

# Professional Standards Newsletter

ISSUE 02 - July 2012



## Hate versus Compassion

I once told my mother I “hated” my pesky sister. Her reaction was so memorable that I can still clearly hear her telling me that ‘hate ‘is a strong, powerful, horrible word and that no child of hers, indeed, no child of God should use it when speaking about anyone else - “Never ever, and don’t you forget it.”

Some 60 years after that short and severe lecture, I haven’t forgotten. What’s more I’m pretty sure that while I may have used that word when talking about lumpy mashed pumpkin and never ending boring speeches, I’m pretty sure when it comes to people, I’ve always found plenty of other less severe and indeed more accurate words to describe my feelings.

Even if you are 100% confident that God does not want marriage to include same gender relationships, even if there’s no doubt in your mind such a thing will devalue marriage and harm our society, we need to treat those who think differently with respect and dignity.

We proclaim that God is “love”. Our Lord died for all people—each and every person. How then can we think for a moment that he hates anyone? How can those who know they’ve been claimed by his

this issue

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### Workshops - 2012

#### COMPLETED

Nundah  
Mt Gravatt  
Dalby  
Bundaberg  
Eight Mile Plains  
Crows Nest  
Milton

#### PLANNED

Toowoomba  
Caloundra  
Coolum  
Rosewood  
Wujal Wujal  
Beenleigh  
Goombungee-Maclagan  
Redcliffe

undeserved love ever proclaim that it doesn't also envelop those who disagree with what we firmly believe.

Get involved in the same-sex marriage debate, talk to your Pastor, listen to the discussions on TV and radio, read your bible, talk to a gay Christian (or if you don't know any, use Google to find out what they say), pray, but don't think for a moment that our duty as God's people allows us to hate.



At any time of controversy express your point of view powerfully, share your faith and firm beliefs, but at all times let your respect for those God has created show through. It's too easy for us humans to get carried away with the desire to win arguments instead of sharing God's love. When we're convinced we're right it's so easy to forget humility.

*"Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others." (Philippians 2:1-4)*

Pastor Keith

## Training Survey

At the end of 2011 an online survey was sent to all Queensland Pastors who are serving in congregations in an endeavour to learn more about how our training is being received and implemented in congregations. I would like to thank the 37 Pastors who responded.

Their responses indicated that 50% of congregations use high risk methods of appointing volunteers who work with children and less than one third are complying with state legislation. The good news is that 95% of the Pastors who responded indicated that they believe it's important to report abuse of children.

May I encourage you to check out the full results by following the menu item "[Training Survey Results](#)" in the Professional Standards menu on the LCAQD webpage.

# A Message from Liz.

## Consequences

Nearly 30 years ago as we laughed and talked around our dining table, my friend's 10 week old daughter Charlotte died whilst my 5 month old son slept soundly in the same room.

In those days the unexpected death of a baby was called Cot Death. These days we know it as SIDS, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

The consequences for both our families have been life long. For my friends, the loss of a child; for their daughter, no sister to grow up with; for my children, the knowledge that life is not a certainty; and for me a lifetime of 'what if.'

During these past 30 years we've worn Red Noses, conducted cake stalls and raised money to find out what causes this most terrible of tragedies. Through this research the lives of countless babies have been saved, parents have the joy of watching their babies flourish into childhood, brothers and sisters have sisters and brothers to grow up with and thousands of people have been spared the grief of loss.

Similarly 30 years ago little was understood about the life long consequences for children who were sexually abused. Physical abuse can be seen in the bruises and broken bones but child sexual abuse whilst unseen, caused misery and grief not just for the child but for their families. Sometimes children were blamed for embarrassing their families by disclosing abuse. Often children were not listened to or were accused of 'making up stories.' Police and government authorities found it difficult to prosecute offenders.

During these past 30 years research has been undertaken into the life long consequences for people who were sexually abused as children. The incidence of depression, drug and alcohol addiction, problem gambling, self harm and suicide is profoundly increased. Researchers have spoken to convicted child abusers to understand the risk factors for children. One of the quite



If you missed Four Corners on July 2 check it out on iView found on the ABC website—  
[www.abc.net.au/iview/](http://www.abc.net.au/iview/)

distressing findings is that the three most popular activities for would be child abusers are, water parks, youth camps and churches.

The consequences for the Church are that we must be ever vigilant to ensure that our children are not at risk. This means, Blue Cards for all who engage with children, well organised activities with trained leaders, sensible procedures to ensure children are not at risk whilst on Church premises and restrictions on access for those who have been convicted of child sexual offences.

Our children are too precious and the life long consequences of abuse too great for us to take risks.

Liz Crawford

**Professional Standards Director**

# Continuing to Care for the Known Sexual Offender

We have a long way to go in our understanding of the perpetrators of sexual abuse. Research into this area is really in its infancy. It's understandable then that when we discover a Sex Offender in our midst our first response is to wish that they would go elsewhere.

There are at least three reasons why congregations need to be encouraged not to allow this to be their response.

