

THE PROJECTS

SECTION

F

Changing the Rules – Responsibility, Policy & Law

This section includes initiatives to change law and policy and, through doing this, to change the way in which family violence is viewed and responded to by the state. These projects reflect what is possible when organisations and individuals combine their resources and energy around a single issue or cause. These projects are often driven by unpaid work. They address deeply entrenched attitudes around law or policy, have achieved remarkable things, becoming instrumental in law reform; setting the framework for positive and meaningful review in police responses to family violence; raising national and international awareness around the inequality of women before the law; and taking issues such as inadequate state action to protect women's human rights to the international arena.

Most of these projects or campaigns are rights-based, placing the rights of women and children suffering from domestic violence in a human rights context. This context includes the international human rights conventions to which Australia is a party, and the concept of due diligence which places the state in a position of responsibility for the behaviour of individual citizens. All the projects outlined here use one or more of the following key elements for changing the rules:

- *research* – proving a case and providing a mandate for action
- *understanding* – how the creation of policy, legislation and legal reform works
- *strategy* – figuring out how to effect change
- *the international context* – using international laws and conventions and the instruments of those to create a context for the campaign and, sometimes, to demand international intervention
- *the political system* – lobbying and political advocacy
- *public awareness and opinion* – using the media and other awareness raising techniques

The Domestic Murders Project (Victoria, 1989-94)

case study

KEY INFO

The Women's Coalition Against Family Violence formed in 1987 as a community-based women's network to address family violence through community education and awareness-raising. The Coalition's members included women working in community legal centres, community health services, domestic violence and sexual assault services. During the first few years of the Coalition's work, it was contacted by a number of family members of women and children who had been murdered.

In 1989, the Coalition held an event to commemorate the deaths of women and children who had been murdered by their partners, ex-partners and fathers. The Coalition found a universal theme in the speeches of family members:

*Family members emphasised the long history of violence preceding the murders of women and children. They said that almost without exception the response of the police was inadequate and inappropriate in the light of the history of domestic violence which led up to the murders, and they expressed a range of criticisms of the legal profession and the courts in their dealings with witnesses, the dead women and children and the men who had killed them.*¹⁸⁶

AIMS

Coming out of the commemoration event, the Coalition:

*... in conjunction with family members and friends of the murdered women and children, decided to undertake research aimed at documenting and publicising the reality and extent of the domestic violence that precedes murder.*¹⁸⁷

PROJECT DETAILS

The research project, which ran over two years, prioritised the stories of the murdered women and children, as told by their friends and families. It also analysed a range of documents to examine the 'context of domestic murders and the response of the community, police, legal system and media to these murders'.¹⁸⁸ Information was gathered from Victorian Coroner's Court files; Department of Public Prosecutions' files; police statements; homicide squad murder registration books; medical evidence; witness statements and media reports.

The project found that the legal system and the wider community are complicit in domestic murders. The Coalition reported:

*As we waded through mountains of papers and documents, the uniform absence of any attempt to provide an account of the victim's life and the context and history of violence which preceded the murder was striking. Throughout the entire process, from initial police investigations through to court trials and media reporting, we witnessed the systematic silencing and marginalising of the experience of the dead woman and children, and the relentless focus on attempting to justify or explain away the killer's actions.*¹⁸⁹

In 1994, the Coalition presented the findings of the Domestic Murders Project in a book, *Blood on Whose Hands? The Killing of Women and Children in Domestic Homicides*. *Blood on Whose Hands?* brings together the stories of a number of murdered women and children as told by their families and friends. These stories are combined with an analysis of legal responses both prior to and after the murders and media responses to the murders. The book highlights the extent of institutional and community inaction towards, and complicity in, domestic violence.

SOME KEY LESSONS

★ An action research model is appropriate in new initiatives

The project used an action research model, with the research project coming out of the initial work with family members, and the book developing out of that. At every stage, the voices and stories of the families of the women and children who were killed were prioritised. As a result, unique information from family members of those murdered was gathered for the project.

★ Working in conjunction with family members was essential

The Campaign was guided by surviving family members – their stories, their perspectives and their experiences. The families were included in the campaign's steering committee, and approved all the information in the book.

