



Centre Against Sexual Assault

Loddon Campaspe Region
A 00 18619

24 February 2006

Ian Holland,
Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Mental Health
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Mr Holland,

Would you please consider the following information as an addition to the submission I made to the Senate Select Committee on Mental Health on the 23.02.06.

I would like to ensure that the Committee is aware of the following reports and studies and some of their main findings. I have highlighted references that note women's vulnerability to sexual assault within psychiatric institutions.

Graham, Carolyn. (1994) *Certified Truths: Women who have been sexually assaulted-their experience of psychiatric services*. South East Centre Against Sexual Assault, Melbourne.

- p.46 " many women reported not having felt safe while a patient in a psychiatric hospital, due to an absence of policies and procedures that protected them, their experience of being sexually assaulted or of witnessing sexual assault of other patients."

Fraser, M. & Nunan, C. (1998) *Crossing the Chasm: Women and the Public Mental Health System in the Loddon Mallee Region*. Loddon Mallee Area Mental Health Service, Bendigo Health Care Group, Bendigo.

- p.9 Recommendation number two: " that services respond to the needs of women with mental illness with experience of sexual assault in ways which support women and validate their experiences in an environment of respect, privacy and safety."

Keel, M. (2005) *Sexual Assault and Mental Health in Australia, Collaborative responses for complex needs*. ACSSA Newsletter, No.6. April 2005.

- pp. 14-15 "people with diagnosed mental illnesses also have a heightened vulnerability to sexual assault, particularly within mental health and other health care facilities....institutions tend to deal with disclosure by disbelieving, denying, minimising or ignoring patient's accounts."

Yours sincerely,
Carolyn Wallace

MANAGER

Loddon Campaspe Centre Against Sexual Assault

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