

Survey Little change since 1995

Many blame women for rape if drunk

Miki Perkins
Social Affairs Reporter

An alarming number of Australians believe that violence towards women and rape can be excused and blame the victim, particularly if she is drunk, a new report shows.

About one in five Australians agree that a woman is partly responsible for rape if she is intoxicated, and one in six agree with the notion that when women say "no" they actually mean "yes".

A nationwide VicHealth survey about attitudes towards violence against women discovered that although most people understood that family violence was a crime, a sizeable proportion believed there were circumstances in which it could be excused.

About four people in every 10 agreed that rape was the result of men not being able to control their need for sex, while more than half agreed that women could leave a violent relationship "if they really wanted to".

About 80 per cent agreed it was hard to understand why women stayed in violent relationships.

Most recognised that partner violence was usually perpetrated by men, but since the first survey in 1995 there has been a decrease in understanding that women are at greater risk of sexual assault by a person they know than a stranger.

More than half agreed that women often fabricated cases of domestic violence to improve their prospects in family law cases. And 30 per cent of Australians agreed that women preferred a man to be in charge of the relationship.

There was a growing international consensus that the causes of violence against women could be eliminated if attitudes shifted,

VicHealth chief executive officer Jerril Rechter said.

"On the whole we haven't improved much since the first survey was completed [1995]," Ms Rechter said. "But what we're seeing is more people who now understand that violence is more than a bruised eye or broken bones."

People needed empathy and education to understand how difficult it was for a woman in a violent relationship to leave, she said.

"They feel they don't have anywhere to go and they have been so excluded from their peers and friends over a long period of time that they are often very isolated."

Ms Rechter said she was heartened by the fact that 98 per cent of people agreed they would step in if they saw violence against a woman they knew.

There was no significant difference in attitude between states and territories or low, middle or high-income earners, the survey found.

The main influence on people's attitudes to violence against women was their understanding of the issue and how supportive they were of gender equality.

Young people between 16 and 25 generally had poorer attitudes about sexual assault, while older people (65 and older) were less likely to support gender equity and had rigid ideas about a woman's role in a relationship.

The survey involved more than 17,500 20-minute telephone interviews with a cross-section of Australians aged 16 and older.

If you or someone you know is impacted on by sexual assault or family violence call 1800 737 732.

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The 'horrific life' no woman

Miki Perkins
Social Affairs Reporter

The first time floored her. He gripped her around the face and pushed her roughly backwards.

Kristy had never been hit before, not by her loving father, nor her decent former boyfriends. But she knew it was wrong, so she ended it. That day.

A few months later he fell off his dirt bike and broke his back and feet. He got back in touch, appealing to her sympathies, begging for care. She felt bad. He promised to reform and they got back together.

The last time he hit her floored her too, literally, while their four-month-old daughter was in the

next room. The assault lasted for more than an hour.

He called her unspeakable things, hit her, bruised her and throttled her so hard that Kristy was almost unconscious. She lost the hearing in one ear for a day.

In between those two assaults – the first and the last – had been almost four years of violence. Her husband – they had married – abused her when she was pregnant and after their baby was born.

When Kristy, a social worker, dressed in the morning she would choose long-sleeve tops and skirts to hide the bruising, and felt so ashamed she told no one; not family or close friends. "I could feel my confidence disappearing. I wasn't

even aware that I was in an abusive relationship. I just thought he'd had a bad day, had a short temper."

After the final assault, Kristy was scared she would be killed. The fear of staying with her husband overcame the fear of leaving him, the threats he had made if she were ever to report him.

According to a wide-ranging report on community attitudes to family violence released by VicHealth on Tuesday, eight out of 10 people say it's hard to understand why women don't leave a violent relationship.

Kristy knows why. "He told me he would hunt me down and kill me and I believed it, I still do."

One woman is killed by their

The house (Crown) always wins; you lose

"Let the voters decide" is a term Victorian Labor leader Daniel Andrews is very fond of. So much so he will risk hundreds of millions of dollars in potential compensation payments for ending a potential \$8 billion East West Link contract so voters, not back-room dealers or lobbyists, can decide the transport priorities for this state.

