

Women's Health Tasmania

NEWSLETTER



SPRING 2017

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HERE FOR ALL WOMEN



Marriage, Misinformation and Mayhem

by Jen Van-Achteren,
Health Worker

There are a lot of myths and misinformation in the public arena about marriage equality and what it could mean for the future of Australia. There is also a lack of understanding regarding the processes which could be used to inform and decide the issue, let alone the financial and emotional costs to the Australian public. In this very long, but comprehensive, article we shine a light on the issue causing mayhem for many Australians.

Background – How we ended up with a postal survey on marriage equality

Changes to federal legislation - including, in the past, the Marriage Act - are made by Parliament. The only time a referendum can be held is to make changes to the Constitution. Given there is nothing in the Australian Constitution about the nature of marriage, there is - and was - no trigger for a referendum. Ireland had to hold a referendum on marriage equality because the Irish Constitution had to be changed to allow same-sex couples to marry. This is not the case in Australia.

A national plebiscite, in Australia, is a compulsory vote by citizens on an issue of national significance. There have only been 3 national plebiscites in Australia:

1916: military service conscription (defeated)

1917: reinforcement of the Australian Imperial Force overseas (defeated)

1977: choice of Australia's national song ('Advance Australia Fair' preferred.)

The outcome of a plebiscite does not bind the Parliament to act on the wishes of the Australian people, making it a very expensive and divisive opinion poll. As prominent constitutional lawyer George Williams stated, "Plebiscites are rare in Australia. They go against the grain of a system in which we elect parliamentarians to make decisions on our behalf".⁽¹⁾

The Federal Coalition Government, determined to deliver on its promise to put the issue of marriage equality to the people, twice tabled legislation to enable a national compulsory, but non-binding, plebiscite on marriage equality; on both occasions, the legislation was voted down. Consultants Pricewaterhouse Coopers estimated the full cost of a plebiscite at \$525 million.⁽²⁾

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The Government then instructed the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to conduct a non-compulsory non-binding postal survey. The Government estimated the postal survey will cost the Australian taxpayer \$122 million. Former High Court judge Michael Kirby said the same-sex marriage postal survey is "something we've never done in our constitutional arrangements of Australia".⁽³⁾ See the ABC's Fact Check website for more information.

The postal survey was the subject of High Court challenges brought by two groups of plaintiffs: the first comprising independent MP Andrew Wilkie, Victorian mother-of-three Felicity Marlowe and Shelley Argent from Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays; the second involving Australian Marriage Equality and Greens Senator Janet Rice. The plaintiffs argued the government had unlawfully financed the postal survey through a special funding pool, which sets aside money specifically for urgent and unforeseen matters (Appropriation Act Section 10).⁽⁴⁾ They argued the criteria of urgent and unforeseen had not been met, because Government ministers had been discussing "alternative measures" to deliver on the promise of a public vote publicly for approximately 6 months prior. They also contended the postal survey did not fall under the "ordinary annual services of government" and the Australian Bureau of Statistics did not have the authority to collect the kind of information the Government was requesting.⁽⁵⁾

The Solicitor-General Stephen Donaghue, QC, argued, while a compulsory plebiscite had previously been canvassed, a voluntary vote conducted by the ABS had not been decided by Cabinet until August - and therefore had not been foreseen.⁽⁵⁾

The plaintiffs failed to convince the bench the postal survey was unlawful, which meant the postal survey went ahead. The survey closes on November 7, with the results due to be published on the ABS website on November 15.

The results of both the proposed plebiscite and the current postal survey can be ignored by the Federal Government.

Religion and Marriage

Chapter 5 Section 116 of the Australian Constitution states: "The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth."⁽⁶⁾

This means different religious and spiritual beliefs are welcome and people of faith are free to practise their religion within the boundaries of the law. In addition, it also means no laws can be made which impose religious observance on the people of Australia.

