

Breaking free

asca

Adults Surviving Child Abuse

The Newsletter of Adults Surviving Child Abuse | ISSN 1836-6899 | November & December 2013

Inquiry findings bring hope

The findings of Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Non-Government Organisations entitled "Betrayal of Trust" has been released. Its recommendations are wide-reaching, spanning five broad areas "reforming criminal law, accessing civil litigation, creating an independent, alternative avenue for justice, monitoring response by organisations to criminal child abuse, presenting criminal child abuse in organisations". Their prompt consideration and implementation is welcomed.

Read more [HERE](#).

Victorian Government moves swiftly to implement recommendations of abuse inquiry

ABC News | 13 November 2013

Victorian Premier Denis Naphine says the Government will immediately begin drafting legislation in response to the Victorian Parliament's inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other organisations.

The two-volume report entitled Betrayal of Trust report makes 15 recommendations.

The Federal Government has six months to respond but Dr Naphine says the Victorian Government will not be waiting.

He expects legislation will be introduced to Parliament early next year.

"We will commence immediately drafting legislation to implement a number of the key recommendations, including creating a new grooming offence, creating a new child endangerment offence (and making it clear that it is a crime to conceal criminal child abuse offences," he said.

Dr Naphine says he will act immediately to protect the children of Victoria.

"I'm ashamed and embarrassed by the actions of the Catholic Church, or the lack of actions on these matters," he said.

"The protection of children in Victoria is paramount.

"We have heard through this inquiry the voices of the victims and those who spoke on their behalf. We have heard those voices and we will not let them down."

Dozens of victims of abuse by clergy and at non-church institutions and their families were in the public gallery.

They erupted in applause after the findings were handed down.

Full article available [HERE](#).



Recommendations of the Victorian Parliament's inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other organisations

ABC News | 13 November 2013

These are the 15 recommendations of the Victorian Parliament's inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other organisations

Reform criminal law

Compulsory reporting to police – Legislative amendments to ensure that a person who fails to report or conceals criminal child abuse will be guilty of an offence.

A new child endangerment offence – Making it a criminal offence for people in authority to knowingly put a child at risk, or fail to remove them from a known risk, of criminal child abuse.

A new grooming offence – The creation of a separate criminal offence extending beyond current grooming laws to make it an offence to groom a child, their parents or others with the intention of committing a sexual offence against the child (regardless of whether the sexual offence occurs).

Easier access to the civil justice system

Address legal entity of non-government organisations – Require non-government organisations to be incorporated and adequately insured.

New structures – The Victorian Government is to work with the Australian Government to require organisations that engage with children to adopt incorporated legal structures.

[Read more on Page 8](#)

From the Editor



In this combined November-December holiday issue of ASCA's *Breaking Free* newsletter we open with a feature on the promising recommendations of the Victorian Parliamentary report "Betrayal of Trust". We reflect on the highlights of Blue Knot Day; inspired by the many who contributed to raise awareness and provide hope to survivors. As ASCA continues to promote trauma informed care in a diverse range of arenas, we catch up with some of the important work in which Cathy, our President, and Pam, our Head of Research and Clinical Practice, have engaged.

With the festive season approaching, a time that can often be challenging for survivors, we include an article on self care from Kate, our 1300 Professional Support Line Co-ordinator, and remind those who are seeking support to utilise our 1300 telephone service. ASCA continues to advocate for survivors' wellbeing in the media and provide readers with up to date information from the Royal Commission. Finally, to close this year, we are pleased to announce the release of dates for our 2014 workshop series for survivors, carers, workers and professionals – all of which focus on helping survivors on the road to recovery.

Until our combined January-February issue, I wish you all the very best over the holiday period.

Fiona Thomas | Editor

The Big Picture

As we approach the end of a hectic and progressive year for ASCA and the needs of adult survivors nationally we can reflect on a period heralding possibilities for change, which are long overdue. With the commencement of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses into Child Sexual Abuse and the recent release of the report and recommendations of the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry, the Australian community and governments are beginning to acknowledge the needs of those affected by child abuse.

As we start to see the development of trauma informed services ASCA has been playing a key role in education and training. We are delighted to additionally welcome Nicky Bisogni, who has extensive clinical, training and sector experience, as our Training Project Manager. Based in Melbourne, Nicky brings passion, networks and expertise to join our growing team and focus on exploring our expanding training brief. Welcome to Nicky and our other new staff members, Fiona and Carly as well as to our new 1300 counsellors.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our staff and contractors, as well as our active and committed board for all of their work towards helping adult survivors find better lives. I would particularly like to thank and acknowledge John Teer, who, after 5 years on the board and 3 years as ASCA Chair, has stepped down from the board (due to Constitutional requirements). John will be staying on in the role of ex-officio treasurer. His contribution to ASCA and the needs of survivors, entirely voluntary, has been exemplary. I personally am delighted that he has agreed to have an ongoing role with the organisation. I welcome our incoming Chair, Jon Kaplan and look forward to working with him in 2014 and beyond.

I wish you all the very best over the holiday period which I know for some of you can be a particularly challenging time. I would commend you to the article in this newsletter regarding self care over this period and also alert you to the times during which you will be able to access our 1300 service.

Dr Cathy Kezelman | President



Taking care of business

2013 has been a big year of change and growth for ASCA. Increased funding through government grants has allowed for a considerable expansion of ASCA services. The hours of the 1300 Professional Support Line have increased significantly and we have been able to deliver increasing numbers of workshops for survivors and carers. The demand for professional development for health professionals in supporting adult survivors of complex trauma and trauma informed training for workers continues to grow. During 2013 ASCA has delivered an expanded number of in-house and public workshops to meet this growing demand. Also significant for the organisation was the move to new, larger premises earlier in the year.

