 Aboriginal Issues

- The Aboriginal workshop of this conference explicitly and totally rejects the myth that sexual assault is in any way condoned by traditional Aboriginal law.

- There is an urgent need to recruit and retain at least equivalent numbers of female Aboriginal police aides to deal with issues of violence against Aboriginal women.

- There is an urgent need to ensure that the voice of the Aboriginal women is heard in any consultations with the Aboriginal community and that the status and rights of Aboriginal women are respected in the law reform process.

- Further research is urgently needed to examine the implications for women arising from the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody recommendations.

- Aboriginal organisations need to establish clear guidelines and protocols regarding the recruitment, employment and training of non-Aboriginal staff.

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1 Topic areas are presented in alphabetical order.
Community Awareness

- This conference recommends that there be statewide community awareness campaigns in each state using radio and television to address the false myths of rape that discount survivors' experience, confound prosecution and hinder recovery for people who are raped. In line with such campaigns, counselling services for survivors of sexual assault need to be adequately funded in the lead-up to such campaigns so that they can meet the increased demand for counselling that is generated.

Criminal Justice System

- This conference calls on every state to enact legislation and court procedures to ensure that women's experiences of sexual assault are not discounted or discredited through the legal system.

- The Australian Institute of Criminology should write to the committees of the Attorneys-General and urge that, in reviewing matters to do with the media, they have particular regard to the AJA Code of Ethics and other articles of self-regulation, and ensure that these self-regulatory devices are enforceable and enforced, particularly with respect to the rights of victims to compassion, respect and protection against invasion of privacy.

Education

- Within the development of policies and protocols for schools, the Education Department and schools should affirm the right of all students to learn in a safe environment; that curriculum and education materials used in schools promote an awareness of issues of violence and promote non-sexist, non-racist and non-violent behaviour; that professional education programs be available for all teachers, principals and school support staff—addressing violence in schools and in particular gender-based violence and sexual harassment; that schools develop codes of practice to respond to sexual harassment and gender-based harassment; and that schools recognise gender-based harassment is occurring right now and develop policies and protocols to prevent it.

- Tertiary institutions must recognise that they have a legislative obligation to ensure equal participation in all aspects of tertiary life and recognise that personal safety on campus is an issue.

- As a sign of commitment to these principles, tertiary institutions across Australia are strongly urged to establish a personal safety awareness position to undertake systematic education and training with the aim of reducing violence, overt and covert, on campuses nationally.
The topic of Sexual Assault should be an option/compulsory in degree courses. Units would be credited towards degrees and raise awareness of violence across the community.

The impact of the training that has been made available to health workers and police is acknowledged with the consequent improvement in many sectors of the response to victims of sexual assault. Mandatory training for the judiciary, the magistracy and other members of the legal profession needs to be introduced in order that community attitudes be reflected in their judgements and conduct of sexual assault matters.

The National Women's Health Program should be funded by Commonwealth and State Governments.

The Judiciary

- An accountability mechanism should be developed for the judiciary which is not the Appeals Court but rather structured to respond to community outrage.
- This conference recommends the introduction in all states of a strategy to bring about a judiciary and magistracy that reflects the diversity of Australian society, including proportionate representation of women and diverse cultural groups.
- The conference expresses its concern at the lack of attendance by the judiciary at this conference.

The Police

- The police forces of Australia need to educate their members in the sensitivity required while investigating reported crimes of sexual assault and that they adopt a policy of specialisation and the application of the appropriate resources.

Survivors of Rape

- A national policy regarding victim compensation and the responsibility to inform victims of their rights, with uniform administration and authorities, needs to be established.
- A national position on the policy and procedures underlying compensation for victims of crime; a national Charter of Victim's Rights; and the use of victim impact statements in criminal trials, should be worked on by the State Attorneys-General.
The community needs to make a genuine effort to include people from the community (particularly survivors of rape and sexual assault,) in efforts to prevent rape, so that the community can own and take responsibility for it.

This conference should support a consultative process involving all states to lobby the Federal Government for adequate, equitable and ongoing funding for sexual assault services for survivors of sexual assault and abuse throughout Australia.

This conference recommends that, given the extreme importance of the reactions of others after rape, each state publish grievance procedures for survivors who have received unsatisfactory treatment by health services, police and the Director of Public Prosecutions. Survivors should be informed of the outcome of the process.