Marriage, unlike religious ceremonies - such as, bar mitzvahs and baptisms - is a civil institution recognised in Federal law in the Marriage Act 1961. As pointed out by Dr Olivia Rundle, in the Winter 2011 edition of our Newsletter, "Legal marriage and religious marriage are distinct institutions. The government approves religious organisations to conduct religious marriage ceremonies, according to religious rites, which will be automatically recognised as having satisfied the legal requirements for marriage."⁽⁷⁾ Civil celebrants are authorised by the Government to conduct civil ceremonies using words prescribed by the Act. Of course, both religious and civil marriages are not considered legal until the paperwork has been filled in, signed and the marriage registered with the relevant state government.

Not surprisingly, under the current legislation opposite sex couples can marry even if they have different religious beliefs or none at all. In Australia, the vast majority (70%) of marriages are performed by civil celebrants rather than a religious official.⁽⁸⁾

Dr Rundle also stated, "Religious freedom also means religious institutions can choose who is eligible to marry within them. If marriage between two people of the same sex was legal, there would be no obligation imposed upon churches to marry same sex couples."⁽⁷⁾

To date, marriage equality bills have been introduced by members of parliament representing the Australian Democrats, Australian Greens, Australian Labor Party, Liberal Democratic Party, Liberal Party of Australia and by Independents. All of the 22 Bills put forward on the issue of marriage equality since the Howard Government amended the Marriage Act in 2004 - by inserting the definition of marriage as a union of a man and a woman - continued to provide religious institutions with the ability to choose who is eligible to marry within them.⁽⁹⁾ Marriage equality advocates have repeatedly and clearly stated they respect the legal right of religious institutions to choose who is eligible to marry within them. No one plans to legislate to force churches to perform ceremonies for non-heterosexual couples.

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Leading Feminist

Thordis Elva is an author, a playwright, a screenwriter, an entrepreneur and a motivational speaker.

Her recent book, "South of Forgiveness" is a non-fiction narrative about how she was raped at the age of 16 by her first boyfriend, Tom Stranger, who co-authored the book with her.

Following a viral TED Talk with Tom in October 2016, Thordis has since addressed worldwide audiences through her appearances and interviews, with the hope that her story can raise awareness of sexual violence and the importance of consent.

Q. When and how did you become involved in the feminist movement?

I was raised by feminist parents, both of whom had careers and divided the household chores equally between them. I'll issue a trigger warning for the next thing I'm about to say, but my first boyfriend raped me when I was 16 years old, and we've spoken publicly about it in our TED talk as well as in our book, *South of Forgiveness*. As a part of my recovery, I educated myself about sexual violence and realised how it's a part of gender-based violence, with a majority of perpetrators being male and a majority of survivors being female. It motivated me to join the fight to prevent other women and girls from experiencing what I went through.

Q. What inspired you to become involved in the feminist movement?

I had a defining moment when I was 23 and was told by a male customer at the car dealership where I worked that the only thing I was "good for" was "pouring milk in his coffee". It became yet another encouragement to eradicate sexist views and gender-based discrimination. A few years later, a man was acquitted of raping a teenage girl in Iceland because she had not fought back hard enough, according to the Reykjavik District Court. That inspired me to write my first book. To sum up, various forms of injustice have served as my biggest encouragement to do something about it.



Thordis Elva

Q. Is there a particular woman or women you admire. And why?

Oh my, yes! There are so many women I admire. Pat Mitchell, for smashing the glass ceiling for women in media, Clementine Ford for her feisty writing and fearless activism, Kimberlé Crenshaw who coined the term "intersectionality", to name a few. I could go on and on!

Q. What do you consider to be the greatest achievement of the movement?

That sexism is no longer accepted as the default way in which the world works. Yes, sexism still exists, but it's no longer acceptable to automatically rule out women due to their gender, which was the norm only a few decades ago.

Q. What do you consider your greatest achievement to be?

To have managed to turn the most destructive experience of my life into a constructive force, by breaking my silence and talking publicly about the sexual violence I've been subjected to. It has resulted in many people speaking up about their own abuse, as I've been told in countless letters and messages. It inspires and encourages me every day.

