

# Sex Offender Programs

Increasing Community Safety

Understanding the Continuum of Sexual  
Aggression

and

The Victorian Sex Offender Register



# WARNING

CONTENT MAY BE  
OFFENSIVE

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF



# Why do we need to talk about supervising sex offenders in the community?

DEPARTMENT  
OF JUSTICE



- Most end up released into the community.
- Most are not under correctional supervision.
- Some can be safely managed in the community.
- Communities can help sex offenders reintegrate and thus prevent future victimization.
- Helping sex offenders reintegrate into society helps the families (including possible victims) both financially and emotionally.

# 3 Strategies for Increasing Community Safety



1. Effective treatment of convicted sexual offenders
2. Increasing community awareness of the continuum of sexual aggression
3. Offender tracking – The Victorian Sex Offender Register

# 1. Effective Treatment

## Corrections Victoria Sex Offender Programs



*“To provide intervention to sex offenders to increase community protection based on best practice”*

Achieved through

- a coordinated and integrated system of assessment and treatment for offenders
- consultancy, training and supervision of prison and correctional officers and,
- community education.

# Current Profile of Offenders



## Prison

- Approx. 400 convicted sex offenders in prison
  - 140 sexual offenders against children
  - 120 sexual offenders against adults
  - 100 indecent assault offenders
  - 40 other (i.e. murder, abduction, theft etc)
    - Average sentence is 4-6 years
    - Maximum sentence is indefinite
    - Minimum sentence is 3 months

## CCS

- Approx. 380 sexual offenders serving Community Based Dispositions
- 150 sexual offenders serving Parole
- Offence profile is similar to Prisons

# Target Group

- All convicted sexual offenders serving a prison sentence or community disposition
- Offenders who have a previous conviction for a sexual offence
- Offenders who have an identified sexual element to their crime
- *Treatment duration minimum of 144 hours over 9 months (high risk 300 hours, maximum determined by length of sentence)*



# Intervention Principles

- **Control not cure**
- **Need for Intervention**
- **Mandatory Intervention**
- **Setting Intervention Goals**
- **Explicit Value Stance**
- **Respectful Confrontation versus Collusion**
- **Targeting Sex Offending Behaviour and General Skill Development**
- **Appeal To Narcissism**
- **Explicit, Empirically Based Model of Change**
- **Ethical and Professional Practice**



## 2. The Continuum of Sexual Aggression

It is the occurrence and escalation of sexually inappropriate or abusive behaviours

- Can be sexualised behaviours of children under 12 years old that without intervention may continue into adulthood or can leave them vulnerable to “*more*” sexual abuse
- Can be sexually assaultive behaviours of juvenile offenders that without intervention may continue into adulthood
- Can be sexualised behaviours and or deviant sexual interests in adults that without intervention may continue to more serious sexual offences.

DEPARTMENT  
OF JUSTICE

State Government  
**Victoria**

# Sexualised behaviours of children under 12 years old



Premature sexualization can be manifested by:

- Excessive masturbation
- Undue avoidance of adults
- Premature sexual awareness
- The sexualization of relationships
- Explicit or frequent sexual preoccupation in talk and play

Sexualized behaviour by children

- leaves them vulnerable to further abuse
- is strongly reinforced when adults show they are unable to cope with it.

# Sexually assaultive behaviours of juvenile offenders



Research indicates that adolescents make up a significant percentage of those who commit sexual offences (Abel et al, 1993), and if there is a risk, no matter how small, that these children and young people could go on continue these behaviours into adulthood, when behaviours become more entrenched, then it is imperative they are addressed at the earliest possible stage.

Same range of behaviours as adults but needs to be considered in the context of relationship dynamics, age differential and equality (physical, cognitive and emotional development)

# Sexualised behaviours and or deviant sexual interests in adults



Efforts to obtain sex through words or status.

Obscene phone calls, voyeurism, exposure and theft of items used for sexual deviant fantasies.

Objectification and aggressive remarks to his/her target

Stalking, frottage and physical contact that can be excused as accidental.

Tactile or oral contact with the victim including masturbation or kissing the genital area of the victim.

Aggressive contact includes grabbing breasts or buttocks or physical restraint

Genital penetration whether that is accomplished orally, anally or vaginally

Use of force for rape and penetration of the victim with objects

Forcible penetration offenses that perpetrate the use of weapons, bondage, forcibly restraining the victim during the act and all forms of rape.

Sadistic and/or ritualistic abuse that often will include infliction of pain, kidnapping and torture

Sexual homicide, victim mutilation, or dismemberment as one might also see with serial killers (Ross, 1994).

# Important because

Greater understanding of the continuum of sexual aggression can greatly assist in community protection by

- increasing awareness of behaviours that may leave to more “serious” sexual assault
- Encouraging everyone to play in role in the solution by discouraging tolerance of even “minor” infractions
- increasing the likelihood that intervention will be sought



### 3. The Victorian Sex Offender Register



Sex offender registration statutes are promoted as a means of:

- deterring offenders from committing future crimes;
  - *monitor offenders, contain information on patterns of offending behavior, identify "risky" situations*
- providing law enforcement with an additional investigative tool;
  - *identify likely suspects with similar crime patterns for unsolved sex offenses. and*
- increasing public protection.

# The Register

DEPARTMENT  
OF JUSTICE



- Came into effect 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2004
- Includes new offences and retrospective for those on an existing sentence or order
- All adults found guilty of a sexual crimes against children will be registered, and banned from working with children
- Courts will have discretion on whether to include sex offenders whose victim is an adult, or if the offender is under 18 years.

**serious sex offenders must inform police annually of their personal details such as**

- name, birth date, address,
- tattoos or permanent distinguishing marks
- motor vehicle details
- employment details
- Club or organisation affiliations
- the names and ages of any children who reside in their household
- Children with whom they have regular unsupervised contact and travel plans.

# Penalties

- up to one year in prison and fines up to \$12,000 for applying to work with children
- two years in jail and fines up to \$24,000 for failure to comply with reporting obligations or those who provided false or misleading information.





# Community protection or false sense of Security?



- The current climate emphasises tracking and notification strategies and deemphasise treatment and community education.
- We strongly support sex offenders being held responsible for their actions, being treated for their behavior and utilizing interventions designed to reduce their risk to re-offend
- We believe however
  - the level of protection afforded by these laws is limited
  - offender registration does not guarantee protection from harm
    - An offender can travel from one community to the next and re-offend.
    - The vast majority of offences against children occur in their own homes or in the company of a trusted adult known to them
    - Research suggests registration & community notification has had little impact on re-offense rates

# Community Safety is Our Concern



- Stability of an offender contributes to control of his offense cycle
- Harassment of offenders can DECREASE community safety
  - Offender may go “underground” and law enforcement will not be able to monitor him
  - Offender may feel out of control and act out-harming someone with another offense
  - Offender may stop going to treatment