the development of the Strategy and to support and guide the Women NSW project team.

The NSW Sexual Assault Expert Group comprises of representatives from government and non-government organisations including legal, cultural, health, academic and frontline services, with the required subject experience and expertise.

Membership of the NSW Sexual Assault Expert Group includes:

- Women's Health NSW
- Indigenous Women's Legal Program, Women's Legal Service
- Our Watch
- People with Disability Australia
- Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia
- Domestic Violence New South Wales
- ACON
- United Muslim Women's Association
- Rosie's Place
- Jannawi Family Centre
- Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre
- Indigenous Law Centre, UNSW Law
- Family and Community Services
- Prevention and Response to Violence, Abuse and Neglect, NSW Health
- Education Centre Against Violence, NSW Health
- Strategy and Policy, NSW Department of Justice
- NSW Police Force
- Victims Services, NSW Department of Justice
- Corrective Services NSW, NSW Department of Justice
- Department of Premier and Cabinet.

EVIDENCE – LITERATURE REVIEW INSIGHTS

Women NSW commissioned a literature review by the Australian Institute for Family Studies to examine Australian and international literature on sexual violence prevention, education, crisis and long-term support; policing and legislative responses; and training and capacity building to provide critical insights and policy learning for possible application within the NSW context.

The review, titled *Current approaches to preventing and responding to sexual assault: A Rapid Evidence Assessment*, can be accessed at www.women.nsw.gov.au

The review investigated four key domains:

- prevention and education strategies
- crisis and long-term support for victims and survivors
- policing and legislative responses to victims, survivors and perpetrators and
- training and capacity building.

The review found that in order to be effective, all measures introduced as part of support and therapeutic services, policing and legislative responses and training and capacity building approaches need to be informed by **trauma-informed practice**.

Trauma-informed practice is guided by principles of safety and the understanding that survivors may have a history of violence and victimisation and should be protected from re-victimisation. Many service systems and settings in which victims and survivors find themselves have a patchy understanding and application of trauma-informed principles. The first step towards safeguarding the value of interventions to sexual violence survivors is to develop **a shared understanding** of the essential principles of trauma-informed practice.

The review underscored the complexity, and at times, the limited scope, of the evidence base on child and adult sexual abuse and assault, amplified by the complicated service delivery landscape. This finding highlighted the need for a comprehensive and integrated prevention and response strategy that addresses **the diverse forms of sexual victimisation that occur over the life course of individuals** to ensure that all measures and initiatives work to reinforce their respective outcomes.

To inform the Strategy, the review identifies three fundamental and interrelated guiding principles:

- sustainable, whole-of-population prevention requires a **public health approach** to provide the maximum benefit for the largest number of people as it seeks to change the underlying behaviours and conditions that facilitate social harm. This approach to prevention is grounded in an understanding of the critical intersections between individual and social influences that shape the experiences of potential victims and perpetrators. **Primary, secondary and tertiary** prevention strategies need to be introduced in a staged approach, from **problem definition** through **intervention** and **evaluation** to eventual **scaling up**.
- **individuals and communities may have different experiences and needs in relation to sexual assault.** **Gender inequality** is a central concept, though not the only factor in understanding and preventing sexual assault. The recognition that certain norms, beliefs and attitudes about what it means to be feminine and masculine enable sexual abuse and violence, needs to be balanced by an understanding that these factors intersect with other systems of power and oppression. Consideration should be given to how systems of power and oppression and different aspects of an individual's identity impact the experience of sexual assault and harassment for women and children, people with a disability, young people, the LGBTIQ community, people who are homeless, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

- **systems and service responses need to be joined-up** and reinforcing in order to integrate specialist agencies and services with other therapeutic and non-therapeutic providers. Expert knowledge residing in specialised sexual assault services needs to be expanded to pertinent areas across the criminal justice system, as well as to other non-sexual assault specialist services and systems. For instance, effective interagency responses to sexual assault and violence may take the form of co-located services and care and case coordination.

The review emphasised that the three fundamental principles are interconnected and **should underpin all initiatives** for a state-wide strategy both in shaping high-level priorities and enabling a shared understanding across key stakeholders, agencies and portfolios about best practice in preventing and responding to sexual assault.