Q. How would you respond to women who question the value of feminism?

I'd say this: The way in which you lead your life is your choice, but that choice is a result of the hard work of feminists who came before you. If you enjoy your right to vote, open a bank account, drive a car and get an education, you should acknowledge the feminists who made that a possibility for you. It took the blood, sweat and tears of brave women who paved the way so that you could lead the life you have. Think of feminism however you want, but the least you can do is know your history.

Q. How do you stay inspired in the face of lack of progress on issues for women, such as the disparity in pay rates or the level of violence against women?

Because I see fantastic changes happen every day. For example, when I first started talking about my status as a rape survivor 8 years ago, only four other people in Iceland had broken their silence publicly. Now, thanks to social media campaigns like #outloud, thousands of people have come forward with their experiences of abuse, refusing to be silenced or shamed. The world is changing and we must never forget that or give up the fight, even though it happens frustratingly slowly sometimes.

Q. Is there one message you would like to share, with the next generation, about feminism?

I hope that one day, there will be no need for feminism, as gender equality will have been reached for all women, including the disabled, LBTGQI and racial/religious minorities among us. Until then, we need to be continuously working towards that goal. It starts with you.

ENCORE NEWS

Encore is an eight-week program of two hours duration, specially designed for women who have had breast cancer. It helps restore mobility, flexibility and confidence through gentle exercise.



The program provides trained facilitators, floor and warm water exercises and the opportunity for women to support one another.

Encore programs are free to participants and designed for women who have had breast cancer at any time in their lives.

Hobart

The next Encore program will be held in February, 2018.

Contact Rosemary for further details on 6231 3212. or via email at rosemary@womenshealthtas.org.au

Launceston

The next Encore program will be held in February, 2018.

Contact Mandy via manda_page@yahoo.com.au for further details.

North West

The next Encore program will be held in February, 2018.

Contact Kris on 0407 341 585 for further details.

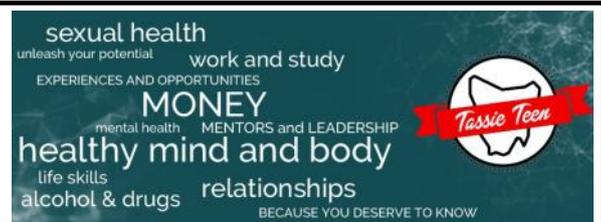


Web Spinning

Tassie Teen is the project of a Tasmanian family who saw the need for a comprehensive online tool for Tasmanian youth, families and the community as a whole.

Tassie Teen aims to help navigate life's challenges and to help find the information and services needed to support you or the young person in your life.

Find Tassie Teen's website at <https://www.tassiteen.com.au/> or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TassieTeen/>



The evolution of marriage

Opponents of marriage equality claim marriage has been the same for centuries and therefore should not be changed. The fact is marriage has continued to evolve over the centuries - including in recent times. In biblical times, men were permitted more than one wife. It is believed by scholars the third-century Saints Sergius and Bacchus - Roman soldiers, Christian martyrs and men who loved each other - were united in the rite of adelphopoiesis, a kind of early Christian same-sex marriage. In his book, *Same Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe*, Yale history professor John Boswell names Sergius and Bacchus as one of the three primary pairs of same-sex lovers in the early church. The others are Polyeuct and Nearchus and Felicity and Perpetua.⁽¹⁰⁾

Not so long ago, women were considered the property of their husbands and had no right to their own property. In Australia, changing values have resulted in our marriage laws being altered a number of times; for example, to allow mixed-race couples to marry, and to remove discrimination against women and Aboriginal people. According to opinion polls, the majority of Australians (60 to 70%) believe it is now time to recognise lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people as equals whose loving and committed relationships are valued equally in law.

