

## Don't Cross the Line website

### Facts and Stats

#### Domestic Violence: a summary of key statistics

- Domestic violence costs the Australian economy approximately 13.6 billion every year. This figure is expected to rise to 15.6 billion by 2021-22.

A Snapshot To Time for Action: The National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, March 2009

The above reference is quoted incorrectly. The actual quote is as follows (p4):

“The cost of violence against women and their children to the Australian economy is estimated to be \$13.6 billion in 2008-09 and, if there is no reduction in current rates, it will cost the economy an estimated \$15.6 billion by 2021-22.”

To conflate 'domestic violence' with '[all] violence against women and their children' is an extremely serious error. 'Violence against women and their children' includes both domestic (intimate and ex-intimate partner) and non-domestic violence. It also excludes domestic violence against men (who make up at least one third of victims<sup>1</sup>). The exclusion of the words 'if there is no reduction in current rates' may also mislead the reader.

- At a total cost of 3.5 billion, it has been established that pain, suffering and premature mortality accounts for nearly half the total cost of domestic violence. The next largest contributor is consumption costs, including property replacement, bad debts and lost household economics.

White Ribbon Day Website - Facts and Stats:

(<http://www.whiteribbonday.org.au/media/documents/Factsheet%2010%20-%20Facts%20and%20Stats.pdf>)

This appears to be an accurate statistic.

- Three women are killed in domestic violence situations every fortnight across Australia.

Domestic Violence - The Facts: Keep Safe Stay Cool

(<http://www.keepsafestaycool.com.au/Downloads/DV%20The%20Facts%20A5%20V4.pdf>)

This source is an *unreferenced* domestic violence information booklet. It is astonishing that a government department relied on such an *unsubstantiated* reference to provide hard data about such an important issue as domestic violence. The correct data is that two women and one man are killed in

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://oneinthree.com.au/overview>

domestic violence situations every two-and-a-half weeks across Australia. 42 females and 23 males were victims of intimate partner homicide in 2006-07 (the most recent data available)<sup>2</sup>.

- It is estimated that in every year, approximately 350,000 and 125,000 will experience physical and sexual violence respectively.

National Plan To Reduce Violence Against Women: Immediate Government Actions, April 2009

The above reference is quoted incorrectly. The actual quote is as follows (p2):

“Approximately 350,000 women will experience physical violence and 125,000 women will experience sexual violence each year”.

Once again, to conflate ‘domestic violence’ with ‘violence against women’ is an extremely serious error. These figures refer to *all* violence against women, not just domestic violence, and exclude domestic violence against men. As far as domestic violence goes, it is estimated that in every year in Australia, approximately 114,600 women will experience domestic violence (43,800 from their current partner, and 70,800 from their former partner). So will 27,900 men (8,400 from their current partner, 19,500 from their former partner). In total 142,500 people will experience domestic violence every year<sup>3</sup>.

- Domestic violence is the main cause of death, disability and illness in Victorian women 15-44 years. It is more harmful than smoking, alcohol and obesity combined.

VicHealth 2004, *The Health Costs of Violence: Measuring the Burden of Disease caused by Intimate Partner Violence*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne.

The above reference is quoted incorrectly. The actual quote is as follows (p10):

“[Intimate partner violence] is the leading contributor to death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged 15–44, being responsible for more of the disease burden than many well-known risk factors such as high blood pressure, smoking and obesity.”

To confuse a cause and a contributor is a very serious error of terminology. The VicHealth finding refers to contributors or risk factors – i.e. variables associated with an increased risk of death, disability or illness that do not imply causation. Indeed the VicHealth study’s authors noted that “a cross-sectional analysis [such as ours] is a weak design to examine the relationship between a risk

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<sup>2</sup> Dearden, J., & Jones, W. (2008). Homicide in Australia: 2006-07 National Homicide Monitoring Program annual report. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. Retrieved September 21, 2009, from <http://www.aic.gov.au/en/publications/current%20series/mr/1-20/01.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006). Personal Safety Survey Australia: 2005 Reissue 4906.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics. (Original work published August 10, 2006) Retrieved September 21, 2009, from [http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4906.02005\\_\(Reissue\)?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4906.02005_(Reissue)?OpenDocument)

factor and disease outcomes because it cannot indicate whether exposure to the risk factor preceded the health outcome”<sup>4</sup>.

