Australia is suffering from a nightmare that keeps many of us tossing and turning; we wake in fright. It’s scary that, every week in Australia, one woman is killed by a former or current partner. It’s also scary that one in four young Australians has witnessed violence against their mothers. It’s a nightmare that many people may not even realise that what their partner is doing to them is abusive.

When anyone in a family or an intimate relationship tries to gain control or keep control over another person it is family violence, for it violates the innate dignity of the individual. The nightmare of misused power can be physical and sexual abuse, or more subtle psychological, emotional and financial abuse. A partner hitting the other, or taking away their phone, shouting derogatory names, controlling who they are allowed to see, what they are allowed to do—that is abuse.

Intimidating, belittling, threatening, stalking, damaging and raping; it’s happening in homes across Australia. Salvation Army officers and practitioners know there is no financial, class, religious or cultural exception to the abuse of power; the nightmare is a distressing reality in all sorts of homes across Australia.

No-one has to put up with abuse: it can be stopped. My dream is a community reaching out in caring confrontation.

There are programs that challenge and assist the perpetuators to change their behaviour. There are groups and agencies that empower abused persons to escape their nightmare, and heal and grow better relationships. We can help protect children and those in abusive relationships. We can live and encourage others to live in relationships of mutual respect, which enable everyone to flourish. I have a vision of a world where we all share grace, love, peace, where God’s joyous laughter is heard and made a reality for all, through us. Don’t tell me I’m dreaming!

**Major Geneen Wright**
assistant territorial social programme secretary

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**Male Violence Against Women**

In Australia:
- One woman dies each week from family/domestic violence
- 40% of all women have experienced violence since the age of 15
- Just under one-third of women (29%) have experienced physical assault
- 17% of women have experienced sexual assault
- 16% of women have experienced violence by a current or previous partner in their lifetime
- Since the age of 15, one-third of women (33%) have experienced inappropriate comments about their body or sex life, one quarter (25%) have experienced unwanted sexual touching, and one in five women (19%) have been stalked
- Two-thirds of the women suffering abuse are in the paid workforce
- Family violence costs workplaces half a billion dollars per annum

Data from [www.whiteribbon.org.au](http://www.whiteribbon.org.au)

Nationally, The Salvation Army:
- Sees more than 6,100 people who are affected by domestic and family violence each year
- Helps more than 237,000 people with emergency relief services each year
- Provides more than 10,100 beds for people in Salvation Army programs each week
- Distributes more than 10,000 allocations of food or food vouchers each week
- Advises and supports more than 10,000 people through financial counselling each year
- Supports more than 9,500 people addicted to alcohol, other drugs and/or gambling each year

Data from The Salvation Army’s Service and Mission Information System (SAMIS)
The use of violence to oppress those we ostensibly love is never acceptable. Major Geneen Wright (on page one of this supplement) rightly points out that family/domestic violence (FDV) can take numerous forms and is primarily about one human being controlling one or more others.

FDV takes many forms and can have devastating and lifelong consequences. As the ABC reported on the 2012 visit of the UN special rapporteur on violence against women, Australians have been urged to address ‘a fragmented approach to eliminating violence against women, and a society that struggles to openly discuss gender inequality and its relationship with violent crime’.

The ABC’s commentator, lawyer Katie O’Byrne, saw consensus in the Australian community in the wake of that message, believing that ‘Australians want to display solidarity against a sinister force that makes violence the most significant threat to the lives of women aged between 15 and 44 in Australia, whether emanating from family, acquaintance or stranger’.

‘This is not just a “feminist issue” or even just a “gender issue”; it is a human issue.’

Ms O’Byrne’s article (http://www.abc.net.au/unleashed/4332000.html) called for visibility, affinity, participation—putting FDV in people’s faces; helping all Australians identify with the injustice; and working together to prevent it in future.

‘But there is a gulf between our public rhetoric and our actions,’ she wrote, ‘and there has been no suggestion that a new government would do any better. The challenge is to eliminate not only the crimes themselves but also the silence and darkness that surrounds them. Surely, we all have a stake in that.’