Myths and misinformation

In recent months, we have seen opponents of marriage equality resort to a fear campaign about what they state are the consequences of permitting marriage equality - in the hope people will be scared and decide to keep the status quo. Many of the claims used to scare people concern children and freedom of speech.

Opponents make sweeping statements that marriage is about having children and the union of a man and a woman is the ideal environment in which to raise them. The facts are many heterosexual couples who marry can't, or don't want to, have children. For some who do, medical intervention - including donor tissue or surrogacy - is necessary to bring a child into the world. And the truth is many same-sex couples are already having and raising children, and have been doing so for quite some time. Same-sex couples are able to foster children throughout Australia. Women in same-sex couples can access Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) and In vitro fertilization (IVF) in all state and territories. ART/IVF is available for surrogates of male couples everywhere in Australia except Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Same-sex couples are now able to adopt in all states and territories except the Northern Territory, where the Labor Government intends to introduce legislation

shortly which will allow this to occur. Contrary to what opponents would have us believe, credible peer-reviewed studies conclude children raised by same-sex couples have the same levels of social, sexual and emotional adjustment as other children.⁽⁸⁾ Some studies even suggest their social skills and compassion for others are higher. Of course, the children of same-sex couples fare best when the relationship of their parents is valued and respected.

Claims marriage equality will lead to changes in education policy and curriculum, using emotive language, are designed to bewilder and scare people. Marriage reform has nothing to do with the education of our children. Students will continue to be provided with age-appropriate information. The Premier, Will Hodgman, and the Education Minister, Jeremy Rockliff, have both stated emphatically marriage equality will not alter how or what children are taught in schools. The current education programs referred to by opponents of marriage equality in their advertising materials have been endorsed by the three main political parties in Tasmania. The programs are designed to train teachers to have the confidence and skills to deal with prejudice and bullying, and do not involve sex education.⁽⁸⁾

The suggestion, by opponents, marriage equality will erode freedom of speech is another attempt to frighten the public. People will be able to continue to express their opinions, just as they can now, as long as it is within the laws which protect the rights of all people.⁽⁸⁾ With the right to freedom of speech comes the responsibility to consider the impact your words and their meaning may have on a fellow human being.

Sadly, hurtful and discriminatory things have been said and written by both sides of the debate on marriage equality. It is possible to have a respectful dialogue on this issue when people on both sides are beholden to be considerate. For people who have never felt they didn't fit society's mould, been bullied or discriminated against, it would be near on impossible to truly comprehend the impact such feelings and incidents have on people who have. LGBTIQ people have been, and continue to be, rejected by their families, friends, communities and institutions. The negative impact this debate has had on the well-being of LGBTIQ people and their families is profound; even more so when it is combined with years, even decades, of discrimination.

Strong, out and proud activists talk on social media of how they struggle to cope some days with having to endure listening to people debate the validity of their loving committed relationships, and whether or not they deserve to be considered an equal citizen. Imagine how

more over...

hard it must be for the young person, still in the closet, living in an isolated regional area. Or the children of a same-sex couple who just want their parents to be able to get married like their peers' parents.

Many people believe same-sex couples enjoy the same recognition as de facto partners in law. Same-sex couples can even have civil unions in most states. Sadly, the reality is there are many instances where the current legal rights of same-sex couples have not been recognised, because their legal unions are not as widely understood or respected as marriage. Opposite-sex de facto couples have the right to choose to marry; at present, same-sex de facto couples do not. ⁽⁸⁾

Liberal politicians, including the Prime Minister and Finance Minister Mathias Cormann, have suggested the high rate of returns of the postal survey proves the Australian public wanted to have their say on marriage equality and the rights of an entire section of the population.⁽¹¹⁾ Advocates for marriage equality would argue the postal survey is the last thing the LGBTIQ community, their families, friends and supporters wanted. Imagine having to ask every eligible voter in Australia if you can marry the person you love; to ask, cap in hand, whether you deserve to be treated as an equal citizen. The LGBTIQ community did not want to have to endure what they knew would be a divisive and damaging debate. Many supporters of the LGBTIQ community expressed their horror at being able to vote on the rights of their family and friends. The high return rate on the part of supporters of marriage equality is more about being backed into a corner by this government. Supporters recognise the government won't amend the Marriage Act if the outcome is not a resounding Yes.