Crucially, all **interventions, services and programs need to be rigorously evaluated** in order to ascertain what works and what does not. Evaluation insight from both pilot and longer-term projects will form the evidence base for a broader strategy to address sexual assault across primary, secondary and tertiary levels of intervention, various service-delivery settings, as well as different life stages of individuals and communities.

NSW GOVERNMENT SERVICE AUDIT

The NSW Government has an existing service system for prevention and response to sexual assault. NSW Government agencies have different yet crucial roles to play in preventing sexual assault and in responding to victims/survivors.

In 2016, the NSW Government mapped all government-run and affiliated services, policies and guidelines that deal with sexual assault and sexual violence. The audit revealed that several Government departments, and numerous allied service providers and non-government organisations, currently work both independently and jointly, to prevent or respond to sexual violence in NSW.

The audit identified almost 280 initiatives that address sexual assault and sexual violence. The audit will be instrumental in ensuring that the existing services are appropriately situated and fulfil their intended function and will assist in effective planning and resourcing of new initiatives. Some of the existing initiatives are outlined below.

MULTIAGENCY INITIATIVES

The **Joint Investigation Response Teams** (JIRTs) of NSW Police Force, Department of Family and Community Services and NSW Health staff across NSW aim to provide a seamless service response to children and young people at risk of significant harm, as a result of sexual assault, serious physical abuse and extreme neglect. The multiagency response through JIRT combines the expertise of the three agencies to deliver improved outcomes for vulnerable children and young people and their non-offending family members by providing them with coordinated safety, justice and health responses.

In response to the Wood Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW, **Child Wellbeing Units** were established in NSW Health, NSW Police Force, Department of Education and Department of Family and Community Services. The three current Child Wellbeing Units in Health, Police and Education aim to drive better alignment and coordination of agency service systems, to enable better responses to children and families in need of assistance, including where there are concerns relating to sexual assault.

Love Bites is a long-standing domestic and sexual violence education program targeted at high school students that is linked to BOSTES mandatory K-10 PDHPE syllabus outcome and content. The program engages young people in the prevention of domestic violence against their peers, children and women, promotes respectful relationships between young people and encourages an awareness of family, domestic and sexual violence. Following its success in high school settings, the program has been extended to younger students and to detention centers. Love Bites is delivered in cooperation between local health districts, non-government organisations and the Departments of Education and Justice.

HEALTH INITIATIVES

NSW Health has a statewide network of 55 specialist **Sexual Assault Services** that provide trauma-informed and trauma specific services for children, young people and adults who have experienced sexual assault, including adult survivors of child sexual assault. These services are delivered by local health districts and provide integrated psychosocial and medical forensic responses, including the provision of medical treatment and forensic examinations, free information, crisis and ongoing counselling, court preparation, court support and court reports, education and training for professionals and community education, awareness raising and prevention activities.

The specialist Sexual Assault Services also provide responses to children under 10 years old with problematic or harmful sexual behaviour (harmful to self or others) if they are also victims of sexual assault. Support is also available for non-offending family members.

New Street Adolescent Services are part of NSW Health's child protection services and provide a specialised, early intervention, community-based service to address harmful sexual behaviours displayed by 10-17 year old young people who, for a range of reasons, have not been criminally prosecuted.

New Street Services are currently delivered from four sites in NSW: New Street Sydney (North Parramatta) & Central Coast, Rural New Street Hunter New England (Tamworth and Newcastle) and Rural New Street Western NSW (Dubbo). New Street Illawarra Shoalhaven will commence operation in 2017.

The NSW Health Aboriginal Family Health Strategy 2011-2016 provides a framework for responding to family violence in Aboriginal communities within a culturally competent, family-based context with a focus on healing. **Aboriginal Family Violence Services** work to reduce the incidence and impact of family violence and to build community capacity to prevent, respond and recover from family violence.

A state-wide **Child Abuse and Sexual Assault Clinical Advice Line** will provide all clinicians, including those in rural and remote locations, with access to the medical and forensic expertise available in the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network and the John Hunter Children's Hospital. The advice line will provide access to medical expertise, peer support and supervised examinations via telehealth applications, ensuring a continuous real-time response for victims of child abuse and sexual assault throughout NSW.

