

Tuesday 31 August 2010



MEDIA RELEASE

CHILD PROTECTION WEEK

The Wimmera Centre Against Sexual Assault will use National Child Protection Week to promote their "Personal Safety Success Training" program for primary school aged children.

Child Protection Week will run from 5 to 11 September 2010. Throughout Child Protection Week there will be displays at Wimmera Health Care Group, Horsham Plaza, the Horsham Library and the Stawell Primary School whereby children will be encouraged to actively participate by taking home a Helping Hand worksheet.

Wimmera CASA Co-ordinator Jo-Anne Bates said that the aim of Child Protection Week is to raise awareness of child abuse and neglect in our community. "Abuse appears in many forms including physical, sexual and emotional. Research shows that one in three women and one in six men are survivors of childhood sexual assault. The aim of Child Protection Week is to highlight that child abuse happens and to encourage communities to actively take action and responsibility. All children have the right to feel safe and be safe and we want people to speak out about this type of crime" she said.

Ms Bates said that parents are encouraged to participate with their child in working through their Helping Hand worksheet by allowing them to nominate on each finger of the hand an adult they know, trust and feel safe with.

"They can draw people's faces as well as write their names and contact details. They can also nominate people from outside of the family to create a stronger and wider support network. It is important that children understand they need to have more than one person on their Helping Hand and to know that if they approach one person who is not available or does not believe them, they can go to the next person on their Helping Hand. Children must understand that they can keep telling until someone listens and takes action to ensure their safety. Their own personal network is always with them as a reminder of the people they can go to for help when they feel unsafe" she said.

Ms Bates said that sexual assault offenders are generally known to the child and trusted by them. "Offenders are clever manipulators who not only build trust with children, but also with parents and communities. For this reason, it

can be difficult for a child to disclose abuse. It is never their fault and children must not be made to take responsibility for the behaviour of the offender” she said.

Ms Bates said that if your child makes a disclosure of any form of child abuse you should:

- Believe your child and respond calmly
- Assure your child that it is not their fault
- Comfort and reassure them and let them know that you are glad they told you
- Notify police on 000; and or Child Protection on 1800 000 551 so that your child can receive appropriate help

The Wimmera Centre Against Sexual Assault provides a free confidential service to children and adult victims of sexual abuse and their families. The service is based in Horsham, however, an outreach service is available throughout the Wimmera and Southern Mallee region. For further details please telephone 5381 9272.



Staff members Netta Hobbs, Christine Barnett and Jo-Anne Bates promote the Personal Safety Success Program, just one of the important child protection services provided by the Wimmera Centre Against Sexual Assault

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Jo-Anne Bates
Co-ordinator
Wimmera CASA
Ph. 5381 9272

Sue Frankham
Community Liaison Officer
Ph. 5381 9309