Our position

Women's Health Tasmania supports the Yes campaign for marriage equality. We believe when the laws of our country treat all its citizens as equals it will have a positive and lasting impact on the health and well-being of LGBTIQ people and their families.

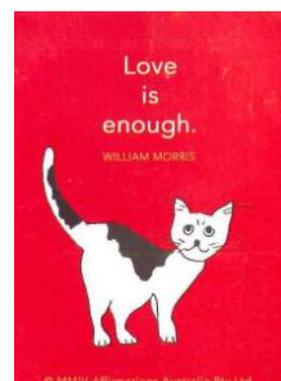
What now?

The results of the postal survey will be published on the ABS website on November 15. If the majority of surveys are in favour of marriage equality, the Turnbull government has promised to introduce legislation to amend the Marriage Act to allow same-sex couples to marry. While this will be a cause for celebration for advocates of marriage equality, it will be difficult for opponents. There are concerns on both sides of the debate about the details in the Bill to change the Marriage Act - but that would be a whole other article! Let's cross that bridge when we get there.

If you haven't returned your postal survey yet, there is still time. Get it in the post before October 27 or drop it in to an ABS office by November 7. Please consider reminding your friends and family to do so too.

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- (10) Cherry, [Kittredge \(October 7, 2017\)](#). [Sergius and Bacchus: Paired male saints loved each other in ancient Roman army.](#) <http://gspirit.net/sergius-bacchus-paired-male-saints/>
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WHAT'S ON @ WHT

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|----|--|---|---|--|---|
| AM | | <p>10:30 - 11:30am Meditation Guided and safe with Jean Gilbert. By donation Last session for 2017 is November 28. Recommences January 9, 2018</p> | <p>9:45 - 11am Yoga (Hatha) experienced with Jo. \$8 per session Come early for a spot.</p> | <p>10 - 11:30am Meditation Mindfulness & Self Compassion Starting November 2, 2017 for 4 weeks initially. Valerie 0405 329 687 See page 10</p> | <p>10am - 2pm Waste to Wonderful Textile skill sharing. Until December 1, 2017 Contact Jen on 0417 137 100</p> |
| | | <p>10 - 11:30am Fitball (beginners) Gil Whitehouse \$8</p> | <p>10:30 - 12:30 Women's Walks 6231 3212 Last session for 2017 is December 1. Recommences January 10, 2018</p> | | |
| | <p>11am - 12pm Tai Chi Weekly \$8</p> | <p>11am - 12:30pm Community Health Nurse</p> | <p>11:15am - 12:30pm Yoga (Hatha) beginners with Jo \$8 Come early for a spot.</p> | | |
| PM | <p>12:10 - 1:10pm Ageing Well with Weights Practice</p> | | <p>2:30 - 4pm Ageing Well with Weights Practice</p> | <p>1:30 - 2:30pm Feldenkrais Begins October 5, 2017 for 10 weeks. \$15 per session or \$135 Wendy on 0447 120 688 See page 11</p> | |

Therapists and Monthly Groups

Breast Cancer Support Group

3rd Tuesday of the month 11:45 am - 1:15 pm. For any woman diagnosed with breast cancer who would like information and support.

Bowen Therapy (NST)

Every Wednesday at the Centre. \$65 per session. To make an appointment, contact Christine Toyama on 0417 363 108.

Food Coaching

Every Wednesday at the Centre. For appointments, contact Alison Gandy on 0400 515 352.

Writers' Support Group

1st Wednesday of the month, 2 - 4 pm. New members welcome.