- They remain a child of God .
- The result of an abuser being rejected and isolated by their community may increase the risk of that person re-offending.
- Harsh rejection by the community can lead to caring families of abusers and even victims to protect perpetrators by not reporting abuse. (recent research in America – Hanson, Resnick, Saunders, Kilpatrick, & Best, 1999 - indicates that only 12% of child sexual abuse is reported to authorities)

Our response needs to be appropriate to each situation. A risk assessment may result in an appropriate Limited Contact Covenant, but congregations need to take seriously their responsibility to continue ministering to the perpetrator. “When communities hold offenders accountable in compassionate and thoughtful ways that prevent re-offence, they increase the likelihood that individuals will get the help they need before they perpetrate abuse again.” ([A reasoned Approach](#) page 37 - )

When the perpetrator is a young person\* our continuing care is critical. While some youth will continue to sexually abuse others into adulthood, treatment programs have shown to effectively reduce sexual re-offense. Children and adolescents are more likely than adults to stop their abusive behaviour and live safely in the community (Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Chaffin, 2009).

## **Known sex offenders ‘tip of the iceberg’**

Check out this article from the Brisbane Times from July 12, 2011.

“More than 3200 child sex offenders are living in Queensland, according to latest records from a national register.

Child protection advocates say the number is the “tip of the iceberg” and are urging parents to ensure their children are aware of their personal safety and feel free to talk about any intrusions.

While the media focus is often on the repeat child sex offenders described as the “worst of the worst”, parents have been told the main risk comes from trusted family members and friends.....” [MORE](#)

\*the latest research indicates that 30% to 50% of those who sexually abuse a child are children or adolescents themselves - Barbaree & Marshall, 2006; Knight & Prentny, 1993; Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Chaffin, 2009)

# Recent Research

## Elder Abuse WA

A recent examination of the extent of Elder Abuse in Western Australia has estimated that in 2011 there were approximately 12,500 victims of some form of elder abuse in WA. They also anticipate that the total number of victims over the age of 65 will increase by around 90% over the next twenty years.

The issue of financial abuse was the most significant type of elder abuse identified in both the qualitative and the quantitative studies.

### **EXAMINATION OF THE EXTENT OF ELDER ABUSE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

#### Convictions for Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse allegations are notoriously difficult to prosecute (Fitzgerald, 2006; Taylor, 2007). In fact, data from New South Wales indicated that 74% of alleged offenders in sex offence cases against an adult that proceed to trial in the Higher Courts, are acquitted of all charges (Fitzgerald, 2006). For sex offences alleged against a child, the acquittal rate is slightly lower at 61%. In comparison, the acquittal rate across all offences is 30%. Wundersitz (2003) found similar results with regards to sex offences against children in South Australia.

Reasons for this is discussed in the 2011 edition of "Aware" a magazine produced by The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.

#### Perpetrators

Participants in a 2010 study "Insights into sexual assault perpetration" described the perpetrators variously as: charming, skilled at exploiting people, controlling, talkative and engaging. They were men with whom victims had a relationship, worked alongside, or with whom they had recently become acquainted. Most of the perpetrators were respected by their friends and peers. In some cases, the perpetrators were highly respected and/or authoritative members of their communities.

The majority of the perpetrators were identified as being professionally employed, including: large business owners, a pharmacist, a police officer, a military officer and an academic working in the field of preventing violence against women. Two perpetrators were identified as being religious leaders. ... Many participants

described the perpetrators as having personas that were "nice", "normal" and "charming", although others also thought the perpetrators were "below average". .... Overall, however, the descriptions of the offenders challenged stereotypes and preconceptions around the profile of a man that "typically" offends.

#### Response

If you find an interesting article or are alerted to some new research , please send the details to us so that if it is appropriate we can share it with others.

We'd love to hear from you

#### Touch

I have been recently alerted to an extensive and very interesting article To Touch Or Not To Touch. It deals with touch in Psychotherapy and Counselling, but contains a huge amount of information you may find interesting.

## For Pastors

### Blue Cards

A big thank you to all who have sent in their Blue Card details. There are now only a couple who have not yet complied to our request.

When you are notified that your Blue Card is about to expire, please apply for a renewal immediately.

## For SMO Coordinators

Sadly you are still unable to add members to Safety Management Online Please send me the names and email addresses and I will add them to the site on your behalf.

On entering the site make sure you are linked to the correct group. If not you can change the group by clicking on the group name (near the LCA Logo) on your Home Page.

And again thank you for the work you do in this area.

## For those Planning a Workshop



If your congregation is interested in hosting a workshop in 2012 please check out the LCAQD website. [A new page](#) has been developed with all the necessary information and a link to an online application form.

### Response

We'd love to hear from you.

Please tell us what changes have occurred in your congregation since you have attended the Professional Standards Workshop.

Send us a quick [email](#) sharing those things that have worked well and those that still need more work.

Have we made a difference?

Our aim is to produce two short newsletters a year for those who attend our Queensland Workshops. If you don't wish to receive this newsletter please email [keith.stiller@qld.lca.org.au](mailto:keith.stiller@qld.lca.org.au)

## Professional Standards Unit

24 McDougall Street, Milton 4064  
P.O. Box 1535 Milton 4064

Liz Crawford 3511 4089  
Keith Stiller 3512 7237  
Kate Ryan 3512 7284  
3511 4070 fax