★ Creating strategic 'noise' around a silent issue brings powerful responses

Maria Dimopoulos, who worked on the campaign, said: *'The campaign captured the hearts and minds of people across the sector, not only the workers, but politicians and those working in legal areas as well.'*¹⁹⁰ After the first commemoration, groups around Victoria were inspired to hold local commemorations for women who had been killed. The Domestic Murders Banner, created by women in the community for the first commemoration, travelled to many local commemorations.

★ Media is an essential component in bringing about change

The campaign generated a lot of national and some international media, including television coverage. Kath McCarthy, a founding member of the Coalition, says now of the project:

*Domestic homicides as they related to domestic violence had never received so much publicity before. The project was extremely effective in heightening the seriousness of domestic violence and making key policy makers and the wider community aware of what lies behind the headlines.*¹⁹¹

★ Advocacy must include challenges to unjust legal responses

The campaign highlighted in detail the inadequacy of the legal responses to the murdered women and children, both before death and afterwards. This work has played a significant role in the Victorian Law Reform Commission's current examination of the partial defence of 'provocation' to the charge of murder homicide, which has often been successfully used by men who have killed their partner, to allege that the killing was committed in anger 'in response to certain kinds of provocative conduct'.¹⁹² Leaving a relationship, 'nagging', having 'an affair', or criticising a man's sexual performance have all been seen as constituting provocation.

★ The project was time consuming and traumatic

Once the research project successfully gained funds from the Victorian Women's Trust, the project struggled to adequately support its paid workers. Coalition member Kath McCarthy reports:

*We had not anticipated the level of vicarious trauma to which the project exposed the project workers and (unpaid) collective members who were also co-authors and researchers. The project became much bigger than we'd ever envisaged, and the funding didn't reflect the reality. It was largely a voluntary effort and the timeline blew out.*¹⁹³

RESOURCES

The Domestic Murders Project Banner is housed at the Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre **tel:** 03 9486 9866 **e:** dvinc@dvinc.org.au

Blood on Whose Hands? The Killing of Women and Children in Domestic Homicides is distributed by Federation Press and is available from the DVIRC library and some university and public libraries around Australia.

Release Heather Osland Campaign: Women Who Kill in Self-Defence (Victoria, ongoing)

case study

KEY INFO

The Release Heather Osland Campaign is a voluntary campaign that has worked since the end of 1996 for the release of Heather Osland, who was convicted in 1996 of murder for the killing of her violent husband. Run by the Release Heather Osland Group, the campaign has succeeded in raising national awareness of the inadequacy of state and community responses to family violence. The campaign has supported a number of legal challenges to Heather's conviction, and continues to support Heather in her last years in jail.

BACKGROUND

Heather Osland and her adult son David went to trial in 1996 for killing Heather's husband, Frank Osland. At the time Frank was killed, Heather had suffered thirteen years of severe and escalating abuse from her husband. David is one of Heather's four children, all of whom had suffered severe abuse at the hands of Frank. Heather and David both pleaded self-defence, stating that they were convinced that they were in danger for their lives. While David struck the fatal blow which killed Frank, he was acquitted on the grounds of self defence. Heather was found guilty of murder and sentenced to 14 years imprisonment.

Reflecting on their lives before Frank's death Heather says:

There is little understanding in the community of the level of control exerted by violent men such as Frank. I should mention I left him eight times, only to return because of the threats made to my family. It's surprising how many times it has been said to me personally 'Why didn't you leave?' I answer 'I did, eight times!'.¹⁹⁴

AIM

The campaign was established in 1997, primarily to seek Heather's release from prison and to raise awareness that her actions were self-defence. Through a focus on the particulars of her case, attention was drawn to the inherent gender bias in defences to homicide in Australian law, and the inadequacy of state and community responses to family violence. More broadly, the campaign has advocated for the defence to homicide of self-defence, to be reviewed and reformed to reflect the experiences and reality of women who are acting to save their own lives. The campaign has sought to highlight and challenge state and community responses to family violence, and women's inequality before the law.

ACTIVITIES

The Release Heather Osland Campaign was very carefully structured to maximise the effectiveness and accountability of a voluntarily run campaign on a very controversial issue. The campaign provided participants with detailed information and resources for action and established clear guidelines to facilitate coordination and interaction. Materials clearly outlined the relationship that the group has with Heather and the group's accountability to her:

The primary aim of the group is to work towards Heather's release. Heather is part of the group therefore the group works with Heather not for her. The group always works in full consultation with Heather ... The group does not provide Heather with legal advice.¹⁹⁵

Using this approach, the Release Heather Osland Group managed a remarkably difficult public awareness campaign with a consistent and proactive response. The group prepared a media strategy, undertook journalist briefing, and briefed and prepared all nominated spokespeople (who were the only campaign members empowered to speak to the press).