[Read more on Page 3](#)

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Have your contact details changed?

If your contact details have changed, you can update them at www.asca.org.au (or contact ASCA on (02) 8920 3611 if you do not have access to the internet or email).

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If you have forgotten your username and/or password, go to join/login on our website and click on **Forgot your User Name?** or **Forgot your Password?** as appropriate.

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this newsletter have been included to allow our members to consider a variety of therapeutic options and spiritual views. ASCA does not support any particular spiritual stance over another; nor does it uphold any particular therapy as superior. The Editorial Team accepts responsibility for all editorial comment.

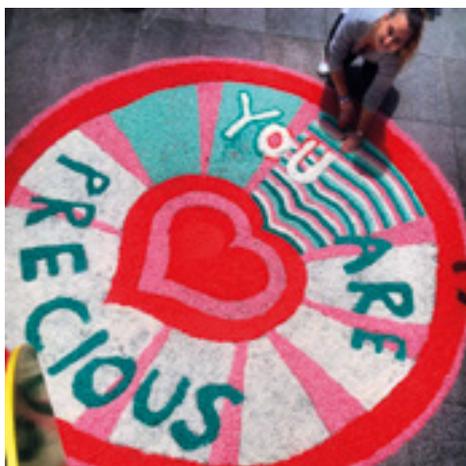
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Blue Knot Day 2013 Highlights

Mandala making event

Sarah Coconis, The O'Brien Centre Inner City Health Program



Blue Knot Day is an important and relevant event for the Inner City Health Program to engage in. Research indicates that the majority of consumers of public mental health, homeless health and drug and alcohol services are survivors of childhood abuse and/or neglect and it is this background of childhood trauma that is the underlying cause for consumers' distress and issues that connect them with our services.

We celebrated Blue Knot Day all week through various awareness raising activities. We held an information stand in the reception area of the O'Brien Centre and in the garden outside the main entrance. We handed out information leaflets about child abuse; how it affects survivors' health into adulthood and how to access the right kind of help.

The most striking and engaging activity was the making of a huge mandala in the garden outside the main entrance to The O'Brien Centre, which is the building housing the homeless health, mental health, drug and alcohol, and community health teams at St Vincent's Hospital. A mandala is a circular

artwork of Hindu and Buddhist origin which traditionally represents the universe. The image design communicated a message of love and hope for survivors. It turned out beautifully, with about 25kg of rice which had been dyed in different colours in order to 'colour in' the design.

Mandala making is well known for requiring the makers to be drawn into the present moment which is very calming for the mind and body. We now know from MRIs and observations in psychotherapy that once the mind and body are still and calm creative thinking becomes possible. Adult survivors of childhood trauma commonly experience chronic stress and anxiety and many have developed harmful methods of attempting to self-soothe, which can compound their pre-existing trauma in a vicious cycle. Mandala making is a powerful therapeutic activity; it promotes individual reflection but also a sense of connection and cooperation with others.

Our hope was that the mandala making process would engage people via their senses and their emotions, and foster a sense

of mindfulness, relaxation, connection and love. We envisioned that the collaborative process might break down barriers between consumers and staff and allow people to choose their level of involvement.

The mandala making seemed to be a hit with consumers, staff and visitors! A consumer from the ICHP, Dean Evans remarked:

"Doing the Mandala was very therapeutic. I didn't think it would be, but once I started, I couldn't stop. It was nice that everyone came to help and it's good that ASCA are raising awareness of adults surviving child abuse, because some people can't get over it by themselves and they need support."

Marlene Headington, a drug and alcohol clinician with the Homeless Health Service commented that:

"Creating the Mandala was an amazing experience; for me it was relaxing and quite meditative. To see the range of Inner City Health Program consumers, staff and passers by joining in and sharing and helping each other was inspiring. Watching the interactions between people who were otherwise strangers talking about their experiences and acknowledging that they had an unspoken bond was moving. Although not a lot was said, a nod or grunt in agreement with another's comment spoke volumes that each of the people taking part understood the others' pain and need for healing. This truly was a beautiful experience to be part of and I left work feeling like I had received a reminder of why I chose to work in this profession."

The mandala seemed to create a safe space for people to reflect and to spontaneously interact with other people, the artwork and the theme of childhood trauma. It was a lovely, humanising way to engage people. There were quite a few touching moments and some tears from both staff and visitors who felt that their experience of childhood abuse and its pervasive effects into their adult lives had been de-pathologised, acknowledged and understood.

Continued from Page 2

Many new staff members have been welcomed during the year. In just the past month we have welcomed three new staff. Carly Fenton has been appointed in a permanent capacity as Training and Events Coordinator. Fiona Thomas joins ASCA in a newly created role of Training Coordinator and Nicky Bisogni has been appointed to another

newly created role of Training Project Manager. These positions will support and expand our increasingly busy training and workshop program.

As we reflect on what has been a very busy year for the ASCA office team we also look forward to the coming year. We expect 2014 will be a time of both consolidation as well as opportunities for continued steady growth of the organisation.

We wish all ASCA members and supporters a safe and enjoyable holiday season, and very best wishes for 2014.

Mark Bebbington | COO

Blue Knot Day 2013 Highlights



Interrelate Blue Knot

Day morning tea | *Di Frost, Interrelate*

It was a beautiful Spring day and a lovely way to connect with other services and the community. Attending services included Centacare Bathurst, Centacare Wilcannia-Forbes, National Association for Loss and Grief (NALAG), Dubbo, Knowmore, Uniting Care Burnside, Mission Australia and Break Thru Employment Services.

