



BULLETIN 2018 – 19

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What's happening at Ascot:



On Tuesday 28 May 2019 Past President Hugh Langridge welcomed members and guests, Giddy Bermann (Mike Bermann brother visiting from Israel) and Guest Speaker Karen Kerlin from Starick to Ascot's Breakfast meeting.

Karen gave a very interesting and informative Presentation titled 'BEHIND CLOSED DOORS'
To read Karen notes go to page 3...



L-R Host Chair Leanne Barron and Project Officer (Starick) Karen

KAREN KERLIN - BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

My name is Karen Kerlin and I am a newly-appointed project officer at Starick. Our organisation provides practical and emotional support to women and children during a very difficult time in their lives - when they are combatting the dilemmas of domestic violence.

I know the topic of domestic violence or DV as it is referred to is not ideal to ponder as we share breakfast. But the facts cannot be ignored. And the facts relate to every single one of us in this room. In my research for this talk today, I came across some interesting information about DV in the entertainment world. The life of 79-year old rock singer Tina Turner has been plagued with violence at the hands of her ex-husband, the late Ike Turner. In her new memoir released late in 2018 called My Love Story, Tina's life in the 60s and 70s mirrors many of the same key concepts about Domestic Violence today.

Violence against women is now recognised to be a serious and widespread problem in Australia, with enormous individual and community impacts and social costs. Issues affecting employees in their private life often intrude into the workplace. These could be the people we share a cuppa with in the staff room. It could be the apprentice in our workshop. It may be the person we least expect that is facing very tough circumstances when their work day ends. Or even during their work day, when perpetrators may intimidate their victim with hundreds of text messages, emails, driving by the workplace or even stopping in unannounced.

There are some indicators that an employee or colleague may be experiencing domestic violence such as :

Arriving to work late or very early

Unexplained absences

Evidence of decreased concentration, performance and productivity.

A person may appear tense when receiving repeated personal phone calls. They may talk about marital or relationship problems or show other signs of fear, anxiety and depression. And, the obvious, indicators may be bruises, chronic headaches, abdominal pains, and muscle aches.

I'd like play a little game with you all now. Pretty simple, it's called ...

Did you know?

I left a little slip of paper on your table before I started speaking. Please turn your paper over. Now, when I ask you, please read aloud the information on your card. I will add some information based on what is read out.

(Underlined is what would be on the small card)

On average, **one woman a week** is murdered by her current or former partner in Australia.¹

1 in 3 Australian women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15.²

1 in 4 Australian women has experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner.⁵

297, 500 is the estimated number of Western Australians who have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner.

Australian women are nearly **three times more** likely than men to experience violence from an intimate partner.⁶

- **More than two-thirds (68%)** of mothers who had children in their care when they experienced violence from their previous partner said their children had seen or heard the violence.⁹
- **There is growing evidence** that women with disabilities are more likely to experience violence.¹²

In 2014–15, Indigenous women were **32 times as likely** to be hospitalised due to family violence as non-Indigenous women.¹⁴

This is a sombre reality check. So are details on the **impact** of domestic violence on society. On **our** society. Domestic violence is the **leading cause of homelessness** in WA (write this onto beaten up cardboard) for women with children. In 2016–17, about 72,000 women, 34,000 children and 9,000 men seeking homelessness services reported that family and domestic violence caused or contributed to their homelessness. It also results in a police call-out on average once every two minutes across the country.¹⁸ 120 seconds. During those seconds, yet another call for help.

Tina Turner's words link to the idea of homelessness and why she did not leave Ike. She says that the first time Ike struck her was years before their marriage, when she was pregnant with their first child together but wanted to NOT change her name, Anna Mae Bullock, to the one we now know so well.

That was the first time Ike hit me. He picked up a wooden shoe stretcher and struck me on the head — always the head, I learned through experience — and it really hurt. I was so shocked that I started to cry.

Ike's response was to order me to get on the bed. I really hated him at that moment; the very last thing I wanted to do was make love, if you could call it that. When he'd finished, I lay there with a swollen head, thinking: 'You're pregnant, Anna, and you have no place to go.'

Intimate partner violence with partners also has **serious impacts on women's health**- (write this onto beaten up cardboard) . Health issues include illness, disability and premature death, and mental health conditions like anxiety disorders and depression. I cannot imagine living every day of my life in fear.

What we saw on the outside was a hot lady showing us her moves, singing Proud Mary and Nutbush City Limits. But behind closed doors, Tina Turner writes of her life:

He threw hot coffee in my face, giving me third-degree burns. He used my nose as a punching bag so many times that I could taste blood running down my throat when I sang.

He broke my jaw. And I couldn't remember what it was like not to have a black eye. The people closest to us saw what was happening, but they couldn't stop him: any attempt to help me would make him more violent.

I was a frequent visitor to Emergency, although most of the time I just pulled myself together, applied make-up to the bruises and showed up at the next performance. If the doctors thought it was unusual that I had so many 'accidents,' they didn't say anything. They probably thought that was just the way black people were, always fighting.

So, why am I sharing this with you today?

Firstly, it is not all doom and gloom! It is reality, but look how far we, as a society, have progressed regarding raising awareness of and providing support to those experiencing mental health issues? Depression and anxiety

anxiety are talked about in workplaces. We are slowly making inroads to raise awareness about DV.

At a Federal level, there's continued dialogue with frontline services, about creating safe places and linking prevention strategies to much needed investment in the sector.