The top five *causes* of death, disability and illness [combined] for Australian women aged 15-44 years are anxiety and depression, migraine, type 2 diabetes, asthma and schizophrenia<sup>5</sup>. The top five *contributors* (risk factors) for death, disability and illness for Victorian women aged 15-44 are intimate partner violence, illicit drugs, alcohol, body weight and cholesterol<sup>6</sup>.

It should also be noted that, of this total death, disability and illness (burden of disease) in women aged 15-44, deaths (femicide) made up 2 per cent of the disease burden; physical injuries 0.6 per cent; substance abuse 22 per cent and poor mental health (e.g. depression and anxiety) 73 per cent<sup>7</sup>.

By incorrectly using the language of causality, the public could be misled into believing that the leading *cause* of harm to young women is family violence (via injuries and deaths), when in actual fact violence doesn't make the top ten causes. By using instead the language of risk factors, the public can be correctly informed that family violence might be the main risk factor that is associated with poor health and wellbeing outcomes in young women – mainly increased levels of anxiety, depression and substance abuse.

- At least 1 in 17 women is a victim of domestic violence each year.

FaCSIA Annual Report 2006-2007

([http://www.facs.gov.au/about/publicationsarticles/corp/Documents/2007%20Annual%20Report/1\\_3.htm](http://www.facs.gov.au/about/publicationsarticles/corp/Documents/2007%20Annual%20Report/1_3.htm))

The above reference is quoted incorrectly. The actual quote is as follows:

“At least one in 17 women is a victim of violence each year.”

Once again, to conflate 'domestic violence' with 'violence against women' is an extremely serious error. These figures refer to *all* violence against women, not

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<sup>4</sup> Vos, T., Astbury, J., Piers, L. S., Magnus, A., Heenan, M., Stanley, L., et al. (2006). Measuring the impact of intimate partner violence on the health of women in victoria, australia. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 84(9), 739-44. Retrieved September 21, 2009, from <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/84/9/06-030411ab/en/index.html>

<sup>5</sup> Begg, S., Vos, T., Barker, B., Stevenson, C., Stanley, L., & Lopez, A. D. (2007). The burden of disease and injury in australia 2003. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Retrieved September 21, 2009, from <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10317>

<sup>6</sup> Heenan, M., Astbury, J., Vos, T., Magnus, A., Piers, L. S., Walker, L., et al. (2004). *The health costs of violence. Measuring the burden of disease caused by intimate partner violence. A summary of findings*. Carlton South: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. Retrieved September 21, 2009, from <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/en/Resource-Centre/Publications-and-Resources/Mental-health-and-wellbeing/Preventing-violence/The-Health-Costs-of-Violence.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> Heenan, M., Astbury, J., Vos, T., Magnus, A., Piers, L. S., Walker, L., et al. (2004). *The health costs of violence. Measuring the burden of disease caused by intimate partner violence. A summary of findings*. Carlton South: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. Retrieved September 21, 2009, from <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/en/Resource-Centre/Publications-and-Resources/Mental-health-and-wellbeing/Preventing-violence/The-Health-Costs-of-Violence.aspx>. Also Vos, T., Astbury, J., Piers, L. S., Magnus, A., Heenan, M., Stanley, L., et al. (2006). Measuring the impact of intimate partner violence on the health of women in victoria, australia. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 84(9), 739-44. Retrieved September 21, 2009, from <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/84/9/06-030411ab/en/index.html>

just domestic violence, and exclude domestic violence against men. As far as domestic violence goes, 1 in 67 women is a victim of domestic violence each year, as is 1 in 268 men (or, overall, 1 in 106 persons)<sup>8</sup>.

- 1 in 8 high school students will be in a domestic violence relationship before they leave school.

#### Domestic Violence - The Facts: Keep Safe Stay Cool

(<http://www.keepsafestaycool.com.au/Downloads/DV%20The%20Facts%20A5%20V4.pdf>)

This source is once again an *unreferenced* domestic violence information booklet. It is important to note that, whatever the correct figure may be, approximately equal numbers of victims will be male and female<sup>9</sup>.

- 95% of domestic violence involves a male perpetrator and a female victim. The other 5% includes same sex relationships or a female perpetrator to the victim.

#### Domestic Violence - The Facts: Keep Safe Stay Cool

(<http://www.keepsafestaycool.com.au/Downloads/DV%20The%20Facts%20A5%20V4.pdf>)

This source is once again an *unreferenced* domestic violence information booklet. The correct data is that up to two-thirds of domestic violence victims are female, and at least one third are male<sup>10</sup>.