Warped Wenches

3rd Saturday of the month, 10 am to 4 pm. A group of women who love to sew, and share an interest in all sorts of crafts.
Contact Denise 0417 808 871.

Come in for a cuppa, browse in our library or use the photocopier.

Food and Waste

by Alison Gandy

ABC's recent War on Waste program was a timely reminder that we can all play a part in reducing our food waste. But where to start? Here are a few essentials to get you started...

- Get into the habit of looking in your kitchen cupboards and pantry each week to see what foods you have on hand. Also tidy your fridge and freezer each week - do both before you write a shopping list or meal plan.
- Budget for your weekly shop and look online for store specials to save money - write a list for each food store, reflecting the meals you can realistically cook.
- Buy dry goods loose in paper bags, only buy small quantities more often, so they are fresh and used quickly - I store these in glass jars so I can easily see what I have.
- Have a range of eco bags in your car or handbag ready for shopping - I make my own drawstring produce bags from tip shop fabrics, so I don't need single use plastic bags.
- Rotate all foods, so new foodstuffs are behind older items & fresh veggies are under the new.
- Eat what foods you have first, before adding more foods into your household.
- Reduce the amount of condiments you purchase to 2 or 3 varieties.
- Try not to shop when you're tired or hungry as you may be tempted to impulse spend. For 1-2 person households, why not try shopping with a bag or a basket to save money?
- Place perishables into a cooler bag at the time of purchase, to extend their shelf life - no matter what the weather!
- Immediately portion and freeze leftovers or lunch box when plating up meals. Use pyrex in the freezer to give a good visual of foods/meals on hand.
- Take something out of the freezer instead of buying takeaway, add a fresh garnish like veggies, greens or rice to it. Buy less processed foodstuffs to reduce packaging.

- Compost - there's nothing like emptying a bucket of kitchen food scraps, to help track your food wastage.

If you would you like help to combat your waste and love your food, why not consider booking in to one of my Healthy guided shopping tours? Experience the benefits of a personalised shop in 2-3 food stores in Kingston. Details can be found on my website or Facebook.



Alison Gandy
All Food Coaching
0400 515 352
allfoodcoaching.com
facebook.com/
allfoodcoaching



Ageing Well with Weights

The 8 week Ageing Well with Weights course has proved to be very popular and we plan to offer another one in the new year.

Classes will be on **Mondays from 9:30 to 10:30am.**

The course costs **\$10 per week or \$65 paid upfront** for the full 8 week course.

To register your interest and book please contact the Women's Health Tasmania on 6231 3212 or via email to info@womenshealthtas.org.au



WOMEN'S WISDOM LIBRARY



South of Forgiveness

by Thordis Elva
and Tom Stranger

Trigger Warning: This review contains information regarding sexual assault.

When Thordis Elva was sixteen in 1996, she was raped by her eighteen year old boyfriend Tom Stranger. At the time, Stranger was an Australian exchange student studying in Elva's home city of Reykjavik, Iceland. When Elva was thirty-two, in 2006, she contacted Stranger and asked him to meet face to face. They decided to meet in Cape Town, South Africa, a country equal distance from Iceland and Australia. For a few years before this, Elva and Stranger had been in contact via email - after Elva had a need to express the impact the assault had on her life, a need for Stranger to acknowledge what he had done, and to explore if it was possible to find peace. The book follows this very complex journey.

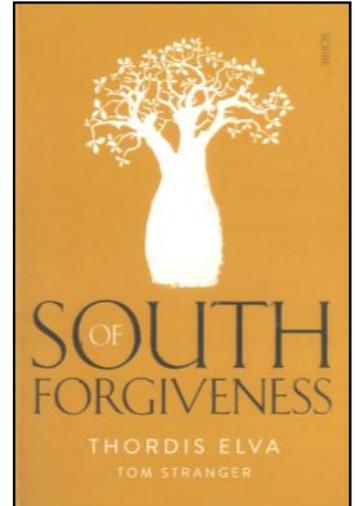
When I first heard of this book, I was taken aback that it could exist. So many questions ran through my head. How could a person be in contact with someone who had caused them so much harm? I became acutely aware of my own judgements of such a story and book. After reading the book, I have had a shift in thinking.