The campaign was involved in a number of formal challenges to Heather's conviction of murder: appealing to the Victorian Supreme Court in 1997; bringing the case before the High Court in 1998; and preparing a Petition of Mercy which was submitted to the Victorian Government in 1999.

The campaign raised funds from the community and philanthropic trusts; created a website (www.vicnet.net.au/~rhog/group.htm); and prepared a comprehensive Supporter's Kit. The kit is informative, clear and accessible. It contains background information; a letter from Heather; a letter writing guide and sample letter; a petition; a lobbying guide; and a media responses guide. The kit can be downloaded from the website. Supporters undertook intensive lobbying on both a state and federal level at key times in the campaign, working to build political will and awareness around Heather's situation and the issue.

The Release Heather Osland Campaign has been a landmark campaign in Australia. After almost ten years, the group is still active, and their efforts have effectively put on the agenda the failure of the state and the legal system to protect women from long-term abuse. Heather Osland contributed to this kit from prison:

*There is so much that I could add/for speak about lessons learnt or major challenges ... but I cannot change the past. I thank you for the hard work that you are doing working on this Resource Kit. If it changes or saves one life then what I've endured has made a difference and it's been worthwhile.*¹⁹⁶

SOME KEY LESSONS

★ To change women's experience of abuse, legal responses must be challenged

The campaign's appeals and Petition of Mercy were unsuccessful. Heather is still incarcerated and expects to be released from prison in 2005. The campaign now focuses on supporting Heather during her incarceration and on law reform. However, the campaign *has* been effective, playing a significant role in the current review by the Victorian Law Reform Commission of Defences to Homicide.¹⁹⁷

★ Strategic use of the media is crucial in advocacy

Through the careful structuring of their media responses, and a proactive approach to briefing spokespeople and journalists, the campaign was able to get its message out, despite the controversial nature of the subject. It has had a significant impact on public awareness of family violence and women's access to justice. Balancing direct *negotiation* for change with a well publicised *demand* for change is something that needs to be addressed throughout the life of a campaign such as this one. The campaign faced a very difficult task in trying to balance the strategic use of media, to put public pressure on the state, with direct lobbying of politicians outside the public arena As Heather puts it:

*While the petition of mercy was being considered we did not go to the media. We were given the strong impression that the outcome was more likely to be positive if we stayed away from the media and dealt directly with the government. At the time, it seemed the most strategic path to take. In hindsight, every time the government asked for that little bit extra information, the media should have been informed. We shouldn't have been silent during that process; we should have made it very public.*¹⁹⁸

RESOURCES

More **information** and **Supporter's Kit** w: www.vicnet.net.au/~rhog/group.htm

Through Women's Eyes: Police and Family Violence

(Loddon Campaspe Region, Victoria, 2003)

case study

KEY INFO

Through Women's Eyes was a research and advocacy project undertaken in 2003 by Bendigo's Emergency Accommodation and Support Enterprise (EASE), which is part of the Loddon Campaspe Family Violence Prevention Network. The project examined women's experiences of police responses to family violence in the Bendigo region, towards working in partnership with the Victorian police to improve police responses.

BACKGROUND

Through Women's Eyes came about from EASE's casework with abused women and children and their experiences of the criminal justice response to family violence. Since EASE's establishment in 1994, the stories of women and children indicated ongoing concerns with police responses. Previous attempts to work with police on these issues had been unsuccessful, partly due to a lack of clear evidence. In 2002 EASE decided to research and document women's experiences, with the hope that this would give EASE, and police, a clear mandate for change.

AIMS

The aims of the project were twofold: to research and document the women's experience of the police response to family violence; and to work in partnership with Victoria Police to improve the situation.

PROJECT DETAILS

The project was supported by the Reichstein Foundation. A project Steering Committee was established, drawn from a diversity of government and non-government agencies working on issues relating to family violence. The project built on the internal state-wide review of Victoria Police responses to violence, *Victoria Police Violence Against Women Strategy: A Way Forward*, which was released in 2002. This review's clear acknowledgement of the need to improve police performance with regard to violence against women set the tone, and a further mandate, for the Bendigo research.

