

PUTTING A FULL STOP TO SEXUAL, DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE.

📞 1800 FULL STOP
1800 385 578
💬 fullstop.org.au

Full Stop Australia Marks 50 Years of Service. What Will It Take? Putting a Full Stop to Sexual Violence.

Date: 28 October 2024

Notes to Editors:

1. On 5 November 2024, in recognition of 50 years of service, Full Stop Australia is hosting a [conference](#), “What Will it Take? Putting a Full Stop to Sexual Violence.” **Media passes are available**, please reach out to media@fullstop.org.au.

2. Please use “**Full Stop Australia**” (full name) when referring to the organisation in a media story. The contents of this press release can be used as quotes attributable to **Full Stop Australia CEO, Karen Bevan**.

Tomorrow, 29 October 2024, Full Stop Australia turns 50 years old. On this day in 1974, the Sydney Rape Crisis Centre began operating out of a single room at the Sydney Women’s Liberation House in Glebe.

NSW Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Jodie Harrison acknowledged the important milestone and thanked Full Stop Australia for 50 years of service supporting victim-survivors of sexual, domestic and family violence. *“Full Stop Australia has played a significant role in making sure victim-survivors receive the help they need when they need it through its 24/7 helplines. Its advocacy ensures victim-survivors’ voices are heard, and through its training, builds organisations’ capability to respond to sexual violence.”* Said Minister Harrison.

A lot has changed since 1974. At that time, support was mostly provided by volunteers, some of who were themselves victim-survivors. Hospitals were often unwilling or unable to provide support to victims of sexual assault, laws and policy were archaic and wholly inadequate, exemplified by, but not limited to, marital rape being legal and workplace sexual harassment and sexism being condoned.

Full Stop Australia CEO, Karen Bevan, said *“50 years on, progress has been made, but there are still ongoing and emerging challenges that victim-survivors face, with many services at capacity. Whilst we take a moment to acknowledge the progress over the years, we are quick to call for ongoing reform of all systems, so that we can put a full stop to sexual violence once and for all.”*

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These days, some services are government-funded, and some hospitals have specialised sexual assault services and forensic capabilities. Important first strides have been taken in reforming the criminal justice system and policy frameworks to better protect victim-survivors and people who use abuse to account.

Some examples of policy, law, research progress include:

- The Respect@Work inquiry and the implementation of its recommendations, including positive duty requirements.
- Affirmative consent legislation has been enacted in some states and others are considering this necessary reform.
- Coercive control legislation in some states and territories, which seeks to view abuse as patterned behaviour, moving away from incident-based response.
- Some key research, including *the National Community Attitudes Survey (ANROWS)*, *Perpetration of Sexual Violence In A Community Sample Of Adult Australians (AIC)* and the *Australian Child Maltreatment Study (ACMS)*, allow us to better understand the impacts that, and prevalence of, sexual violence and child sexual abuse on our communities.

Very little of this would have been possible without the tireless efforts of numerous campaigns led by survivor-advocates over the years, reiterating the critical importance of centring victim-survivors in this work.

There is still a lot of work to do. In June this year, the ABS released data showing 35,138 reported sexual assaults in 2023 - a 31-year high. With most sexual assaults going unreported, the total number is likely much higher.

For many years, the earliest iteration of Full Stop Australia, the Sydney Rape Crisis Centre, was run entirely by volunteers who would travel all over Sydney picking up women who had been sexually assaulted and bring them to the centre for counselling and medical help. This was the first centre and service of its kind in Australia and only started receiving partial government funding in 1975, which only covered some operational costs.

Since its establishment, the organisation has continuously expanded and improved services for victim-survivors and their communities, rebranding as NSW Rape Crisis Centre in 1997, Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia in 2013 and Full Stop Australia in 2021. The service now reaches people in every state and territory, providing over 15,000 trauma-specialist counselling sessions every year.

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Minister Harrison said, *“The NSW Government looks forward to working with Full Stop Australia in rolling out our Primary Prevention Strategy, to stop the violence before it starts, so we can live in a community free from sexual, domestic and family violence.”*

Looking ahead, Full Stop Australia can only continue doing this work with the support of communities and government. The last 50 years have seen much progress, but there is still so much to do.

Donate to support Full Stop Australia’s mission to put a full stop to sexual, domestic and family violence. [Donate.fullstop.org.au](https://donate.fullstop.org.au)

The NSW Sexual Violence Helpline is available to anyone in NSW impacted by sexual violence. Call 1800 424 017.

Free 24/7 trauma-specialist counselling is available to anyone in Australia who has been impacted by sexual, domestic and family violence. Call 1800 FULL STOP (1800 385 578).

END

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