

You have the right to.....

- * Live free from fear and violence
- * be heard and acknowledged.
- * be treated with dignity and respect.
- * make your own choices and have them respected.
- * know the name and qualifications of your Counsellor Advocate.
- * confidentiality and privacy.
- * Have an interpreter and be given appropriate verbal and written information in the language of your choice.
- * decline student presence or services, and decline involvement in research or media work.
- * a fair and clear investigation of complaints about service provision.

Barwon CASA believes that it is the right of victim/survivors to be fully informed of their choices on any issues that affects them.

Contacting us

**Barwon CASA is open
Monday to Friday
9.00am to 5.00pm**

(appointments may be offered outside of standard business hours)

Business Hours

Barwon: (03) 5222 4318

Wimmera: (03) 5381 1211

Sexual Assault Crisis Line

(24 hour service)

1800 806 292

Email

admin@barwoncasa.org

wimmera@barwoncasa.org

Web

www.casa.org.au

Barwon: Level 1, 59-63 Spring Street
Geelong West VIC 3218

Wimmera: 25 Roberts Avenue
Horsham 3400

Postal Address: PO Box 245
Geelong VIC 3220



Barwon CASA
Counselling Services

Barwon Multi Disciplinary Centre

The Barwon Multi Disciplinary Centre (MDC) provides the following services:

- * Barwon CASA provides information, counselling and advocacy to victim/survivors of sexual assault and to their non-offending family or carers.
- * Victoria Police, Sexual Offences & Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT) provides specialist investigations to identify, apprehend and prosecute offenders.
- * Child Protection, Sexual Abuse Investigation Team (SAIT) practitioners conduct protective investigations and interventions in accordance with the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*.

What is a MDC?

The Barwon MDC is located in Geelong and is a partnership between Barwon CASA, Victoria Police and DHS Child Protection for the investigation of sexual assault against adults; both male and female, young people and children.

MDCs seek to provide victim/survivors of sexual assault and child abuse, safety, support, and access to the criminal justice system within an integrated, seamless and multi-disciplinary environment.

What is the aim of the MDC?

MDC partners recognise that sexual assault is a gendered crime. This approach acknowledges that women and girls are the majority of victim/survivors with the overwhelming majority of offenders being male and known to the victim/survivor. The MDC also acknowledges that men and boys are victims of sexual assault and experience trauma. The MDC aims to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all victim/survivors. The MDC provides access to support, information, criminal justice processes and services appropriate to individual need.

Will you be required to talk to Police or Child Protection?

Talking to the Police is always an option to consider when you have been sexually assaulted or experience family violence. However it is your choice whether you wish to talk to Police and we will support you in your decision.

For children who have been sexually assaulted, mandatory reporting applies in Victoria. In this circumstance, Police and/or Child Protection will need to be consulted.

What are the benefits of the MDC?

There are many benefits of the co-location in the MDC including:

- * Capacity across all three organisations to provide holistic support to victim/survivors and non-offending family members
- * Opportunity to immediately connect victim/survivors with therapeutic counselling responses or the criminal justice system
- * Improved continuity of care and ongoing support to victim/survivors throughout the criminal justice process.
- * Greater confidence in the criminal justice system by victim/survivors
- * More timely assessment of the needs of victim/survivors with disabilities and cognitive impairments
- * Reduced barriers to participation, access and inclusion in the criminal justice system for victim/survivors of sexual assault
- * Improved longer term wellbeing outcomes through coordinated support

Will my information be shared with Police or Child Protection in the MDC?

Barwon CASA complies with the *Information Privacy Act 2008*. All information is securely stored. Information can only be shared with professionals from other organisations with your knowledge and written consent.

There are however three exceptions to this:

1. If we have reason to believe that a person aged 17 years or younger, is at risk of harm.
2. If we have reason to believe that you may seriously hurt yourself or someone else.
3. If there are criminal justice proceedings, your file may be subject to a subpoena. If this happens we may oppose the request in order to protect the privacy of your file. However, in the event that we are unsuccessful we are legally required to hand over your file. We will try to contact you and inform you of this prior to any action being taken.

What Laws protect my information?

Our organisation complies with all the requirements of the *Information Privacy Principles 2000* and the *Victorian Health Services Act*, including the *Health Records Act 2001* and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. This governs how your information is collected, held, managed, used, disclosed, transferred or destroyed.

Need more information?

If you wish to remain anonymous while using our service please speak with a Counsellor Advocate.

If you have further questions about the MDC or would like to request access to your information, contact the Chief Executive Officer during business hours on (03) 5222 4318.