

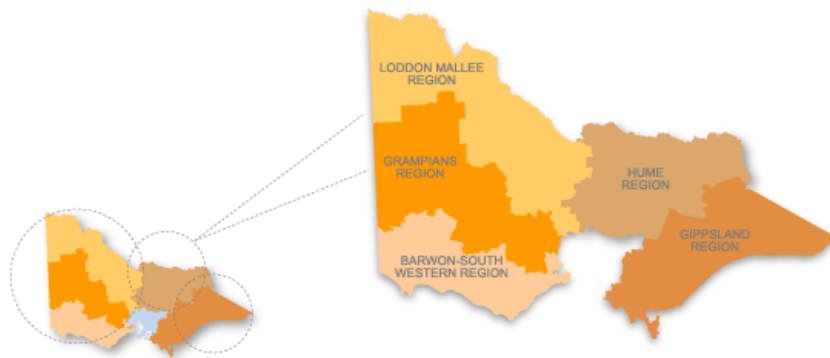
Referral protocols between Mildura Victims Assistance and Counseling Program and the Police in North Western Victoria.



Sunraysia Community Health Services: Victims Assistance and Counselling Program

- The Mildura program services the Northern Sector of the Loddon Mallee region, located in the North West of the state. The area includes the regions of Mallee, Northern Gannawarra and the Northern aspect of Buloke.
- The service is based in Mildura with the most distant outreach town of Kerang being approximately 320kms.

VACP Service Area



Sunraysia Community Health Services:
Victims Assistance and Counselling Program

Staffing

1.5 EFT

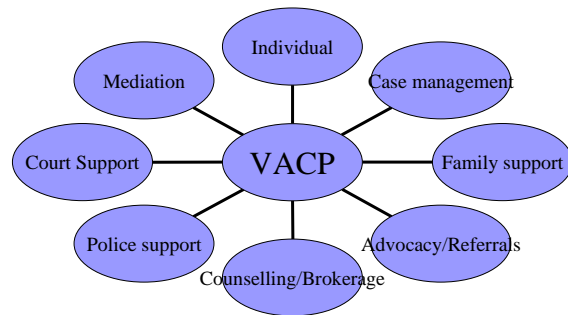
1 EFT Co-ordinator / Social Worker

0.5 EFT Welfare worker

Counselling out sourced

Sunraysia Community Health Services: Victims Assistance and Counselling Program

**Service
Coordination
Model:
For reported
& non-reported
Crime**



Protocols:

When:

- Protocols were implemented From July 2001 to July 2004.

Why:

- It was identified by the VACP workers that victims accessing the program after months/years appeared more distressed than clients accessing early.

Areas of stress

- Safety
- Emotional
- Financial
- Lack of information regarding:
 1. Police processes
 2. Court and legal processes.

Concepts considered

- Victims of crime are traumatized by their experience,
- Early access to supportive services, enhance the victim's recovery
- Protocols referring victims will assist victims of crime access services sooner.



Implementation

HOW:

- Victims Assistance Co-coordinator met with senior officers from Mildura, Swan Hill and Ouyen Police stations and the protocols were formalized and implemented.
- The Senior Sgt of each police station referred clients to VACP. VACP workers then made contact with the victims to provide support and information.



Protocols ceased.

- Protocols continued for 3 years until July 2004.
- Ceased as it was deemed necessary due to possible breaches of the Privacy Act.
- No direct protocols with police at this point.

Reinstatement

- September 2006 police protocols reinstated .
- Advocacy both at local level and state for reinstatement of protocols
- Launch of Victims Charter

VACP RESEARCH

- clients interviewed :
 - Victims interviewed who were referred with in one month by police.
 1. All identified that early access to the service was valuable and aided in their recovery.
 2. This is involved: Liaison with police, keeping them informed with the police and legal processes, referrals to needed services and counseling.

Comments:

The emotional support knowing someone was there.

"Police protocols worked quick and efficiently

I know what to expect with police and courts.

Once accessing the VAP service I then felt at ease.

It assisted in my recovery

I probably wouldn't have found the service without the police referral.

- Clients interviewed following the abandonment of the Protocol.
 1. Were not referred by Police.
 2. Access service 3mths to 4years after crime.
 3. All clients believed their recovery process would have been different with earlier support.

Comments:

I wouldn't have to tell everyone what happened instead of having to retell my story a number of times.

I was unable to function for 8 weeks. Life was a nightmare. I could have to put it behind me and moved on. I would have been able to get it over and done with.

I didn't know where to start or where to go.

I didn't know that we could access counseling, thought we could cope

Life was more chaotic, I was bounced around services.

To not know your rights was why it was so hard for me

Police interviewed

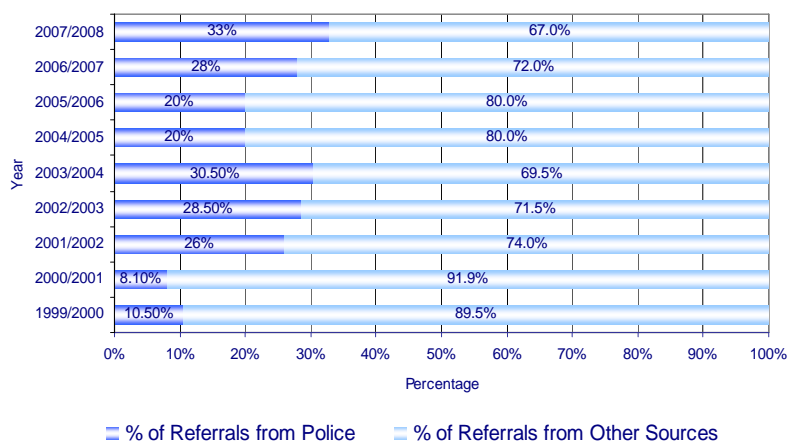
- Police Officers interviewed.
 1. All believed that the referral protocols assisted Victims of Crime.
 2. That the protocols eliminated the uncertainty victims may feel about dealing with legal systems.
 3. Provided victims with early intervention and support
 4. Reduced the effect of the trauma.
 5. Enhanced professional relationships between Police and VACP.
 6. The protocols enabled police and VACP to work towards same goal to the betterment of the victims.
 7. Assisted in implementation of Victims Charter.

Stats: Referrals from police.

- Prior to protocols 8.1% referred from police.
- During protocols 30.6% referred from police.
- After ceasing protocols 16.7% referred from police.
- After reinstatement of protocols 33%

Police referrals

% of Referrals Received From Police From 1999 to 2008






Summary

- Formal referral protocols between the Police and Victims Assistance & Counselling Program enhances the effectiveness of support and outcomes for victims.
- Protocols provide prompt access to support and counselling services, promoting recovery.



Summary

- Promotes positive relationships
- Increased police referrals
- assist in the implementation of the Victims Charter.
- ensure that victims of crime are treated with courtesy, respect and dignity by criminal justice agencies.



Sunraysia Community Health Services:
Victims Assistance and Counselling Program

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