



MEDIA STATEMENT

SAME SEX DOMESTIC ABUSE GROUP

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LGBTI VICTIMS CHALLENGE WA'S CURRENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SECTOR

Same Sex Domestic Abuse Group (SSDAG) today released their evaluation report into the capacity of mainstream Western Australian domestic violence (DV) and abuse services to support members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transexual and Intersex (LGBTI) community.

The release of this evaluation report asks important questions of why same sex domestic abuse victims do not receive equal opportunity to access support services.

Despite continuous work by SSDAG since 2004 to train the domestic violence sector, it appears unwilling to provide equal access to support LGBTI victims of domestic abuse. Further, same sex domestic abuse crimes in the media are not reported in a domestic violence context. SSDAG recommends enhancing current services to women by including more diversity in the domestic violence sector.

SSDAG Chairperson Mark Ravenscroft says: "This report is also relevant to those interested in social justice, institutionalised discrimination and the failure of law-reform to deliver actual services. It is an example of the failure of public servants to carry through with gay and lesbian law reform in WA."

Research shows that LGBTI people experience equal levels of domestic abuse in relationships. *Private Lives Survey* (Latrobe University, 2006) - one of the largest community health survey in Australia - proved that incidences of domestic and family abuse within the LGBT community were 32%. WA's 1996 Vickers report into intimate partner abuse and family violence cited research that indicated that prevalence of domestic abuse was at least similar to heterosexual family violence and may well be higher. Internationally, the figures support this unacknowledged problem.

SSDAG remains the sole representative for LGBTI victims of domestic abuse, and face an uncertain future with the denial of the existence of this problem by government departments. The evaluation report can be downloaded from the SSDAG website's Media Release page.

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