This defence of democratic ideals ends at the polished front door of Crown Casino.

Who voted at the last election to give Crown a free kick until 2050 on problem gambling and smoking reforms? Who voted to give Crown more poker machines and gambling tables and reduce VIP tax?

Crown says its management agreement with the government means any variations require the agreement of both parties – few sectors in Victoria have the same

COMMENT
Jason Dowling



power. Car manufacturers, cannery workers or even TAFE colleges can't veto government policy. They have to cop it.

The casino exists in Melbourne only because the government provides it with a licence.

Governments are elected to govern and if they believe the casino is not paying enough tax, they charge them more. Few of us as individuals or companies get to negotiate our tax rate – the Liberal and the Labor parties appear to be gifting Crown that right. Crown is already on a good deal with its \$1-a-year rent for its large Southbank real

estate. And unlike Sydney and possibly Brisbane, Crown is not facing competition from another casino.

Crown is Melbourne's monopoly casino operator with thousands of poker machines. It is the only poker machine venue allowed to operate 24/7, the only venue where smoking is allowed in some areas.

The common phrase in gambling, the house always wins, was never more appropriate than Crown Casino's special treatment in Victoria.

The deal before Parliament exposes the state government to up to \$200 million in compensation to Crown if new problem gambling or smoking changes adversely affect Crown. Labor says this "poison pill" will not be "any impediment whatsoever to implementing problem gambling solutions if we believe them to be necessary".

Then why allow such a clause through? Why not pause on the deal, remove such a clause?

Labor says it can't "pull bricks out of the agreement". The only option was to scuttle the bill or let it go through. Labor should have scuttled a bad deal.

Crown has a lot of muscle and money. It is a huge employer and pays more than \$200 million in tax a year to state coffers.

In the past four years Crown has made more than 20 donations to the Victorian and federal branches of the Labor Party totalling more than \$50,000. The Libshave received similar largesse.

If Daniel Andrews believes the public should be allowed to make its call on important policy issues, he should pause on the Crown deal until after the election.

Let's be consistent.

Labor will

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make the best of this, and that is exactly what Labor has done," Mr Andrews said.

The Age can reveal the latest Crown deal has been pushed by the government without the social and economic impact assessment that was required for the last casino expansion, despite the Treasurer demanding this when he was in opposition. The new deal will grant the casino an extra 128 poker machines, 40 gaming tables and 50 more automated table game terminals.

The government has also removed the super tax on commission-based play for international and interstate VIP players.

In return, the government will collect an additional \$910 million in tax from Crown.

What we think of violence against women:

- 78%** agree it's hard to understand why women stay
- 51%** agree most women could leave a violent relationship if they really wanted to
- 98%** prepared to intervene if a known woman is being assaulted
- 92%** prepared to intervene if unknown woman is being assaulted
- 9%** agree a woman cannot be raped by someone with whom she is in a sexual relationship
- 64%** agree some men are unable to manage their anger
- 19%** agree that if a woman is raped while drunk/affected by drugs she is at least partly responsible
- 43%** agree rape results from men not being able to control their need for sex
- 17%** agree domestic violence is a private matter to be handled in the family

SOURCE: VICHEALTH

should have to endure

One woman is killed by their partner or ex-partner almost every week in Australia. Statistically, the most dangerous time for a woman is when she has left the violent relationship. "Women can't manage it alone. The situation can escalate quickly so they have to reach out and use the help that's available. There's actually lots of people who will support you."

After the final assault the police were called and they filed an interim protection order on her behalf, a step that had been a psychological barrier for Kristy.

The matter went to court and he was convicted of seriously recklessly causing injury and was sentenced to 14 months' jail. He

appealed (and was bailed for eight months) and the sentence was reduced to a two-year community corrections order.

Now divorced, Kristy reveals her address to no one. She has had to move twice and buy a different car. "It's a horrific life. Pieces of me have been taken away that I will never get back again."

Now Kristy is adjusting to her new life, new freedoms. She is dedicated to helping other women, encouraging them to seek help. "There is a way out, nobody deserves to be violated in that way."