We were all entertained by Isaac Compton, a brilliant local musician. Everyone enjoyed a fantastic morning tea of blueberry muffins, blue cupcakes, blue cordial and blue lollies and we released blue helium balloons in support of survivors of child abuse.

Walking the labyrinth – a pathway to healing and recovery

Dr. Johanna Lynch, Integrate Place



Integrate Place in Manly QLD gathered survivors for rock painting workshops in preparation for our Blue Knot Day event. Over 284 rocks were decorated by survivors, their children, therapists and members of the community wanting to show their support. These were used to make our labyrinth in the park for reflection on the journey of recovery. Participants helped to lay out a labyrinth on the grass in the park that became a healing labyrinth that was walked to accompanying music. The labyrinth – unlike a maze – has no dead ends – just like life's journey.

Participants described a sense of release walking the labyrinth, of not being alone, of a moment of change in their journey because what had happened to them was being acknowledged by their community.

A mixture of young and old, women and men, were all able to walk the labyrinth together and individually at their own pace.

Once again it was an honour to be able to participate in hosting a Blue Knot Day event in our community. This is our fifth year – ever since its inception as Forget Me Knot day!

We have decided to keep the rocks as a mobile labyrinth that can be used again in the future.

Participant reflection: Having first heard of Blue Knot day last year through Integrate Place Manly, I attended the informal gathering held in the park by the sea. While there, surrounded by a group of survivors of child abuse and neglect, through the many faces, I felt a huge amount of comfort. Comforted by the knowledge I am not alone.

This year, I was perplexed for a reason to attend! I thought I had dealt with that last year, it had seemed just right. This year, the concept of the labyrinth was new to me, a maze without dead ends, a continuous pattern of discovery which leads you to the center and back to the outside. But slowly, ever so slowly I began to understand, it is a journey that people undertake to overcome the trauma of child abuse and neglect. The impact from such horror is life changing. It had taken me many decades to finally accept, to fully accept. This had happened to me!

I have always felt the perpetrator was at fault! But I did carry some guilt that maybe I have been partially to blame. I'M NOT! I now also see. How if affected many aspects of my life, TRUST, SELF WORTH, SELF DOUBT, CONFUSION, NOT "KNOWING" I HAD BOUNDARIES OTHERS DO NOT HAVE A RIGHT TO CROSS.

I will go forward, and take with me the new understanding, of boundaries and feel confident. I, just like everyone else. HAVE THAT RIGHT.

Blue Knot Day 2013 Highlights

Survivor Initiative on Blue Knot Day

Shonalee Campbell

My event started off as an assignment for TAFE, but the reason I chose to support ASCA in particular is because I too am an adult survivor of child abuse. I know firsthand the importance of SPEAKING OUT before even beginning the very long road to recovery.

To engage the community in awareness and assist in promoting recovery, I asked the community to leave a message of hope on a white ribbon for survivors, and attached the ribbons to a display.

The dolls and teddies at the event were tied in knots to the chair and as people left they

each untangled a knot, symbolic of hope for recovery.

As a survivor, I found this experience extremely empowering as I no longer needed to keep my experiences a secret behind closed doors! Instead I was able to stand up and say: "I never asked to be victimised, but I was. Now I am on my journey to recovery. I now sit at survivor status but am working towards becoming a warrior!"

Thank you so much for the opportunity to raise awareness and funds to support such a worthy cause. I am looking forward to being further involved with ASCA in the future.



Church Service Casino

Robbie Gambley



This was our 5th service in honour of Blue Knot Day. We held two healing services, one at 7:00am and the main service at 9:00am.

Our Rev. Geoffrey Bradford embraced the cause very warmly. Richmond River Mayor, Mr. Ernie Bennett attended, as did federal member for Page the Hon. Kevin Hogan and his wife Karen. NSW state member for Clarence the Hon. Chris Gulapits and his wife also attended.

Rev. Geoffrey spoke and I also gave a short speech about ASCA and information about childhood abuse. I also read a beautiful poem "High Flight" from The War Poets – an anthology. To me this poem says so much about what people go through who have been traumatised as children by sexual, physical and other abuse.

The church was decorated with a blue ribbon above people as they approached the altar and pretty blue lights. There was a morning tea and people openly spoke about the topic.

Observance of Blue Knot Day 2013

WARM Quakers

WARM Quakers decided to use the opportunity of our fourth Sunday gathering to hold a worship for all those adults who are dealing with childhood abuse and neglect. We note the large number of people affected and appreciate the excellent work done by ASCA to raise awareness, the telephone counseling service they offer, and endeavors for service workers to have guidelines to assist the recovery of all those affected.

It's OK Campaign supports Blue Knot Day

Audrey Clark

ASCA's Blue Knot Day went global in 2013 creating links with Audrey Clark in Manchester UK, a child sex abuse survivor and author of 'Outside Looking In'. Audrey reinforced that "It's okay" to speak about child abuse.

Listen to the 'It's OK Campaign message of hope and inspiration [HERE](#).

As one of the millions of survivors in this country, I sincerely thank you ASCA for your efforts and am so grateful to have stumbled across your service and joined in the Blue Knot Day cause!

