



Biennial Report 2010 to 2012

WEAVE Incorporated
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**WOMEN EVERYWHERE ADVOCATING
VIOLENCE ELIMINATION
(WEAVE) Inc**

**BIENNIAL REPORT
July 2010 to June 2012**



Women Everywhere Advocating Violence Elimination Inc (WEAVE Inc), formed in 2009, is a National Women's Alliance that aims to eliminate all forms of men's violence against women (including sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation and trafficking).

As a non-partisan coalition WEAVE Inc brings together groupings that have sometimes worked separately from one another, such as sexual assault services, women's health services, women's legal services, domestic and family violence services, and organisations working against trafficking. In drawing together key stakeholders that make up the 'violence against women sector' as well as survivors, and activist and interest groups, WEAVE embeds a wealth and diversity of experience and expertise within a single body.

VISION

To ensure that all women and children are able to live free from all forms of violence and abuse.

VALUES & PRINCIPLES

Human Rights

WEAVE Inc employs a human rights framework that recognises that gendered violence is one of the most serious and widespread violations of fundamental human rights, in particular, the right not to be treated in an inhuman and degrading way, the rights to respect, physical, sexual and psychological integrity.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusivity

WEAVE Inc is committed to representing and working respectfully with the diversity of women in Australia. WEAVE Inc recognises, and seeks to advocate and lobby for, the particular and urgent needs of Indigenous women, women from immigrant, refugee and/or non-English speaking backgrounds, women with disabilities, as well as the challenges faced by young women, older women and women in rural and remote areas.

Feminist Framework

WEAVE Inc works within a feminist framework that recognises that gendered violence is both a consequence and cause of gender inequity, embedded deeply within all levels of our society, and that efforts to end such violence must be accountable to women and promote women's empowerment and gender equality.

OBJECTIVES

(a) To provide leadership and advocacy at state and national levels in relation to all aspects of gendered violence.

(b) To bring together in a single body the key stakeholders concerned with all aspects of gendered violence in order to access and disseminate the wealth and diversity of knowledge within the sector as a whole.

(c) To contribute to and monitor policies, legislation and programs which impact on women and children experiencing gendered violence

(d) To promote and prioritise equity of access to services for all women including Aboriginal women, Torres Strait Islander women, women from immigrant, refugee and/or non-English speaking background, women in rural and isolated areas, older women, young women and women with disabilities.

(e) To promote greater community awareness of gendered violence and its personal and social consequences using community development and educational strategies.

(f) To build and promote alliances and collaborative relationships with other key stakeholders and networks.

(g) To promote, further develop and disseminate 'cutting edge' knowledge of gendered violence arising from practice, research, community and activism.

(h) To connect with international developments in advocacy, research and practice concerning gendered violence.

WEAVE Inc FOUNDDING COMMITTEE

Dr Elspeth McInnes AM, Convenor

Dr McInnes has a doctorate in sociology and a research focus on the needs and interests of mothers and children after separation from violent relationships. Elspeth is a senior lecturer at the University of South Australia and has vast experience in representing women's interests at a national level through her former positions as Executive Officer and Convenor of the National Council of Single Mothers and their Children, and as a former Board member and Vice President of the Australian Council of Social Services. Elspeth is currently serving as the NCSMC Policy Officer. She is the successful recipient of a number of research and other grants related to women's issues, and publishes and presents widely.

Ms Betty Green, Deputy Convenor

Ms Green has Bachelor Adult Education (Hons), Associate Diploma of Social Welfare. Betty has worked extensively in the community women's health sector in New South Wales. A core focus of her work is domestic violence/violence against women, providing counselling for 17 years, facilitating domestic violence support groups as well as advocating for improved services responding to women and children affected by violence. Her knowledge and skills in domestic violence are recognised; she regularly provides lectures at University of Western Sydney, Family Violence and Social Policy Units and was awarded an EDNA Ryan Award for Community Activism (2006). She is co-founder and Convenor of the NSW Domestic Violence Coalition providing leadership in that state to a diverse membership made up of services, agencies and interest groups focused on working towards policy and systemic change to better meet the needs of women and children affected by domestic violence. She has served as Chair on community management committees in the women's services sector. Betty was appointed to the New South Wales Death Review Team and currently serves on NSW Premier's Council for Preventing Violence Against Women.