The **NSW Health Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV)** is a statewide service providing specialist family violence, sexual assault, child abuse and neglect and cultural competency based training to NSW Health and other government and non-government agencies.

ECAV has worked in partnership with Aboriginal communities to develop individual programs that meet the needs of Aboriginal communities to raise awareness and build capacity around supporting communities to identify and respond to personal and collective experiences of trauma.

These programs include community programs including **Weaving the Net, Strong Aboriginal Women and Strong Aboriginal Men**, worker programs including Journey of Survival, skills in child protection, child sexual assault in Aboriginal Communities, and a qualification pathway that includes the Certificate IV in Aboriginal Family Health (Family Violence, sexual assault and child protection) and the advanced diploma of Aboriginal specialist trauma counseling.

ECAV has developed a range of evidence-based resources to support victims/survivors of sexual assault and their families, the community and professionals including *Nothing But the Truth: Court preparation for adult and child witnesses in sexual assault proceedings* and *Helping to Make it Better: Helping your child – important information for parents and carers about the sexual assault of children*.

ECAV also provides training, supervision and support for the development and implementation of **medical forensic responses to adult sexual assault**. The program provides specialist resources such as training manuals and delivers training in forensic issues for sexual assault to medical staff.

ECAV also provides a post-graduate qualification for doctors and nurses who may be required to provide medical and forensic care to adults who have experienced a recent sexual assault.

Through the **Adult Survivor Group Work Project**, the NSW Health Education Centre Against Violence provide training on delivering evidenced based and consumer supported group work programs for adult survivors of child sexual abuse. Enhanced staff training will increase the system-wide capacity to provide group programs for adult survivors of child sexual abuse and expand the availability of groups for male survivors.

NSW Health also funds **Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia** to provide telephone counseling 24/7 for anyone in NSW who has experienced sexual assault to complement services provided by NSW Health Sexual Assault Services. Victims calling the service who have experienced recent rape or sexual assault, or who require ongoing counseling or other Health services are referred to their local NSW Health Sexual Assault Service for an integrated psychosocial, medical and a forensic response if required. NSW Health also funds this service to provide face to face counseling one day per week in six **Women's Health Centres** for women who have experienced childhood sexual abuse.

JUSTICE INITIATIVES

In response to a recommendation of the Royal Commission, the Limitation Act 1969 was amended to retrospectively remove limitation period defences from civil actions for damages that relate to the death or personal injury of a person resulting from child abuse.

The Department of Justice runs a number of other initiatives designed to address sexual assault across the judicial and correctional systems. Operating under the Charter of Victims' Rights, the **Victims Services and Support Scheme** provides sexual assault victims with crisis support, access and referral to a wide range of services, including counselling and financial help, and ongoing assistance during victims' involvement with the criminal justice system.

The Scheme also works to raise public awareness of its services by distributing information to both crime victims and service providers who assist them. Victims Services ensures that assistance and information is available to people with disabilities and those within Aboriginal and Torres Strait and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The Child Sexual Offence Evidence Pilot allows eligible child sexual assault victims to have all their evidence pre-recorded in advance of trial and in the absence of the jury.

The Pilot also provides for the appointment of specially trained children's champions to assist child victims to communicate with the parties and the court when giving evidence. Children's champions are also available to assist with the facilitation of communication at the police interview stage. The initiative seeks to reduce re-traumatisation of children and to support children in providing robust evidence in sexual assault trials. Upon its completion in late March 2019, the Pilot will be comprehensively evaluated.

The NSW Government delivers a wide-range of programs for sexual offenders. These custody and community-based programs are of various lengths and intensities and are specifically targeted at a range of offender categories. Tailored programs for moderate-high risk offenders in custody, offenders with an intellectual or cognitive impairment, offenders who deny their offences, and preparatory and maintenance programs aim to intervene at specific points in the offending and corrective cycle in order to minimise opportunities for re-offending.

The statewide Witness Assistance Service provides information, referral and support for victims of violent crimes and vulnerable witnesses involved in cases prosecuted by the Director of Public Prosecutions. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions provides the service in order to minimise re-traumatisation of victims and ensure that witnesses are able to provide evidence to the best of their ability.