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On web and mobile
See Tessa van der Riet's video of Kristy's story online.

honour casino's new deal

"This is another backflip from Daniel Andrews and Labor, but it is one we actually welcome," Treasurer Michael O'Brien said.

Crown pays rent of \$1 a year for its expansive Southbank site to the state government. The rent cost is to revert to a commercial rate after 2033. A government spokeswoman said the new Crown deal did not include any change to Crown's lease arrangement.

The deal to extend the Crown licence from 2033 to 2050 also includes a clause that could trigger the government being liable to pay Crown compensation of up to \$200 million for regulatory changes, including future problem gambling or smoking changes that have an adverse impact on Crown.

Yesterday, shadow gaming minister Martin Pakula said the compensation provisions in the new

Napthine-Crown deal would not stop it from pursuing programs to reduce problem gambling.

"We will make our decisions about problem gambling solutions on their merits not in response to this poison pill the government has put in this agreement," Mr Pakula said.

The Crown deal has drawn the ire of gambling reform activists. Anti-gambling campaigner Tim Costello called the decision one of the worst bipartisan decisions made in Victoria's history.

"Labor and Liberal have profoundly let the Victorian public down. This destroys any plans for reforms," Mr Costello warned.

Crown Resorts chief executive Rowen Craigie said Labor's decision would help provide long-term certainty for Crown and the 8800 people who worked there.

Fears over 'rushed' bill to recast anti-graft body

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passed. Notice of the changes was made on Tuesday, with the second reading of the bill, when it is formally released to the public, set for later this week. Each bill usually spends a week in each house of Parliament.

Dr Napthine said he believed Parliament should have time to pass the bills.

Major changes to IBAC include allowing the watchdog to undertake preliminary investigations before determining whether to dismiss, investigate or refer a complaint. All public sector bodies will also have to notify IBAC of any matters that they suspect on reasonable grounds involve corrupt conduct.

Labor has yet to be briefed on the bill but has demanded changes for more than a year.

It is understood both IBAC and the Ombudsman - who was also critical of the IBAC laws because they undermined its operation - have been consulted on the changes. Neither body would comment on Tuesday.

One of Mr Baillieu's advisers on establishing IBAC, Stephen Charles, QC, said it appeared the threshold for investigation had not been lowered by the changes.

The Premier's press release said: "Under the new threshold test, IBAC will be able to investigate conduct whenever IBAC is satisfied that the conduct, if proven, would constitute serious corrupt conduct and IBAC suspects on reasonable grounds that the conduct is in fact occurring or has occurred."

Mr Charles said, without having seen the legislation, that this still left the threshold too high.

Shadow attorney-general Martin Pakula



The Age on March 10, 2012

said the opposition had yet to be briefed on the legislation. He questioned whether Parliament would have time to debate and pass the amendments.

"If the government is planning to ram it through both houses in one sitting week then that is very close to treating the Parliament with contempt," Mr Pakula said.

Dr Napthine said he wanted the bill to be given fair and proper consideration by the Parliament and that he did not want any legislation "waved through Parliament".

"We believe there is time for the Parliament to consider these matters," he said.

The Premier said he did not expect there would be a need to extend the sitting hours of Parliament, with much of the legislation foreshadowed for months.

The government will also introduce legislation to expunge past homosexual convictions. Homosexual acts were decriminalised by the Hamer government in 1981.

Product Safety Recall

IKEA recalls GUNGGUNG children's swing for risk of serious injury

IKEA urges customers who have GUNGGUNG children's swing to immediately stop using the swing and return it to any IKEA store for a full refund.

Defect: IKEA has received reports of incidents showing that the suspension fittings do not live up to our quality requirements posing a risk of serious injury.

Hazard: The suspension fittings do not live up to our quality requirements posing a risk of serious injury. GUNGGUNG children's swing has been sold on all IKEA markets since 1st March 2014.

What to do: IKEA urges all customers that have an IKEA GUNGGUNG swing to immediately stop using it and to return it to any IKEA store for a full refund.

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Contact Details:
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