



Intimate Partner Violence

WACOSS requests the government to address the issue of mutual intimate partner violence, plus provide support services for men who are victims of violence and women who use violence.

There are no specialist services for men who are victims of violence and women who use violence. However, Centrecare, Relationships Australia and Kinway do provide individual counselling for anyone who presents with such an issue. They also provide counselling for people from same sex relationships who experience violence.

The Men's Project that was undertaken by the Family and Domestic Violence Unit of the Department for Community Development in 2005 was considered by the Cabinet Social Policy Committee in June 2006 and should be released shortly. It is anticipated that this report will address the issue of men as victims amongst a range of issues.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics survey on personal safety was released in August 2006¹. Some of the relevant findings include:

- Of those women and men who experienced current partner violence since the age of 15, 70% (160,100) were women and 30% (68,100) were men
- Of those women and men who experienced violence from a previous partner 76% (1,135,500) were women compared to 24% (367,300) who were men
- Of those women and men who were physically assaulted by their current or previous partner of the opposite sex during the previous 12 months, 78% (74,000) were women and 22% (21,200) were men.
- 67% (125,100) of assaults by the opposite sex in the home were on women, with 33% (60,900) on men
- Of the 195,300 women who experienced physical assault by a male perpetrator, 64% (125,100) of incidents occurred in a home
- Of the 79,500 men who experienced physical assault by a female perpetrator, 77% (60,900) of incidents occurred in a home
- Of those women who experienced physical assault by a female perpetrator, 38% (25,300) were assaulted in a home
- The most common location for physical assaults to occur for women was in the home irrespective of the sex of the perpetrator (64% of physical assaults were by male perpetrators and 38% of physical assaults were by female perpetrators).

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (4906.0 - *Personal Safety, Australia (Re-issue)*, 2005

A summary of some 130 studies of violence between partners prepared by the Lone Fathers Association Australia as part of a submission to a Senate Inquiry emphasises the need to provide support services for men who are victims of violence and women who use violence.²

Erin Pizzey, founder of the world's first shelter and crisis line for battered women, Chiswick Womens' Refuge in the UK wrote an open letter to women in the domestic violence movement in 2000 titled *Where there's a will, there's a way – isn't it time for domestic violence services for men?*³

Linda Kelly states the images we associate with domestic violence depict the male as batterer and the female as victim. Yet, despite the critical importance of first acknowledging and then eradicating the male abuse of women, an equally important but untold story remains. Women can be batterers. Men can be victims.⁴

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² Lone Fathers Association Australia submission to *the Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Inquiry into the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parenting Responsibility) Bill, 2005*, February 2006

³ 2000 Interview with journalist Philip W. Cook author of "Abused Men-The Hidden Side of Domestic Violence". Originally published in the book "Everything You Know is Wrong" (Disinformation Press-2001) "The Whole Truth About Domestic Violence" P. Cook.

⁴ Linda Kelly *Disabusing the Definition of Domestic Abuse: How Women Batter Men & the Role of the Feminist State*, Florida State University Law Review (Vol 30:791-855, 2003)