

SHAPING THE FUTURE

2019 ATSA Conference | Thursday November 7 | POSTER

Victim/Survivor Views About Sex Offender Reintegration and Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA)

Kelly Richards, PhD
Queensland University of Technology

In recent years, a number of studies have been undertaken on the views of the public about Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA). However, the views of victim/survivors of sexual violence have not previously been documented. Indeed, surprisingly little has been documented about victim/survivor views of dealing with perpetrators of sexual violence at all. Understanding what victim/survivors think about sex offender measures generally, and CoSA specifically is, however, a critical component of ensuring that such measures meet the needs of those most directly affected by sexual violence. Furthermore, understanding what victim/survivors' views and needs are can help governments, legislators and policy-makers to craft initiatives that are palatable to the broader public, who often oppose reintegration measures based on the belief that such measures disregard victim/survivor wishes.

This paper will present on original empirical research that sought to fill this critical gap in knowledge. The study, funded by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), elicited the views of 33 victim/survivors of sexual violence in Australia about sex offender reintegration measures broadly, and CoSA specifically, via semi-structured, qualitative interviews. Its findings will be relevant to a wide range of ATSA delegates, and especially those involved in policy-making relating to sexual offenders.

Dr Kelly Richards is a Senior Lecturer in Queensland University of Technology's Faculty of Law, School of Justice. She completed a PhD on restorative justice at Western Sydney University in 2007 and in 2010 was awarded the ACT Government Office for Women Audrey Fagan Churchill Fellowship to study Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) in Canada, the USA and the UK. Her recent research, funded by Australia's National Organisation for Women's Safety (with Dr Jodi Death, Queensland University of Technology, and Professor Kieran McCartan, University of the West of England) includes the first study into CoSA in Australia. This research also examines the role of cultural mentoring support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders released under Queensland's *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act* as well as the views of victim/survivors of sexual violence on sex offender reintegration broadly and on CoSA specifically. Dr Richards has also undertaken research on public opinion about CoSA and the causes of child sexual abuse, global media coverage of CoSA, and the desistance narratives of CoSA Core Members.

Dr Jodi Death is a Senior Lecturer in Queensland University of Technology's Faculty of Law, School of Justice. She holds a PhD in criminology from Charles Sturt University. Her recent research, funded by Australia's National Organisation for Women's Safety (with Dr Kelly Richards, Queensland University of Technology, and Professor Kieran McCartan, University

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