Kind regards, Kymm

Amazing conferences – building communities



Dr. Cathy Kezelman, President, ASCA

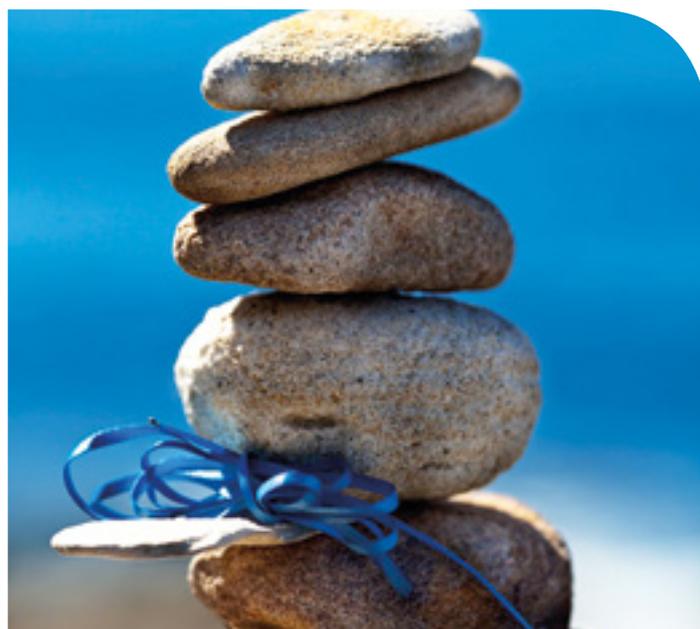
In November I was fortunate to speak at three diverse conferences. The 16th Rural Mental Health Conference in Albury: "Making the Most of Change – Building Mental Health Futures" brought together an enthusiastic community of those engaged in rural mental health services. Opened by John Feneley, NSW Mental Health Commission, the conference provided an opportunity to speak about "Building a workforce informed about Trauma", reflecting ASCA's work in policy, practice and workforce development and training in this area.

The following week I attended the Hearing Voices Conference, which was attended by over 770 people during the 3 days, making it the largest ever Interoice World Hearing Voices Congress, and the largest ever consumer-led event in Australia's history. "Most importantly, many voice hearers have now found new ways of living with their voices, many workers now have new strategies and ideas for better supporting voice hearers, and many family, friends and carers now feel better able to understand and support their loved ones." I was honoured to sign a historic document, the Melbourne Declaration on behalf of ASCA, one of the 55 organisations making a public commitment, on the day to the needs and wants of voice hearers.

Read more [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

Most recently I joined Dr. Richard Benjamin, public psychiatrist, Department of Health and Human Services, Tasmania and member of ASCA's Advisory Panel in Hobart to present a workshop: "When we don't decide: childhood trauma as a social determinant of health" at an

innovative Social Determinants of Health Forum "Our health – who decides?" A unique forum, it provided the opportunity for active conversations and networking around some of the pressing issues in public health policy for change. Richard and I were delighted to have the opportunity to put the needs of adult survivors of childhood trauma and abuse onto the agenda.



Conferences and research



Pam Stavropoulos, Head of Research and Clinical Practice, ASCA

Attendance of conferences on the topic of complex trauma is part of quality assurance of ASCA programs. On October 17th I attended the STARTTS training 'Healing Trauma Across Cultures', by Dr Boris Drozdek. Cultural sensitivity is an increasingly important dimension of the work ASCA does, and it was valuable to gain additional insight into the many ways in which culture

inflects experiences of trauma.

A STARTTS training on August 15th-16th by Janina Fisher ('Healing the Body, Healing the Mind: Sensorimotor Psychotherapy in Treating Complex Trauma') was also extremely valuable. A highlight of this conference was the opportunity it provided to personally present a copy of the ASCA *Practice Guidelines* to Dr Fisher, who was an early supporter of them and who warmly reaffirmed her support at our meeting.

As well as the many trainings we offer, ASCA also accepts invitations to speak at various forums. On October 15th I presented a PD for Relationships Australia at their North Ryde offices. I also spoke on early life trauma and the coping mechanisms it can generate to the Alternative Education Alliance in Sydney on November 14th. The

audience for this talk was health professionals who work directly with children and adolescents, and the talk led to an invitation to offer trauma informed training to school teachers (one of many diverse requests we are now receiving and which we are in the process of assessing).

Publications are also an important vehicle by which to convey and consolidate the research insights on which we are building. As a member of the Scientific Committee of the ISSTD, I am part of a group of writers who are collaborating on articles which address various facets of childhood trauma. The first of these articles ('Institutional Abuse and Societal Silence: An Emerging Global Problem') is about the Royal Commission, and has been accepted for publication in the *Royal Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*.

We expect two more publications (on issues to arise in relation to the Royal Commission, and on the particular challenges of researching dissociation) to follow. Another article ('Resolving Childhood Trauma: the ASCA *Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Complex Trauma and Trauma Informed Care and Service Delivery*') will appear in the journal of the Counsellors and Psychotherapists Association of NSW (the *CAPA Quarterly*) in early 2014.

Self care over the holiday season

The holiday season can be fraught with difficulties for many people, survivors in particular. This time of the year can bring up strong feelings of grief, sadness and anger as well as the usual stress of the season. Self care is essential for coping with this time and creating a more positive holiday experience. For good self care, consider the following strategies.

1. Have good boundaries

During the holiday season people face pressures to meet other people's needs and this can be challenging. It is important to remember that you have a right to decide the type of Christmas and holiday that you want or not. Having good boundaries can help with this. Boundaries are also an important part of maintaining safe relationships with others.

As part of this you have the right to say no to anything that is not good or helpful for you. Sometimes people fear saying no, especially at this time of the year, because they don't want to upset people. However, other people's feelings are their responsibility, while self care is yours. Remind yourself of what you need over Christmas and say no to things that are too stressful or overwhelming.

For survivors maintaining safe and healthy relationships and boundaries can be very hard. Frequently these behaviours were not modelled to survivors as they grew up and they may have family members who don't respect boundaries or don't have good boundaries themselves. If maintaining safe relationships and healthy boundaries is difficult, seek help from a supportive friend, family member or counsellor. Discuss boundaries with them and gain their support you as you decide on what your boundaries will be and how to implement them.