Ms Marie Hume, Secretary

Ms Hume is a psychologist with a Masters in Social Science. Marie is Convenor of the National Abuse Free Contact Campaign which seeks to support the safety of mothers and children leaving violent relationships. This involves her in lobbying, advocacy, maintenance of an active national/international email list, and regular presentations at forums in different states. Marie was the Project Officer of the Women's Safety after Separation website hosted by the National Council of Single Mothers and their Children. From many years as a counsellor within the Family Court she has extensive experience working with violence issues in the context of relationship breakdown, and a thorough understanding of the family law system.

Ms Jen Taylor, Treasurer

Ms Jen Taylor is a qualified bookkeeper who has been employed in the community sector for the past 12 years. She has served as Treasurer on many boards. Jen uses her financial expertise in many

voluntary capacities to ensure the viability of small non for profit organisations. For many years, she has ensured the ongoing financial viability of National Council of Single Mothers and Their Children Inc. Jen has been a passionate activist in violence against women campaigns for many years.

Ms Kathryn Rendell

Ms Rendell has an MA in Women's Studies, a Bachelor of Social Science and an Associate Diploma in Community Welfare. She has worked in the sector for 30 years, primarily in domestic violence and early childhood service areas. Her work has included counselling, advocacy, research and training as well as several years as an academic at Griffith University. Her publications include a number of practice journals and the report on child contact in the context of family law and family violence, *An Unacceptable Risk*, co-authored with Zoe Rathus and Angela Lynch for the Queensland Women's Legal Service in 2001. She is a founding member of the National Abuse Free Contact Campaign and a current Advisory Committee member of the National Council for Single Mothers and their Children.

Ms Jac Taylor

Ms Taylor has over eight years' experience working in the women's sector. She has a Master Degree in Social Work and a Bachelor of Arts (politics and public policy). Currently, working in the domestic violence sector, Jac is a strong advocate for ongoing system change to reduce violence against women and improve responses to women experiencing violence. Former Executive Officer of the National Council of Single Mothers and their Children, Jac has spoken at many forums with a particular focus on how public policy impacts on the lives of women and children.

Supported by a group of anti-violence activists and organisations:

- Barb Crossing
- Beth Tinning
- Betty McLellan
- Libby Eltringham
- Michael Flood
- Robyn Cotterell-Jones
- Sandra Dann
- Sheila Jeffries
- Terese Edwards
- Vig Geddes

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ACTIVITIES 2010 - 2012

Incorporation

WEAVE Inc became incorporated on 7 July 2010.

WEAVE Logo and Website

During 2010/11 WEAVE created its logo. Connie La Pietra, Graphic Designer (www.lagraphicdesigns.com.au) kindly provided her services at no cost to design the logo.

WEAVE also developed the WEAVE website - <http://www.weaveinc.org.au>

Connie La Pietra, Graphic Designer (www.lagraphicdesigns.com.au) kindly provided her services at no cost to create and design the website and continues to provide her services in updating the website.

The website contains:

- Campaigns
- Projects
- Activism
- Submissions
- Press Releases
- Papers and Research
- Conferences and Events
- Links and Resources

We have been active in linking with and promoting campaigns and activism by other groups and organisations.

National Remembrance Quilt Project – "Not one more"

Remembering the women and children killed in domestic violence.

This is a national project engaging women and supporters in the community to work together in the creation of a Remembrance Quilt to honour and remember the women and children who have been killed in domestic violence in their community, in their state.

In each state delegated women's services have been promoting the Project in their community.

Women's groups, community groups, and key stakeholder groups were invited to decorate a Quilt Block.

The Quilt Block contains general thoughts or messages about domestic violence deaths of women and children and calls for states to establish Domestic Violence Death Reviews to help us understand why these deaths occur.

Some Quilt Blocks have been created by friends or family members of women and children who may have died as a result of domestic violence.

We have had blocks completed in a wide range of regional centres across Australia.

In the development of this project there have already been many benefits to the raising of awareness and the importance of remembering women and children who have died in the context of domestic violence:



“Doing the quilt provided a valuable means of discussing the impact of domestic violence in the community.”

“The women have enjoyed the project immensely and deeply appreciate the importance of remembering women and children who have been killed in domestic violence in the community.”

To date the quilt has travelled to Townsville Multicultural Support Group;; Victorian Women’s Hospital, Melbourne; Women’s Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services, Perth ; National Community Legal Centres Conference, Adelaide and will continue to travel around Australia.

We would like to thank the women who made the blocks and acknowledge the support of the following services:

- Spiderwomyn Feminist Circle, Fremantle WA
- Robinson House, Blackburn, Victoria
- Townsville Multicultural Support Group, Queensland
- Wooree Miya Aboriginal Women’s Refuge, Inglewood WA
- Janice Isles, Jenny Letts, Burketown Queensland
- Heather Joy, Adelaide SA
- Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services WA

Domestic violence homicide: what we know & what we want...