Twenty women were interviewed for the research project. All were clients of EASE and had had contact with police in the previous twelve months due to family violence. The women were aged between 16 and 52 years, lived in the Bendigo area, and 19 of them had had contact with police stationed at Bendigo. This made the research particularly pertinent to the Bendigo police response. Research findings were drawn together in a publication called *Through Women's Eyes: Police and Family Violence* and used as a basis for recommendations to improve police responses. Recommendations included: providing women with clear written information about services and Intervention Orders; interviewing women safely and privately; monitoring adherence to guidelines; police education on women's experiences of family violence; greater police accountability; and mandatory police application for Intervention Orders on behalf on any person 'who has been, or is likely to be, the victim of domestic violence'.¹⁹⁹

The study was launched at the Family Violence and Integrated Responses Conference, organised in Bendigo during the Week Without Violence 2003. This conference was attended by a large number of police from around the state. In both the writing and presentation of the study, EASE took a specific focus on the positive results of quality policing, and how this had helped women and changed their lives for the better. At the launch, researcher Cheryl Munzel also spoke of the challenges faced by those working in this area. With a clear strategic focus on building partnerships

with police for change, EASE worked to engage police in the possibilities discussed in the report. The study and its presentation were well received by police.

The project has led to a number of initiatives and in 2004 The Loddon Campaspe Family Violence Prevention Networker will be working with Bendigo police to achieve them. These initiatives include participating in a regional police-led working group to make recommendations to Victoria Police on the improvement of police responses at both a state and regional level; developing a local court support program; and facilitating the implementation of the Family Abuse Integrated Response (FAIR) model in the Loddon Campaspe region. FAIR aims to improve the crisis response by developing protocols between police and family services for referral and support.

SOME KEY LESSONS

★ Research has provided a mandate for change

The project gave credibility to EASE in the eyes of police and others involved in the criminal justice response to family violence. It has assisted those working towards change within Victoria Police by placing a spotlight on police practice around family violence. Senior officers at the local stations realised the focus was on their management of policing family violence and undertook to improve the situation.

★ A diverse steering committee has been a vehicle for change

The steering committee included representatives from all key agencies involved with the criminal justice response to family violence. Its regular meetings brought about change by simply bringing people involved with the criminal justice system together to discuss the policing of family violence. This was unprecedented. There was also a woman on the committee who had experienced the police response first hand, and her contributions about her own experience of the system were pertinent and illuminating. The committee was thus both educative and an opportunity to build links and joint approaches.

★ Advocacy work positions organisations as agents for social change

Through this research and advocacy project, EASE and the Loddon Campaspe Family Violence Prevention Network have developed more clarity about their role as agents for social change. The Network will become more involved in lobbying for the improvement of police responses through its participation in Domestic Violence Victoria, the peak body of women's domestic violence services in Victoria. The Network will also focus on obtaining funding for a Community Legal Centre in the Loddon Campaspe sub-region.

★ Partnerships for change require a focus on the positive

The major challenge faced by the project was to build positive links with police towards a partnership for change. Researcher Cheryl Munzel reports:

Stories from the women about police practice tended to be negative more than positive, and it was a challenge to present the findings in a way that would engage police and not alienate them further. I was able to build on the state-wide Victoria Police review and, in the launch and presentation, I emphasised the positive examples where police had really helped women. It was also important to acknowledge the difficulties police face in this work. In the launch I expressed an understanding of some of those by talking about my experiences as a child protection worker, such as working with clients who often hate or fear you because of your role; having very limited resources with high work loads; and the frustration when women go back to violent situations. This was very important, and police thanked me after the presentation for acknowledging some of their difficulties and for being balanced in the research.²⁰⁰

RESOURCES

Through Women's Eyes is available from EASE tel: 03 5443 4945
e: easebend@netcon.net.au

Abuse Free Contact Campaign (Australia, ongoing)*case study***BACKGROUND**

The Abuse Free Contact Campaign (AFCC) was first established in Queensland by a group of welfare and legal practitioners, to critique the violence risks to women and children under the current implementation of the Family Law Act. In 2000, the campaign produced a comprehensive research report of child contact and family violence: *An Unacceptable Risk: A Report on Child Contact Arrangements where there is Violence in the Family*.²⁰¹ The Report was reprinted in 2002.

AIMS

The campaign is now nationally and internationally active as a national coalition of organisations who have formed to advocate on behalf of women and children going through the Family Court system with concerns about domestic violence and child abuse.

