

Research Summary 6

Safety, domestic violence, sexual assault

This summary outlines women's concerns and experiences of safety (including safety of children), a range of issues related to domestic violence, and perceptions of sexual assault.

Safety in the community

Opinions were mixed when it came to feelings of safety in the community. Although most women felt safe during the day when it was light and there were people around, some spoke of the lack of safety at night time, particularly in the Melbourne CBD. Some women felt that Melbourne was becoming more unsafe due to a perceived increase in drug activity.

"Definitely...I find the city feral with the beggars, the dirt, the homeless, the guys hassling you for money. The obvious dealing; we were shopping in a laneway and there were kids chroming in doorways, in front of everyone; it was horrible."

(46-64 years, Moorabbin)

Others did not feel as threatened or unsafe in their communities. These women tended to be residents of smaller towns – like Warrnambool – which was thought to be a safer place than Melbourne.

"The crime rate here is nothing; I've got a police scanner... there is no crime here really."

(25 - 64 years, Warrnambool)

Young women were asked whether they felt safe going out at night. Generally, participants felt unsafe at night but felt safer if with a group of friends.

"If I'm with a group of friends I feel safe. I feel very hesitant going outside at night...even just walking to my car."

(18-25 years, Forest Hill)

Safety of children in the community

Geelong women commented on their experiences and feelings of safety throughout childhood. Many said that there was no sense of fear and that they would often be out of their parents' sight for hours on a weekend. The mothers within the group stated that this definitely was not the case today. These women did not feel it safe for their children to play outside on the street after school. They felt there was a culture of stranger danger now instilled into parents who had to constantly watch their children and know their whereabouts.

"I know my father felt uncomfortable a few times taking my daughter to the park...the older man with the little kid. It shouldn't have to be like that."

(25-45 years, Geelong)

Source: Auspoll report to the VEOHRC - 'Women, Rights and Equality', October 2007.



**Victorian Equal Opportunity
& Human Rights Commission**

3/380 Lonsdale Street Melbourne Victoria 3000

Advice Line: **(03) 9281 7100**

Phone: **(03) 9281 7111**

Fax: **(03) 9281 7171**

TTY: **(03) 9281 7110**

Toll Free: **1800 134 142** (country callers)

Interpreters: **(03) 9280 1995**

Email: information@veohrc.vic.gov.au

www.humanrightscormission.vic.gov.au

YOUR PRIVACY: The VEOHRC complies with Victorian privacy laws and the confidentiality provisions of the Equal Opportunity Act 1995. Our privacy policy is available online at www.humanrightscormission.vic.gov.au/privacy or by contacting the Commission.