2. Create new, self-supportive traditions

Christmas and the holiday season do not always have to be done "the way they were always done". This can be stressful and triggering for survivors. Give yourself permission to step back, decide what you want to do and celebrate your way. For some survivors this may mean choosing to spend Christmas away from family and this is perfectly okay. Make this time manageable by planning activities that you want to do.

3. Exercise

Exercise reduces stress and promotes a feeling of well-being. Exercise does not have to be intense. A walk for 20 to 30 minutes a day can be of real benefit. Choose some form of exercise you enjoy and aim to do it 4-5 times a week.

4. Eat Healthy Food (at least sometimes!)

Extra chocolate, wine, cheese and special desserts are an important part of the holiday season for most people. Enjoy them. However it is also important to balance this with some healthy food to maintain energy and reduce stress. Make sure you are drinking enough water and regularly eating fruits and vegetables.



5. Watch your use of alcohol (and other drugs)

At this time of the year it can be tempting to cope with stress, or feelings of anger, sadness and grief by overusing alcohol and other drugs. However this can create problems, making it harder to maintain boundaries and safe relationships as well as increasing the stress your body is already under. If you choose to drink alcohol, do so in moderation, alternating alcoholic drinks with non-alcohol drinks. Avoid or minimize using other drugs. If tempted to misuse drugs and alcohol try to practice other forms of self care first and seek professional support.

6. Do Good things for yourself

Given the potential difficulties of this time of the year, it's good to give yourself some extra care and attention. Make a list of things you like doing, that help you feel good and aim to do at least one of these each day. When developing your list ask yourself what has worked in the past to help you feel good, to calm you down or to manage stress? Add these to the list. The list does not need to be expensive, but can include simple things like having a bath, listening to music or going for a walk.

7. Ask for help and support

Even with the best self care Christmas can be a time of enormous difficulty, grief and stress. If your emotions feel too overwhelming or self care feels too hard it is important to ask for help. Discuss this with your counsellor, a supportive GP, or a supportive friend or family member.

ASCA's Professional Support Line is also open over the holiday season to offer support, information and referrals to survivors and their family and friends. For most of December and January the phone line is open 9-5, seven days a week. However for public holidays special opening hours apply:

Christmas Day: 11am – 3pm

Boxing Day: 9.30am – 1.30pm

New Year's Day: 11am – 3pm

If you call outside these hours, or if the phone is not answered straight away, leave a message and a counsellor will call you back as soon as possible.

Trauma-Informed Care and Practice Forum

Dr. Cathy Kezelman, President, ASCA

On November 18th ASCA partnered with the NSW Mental Health Commission and the Mental Health Coordinating Council to host a Trauma-Informed Care and Practice (TICP) Forum in Sydney. The forum brought together senior managers and practitioners from agencies across services sectors in NSW.

Sixty-five participants attended including MHCC and MHC staff members and invited presenters. Participants came from government departments, health agencies and community managed bodies representing mental health and human services. The purpose was to share knowledge and information around the evidence, principles, policy and practice needed for the broad uptake of trauma-informed care and practice across mental health and human service systems and sectors and discuss its integration into the Draft Strategic Plan for Mental Health in NSW.

The objective that, by the end of the forum, participants would have a greater understanding of trauma-informed care and practice, its importance for client and worker health and wellbeing, and new ideas about the role everyone can play in the reform process was well achieved. Trauma-informed care and practice is an evidence-based

approach, the principles of which are closely aligned but additional to that of recovery-orientation. Its principles need to be embedded into policy and practice to facilitate recovery for the large number of people engaging with the mental health and human services systems including the criminal justice system.

The forum furthers the work that ASCA has been doing with MHCC and other members of the National Trauma Informed Care and Practice Advisory Working Group over a number of years. This work is based on awareness of the large number of people who are affected by trauma (and abuse), its long-term impacts and the frequent re-traumatisation and re-victimisation those with a history of trauma can experience in services.

Research has established that recovery from trauma is possible and re-traumatisation can be minimised. International experience coupled with that of the growing pockets of Australian innovation have established the benefits of trauma-informed systems and services. ASCA will continue to work with MHCC and other partners to further the reform process, in NSW as with this forum as well as nationally.

ASCA Workshop Feedback

"The training was extremely well received. I really appreciated it – but more valuable is that the attendees had so many positives to say! And, fabulous trainer also!"

– Prashant Munro, Service Manager at Victim Support ACT, In-house Training on 27th November, 2013.

"My sincere thanks for making this available to me. I really appreciate it and thought it was exceptionally well presented. The facilitator was engaging and attentive, and did a great job of making the info clear and accessible, and of clarifying any issues that arose through the course of the day. It was a very helpful, informative and a validating experience".

– Attendee from ASCA's Survivor Workshop, Saturday 23rd November, 2013.

Continued from Page 1

Remove time limits – Legislative amendments to exclude criminal child abuse from the current statute of limitations, recognising that it can take decades for victims to come forward.

Assistance applications – Legislative amendments to specify no time limits apply to applications for assistance by victims of criminal child abuse.

Duty of care – Ensure organisations are held accountable and have a legal duty to prevent criminal child abuse.

Avenue for justice

Specific scheme for victims of child abuse – An independent alternative avenue for justice for victims not in a position to pursue civil claims in the courts. It will be operated independently of organisations but paid for by the organisations.

Improving organisation responses to allegations of criminal child abuse.

Independent statutory body – To oversee and monitor the handling of child abuse allegations by organisations, undertake independent investigations and scrutinise and audit systems in place.

Review – Current Department of Education and early childhood development procedures for responding to child abuse allegations.