Individual members of WEAVE have been active for a number of years in advocating for the establishment of Domestic Violence Death Review Teams in their individual states.

Domestic Violence Death Review Advocacy Groups were established in various states throughout Australia.

WEAVE was instrumental in bringing together these groups to form a National Domestic Violence Death Review Group in order to share information and strategies and to advocate at a national level.

Based on current knowledge approximately 76 women are killed each year by a current or former partner (National Homicide Monitoring Program 1989-90, 2002-03).

We also know based on overseas knowledge that many more women deaths are attributed to domestic violence than are currently acknowledged.

The national campaign for each state in Australia to establish an independent Domestic Violence Homicide/Death Review believes the only acceptable model is an evidence based best practice model.

This means a model must include:

- Transparency - Team membership that is multi-disciplinary, multi-agency, diverse and inclusive
- Statutory protections - are put in place to provide confidentiality, compels that all information/evidence/files are provided for the Review, immunity from prosecution
- Creating time line of events that conveys a sense of movement and identifies the barriers and challenges victim/offender encountered
- Accountability - Recommendations that are made are coupled with a reporting mechanism of implementation and must include follow up. This would include an Annual Report tabled in Parliament
- Accurate data collection and analysis
- Generation of research to support better understanding of domestic violence homicide, investigate identified trends & emerging issues
- Builds on learnings & contributes to a growing body of evidence
- Inter-disciplinary conversations about best practice approaches
- Development of best practice
- Informs and stimulates education, community awareness initiatives

Press Releases**10 August 2010**

WEAVE Alliance (Women Everywhere Advocating Violence Elimination) welcomes the government's announcement of its draft National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children...[more](#)

11 November 2010

Women Everywhere Advocating Violence Elimination (WEAVE Incorporated) welcomes the federal government's announcement that child safety is to be prioritised ahead of relationships with parents under changes to the Family Law Act...[more](#)

Papers and Conference Presentations

McInnes E (2011) *Critique of the Family Violence Best Practice Principles issued July 2011* (<http://www.weaveinc.org.au/Campaigns/critique%20of%20family%20law%20family%20violence%20best%20practice.pdf>)

Hume M, McInnes E, Rendell K, Green G (2011) Issues in Good Practice: women's services in the twenty-first century: where are we heading?, *Australian Domestic and Family Violence Newsletter*, Spring, No. 46 (http://www.weaveinc.org.au/Papers&Research/Newsletter_46.pdf)

McInnes E, Family Law and Homelessness, Homelessness Conference Brisbane September 3 2010 (<http://www.weaveinc.org.au/papers.html>)

McInnes E, Child Welfare & Family Law: Worlds Apart, Children's Law Conference June 18, 2011 (<http://www.weaveinc.org.au/papers.html>)

McInnes E, Mothering in the Context of Domestic and Family Violence – Before and After Separation, Liverpool Domestic Violence Liaison Committee, June 30, 2011 (<http://www.weaveinc.org.au/papers.html>)

McInnes E, Madness in Family Law: Competing Discourses on Mothers: Mental Health in the Australian Family Law system, Paper presented at the 12th International Mental Health Conference, Gold Coast August 24-26.

McInnes E, *Safety First in Family Law is Long Overdue*, Online Opinion, November 16, 2010 (<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=11234>)

McInnes E, *Risk in Child Abuse Cases in the Family Law System: What is the Problem?*, Online Opinion, June 8, 2012 (<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=13715>)

ARACY (Aust. Research Alliance for Children and Youth) seminar – December 2010

WEAVE participated in the meeting which was convened by ARACY and brought together parliamentary representatives of the major political parties, and Australia's top academic, policy and service delivery leaders from a diverse range of sectors and organisations to discuss how the National Action Plan for Young Australians should be developed. WEAVE raised the issue of domestic violence and emphasised the need to support mothers in particular with timely and appropriate support for the health and wellbeing of children and young people. The meeting agreed on the need for a National Action Plan and nominations were subsequently called for members to continue with the development of the Plan. This was not one of WEAVE's priorities at the time, but we will continue to monitor progress.

Activism

Say No to Porn t-shirts

The recent Menswear fashion of "porn t-shirts" is disturbing. Much of this clothing features naked or semi-naked women in provocative poses, sometimes gagged, often accompanied by sexist and sometimes violent slogans or referred to as "bitches".