CAMPAIGN DETAILS

The group has a major focus on the enactment of the Family Law Act, and campaigns to ensure that priority is given to children's right to live free from violence. AFCC critiques the lack of primary consideration of children's safety when balancing the 'need to ensure safety from family violence', with the 'right to know and be cared for by both their parents' and the 'right to contact on a regular basis'.²⁰²

More recently, the AFCC has become active around the federal government's proposal of a 'rebuttable presumption of joint custody', whereby joint custody would automatically be assumed when families break up. Alongside family violence services and women's organisations around Australia, the AFCC has resoundingly rejected this proposal as placing women and children who are experiencing family violence at further risk. The proposal has recently been rejected on the same grounds by the Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry, which was established by the federal government to explore the issue.²⁰³ The AFCC is advocating for the introduction of a rebuttable presumption of no contact where there are allegations of violence established on the balance of probabilities (similar to family violence legislation in New Zealand). Under this proposal, persons found on the basis of civil proof to have used violence would have to show why children were safe before contact was allowed.²⁰⁴

RESOURCES

Contact AFCC **e:** ncsmc@ncsmc.org.au **w:** www.ncsmc.org.au/abusefree/

examples

Local Partnerships for Family Violence Prevention

Community and worker activism around family violence has resulted in a number of successful local partnerships, working across local government and local service providers to create a more comprehensive, and better coordinated, response to family violence. Notable amongst these have been the following.

Darebin Family Violence Working Group

(Northern Metropolitan Melbourne, ongoing)

The Darebin Family Violence Working Group was set up in response to the identification of family violence in the Darebin Community Safety Plan and concerns raised by family support workers and the Darebin Domestic Violence Network. The Darebin Family Violence Working Group was established with representatives from Darebin Council; the police; the magistrate's court; Centrelink; Department of Human Services Protective Services; and the community. Community representatives include tertiary institutions; schools; the local Ethnic Communities Council; Indigenous services; health, housing, community and family violence services; the Darebin Domestic Violence Network; and the Northern Metropolitan Family Violence Prevention Network. The Working Group aims to create a partnership approach to addressing family violence issues in Darebin. The group works to bring together local knowledge; identify and monitor family violence; develop joint protocols and guidelines to address family violence; contribute to Darebin's family violence policy; and facilitate liaison and coordination between government and non-government agencies, networks and initiatives.

A one day forum was held in 2002 for people who work with those affected by family violence, to workshop local ways to address family violence. The forum was well attended, with over a third of attendees being police, and was very successful. Vig Geddes, Coordinator of the Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre, chaired the forum:

We allocated participants to different tables so that there was a mix of people at the tables. Each table was given family violence scenarios to discuss, and as they did this they got to hear a lot about other people's roles in working with family violence. Then they had to come up with a number of agreements about what could be done to improve our responses to family violence.

I think people really got a buzz out of coming up with ideas that the whole table could agree on, because often we are focused on the things that we disagree on. At the end of the forum participants were asked to write one comment and stick it on the wall as they left. I was impressed by how many people commented that they had a better understanding of other people's work, and in particular that of the police.²⁰⁵

Suggestions from the forum are currently being implemented by the Working Group, including a bi-monthly meeting between Darebin police officers and support workers to discuss practice issues.²⁰⁶

RESOURCES

For more information contact Monika Merkes, Chair of the Darebin Family Violence Working Group **e:** MMERKES@darebin.vic.gov.au or visit City of Darebin website **w:** www.darebin.vic.gov.au

Darebin Family Violence Working Group: Partnership for a Safer Darebin, Background Paper 2004 can be downloaded in pdf format:

w: www.darebin.vic.gov.au/Files/darebin_family_violence_working_group_background_paper.pdf

Family Violence Prevention Programs in Shepparton & Brimbank (Victoria, 2004)

In 2004, the Victorian Community Council Against Violence is collaborating with government and non-government agencies to undertake programs addressing family violence in Brimbank and Shepparton. The projects are taking a locally-based approach to family violence prevention. They focus on early intervention delivered through a range of local settings (both family violence and generalist services) and in particular, building the family violence prevention capacity of a range of family violence and generalist service providers. Project officers, based in local auspice agencies in Shepparton and Brimbank, are consulting with local agencies and service providers towards the development of locally-based approaches to family violence prevention.²⁰⁷

RESOURCES

For more information about the VCCAV Family Violence Prevention Program in Shepparton and Brimbank contact VCCAV:

e: vccav.info@justice.vic.gov.au **w:** www.vccav.gov.au

Greater Dandenong Council Family Violence Prevention Program (Southern Metropolitan Melbourne, ongoing)

Since the adoption of its Family Violence and Abuse Policy in 2002, Greater Dandenong Council has been involved in initiatives to respond to family violence, through advocacy, publicity and information dissemination - largely in collaboration with local networks and agencies.