Prevention

Effective selection of suitable personnel – Institute a system of compliance under the Working with Children Act

Manage situational risk – Government it review its contractual and funding arrangements with organisations that work with children to ensure a minimum standard for a child-safe environment.

Prevention systems and processes – The Government should identify a way to support peak bodies to build preventative capacity.

Awareness – The Government to ensure non-government organisations are equipped with information regarding the prevention of child abuse.

Article available [HERE](#).

ASCA in the News

Abuse report can't undo damage: victims | 9 News National | 13 November 2013

Victims got everything they could have hoped for from the Victorian report on child sex abuse, but it can never be enough.

Mick Serch said as great as the inquiry was, the scar of abuse can't ever be healed.

"You can put a bandaid on it but it keeps falling off," Mr Serch told AAP.

Since he suffered sex abuse at the hands of a Christian Brother when he was in grade five at St Leo's College in Box Hill, Mr Serch has endured chronic depression, panic attacks and suicidal thoughts.

"I've also got paranoid schizophrenia which they say is due to the abuse," he said.

Mr Serch attended a victims' 'rally of hope' on the steps of parliament after the report was tabled on Wednesday.

"The more of this sort of thing we have the better for everyone," he said.

"It's a great thing but there's a lot more that needs to be done."

Victims advocacy group Broken Rites spokesman John McNally, who made specific recommendations to the inquiry, said the committee's report had "nailed it".

"It's a real milestone in this journey," Mr McNally told AAP.

"It validates that the victims are not guilty in any way and the church, through their neglect of their duty, are the ones at fault."

As they gathered to read through the 800-odd pages of findings and recommendations, victims described the result as fantastic, powerful and reaffirming.

Anthony Foster, whose two daughters were abused by a priest, says the 12 months of gruelling submissions have been worth it.

"I think we have the basis for everything we wanted," Mr Foster told AAP.

"The process has been challenging in some ways but I think the outcome is potentially fantastic."

For him, the most significant recommendation would be the exposure of organisations to the legal system.

"We will see the Catholic Church become part of the legal system in the state of Victoria in a way that it hasn't been in the past," Mr Foster said.

"I think that will make it change its operations."

Adults Surviving Child Abuse president Dr Cathy Kezelman says the recommendations are long overdue.

"We can't wait any longer for the changes to be implemented – children need to be protected now," she said.

But for the hundreds – perhaps thousands – of Victorians the report estimated had been victims of child sex abuse, the protective measures come too late.

"It's a scar that can't be healed," Mr Serch said.

Article available at [HERE](#).

Listening to Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

The Big Smoke | 25 November 2013

Dr. Cathy Kezelman, President, ASCA

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is a global first, with 'Terms of Reference' that are broad and challenging to implement.

Yet, will it alone be sufficient to drive fundamental societal change?

Child abuse is common and destructive. It is an established social practice within all countries, communities, races and religions. The challenges child abuse poses are not limited to the personal. They are grounded in deep-seated socio-political concerns that fuel the intransigence to change.

Any changes can only occur slowly.

In the 80s, sexual abuse was for the first time publicly named; personal stories were related, and power imbalance and control were identified as key factors in the perpetration of sexual violence. In recent years, the Australian media has begun to report on child sexual assault more frequently. However, a persistent collective consciousness of the lived reality of the trauma of child abuse remains elusive.

Over recent years we have witnessed widespread revelations of abuse, often of a systemic nature, within an array of institutions. We've watched as these institutions have clung doggedly to internal processes, attempted to remain closed to scrutiny, and abrogated hierarchical and bystander responsibility. We have repeatedly witnessed the substantial human cost of secrecy, silence, denial and cover-ups. Institutional risk minimisation has been prioritised over pastoral care.

But there is more to this story that goes beyond these institutions, for the vast majority of child abuse occurs within the home and family. Societies perpetuate a sacrosanct belief in home and hearth, and,

Happiness and its Causes Roadshow | November 2013

LIVING WITH COURAGE AND AN OPEN HEART – Be moved by Dr. Cathy Kezelman's story of incredible courage and resilience in the aftermath of horrendous child abuse. Her story of conquering her demons to raise four children and rise to a role of leadership and advocacy is inspirational.

View video [HERE](#).

luckily, often-times we are rewarded. Many homes and families are indeed safe havens. Unfortunately, not uncommonly reality is at odds with this and instead we have the rupture of powerful cultural fantasies around the ideals of family life.

'Family business' is perceived as private; it occurs behind closed doors. Acknowledgement of abuse and violence within the home are denied so that 'family secrets' are preserved. According to a NAPCAN 2010 survey, less than 50% of Australians would take formal action to protect a child they knew was being abused. Even if a child disclosed sexual abuse, only 34% of Australians would call the police.

Families that are isolated and closed to scrutiny provide the perfect environment for abuse to flourish. Child victims abused in the family are often additionally silenced by fear, shame and stigma. They are confused and conflicted – being hurt by the very person meant to love and care for them.

Perpetrators use secrecy and silence to hide their crimes, and if secrecy fails they attack the credibility of their victims. Secrecy, silence and discrediting occur not only institutionally but society-wide as well. Collectively we recoil from stories of abuse and often blame the victim for making us uncomfortable, and, effectively, for their own victimisation.

Blaming, silencing, punishing and re-victimising victims are national practices.

[Read more on Page 10](#)

ASCA in the News

Continued from Page 9

As bystanders we are complicit in these practices, and the shame, so inappropriately adopted by victims, belongs with us all. Abuse is the ultimate betrayal, yet as a society we commonly betray those who have been abused in childhood, silencing and shaming them, minimising and negating their experiences.