The majority of the book is journal excerpts from Elva, interspersed with journal entries from Stranger, during their time South Africa. *South of Forgiveness* is not a comfortable read, but is an accessible book written in straight forward engaging prose. It is both gentle and distressing and at times uses humour to break its heaviness. It is a groundbreaking book in many respects, exploring incredibly difficult experiences society generally looks away from. Elva wants to push against the shame and silence often surrounding rape, sexual assault and violence against women. It is an examination on a very personal level, as well as having a global context.

South of Forgiveness explores the relationship of 'victim' and 'perpetrator' and questions how to live with these labels. It pulls apart the common idea 'rapists' are monsters hiding down alley ways and that sexual assault is a 'women's issue'. This book squarely places sexual assault as a *men's* and women's issue, stresses how important it is to work together and that most sexual assaults are committed by 'perpetrators' the 'victim' knows.

In the book, Elva quotes statistics from her home country of Iceland and other global statistics to give context. Here are some statistics from Australia:

- 93% of all sexual assault offenders are male⁽¹⁾; and
- 62% of women experienced their most recent incident of physical assault by a male in their home.⁽²⁾



In her TED Talk in 2016 with Tom Stranger, Thordis Elva says:

'labels are ways of organising concepts but they can also be dehumanising... Once someone has been deemed a 'victim' it's that much easier to file them away as someone damaged... less than. And likewise when someone has been branded a 'rapist', it's that much easier to call them a 'monster', 'inhuman'. But how will we understand what it is in human societies, that produces violence, if we refuse to recognise the humanity of those who commit it? And how can we empower survivors if we are making them feel 'less than'?

...It's time we stopped treating sexual violence as a women's issue. ...A majority of sexual violence against women and men, is perpetrated by men. And yet their voices are sorely under-represented in this conversation. But all of us are needed here. Think of all the suffering we could alleviate, if we dared to face this issue together'.⁽³⁾

Elva has stated this book represents her own personal journey and is not a general guide for people who have experienced sexual assault. It is also important to note Stranger does not receive any proceeds from the sale of this book. Neither does the book excuse Stranger's abhorrent actions and the violence he committed.

What *South of Forgiveness* does is open up a space for discussions to be had about a very difficult subject, and faces them head on - with the goal of understanding why violence against women happens, across all social demographics and countries, and the express hope of stopping this violence.

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Sexual Assault Support Service

SASS provides a 24 hour a day support and information service in Southern Tasmania. The 24 hour contact number for SASS's crisis response service is 1800 MYSUPPORT (1800 697 877). This number is state-wide and will automatically direct you to your nearest support service. For more go to www.sass.org.au

Lifeline

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide or experiencing a personal crisis, help is available. Call Lifeline on 13 11 14 (24/7) or dial 000 if life is in danger.

by Alison Mann

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Meditation, Mindfulness and Self Compassion

10 to 11:30am

Starting on Thursday, November 2, 2017
for 4 weeks initially.

at Women's Health Tasmania

Valerie a former Tibetan Buddhist Nun combines 20 years of practice and teachings with current neuroscience research.

To teach meditation, mindfulness and self compassion:

- To reduce stress and anxiety;
- Improve wellbeing; and
- To live more fully in the moment.

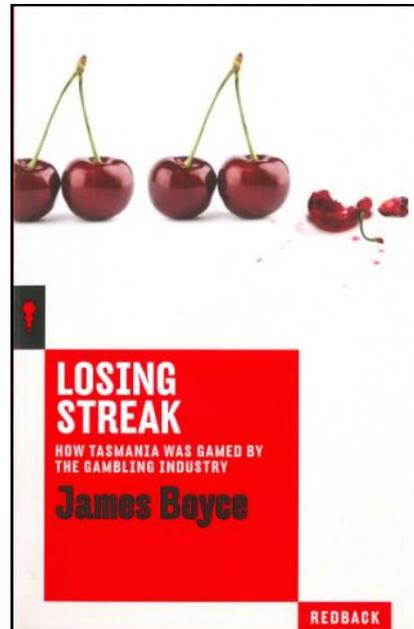
For more information call Valerie on 0405 329 687.