Press releases and a website have been prepared to inform the community about the nature and effects of family violence; brochures have been distributed to community agencies; a website created; and books placed in local libraries. Local Family Violence Prevention Networks have been assisted in the production of a crisis services resource card in nine community languages. Plans are underway for the development of community service announcements for radio in several community languages. Also planned is the production of a multilingual poster; and further refinement of awareness-raising brochures.

Greater Dandenong Council hopes to extend these efforts by sharing resources and the lessons of practical experience with other councils, and fostering collaboration between councils in areas such as advocacy and publicity.²⁰⁸

RESOURCES

For more information contact the Social Planning Unit, City of Greater Dandenong:

tel: 03 9239 5300

example

Women's Human Rights Tribunal & Report Card

(Australia, 1999, 2004)

The Women's Human Rights Tribunal was held in 1999 by the Women's Rights Action Network of Australia (WRANA). It was the first Australian tribunal on women's human rights, highlighting women's experience of human rights violations and abuses. The tribunal was held in the Melbourne Town Hall and 14 women testified to their experiences. The testimonies of these women were used to prepare a comprehensive contribution by WRANA to the Beijing + 5, the Beijing Platform for Action five year review. The tribunal was also filmed and a video was made featuring excerpts of the women's testimonies.

WRANA continues to undertake women's human rights advocacy. In 2004, WRANA is running the Women's Report Card Project. The Report Card prepares a national community report on the status of women in Australia, and a shadow report to the United Nations Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee to inform their consideration of the Australian government's report on the implementation of CEDAW in Australia.

RESOURCES

Contact **WRANA** **w:** home.vicnet.net.au/~wrana

More **Report Card** information **w:** www.ywca.org.au/womens_report_card_project.htm

example

Pacific Women's Network to End Violence Against Women &The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (International, ongoing)

The Pacific Women's Network to End Violence Against Women has become a key vehicle for women's voices in the Pacific, with 26 member organisations across nine Pacific Island countries. The Network is involved in region-wide campaigns. Members share experiences and skills, problems and concerns, and resources and materials. The Network has a critical ability to unite a diversity of organisations in the work to end violence against women.²⁰⁹

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre plays a central role in the Network, as Secretariat, Facilitator of the Network's four-yearly meetings and as a regional role model in work to end violence against women. Against a background of three political coups since 1987, and a history of racial tension, constitutional uncertainty and destabilised legal and human rights, the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre is a multi-racial organisation whose work in advocacy, law reform and direct service is internationally respected.²¹⁰

The Centre was established in 1984. Its work is based on a model of empowering women, and a recognition that women's rights are human rights. The Centre's work includes direct service (including a mobile counselling service); education; research (including Fiji's first national research on domestic violence and sexual assault in 2000); training with workers from the police, judiciary, military, welfare, health and churches sectors; advocacy and law reform.

The Centre is very active in media and public awareness-raising, which dovetails with their lobbying and advocacy work. The Centre also has a regional program of training, mentoring, networking and advocacy for policy change with both government and non-government agencies throughout the Pacific region.²¹¹

RESOURCES

For information on the **Fiji Women's Crisis Centre** and the **Pacific Network Against Violence Against Women** w: www.fijiwomen.com

example

Working through the United Nations Special Rapporteur (International, ongoing)

Australian women are able to make complaints to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women if they have suffered gender specific acts of violence and have not been able to remedy these abuses through domestic law. Although these complaints are not legally binding for the Australian government, the complaints are taken up with the government and made public through the Rapporteur's report. This is another way for women to make the issue of violence against women and children more visible, and to place pressure on the Australian government to make good the commitments it has made to ensure women and children's legal rights to live free from violence in the home.

RESOURCES

For more information about how to make a complaint contact:
w: www1.umn.edu/humanrts/svaw/law/un/enforcement/Rapporteur.htm