FDV counsellors know that understanding an issue brings greater engagement.

The word ‘violence’ is linked to the Latin term for violation, which means both ‘an injury’ and ‘irreverence—to violate, treat with violence, outrage, dishonour’.

The use of power, predominantly by males, to bully others—to injure men, women and children, to violate their personal dignity and health, to dishonour their human rights and their status as individuals made in the image of God and loved by God—is a cancer on the body of Australian society.

The act and/or the threat of physical and sexual violence, the use of finances and emotions and relationships to enforce an individual’s will and push his or her own agenda is both the height of arrogance and the depth of human weakness.

Unlike the status quo in other times and cultures, men can no longer claim privilege, exception or provocation. There is no defence for the abuse of power to dominate others, and there is no rationalisation that will allow perpetrators to escape justice and legal action when survivors are finally empowered by Australian society to seek parity and redistributive justice.

If you have survived violent abuse, or if you are experiencing it in your life, please go to http://au.reachout.com/What-is-domestic-violence, call police in your state or call Lifeline for ‘support and advice in a personal crisis’ on 13 11 14.

See page four for ways to help work for the eradication of FDV.
Helping exploited people

As previously reported in *On Fire* and *Warcry*, Salvationists Ben and Sarah Knop travelled to Cambodia in May to see for themselves what was happening in trafficked people’s lives; *Others* shares some follow-up queries.

You reported that Daughters of Cambodia (DOC), a faith-based NGO funded by donations and a sponsorship program, administers fair trade businesses for young women. What are they? Daughters of Cambodia operate a cafe; a boutique stocking sleepwear, jewellery, toys and bags; a guesthouse; and a beauty spa. ‘Sons of Cambodia’ product is also stocked at the boutique, including screen-printed T-shirts and sunglass cases; see http://daughtersofcambodia.org for more information.

What is the age range of young women trafficked into sex work, and are there other genders or sexual orientations represented? We don’t know the age range of young women at DOC; however, at another social enterprise organisation we visited for victims of sexual trafficking, girls and young women working there (producing T-shirts and jewellery) were aged 15–17. DOC also works with young men through ‘Sons of Cambodia’. We would assume information regarding sexual orientation is confidential.

What exit strategies were deployed in successful transitions from sex work into safety and sustainable incomes? DOC partners with girls to apply individual exit strategies such as social service programs with medical services, counselling, domestic support, day care and a domestic violence project; education, including life skills, health education and literacy; creative classes or art therapy; and the invitational option to attend church. Success is evident in the beautiful, smiling faces of the girls; also in stories of young women who have been able to move on to great educational and business successes.

What responses do World Vision’s 24-hour wholesale food market and youth group street team make to vulnerable kids? World Vision responds to children’s needs by providing them with the chance to ‘be a child’ for a night, with colouring-in activities and story-telling. They educate them around child protection issues, child rights awareness, risks or cases of abuse, child labour and trafficking, and life skills including health and hygiene.

World Vision provides shelter for children while arranging more fixed housing arrangements. While children who attend World Vision’s street team activities are vulnerable to human trafficking, they are currently exploited through child labour. Many children we met earn a small income (approximately US$1 a day) picking through and selling rubbish from local rubbish dumps. They are exposed to disease and, in many cases, don’t attend school. A recent Cambodian socio-economic survey revealed over 300,000 Cambodian children engage in the most dangerous forms of child labour.

The Salvation Army’s corps in Cambodia, Phnom Penh Corps, is a new church; what inroads are they making? On the day we attended, over 200 children came to kids’ church and around 100 people were at the main service/meal. The corps is well supported by The Salvation Army in Korea. The relationships they build and the support they offer is well-received. It’s evident that the Holy Spirit is moving powerfully in their community.

As well as the sex trade, what other forms of trafficking are applicable to Cambodia? The sex trade is certainly best known internationally; it gets the most media attention and is highlighted in films such as *Half The Sky*. The International Labour Organization estimates that 43% of trafficking victims are sexually exploited.