Losing Streak

by James Boyce

How Tasmania was gamed by the gambling industry

This book has certainly had an impact on me. I, like many Tasmanians, have always had a healthy critical view of our political representation. Over the years, I have noticed an increased sense of distrust in the political process in Tasmania, reflecting what is going on more broadly it seems across the rest of the world. *Losing Streak* by James Boyce clearly articulates some of what might underlie this lack of trust. The story



Boyce presents, rigorously researched, talks about a lack of transparency and what appears to be conflicts of interest clouding the debate around the gambling industry.

Boyce builds a damning portrayal of alleged deception, backyard wheeling and dealing, bribery and corruption, with the sorry tale highlighting some of the rather strange and mutually beneficial arrangements occurring in the late seventies between MPs, local business and international entities such as British Tobacco. All this cloak and dagger leading to questions of bribery and corruption, while a government was brought down in the eleventh hour, as it was about to introduce competition into the gambling market - which would have nipped in the bud what would become the most envied casino monopoly in the country.

In defence of this favourable arrangement, the Federal Group points to all the tourism ventures and other investments they have made in Tasmania. Yet, as Boyce points out, these investments involve large profits gained from pokies revenue. Boyce has a lot to say about poker machines, as a form of gambling and investment, and the negative impacts they have had on our communities.

continued over...

This is not about pointing the finger at any particular individuals, businesses or governments. Boyce claims the use of tactics which create conflicts of interest between industry bodies, civic leaders, politicians and other key businesses and individuals, is the way the industry operates across Australia. He claims the gambling industry's tactics have been so successful the mega-profits involved are skewing public policy making, favouring the industry over public interest. The fact this trend has been a concern from the beginning, and is consistent across the country, indicates a systemic problem. Broadly speaking then, the situation in Tasmania is not unusual. However, what is unusual in our case is the granting of an *exclusive* licence to operate pokie machines.

The people of Tasmania know this, especially in relation to gambling machines. Public opinion was against the introduction of pokies in the 1968 referendum and opinion polls ever since show we have not changed our minds.

James Boyce has published *Losing Streak* at the perfect time to inspire all Tasmanians who feel uncomfortable about the current arrangements. Federal's poker machine licence expires in 2023 and the agreement is the government of the day would put forward its position - on what will happen after 2023 - in 2018. The Government is now conducting a Joint Select Parliamentary Committee Inquiry, due to report later this year, looking into the issue. With the state election due in March next year; all sides of politics will be putting forward their positions.

Losing Streak by James Boyce is now available in the Women's Health Tasmania Library.

Disclosure: Women's Health Tasmania is a member of Community Voice on Pokies reform. We made a submission to the Joint Select Committee on Future Gaming Markets and appeared at a public hearing. Our position, as presented in our submission, is for poker machines to be removed from all Tasmanian pubs and clubs, remaining only in the two casinos, without an increase in the number of machines.

Women's Health Tasmania would also like the poker machines made safer with \$1 bet limits, slower spin rates and real intervention strategies in the casinos.

WHT believes these measures are in the best interests of the health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians.

by Julianne Campbell

Breast Cancer Support Group

For any woman diagnosed with breast cancer who would like information and support.



**3rd Tuesday of the month from
11:45 am - 1:15 pm**

The next meeting dates are:

2017

November 21 This will be the last session for 2017 and as such will have a Christmas theme

2018

January 16 Group discussion

February 20 Group discussion

March 20 Group discussion

Please phone Women's Health Tasmania on 6231 3212 for more information.

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