



Friday 15th December 2017

DEMAND ON CENTRES AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT (CASAS) SERVICES

Today the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Assault will present its final report to the Governor-General prior to it being tabled in Parliament.

CASA Forum, which is the Peak Body of the Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault would like to acknowledge the significant work that the Royal Commission has undertaken during the past 5 years in hearing victims' stories and raising the community's awareness of child sexual assault.

During the past 5 years, as a result of the work of the Royal Commission, there has been an increase in community understanding of sexual assault and the demand on Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault services has increased significantly. More and more people have felt able to come forward and ask for assistance in dealing with the effects of past assault. Demand has increased almost 20 percent across the sector with the after-hours telephone service taking an additional 3 000 calls in the past 12 months.

Some of the people contacting CASAs have been victims of child sexual assault in institutional settings but many others have been abused as children by members of their family or have experienced recent sexual assault as adults.

The great work by the Royal Commission has encourage people to come forward about being sexually assaulted either in their childhood or recently. This has led to an increase in demand for services leading to waiting times blowing out.

The Victorian Government needs to commit additional funds to enable these waiting list to be managed and victim/survivors to be seen in a timely fashion. This increase in demand for service started with the work of the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Organisations which commenced in 2012. It is likely to increase again when the Royal Commission tables its report with the publicity which will surround that.

Carolyn Worth
Spokesperson CASA Forum
0414 538 275