While not regulated by the ASB as "outdoor advertising", these shirts when worn out in the public space are unavoidable, and therefore everyone is exposed to them.

WEAVE has agreed to be a joint signatory for the following form letter:

"We, the undersigned, are opposed to the display and sale of clothing, such as t-shirts, with highly sexualised adult images on them. Clothing featuring semi-naked women in provocative poses objectifies women and depicts them as willing and available for sex, and encourages a culture that undermines respect for women.

This clothing contributes to the premature sexualisation of children by imposing adult sexual concepts on them before they are developmentally ready. These images have also been known to act as triggers for victims of sexual assault and violence. Unsolicited pornography exposure is sexual harassment.

We call for a nationwide ban on the sale and display of clothing that depicts and/or degrades women by posing them in a highly sexualised manner."

The form letter was published on the 5th of July on the Collective Shout website (www.collectiveshout.org).

Advertising Standards Enquiry Endorsement of CATWA submission

Rap Porn Video Petition

WEAVE was alerted to the impending distribution of a particularly disturbing music video clip "Monster" by Kayne West. The video portrayed graphic images of brutalized women which many commentators described as disturbing. WEAVE signed an online petition to stop the video's release in Australia.

Put Safety First in Family Law – Women's Legal Service Australia

WEAVE Inc endorsed this campaign, rallying support through the website and networks.

Background (Preamble):

On the 24 of March, 2011 the Attorney-General, Robert McClelland introduced into Parliament changes to reform the Family Law Act to strengthen protections against family violence and child abuse.

The Family Law Legislation Amendment (Family Violence and Other Measures) Bill 2011 makes some positive changes including broader definitions of family violence and child abuse, greater priority for safety and the removal of disincentives to reporting family

violence. This is a great first step, but a lot more is needed to ensure the family law system is not jeopardising the safety of children and their carers affected by violence.

For more information regarding the “Put Safety First in Family Law Campaign” and what other actions you can take to support it, visit www.safetyinfamilylaw.com.

We, the people, call on the Australian Parliament to:

1. Fix the Family Law System to better protect children and their carers from family violence
Parliament should pass the Bill and further strengthen the measures provided within the Bill.

2. Put safety first in family law

The Bill only prioritises safety in cases where “there is an inconsistency” between achieving a safe outcome for a child and a child having an ongoing meaningful relationship with another person. This is not enough; safe outcomes in families should not be made subject to other considerations such as “proving an inconsistency”. A clear statement in legislation making children’s safety and the safety of other family members a priority is required and needs to be “backed up” up by a legislative framework the supports safe outcomes.

3. Remove presumptions in family law

The presumption of equal shared parental responsibility and the emphasis in the Family Law Act on shared parenting, over and above other parenting outcomes, places children and other family members who have experienced domestic and family violence, in danger. Every child and every family is unique and has different needs, thus the “one size fits all” approach is inappropriate and should be removed from the legislation.

4. Ensure primary carers are safe

Children are safest when their primary carers are safe. Living with primary carers who are emotionally and physically abused has a negative impact on a child’s wellbeing and development. The safety of children is not just about preventing violence directed against them; it is about safety and wellbeing of their family and enabling all members of the family to heal from past violence. It defies logic that in legal practice “a parent who is violent to their partner can be considered a bad partner, but a good parent”. This must stop; legislation should protect primary carers and recognise their significant role in children’s lives (especially in very young children) because it is important for the emotional development of children in the short and long term.

Committee Memberships

CEDAW – WEAVE was represented on the NGO report to the UN CEDAW Review Committee coordinated by the YWCA

Child Support Advisory Group on Domestic Violence

Submissions completed in response to:

Australian Law Reform Commission – Family Violence and Commonwealth Laws

1. Discussion Paper released by the Australian Law Reform Commission on Child Support and Family Assistance Issues
2. Discussion Paper released by the Australian Law Reform Commission on Employment and Superannuation Issues
3. Discussion Paper released by the Australian Law Reform Commission on Immigration Issues.
4. Discussion Paper released by the Australian Law Reform Commission on Family Violence and Social Security

Discussion Paper released by the Criminal Division of the Attorney General on Forced and Servile Marriage

Family Law Legislation Amendment (Family Violence and Other Measures) Bill 2011
[Provisions]

Commonwealth Commissioner for Children and Young People Bill 2010

Senate Legal and Constitutional Committees - the inquiry into international child abduction to and from Australia

UN Call for Communications: Allegations of Human Rights Violations Affecting the Status of Women

To access these submissions, please go to: <http://www.weaveinc.org.au/submissions.html>.