We found, however, that labour and forced marriage trafficking were the prominent issues for the Cambodian people. With Cambodia bordering Thailand and Vietnam, and being in close proximity to China and Malaysia, many Cambodians are trafficked across borders.

Victims of trafficking are often provided with an opportunity to earn a higher wage (US$1–US$2 a day) in Thailand and so they make the decision to migrate, only to find when they arrive they have been deceived. They are enslaved as labourers. An all-too-common example of this is boys and young men who are trafficked onto fishing boats in Thailand.

Do people wanting to assist trafficked persons encounter opposition from corrupt government/police/military personnel? NGOs including World Vision are committed to partnering with governments and the police to eradicate the issue of trafficking.

As has been widely reported by organisations including Transparency International, there is undoubtedly corruption in Cambodia, but NGOs who have made connections with local authority and government groups have seen some successful partnerships.
As part of Australia’s national plan to reduce violence against women and their children 2010-2022*, the Federal Government has announced a ‘new national body to boost efforts to prevent violence against women’.

The Minister for the Status of Women, Julie Collins, made the announcement at the inaugural White Ribbon International Conference in Sydney (May 2013). The body will receive $1 million in annual funding and work to ‘advocate and engage with the community about preventing violence’.

The minister declared that, ‘We will be consulting with the non-government sector, with governments and with other experts across Australia about the work of this foundation. In setting up this organisation, we will collaborate with, learn from and support existing best practice primary prevention organisations, such as White Ribbon Australia.

‘We want to make sure that, from the outset, the community takes ownership of this initiative and of preventing violence against women.’

This year, White Ribbon Night fell on Friday 26 July. The fundraiser and awareness campaign saw Australians hosting others ‘to get the word out about the seriousness of the issue of men’s violence against women in Australia’.

Salvationists and Salvation Army staff are encouraged to join and actively support White Ribbon; billed as ‘the world’s largest male-led movement to end men’s violence against women’. A non-profit NGO, White Ribbon Australia is also the only national, male-led primary prevention campaign to end men’s violence against women.

Through primary prevention initiatives and an annual campaign, White Ribbon Australia seeks to change the attitudes and behaviours that lead to and perpetuate men’s violence against women, by engaging boys and men to lead social change.

In particular, Australia’s unique Ambassadors’ Program supports thousands of men to be the faces and leaders of the campaign, by living the White Ribbon Oath: never to commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women.

Women support White Ribbon Australia through their roles as White Ribbon Champions, encouraging the men in their lives to make a commitment to promote positive attitudes and behaviours toward women, as well as to intervene safely to prevent violence against women when needed.

White Ribbon Day celebrates the culmination of the annual campaign and global recognition of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. As such, men and women are encouraged to wear a symbolic white ribbon on 25 November.

Members and staff of The Salvation Army, a national provider of compassionate care to women and children who have survived family and domestic violence, can take this opportunity to express solidarity with those individuals by gearing up for White Ribbon Day, which will also signal the start of 16 Days of Activism to stop violence against women. Programs and corps are encouraged to get on board.

Rather than ignore or dismiss the problem, or see it as someone else’s job to fix, White Ribbon calls on all male Australians to recognise that ‘the violence perpetrated by men against women must stop and it is up to men to stop it’.

‘The victims are not merely statistics; they are wives, sisters, mothers, daughters and friends. Good men cannot and will not sit on the sidelines while those they love are at risk of harm. The White Ribbon Campaign is about recognising the positive role that men play in preventing violence against women. It fosters and encourages male leadership in the prevention of violence against women, based on the understanding that most men are not violent.

‘The campaign is a means for men to speak out against violence against women, and to safely and effectively challenge the attitudes and behaviours of a minority of men who use or condone violence against women.’

To join as an ambassador, to host events or to initially gain more information, Others encourages all Australians, especially males, to go to www.whiteribbon.org.au—let’s take positive action.

*Endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments, COAG; released February 2011.