

# Media Release

---

17 March 2016

## **VIOLENCE Prevention Program delivered to local high schools**

Bellarine Secondary College and Matthew Flinders Girls Secondary College, in partnership with the Barwon Centre Against Sexual Assault, (Barwon CASA) have recently signed up to a Respectful Relationships program for Year 9 and 10 students – the Sexual Assault Prevention Program in Secondary Schools (SAPPSS) to be delivered in 2016. SAPPSS encourages girls to be more assertive and boys to be more respectful. The six sessions for students include definitions and issues, consent and communication, impacts of sexual assault, respectful relationships and prevention, speaking up about sexual assault and being a bystander.

*“At Matthew Flinders Girls we are excited at the possibility this program will further provide our girls to understand the issues of gender inequality, how to participate in respectful relationships and what to do if they do not turn out to be what they expected.”* Michelle Crofts, Principal Matthew Flinders Girls Secondary College.

*“We know that developing respectful relationships has always been a challenge for young people but in an age where the messages coming from many forms of media are conflicting, it is even more difficult. The professional training provided to our staff will ensure the messages from the program are embedded in the school and are supported across the College. Our goal is for Bellarine students to develop as respectful and resilient individuals and this program will certainly support that.”* Mrs Alison Murphy, Principal Bellarine Secondary College.

In 2015, the Department of Education and Training announced that respectful relationships education will be part of the new Victorian curriculum from 2016. This advice stems from the well researched link between gender inequality, adherence to rigid gender roles, violence supportive attitudes and the prevalence of violence against women. SAPPSS was developed by CASA House Melbourne and has been operating in Victorian schools for a number of years. SAPPSS becomes an ongoing program in secondary colleges after an initial three year rollout involving a school and CASA partnership. It is co-presented in schools by Barwon CASA and school staff. *“Teachers are supported by co-presenting with CASA staff who are experienced in this program and in dealing with the issues which arise when teenagers discuss relationships. An important aspect is the training provided to the teachers before the program begins and the ongoing support that the CASA gives.”* Barwon CASA Prevention of Violence Against Women Project Officer, Dr Pamela Bjork-Billings.

Other schools who have delivered the program include St Joseph’s College, North Geelong Secondary College, Nelson Park School and Clonard College. *“The SAPPSS Program encourages girls to be more assertive and boys to become more respectful. It also aims for both sexes to consider the consequences of their decisions. This program teaches issues in a structured and progressive manner that gives students a thorough understanding of the issues around sexual assault. The SAPPSS program has the potential to significantly change attitudes as shown by the success of the program*

at North Geelong Secondary College. I believe that this program should be in all schools.” Paul Dawson, Assistant Principal, North Geelong Secondary College.

For further information, please contact:

Dr Pam Bjork-Billings, Barwon CASA on (03) 5222 4318 / [pam@barwoncasa.org](mailto:pam@barwoncasa.org) or

Helen Bolton, CEO Barwon CASA (03) 5222 4318/0401 281 912 / [helenbolton@barwoncasa.org](mailto:helenbolton@barwoncasa.org)



*Photograph: Mary Thompson Photography*

**Left to right:**

Michelle Crofts, Principal Matthew Flinders Girls Secondary College; Helen Bolton, CEO Barwon CASA; Alison Murphy, Principal, Bellarine Secondary College

Please contact Louise Tracey 5222 4318/ [louise@barwoncasa.org](mailto:louise@barwoncasa.org) for original photo or for other photos relating to the program