Since last year, the law now allows domestic violence victims to break leases within days if a tenancy agreement is in their name. This helps victims being chased for rent even if they have fled to a refuge. Or be up for damages when the very angry perpetrator smashes up the rental house – with the lease in her name.

In December 2018 the Fair Work Amendment Act 2018 took effect. The Fair Work Act 2009 now includes an entitlement to unpaid family and domestic violence leave as part of the National Employment Standards (NES). This entitlement applies to all employees (including part-time and casual employees).

Only last week the news reported that a Perth man who created a fake Instagram account in his ex-girlfriend's name and posted nude images of her without her consent could face a jail term, in the first case of someone being charged under new 'revenge porn' laws in WA.

So, as a society, we are taking small steps. But it will take some years to progress to where mental health now sits – where it is not a taboo topic and where real help is given to victims. Interestingly, 94% of employees agree employers should take a leadership role in educating their workforce about respectful relationships between men and women.

(soften tone)

Secondly, I take this opportunity to say **thank you**. Starick, particularly our clients residing temporarily in our two refuges in Armadale and Gosnells or in our transitional housing, rely so much on the financial and in-kind support from organisations such as your Rotary Club. It is appreciated, it is critical to our operations and as you know the call of all charities, we always need more! You are a bunch of fabulous folk who are lifesavers for some of our organisation and our clients!

Thirdly, the situation of DV needs to be tackled and I am asking each of you as individuals to **let me consult you** about my project. What do you think will encourage small and medium business owners and managers to stop and listen to the increasing importance of DV awareness? Perhaps managers lack knowledge in knowing how to deal with something they suspect a staff member is facing at home. So, is training needed or at least, some guidelines on how to initiate those delicate conversations or how to respond when a staff member shares their situation in confidence? Are there particular resources, tips and tools you think employees need whether they do or do not feel comfortable to disclose to their manager? I would love to visit you, sit and discuss your thoughts. About what is clearly, a sensitive topic? But talk is needed if we are to tackle the problem. You may have other suggestions of appropriate people for me to contact. My current focus is to have meaningful conversations with external contacts and within the industry about the topic. However, I would very much like **you** to be my starting point. And I have my diary with me!

Lastly, I wish to share with you an eye-opening projection from the Australian Human Rights Commission about what the future holds for our society in terms of DV.

The economic impact on our country is alarming. In terms of the annual cost to WA employers alone, DV is projected to be **\$235 million** in 2021/2022. Common costs and impacts affecting employees and the workplace include decreased performance and productivity, and increased absenteeism and presenteeism which is being at work but not productive.

We cannot make domestic violence disappear overnight. But change is needed and the trends in violence need to be halted. Did you know, in 2017, 11 people were killed in WA in domestic-related violence. In 2018, this had more than doubled to 28 lives lost. Victims need to know about services to help them work through their personal situations. Perpetrators need to know there is help available for them to learn to STOP the violent behaviour, to break the cycle of violence.

Let me share with you one last insight into domestic violence and music. Tom Jones' song Delilah is still crooned loudly across generations, once again, mainly at weddings! It has intrigue and revenge woven into the story line..... (either speak the lyrics or play if time).

*"I saw the light on the night that I passed by her window
I saw the flickering shadow of love on her blind
She was my woman
As she deceived me I watched and went out of my mind*

*My my my Delilah
Why why why Delilah
I could see, that girl was no good for me
But I was lost like a slave that no man could free..."*

The lyrics paint a much darker picture. Ladies and gentlemen, a lot goes on behind closed doors.

*"At break of day when that man drove away I was waiting
I crossed the street to her house and she opened the door
She stood there laughing
I felt the knife in my hand and she laughed no more*

What if the jealous ex-lover had information available in his workplace about dealing with his controlling behaviour? Perhaps an Employee Assistance Program was needed. Maybe his manager was observing the build up, but did nothing or felt ill-equipped to approach the subject. Perhaps the woman had been threatened by her ex but did not know who to turn to or what to do. I think staff at all levels needs access to resources about DV plus guidance on how to make information available or how to access it. As I have highlighted this morning, personal situations do permeate a person's professional life and ultimately, our workplaces.

Fellow Rotarians, in the words of Australian Psychologist Dr Leigh Hodder, domestic violence 'occurs across all layers of our society and thrives when good people fail to act on their suspicions.' I embrace this challenge Starick has given to me to help small and medium businesses be more informed about DV without being invasive; to show duty of care towards fellow staff in order to help staff be present, safe and productive at work; and to help make our workplaces large, medium or small - safe and healthy. It all adds up to a healthier society, better for us all.



The ConocoPhillips Science Experience is a fun 3 or 4 days of science activities for Year 9 and 10 students held at several universities in WA. Each program is designed to provide students who have an interest in science with an opportunity to engage in a wide range of fascinating science activities under the guidance of scientists who love their work.

The ConocoPhillips Science Experience has opened the application process for 2019/2020.

Contact Stuart Rutter for more information and an application form.

Email: stuartrutter@gmail.com

Rotary Club of Ascot members in action at Bunnings Sausage Sizzle on Federation Election Day 18 May 2019
It was a cold brisk start to the day but the day turned out to be a profitable one for the hard working Rotarians on the job throughout the day.



L-R Ron Alexander, Stephen Kendall, Joanna Kendall and Roma Gehringer (photo by Bulletin Editor Michelle Kendall)

SAVE THE DATE

On 20 July 2019 the Rotary Club of Ascot will having a double Celebration for Changeover and its 50 years as a Rotary Club

