



Media Release

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Protecting women's rights: Australia has a long way to go

White Ribbon Day (25 November) is a day led by men who seek to change the attitudes and behaviours that lead to and perpetuate violence against women. Redfern Legal Centre (RLC) sees White Ribbon Day as an important opportunity for the whole community to stand up together and speak out against violence against women.

"If women are not safe in their own homes, if women cannot be free of the fear of physical and sexual abuse by their partners, ex-partners and family members, we have a long way to go to protect women's rights in this country," said Jacqui Swinburne, RLC Acting Chief Executive Officer.

The Australian component of the International Violence Against Women Survey (2004) found that nearly one third of all Australian women have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence by a man over their lifetime. The Personal Safety Survey (ABS 2006) found that nearly one in six women have experienced violence by a current or previous partner in their lifetime. Research shows that women are most at risk of violence in their homes and from men they know, including partners, ex-partners and family members.

"These statistics are shocking but consistent with the data we collect through our Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (Sydney WDVCS)," said Ms Swinburne. RLC's WDVCS sees concerning trends, including a disproportionate number of Aboriginal women (primary victims of domestic violence) being listed as defendants in Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders; women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds on spousal visas being threatened with withdrawal of sponsorship if they report violence against them; and an increase in violence against older women by their adult children. Sydney WDVCS assisted 2046 clients in domestic violence related matters last year, 137 of whom identified as Aboriginal, 522 were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, 236 were over the age of 50 and 92 clients were over 60.

For more information on RLC and Sydney WDVCS, see RLC's Annual Report 2011-2012

<http://www.rlc.org.au/about-us/annual-reports.html>