How do we create a society that is receptive to those who have been victimised; that encourages people to speak out, and which acts when they do – a society that supports the victim, disclosing child abuse in institutions, organisations, schools, neighbourhoods, homes and families?

It is time to speak openly about the factors that foster ongoing abuse and how to mitigate them. More survivors and the organisations that represent them are starting to speak out but they need to be heard by a society ready to listen.

Only when this occurs can survivors start to overcome the shame imposed on them by both their original victimisation and their re-victimisation by communities and systems that minimise, negate and dismiss their experiences.

Read article at [HERE](#).

No community is immune AJN | Australian Jewish News | November 2013 | Dr. Cathy Kezelman, President, ASCA

Sadly but at long last the Jewish community is beginning to acknowledge the prevalence and impacts of child sexual abuse within its community. At the same time hopefully we are also aware that no community is immune; the reality is that child sexual abuse affects us all. We all know someone, whether it's ourselves, a family member, a friend or a work colleague. The additional allegations in the last edition of the Jewish News of possible payment of "hush money", and of another institution providing residential care, the Australian Jewish Welfare Society having several victims coming forward are shocking but not surprising. The report from the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other non-government organisations (released this last week) were ground-breaking, albeit chilling. The report was highly critical of the institutions investigated and made recommendations which, if fully implemented, would go a long

way towards protecting children, and prioritising justice, accountability and the health and wellbeing of victims. After years of silence, denial, and obfuscation, the focus is turning to the needs of victims, child and adult, and the protection of our children. It is timely to additionally highlight the role of the current Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The Royal Commission, a global first, is a national inquiry, with wide-sweeping investigative powers and has already borne witness to the stories of large number of survivors. As at November 12th the commission had received 6362 phone calls, 2775 written inquiries and 627 personal submissions. It had conducted 742 private sessions with survivors, with 524 approved but awaiting appointments, and another 1300 seeking a private session, of whom it is estimated about half would have one. More information can be found [HERE](#) or call 1800 099 340.

Royal Commission News

The Royal Commission will continue to hold private sessions in 2014

What is a private session?

If you're affected by child sexual abuse in an institution, you can tell the Royal Commission of your experiences in a private session with a Commissioner. Private sessions are an important way for Commissioners to bear witness and to hear first hand about the impact of child sexual abuse to better understand how it might be prevented in the future.

A private session is a meeting where you tell your story to one or two Commissioners. It's confidential and informal.

Who will be present?

The Commissioners will decide who can be in the room during a private session. Usually it will be you, your support person and one Commissioner and a Royal Commission officer. You and your support person will sit at a table with the Commissioner and the Royal Commission officer when you tell your story.

A lawyer can only attend a private session as an "advocate" if the Commissioners agree to this although a lawyer can attend as your support person if you wish.



Perth Domestic Violence Memorial Event – thank you to organiser Peter Wright

Representatives of the institution or person you may complain about won't be present.

Sometimes two people, or a group of people, may want to tell their stories together in a private session. Please tell us if you want to do this when you contact us.

Royal Commission News

What happens in a private session?

Someone from the Royal Commission will greet you when you arrive. We'll make arrangements to take you and your support person into the room and introduce you to the Commissioners.

When you tell your story in a private session, the Commissioners will not judge you or your story. They won't make decisions about whether what you say is the truth. The Commissioners want to understand your experience, and will probably ask you questions to better understand what happened. You can say that you don't want to answer some, or any, questions.

You won't be asked to give intimate details about what happened if you don't want to talk about that.

At private sessions you won't be asked to take an oath or say you'll tell the truth, but you should tell the truth. You can hand over documents in a private session, but you don't have to.

We'll record all private sessions and we may write a transcript of what we record. You can ask to read the transcript, if there is one, but we can't give you a copy to keep because of confidentiality rules.

At the end of the private session you can speak to a counsellor for support.

What if I have signed a confidentiality agreement?

You can speak to a Commissioner at a private session if you have signed a confidentiality agreement with an institution. The Royal Commission legislation allows you to do this.

Legal Questions and Concerns

The information you provide in private sessions is confidential and not on the public record. For most people the information provided in a private session will not be used as evidence in hearings. If the Royal Commission wants to use your information in a hearing we will contact you to seek your permission. Information provided at hearings is on the public record.

Can I ask someone to speak for me?

If you don't want to speak yourself, the Royal Commission may agree that a support person can tell your story at a private session.

This might be someone from a support or advocacy group. Please tell us beforehand if this is how you want your story told.

If you have a disability that makes it hard for you to tell your story, you may be able to use a support person to speak for you. Please tell us if you (or the person you're helping) have special needs when you contact us.

Do I have to meet face to face?

You don't have to come to a private session to tell your story. You can write down your story or tell us your story over the phone. To find out more, please read our fact sheet called How to tell your story (available on our Fact Sheets page), or contact us.

Online materials

The Royal Commission recently published a number of online materials which you may find useful in understanding, or helping others to understand, the breadth of the work of the Commission.

Watch the Chair of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Justice Peter McClellan AM, explain the work of the Royal Commission [HERE](#).

Frequently Asked Questions are answered [HERE](#).

A list of support services to help individuals who have been affected by child abuse [HERE](#).

The Commission has produced information in a number of different languages, to access [click HERE](#).

Should you wish to engage with the Royal Commission:

Call: 1800 099 340

Email: registerinterest@childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au

Write: GPO Box 5283, Sydney NSW 2001

Website: www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au

Stakeholder enquiries:

stakeholders@childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au

The Royal Commission operates between 8 am and 8 pm across all Australian time zones.

