

NSW SEXUAL ASSAULT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 1989.BACKGROUND:

- . The Committee has been in existence since September 1983. The last published report was for the period January 1985 - December 1987. In September 1988 the Minister approved the extension of the Committee till August 1989, with the requirement that a review then take place. Following this review the Committee has been extended for a further 2 years.
- . The Committee has continued to co-ordinate and monitor the sexual assault programme, providing a mechanism for exchange of information, discussion and problem resolution, and has developed a number of initiatives to further assist victims of sexual assault.
- . The terms of reference for the Committee are as follows:
 - . to co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the Government's sexual assault programme.
 - . to monitor and assist in the implementation of programmes in Government Departments and authorities, in particular: Health, Police, Attorney-General's, Premier's and Youth and Community Services. This will include staff development on sexual assault;
 - . to monitor victim satisfaction with both services and legislation;
 - . to report annually to the Minister.
- . The Committee currently has the following members:

Health : Lesley Garton, replaced Moira Carmody (7/89)
Women's Health Adviser, Dept of Health

Claire Vernon, Co-ordinator, Sexual Assault Centre
Royal Prince Alfred Hospital

Julie Blyth, Co-ordinator, Sexual Assault Centre
Royal North Hospital

Attorney-General's : Daryl Gunter - Criminal Law Review
Division

Office of Director of Public Prosecutions: Margaret Cunneen

Police: Det. Snr. Cons. Des Johnson - Program-Co-ordinator
Sexual Assault

Det. Snr. Cons. Terry Pledge- Sexual Assault Unit

FACS : Jane Woodruff- Director WCU (Chairperson of Committee)

Maureen Kingshott- Legal Officer, Child Protection
Council

Community Representatives:

Renata Kaldor - Chairperson, WAC
 Matina Mottee - Immigrant Women's Speakout
 Anne Stopford - Rape Crisis Centre
 Marion Brown - Women's Legal Resource Centre
 Lorna Hague - Aboriginal women's representative

- . The activities of the Committee have been determined by the 1988/89 work programmes approved by the Minister plus issues raised by Committee members.
- . Two sub-committees have met regularly
 - (i) legal sub-committee;
 - (ii) sexual assault and developmentally disabled victims.
- . The main areas addressed by Committee 1988/89 were:
 - (i) Development of an issues paper on the need for specific policy directives in the area of sexual assault and developmental disability. This has resulted in the decision to proceed with more detailed policy development;
 - (ii) requirement for paid sexual assault workers 24 hours per day;
 - (iii) access of women of non-English-speaking background, and others, to information about sexual assault services;
 - (iv) revision and distribution of pamphlets: Going to Court and Women and Rape;
 - (v) self-defence video;
 - (vi) hypnosis of witnesses and alleged victims by police;
 - (vii) liaison with Police Department: police training; police training video;
 - (ix) focus on responsibility of women for preventing sexual assault;
 - (x) discrepancies in court conviction rates;
 - (xi) sexual assault services for Aboriginal women;
 - (xii) court delays and committal proceedings;
 - (xiii) sexual assault on public transport - survey of service statistics.

Action in the above areas has been undertaken by the Committee and/or staff of the Women's Co-ordination Unit.

SUMMARY:

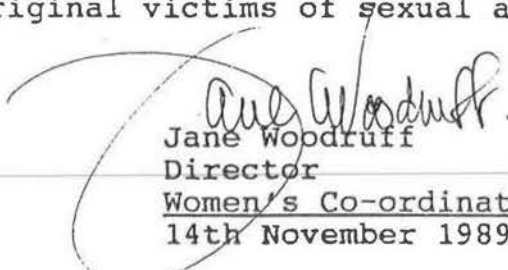
There is clearly a need for interdepartmental monitoring of sexual assault services and legislation in New South Wales. The Committee has been strengthened by the involvement of community representatives who have direct contact with sexual assault victims and who are in the best position to assess the impact of training, education, extension of services, etc.

The following issues are identified as being of continuing concern:

- . community attitudes that interfere with reporting and punishment of sexual assault, e.g. women as provocateurs;
- . sexual exploitation and abuse of people in supported accommodation and other forms of care;
- . access of NESB and Aboriginal women to sexual assault services;
- . legal, judicial and police training;
- . adequacy of legislation.

The Minister has approved the following work programme:

- i. continue its role of monitoring sexual assault programmes across relevant government and community services;
- ii. continue its role of monitoring and responding to grievances and complaints by victims of sexual assault about their treatment by relevant government and community services;
- iii. steering committee to sexual assault and developmental disability policy statement;
- iv. involvement in community education and implementation aspects of Victims of Crime Charter (Minister has already written to A.G.);
- v. develop a strategy for the employment of Aboriginal health workers to work with Aboriginal victims of sexual assault.


 Jane Woodruff
 Director
 Women's Co-ordination Unit
 14th November 1989