The NSW Police **Child Protection Register** maintains and monitors intelligence on offenders under the auspices of the National Child Offender System. The registry also coordinates the activities of the Child Protection Watch Teams throughout the State and provides assistance to Local Area Commands in obtaining intelligence in relation to offenders who target children.

In addition to its work as part of JIRT, the NSW Police's **State Crime Command Sex Crimes Squad** receives and assesses referrals from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, provides a central point of contact for inquiries and referrals from non-government organisations and taskforces and implements training programs to ensure detectives are ready to conduct a professional sexual assault investigation and appropriately interact with victims. The squad also operates a separate child exploitation internet unit, as well as an alternative sexual assault reporting option that allows victims to provide information about the incident without participating in a formal investigation.

FACS INITIATIVES

The Family and Community Services-based **Clinical Consultant** team provides expertise to frontline child protection practitioners treating clients affected by family and domestic violence, alcohol and other drugs misuse and mental health issues. In 2016, the team was expanded to provide clinical expertise on child sexual abuse. ***Seeing, Understanding and Responding to the Sexualised Abuse of Children*** is a practical resource for front-line child protection and out-of-home care caseworkers. The kit provides up-to-date research and tools for work with children and families.

The Child, Youth and Family Support program includes 12 service providers who offer **Child and Adolescent Sexual Assault Counselling** (CASAC) services. Managed by Family and Community Services, CASAC seeks to provide appropriate supports to vulnerable children, young people and families who require suitable early intervention in order to prevent an escalation to more intensive measures such as statutory child protection. The services work holistically with children and families, responding to the full range of presenting issues, including child and adolescent sexual assault.

The FACS Psychological Service provides trauma-informed parenting interventions to carers of children and young people in out of home care who have suffered from abuse and neglect. The service also offers therapy for the children and young people themselves.



PHASE 2: PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND SYSTEM REFORM

The NSW Government recognises that comprehensively responding to sexual assault is necessary to ensure that victims receive the care and support they need at the time of the assault, during their recovery and beyond. Therefore, development of a connected and integrated service system has been identified as a priority by the NSW Sexual Assault Expert Group.

The next phase of the Strategy will involve mapping of non-government sexual assault programs and services and the audited Government services; an extensive consultation process with NSW Government agencies, the non-government service sector, and the general public; and developing future directions on system reform across the intersecting domains of sexual assault prevention and education, supporting victims, holding perpetrators accountable, and improving the system as a whole.

MAPPING GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT SEXUAL ASSAULT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- Following the audit of NSW Government funded sexual assault programs and services completed in Phase 1, mapping of both Government and non-government programs and services related to sexual assault will be undertaken to establish a holistic picture of the service system.
- While the Phase 1 audit identified NSW Government-funded sexual assault services, including those delivered by non-government organisations, it is important to better understand the entire services system, including those services which are funded by the Commonwealth, community or peer-led organisations.
- The concurrent mapping exercise of the audited Government services and non-government services will identify key gaps in the current system and provide opportunities and recommendations for system reform.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- Working in partnership with the NSW Sexual Assault Expert Group to lead a whole-of-community consultation on the Strategy.
- Designing a comprehensive consultation plan with consideration of the diverse experiences and needs of all sectors of the community.
- Conducting comprehensive and structured NSW-wide consultations to identify and consider the diverse perspectives of NSW Government and non-government stakeholders, clients of the sexual assault response, and the broader NSW public/community.
- Implementation of the consultation plan, that will involve workshops with Government and non-government organisations, public consultation through the online platform 'Have Your Say', as well as engagement as identified by the NSW Sexual Assault Expert Group.

Public consultations will commence in February 2017 following co-design with the Expert Group.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE FUTURE DIRECTION FOR SYSTEM REFORM

Consultation will inform recommendations to Government to improve the prevention of, and response to, sexual assault across NSW.

These recommendations will focus on prevention and education, supporting victims, holding perpetrators accountable, and improving the system as a whole.