ASCA In-house Workshops

ASCA workshops are now available in-house on request for organisations seeking trauma-informed training and/or professional development for working with adult survivors of childhood trauma.

Workshops cover topics such as:

- Principles of trauma
- Complex trauma vs. single incident trauma
- Practice guidelines for working with adult Survivors of complex trauma
- Unresolved trauma (prevalence and impacts)
- Coping strategies – adaptive/risk factors
- Attachment, supportive relationships and self-care
- Neuroplasticity and recovery

ASCA in-house workshops provide many benefits as your team can request the topics which interest you and use the time to focus on issues pertinent to your clients and practice. Workshops of one day, two days and half day duration are available.

More information:

For more information on ASCA's in-house workshops, to discuss your needs and obtain a quote please email events@asca.org.au or call **02 8920 3611**

All ASCA workshops are grounded in the latest research presented in ASCA's *Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Complex Trauma and Trauma Informed Care and Service Delivery* www.asca.org.au/guidelines To find out more about our workshops, check the schedule and to register go to www.asca.org.au/workshops or call **02 8920 3611**. For all enquiries email events@asca.org.au

Professional Development for Health Practitioners

Working with Adult Survivors of Complex Trauma

ASCA's one day workshop for health practitioners is grounded in a substantive research base, which identifies and outlines effective responses to complex trauma.

Suitable Audience:

Psychologists, clinical psychologists, counsellors, psychotherapists, mental health nurses, social workers, general practitioners, psychiatrists working clinically with adults survivors of complex trauma.

This workshop covers:

- Understanding complex trauma – prevalence and impacts
- Neurobiology of attachment
- Supportive relationships
- Self-development and self-care
- Coping strategies – adaptive/ risk factors
- Reflective practice and vicarious traumatisation
- Practice guidelines for working with adult survivors of complex trauma

Date	Location
21 February 2014	Adelaide
28 February 2014	Darwin
14 March 2014	Hobart
21 March 2014	Perth
28 March 2014	Newcastle
4 April 2014	Ballarat
11 April 2014	Gold Coast
16 May 2014	Bunbury

Full-day workshop: 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Cost: \$250 / Concession \$190

Professional development endorsement:

ACMHN- 7 CPE Points

AASW – 7 CPD hours

APS, PACFA and CAPA members can accrue CPD hours by participating in activities that they determine to be relevant to their individual professional skills, learning plans and goals. CPD activities do not need to be endorsed by these bodies as long as the training meets policy requirements.

Workshops for Survivors

ASCA's survivor workshops provide survivors and those supporting them with a safe space in which to learn about the impacts of childhood trauma, in all its forms, and possibilities for the process of recovery. They discuss ways in which trauma in childhood can impact current or past behaviours, feelings and/or physical and psychological health. They also build on existing strengths to foster a sense of hope and optimism about the recovery process and provide tools for positive change.

These workshops are open to all adult survivors. It is possible for survivors to bring a support person along to this workshop.

Cost: \$25.00

ASCA's philosophy is for our workshops to be accessible to all survivors. If you are experiencing financial difficulties please do contact us on **02 8920 3611** or email events@asca.org.au

Date	Location
22 February 2014	Adelaide
1 March 2014	Darwin
15 March 2014	Hobart
22 March 2014	Perth
5 April 2014	Ballarat
17 May 2014	Bunbury

Trauma Informed Training for Workers

Supporting people affected by or engaging with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

This whole-day training provides information and tools to assist workers in their daily interactions with clients who experience the effects of unresolved trauma. Trauma comes in diverse forms, including childhood trauma of all types. Research shows that many people who access a wide variety of services are impacted by it. The training explains why 'trauma informed' practice is necessary, what it involves, and how its core principles of safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment can be integrated into existing ways of operating. It addresses how to reduce the possibility of re-traumatisation within services, and the benefits of a trauma informed approach for both clients and workers. It also equips participants with basic knowledge and skills which can be applied and adapted to their role/s within their particular service settings.

Suitable Audience:

Community and mental health workers across mental health and human services sectors. Includes but not limited to supported accommodation/homelessness, AOD, domestic violence, sexual assault, child protection, community and family services, juvenile justice, corrective services.

Full-day workshop:

9.00am – 5:00pm

Cost: \$25.00

(This particular training has been funded by Department of Social Services (under Royal Commission Community-based Support Services initiative) and is available for a short period only for a nominal fee)

Date	Location
20 February 2014	Adelaide
21 February 2014	Wollongong
27 February 2014	Darwin
13 March 2014	Hobart
20 March 2014	Perth
27 March 2014	Newcastle

Professional development endorsement:

ACMHN – 7 CPE Points

AASW – 7 CPD hours

APS, PACFA and CAPA members can accrue CPD hours by participating in activities that they determine to be relevant to their individual professional skills, learning plans and goals. CPD activities do not need to be endorsed by these bodies as long as the training meets policy requirements.

Workshops for Carers

This workshop is designed for partners and supporters (carers) of adults who have experienced childhood trauma and/or abuse. It introduces the concept of a 'trauma-informed' approach to interpersonal relationships, and builds on the core principles of a trauma informed approach to assist individuals who are partners, supporters and/or carers in their interactions with adult survivors of childhood trauma/abuse.

The workshop is divided into three parts:

- What is a 'trauma-informed' approach? What it involves and how it is Helpful.
- Is trauma and what are its effects? (Key points of which to be aware)
- Core principles of a trauma-informed approach to interpersonal relating, and
- These can be implemented in offering support to adult survivors of childhood trauma/abuse.

Date	Location
29 March 2014	Newcastle
12 April 2014	Gold Coast

Cost: \$25.00

(Due to government funding, ASCA is able to provide these workshops for a nominal fee)