- Aboriginal women report experiencing higher levels of violence than non-Aboriginal women and are more likely to sustain serious injuries.

#### A Snapshot To Time for Action: The National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, March 2009

This appears to be an accurate statistic.

- About 7% of non-Aboriginal women reported experiencing physical violence during 2005, compared to 20% of aboriginal women.

#### *International Violence Against Women Survey, Australian Component, 2004*

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<sup>8</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006). Personal safety survey australia: 2005 reissue 4906.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics. (Original work published August 10, 2006) Retrieved September 21, 2009, from [http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4906.02005\\_\(Reissue\)?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4906.02005_(Reissue)?OpenDocument)

<sup>9</sup> 15 per cent of young males and 16 per cent of young females aged 12 to 20 had experienced domestic violence. National Crime Prevention (2001). Young people and domestic violence : National research on young people's attitudes to and experiences of domestic violence. Barton: Attorney-General's Dept. Retrieved September 21, 2009, from <http://www.crimeprevention.gov.au/agd/WWW/ncphome.nsf/Page/Publications>

<sup>10</sup> See <http://oneinthree.com.au/overview>

Once again, to conflate 'domestic violence' with 'violence against women' is an extremely serious error. This figure includes both domestic (intimate and ex-intimate partner) and non-domestic violence against women by men, and does not include violence against women by other women (which makes up approximately one-quarter of all violence against women<sup>11</sup>). It also excludes domestic violence against men.

It should also be noted that the International Violence Against Women Survey was conducted in 2002, not 2005<sup>12</sup>.

- Regardless of factors such as age and ethnicity, women with disabilities are assaulted, raped and abused at a rate of between 2 and 12 times greater than women without disabilities.

Mulder 1995, cited in Strategic Partners (2003) Phase 1 Meta-evaluation report Domestic Violence: Working with men.

This statistic was unable to be verified by us.

- Young women experience higher rates of sexual assault and run higher risks, at least 3 to 4 times higher, than the overall population of women.

Young, M J, Byles and A Dobson (2000) The effectiveness of legal protection in the prevention of domestic violence in the lives of young Australian women. *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice* No 148 (Australian Institute of Criminology).

This statistic could not be found in the reference cited. The only similar statistic is as follows,

"International studies have shown that for young women, the risk of violence by a partner is 3-4 times higher than the risk for women overall"

This statistic refers to domestic violence, not sexual assault, and only by a partner, not overall. The ABS Personal Safety Survey found that both young men and young women experience higher rates of sexual violence than does the overall population<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006). Personal Safety Survey Australia: 2005 reissue 4906.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics. (Original work published August 10, 2006) Retrieved September 21, 2009, from [http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4906.02005 \(Reissue\)?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4906.02005%20(Reissue)?OpenDocument)

<sup>12</sup> Mouzos, J., & Makkai, T. (2004). Women's experiences of male violence: Findings from the Australian component of the international violence against women survey (IVAWS). Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. Retrieved September 21, 2009, from <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/rpp/41-60/rpp56.aspx>

<sup>13</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006). Personal safety survey Australia: 2005 reissue 4906.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics. (Original work published August 10, 2006) Retrieved September 21, 2009, from [http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4906.02005 \(Reissue\)?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4906.02005 (Reissue)?OpenDocument)

- 25% of young people have witnessed physical domestic violence against their mother.

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(<http://www.keepsafestaycool.com.au/Downloads/DV%20The%20Facts%20A5%20V4.pdf>)

This source is once again an *unreferenced* domestic violence information booklet. The correct data is that 23% of young people have witnessed physical domestic violence against their mother or stepmother, and 22% of young people have witnessed physical domestic violence against their father or stepfather<sup>14</sup>.

- Immigrant and Refugee women are more likely to be murdered as a result of domestic violence.

Time for Action: The National Council's plan for Australia to reduce violence against women and their children, 2009-2021

This statistic could not be found in the reference cited. It would be appreciated if an accurate reference for it could be provided.

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<sup>14</sup> National Crime Prevention (2001). Young people and domestic violence : National research on young people's attitudes to and experiences of domestic violence. Barton: Attorney-General's Dept. Retrieved September 21, 2009, from <http://www.crimeprevention.gov.au/agd/WWW/ncphome.nsf/Page/Publications>