REFERENCES

- 1 NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Online crime tool. Accessed 11/10/2016.
- 2 NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Online crime tool. Accessed 11/10/2016.
- 3 ABS, Recorded Crime - Victims, Australia, 2015. Cat. No. 4510.0. Table 16. Accessed 25/10/2016.
- 4 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Personal Safety Survey 2012. Cat. No. 4906.00do001_2012.
- 5 Court data and police data use different categorisations of offences. Court data divides 'sexual assault and related offences' into 'sexual assault' and 'non-assaultive sexual offences':
 - Sexual assault includes aggravated sexual assault and non-aggravated sexual assault.
 - Non-assaultive sexual offences includes: non-assaultive sexual offences against a child; child pornography offences; sexual servitude offences; and other non-assaultive sexual offences.
- 6 NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (2016), *NSW Criminal Court Statistics (as at end Dec 2015)*. Accessed 24/10/2016 from http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_court_stats/bocsar_court_stats.aspx. The court data are case-based, with each case containing one or more charges against a single individual. Charges within the same case that were finalised on either the same or different dates are counted as one person. Where an individual is involved in multiple cases, the cases are only reported as one person if finalised on the same date.
- 7 Sexual offence data reported by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (criminal incidents reported to or detected by NSW Police and recorded on the NSW Police Force's Computerised Policing System): Online crime tool. Accessed 20/10/2016.
- 8 For the purposes of the Personal Safety Survey, sexual assault is defined as '[a]n act of a sexual nature carried out against a person's will through the use of physical force, intimidation or coercion, and includes any attempts to do this. This includes rape, attempted rape, aggravated sexual assault (assault with a weapon), indecent assault, penetration by objects, forced sexual activity that did not end in penetration and attempts to force a person into sexual activity': Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013), *Personal Safety, Australia, 2012*, Cat. No. 4906.0, Glossary. Accessed on 28 November 2016 from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4906.0Chapter1002012>.
- 9 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013), *Personal Safety, Australia, 2012*, Cat. No. 4906.0, Table 17. Accessed on 28 November 2016 from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4906.0Chapter1002012>. Data on females who have experienced sexual assault by a female during the last 12 months were not published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- 10 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013), *Personal Safety, Australia, 2012*, Cat. No. 4906.0, Table 17. Accessed on 28 November 2016 from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4906.0Chapter1002012>. The estimated number of women who have experienced sexual assault by a male and those who have experienced sexual assault by a female cannot be added together to produce an aggregated total about 'police contact'. This is because women who have experienced both sexual assault by a male and sexual assault by a female are included separately for each type of sexual assault they have experienced.
- 11 The estimate of 48,100 men is subject to high sampling error (relative standard error of 25.9%) and should be treated with caution.
- 12 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013), *Personal Safety, Australia, 2012*, Cat. No. 4906.0, Table 17. Accessed on 28 November 2016 from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4906.0Chapter1002012>. Data on men who have experienced sexual assault by a male or by a female during the last 12 months were not published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- 13 Data for NSW have a very high sampling error that is considered too unreliable for general use. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016), *Crime Victimisation, Australia, 2014-15*, Cat. No. 4530.0, Table 2. Accessed on 28 November 2016 from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4530.0>.
- 14 NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (2016), NSW Recorded Crime and Criminal Statistics 2011-2015. Unpublished data (ref: K16-14660), obtained November 2016.
- 15 Includes recorded incidents of sexual assault, indecent assault and acts of indecency and other sexual offences. Incidents involving multiple victims are classified by the age of the youngest victim.
- 16 'Clear-up rates' refer to a criminal incident which, in the view of the police, has been satisfactorily cleared by the commencements of legal proceedings or otherwise.
- 17 'Criminal proceedings' refers to persons of interest to whom the police issued a Court Attendance Notice
- 18 Persons appearing in court for a sex offence against children AND a sex offence against adults appears twice in this data.
- 19 Matters finalised in the NSW Local, District and Supreme Criminal Courts. The 2015 court appearances do not directly relate to the incidents recorded by the police in the same year (2015).



GET HELP

**IF YOU ARE IN
IMMEDIATE DANGER,
CALL 000.**

Rape and Domestic Violence NSW helpline is available **24 hours a day** on **1800 65 64 63**. Help is also available on **1800RESPECT.org.au**.

For all urgent matters regarding a child at imminent risk of significant harm, please phone the **Child Protection Helpline** on **132 111** or **000**.

Victim Services' Victims Access Line provides a single entry point for victims of crime in NSW to assist them in accessing services. Call **Victims Access Line** on **02 8688 5511** (freecall).