



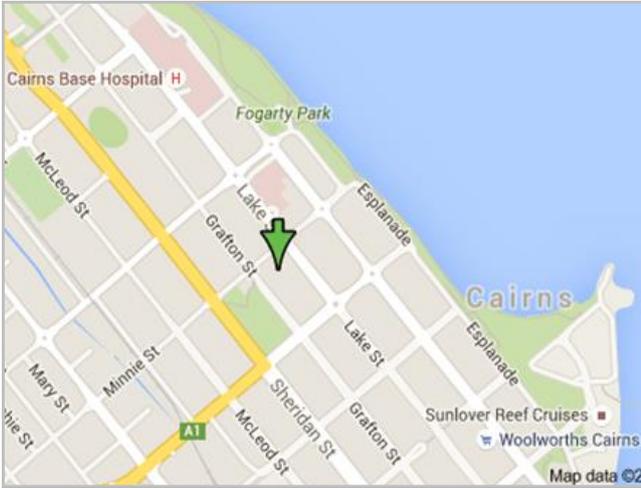


Cairns Sexual Assault Service (CSAS)

The Solander Centre
182 Grafton Street, Cairns Q 4870
(across from Munro Martin Parklands)

P 07 4031 3590
E csas@true.org.au

F 07 4031 6017
W www.true.org.au



Support is here

If you are low on phone credit, please call the service and ask us to phone you straight back.

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How we can help

Cairns Sexual Assault Service (CSAS) provides a free and confidential service for anyone affected by sexual violence.

Our services

- 24-hour crisis support for anyone presenting at the Cairns Hospital Emergency Department or the Police, who has experienced a recent sexual assault
- Information and support for victims/survivors of sexual violence, and their non-offending partners, family members, carers, friends or support people
- Face-to-face and telephone counselling
- Referral and advocacy throughout police and legal processes
- On-site clinical care, including STI checks, pregnancy testing and emergency contraception
- In-service, secondary consultation and resources for professionals working with anyone who has experienced sexual assault or sexual abuse
- Community education

Who we support

CSAS is an inclusive service supporting all people impacted by sexual violence (recent or historic) regardless of age, gender, sexual preference, ethnicity, religion, personal values or cultural background.

If you have specific service-access requirements, such as a translator, interpreter or disability access, please let us know.

What is sexual violence?

Sexual violence involves any unwanted sexual act or behaviour that is threatening, violent, forced or coercive, and to which a person has not given consent or was not able to give consent.

Sexual violence includes:

- sexual harassment and intimidation
- lewd or suggestive comments, stories or showing of sexualised pictures
- unwanted touching
- stalking, secret filming, unauthorised distribution of images
- exposing of genitals, such as 'flashing'
- spiking drinks, or the use of drugs and alcohol, in order to reduce or impair a person's capacity to make choices about sex or sexual activity
- having sex with someone who is asleep or severely affected by alcohol and/or other drugs
- coerced or forced sexual activities
- incest, sexual assault and rape

Consent is an important part of the definition of sexual assault. The ability to give consent relies on a person being of legal age, being sober and having the mental and physical ability/capacity to freely agree.

Sexual assault or abuse typically makes a person feel violated, frightened or threatened.

A victim/survivor of sexual assault may feel that something they did led to the assault - perhaps you agreed to stay late at the office, were drinking at a party, or got a lift home from a friend, family member, neighbour or acquaintance. These are things we often do quite safely.

Responsibility for an everyday situation turning into an occasion of sexual violence belongs fully to the perpetrator.

Your rights

As a victim/survivor of sexual violence, you have the right to:

- be treated with respect and dignity
- privacy. This means you can refuse to answer any questions about the sexual assault, your sexual orientation, your sexual history, your medical history and your mental health history
- have your conversations with a sexual assault support worker/advocate remain confidential
- decide whether or not you want to report the assault to the police
- not be judged based on your age, gender, sexual preference, ethnicity and/or cultural background
- have a support worker / advocate, or someone else you are comfortable with, accompany you to forensic, medical, police and legal proceedings
- request that a support worker / advocate, or someone else you are comfortable with, stay with you in the examination room
- ask questions and get answers regarding any tests, exams, medications, treatments or police reports
- be considered a victim/survivor of sexual assault, regardless of the offender's relationship to you.

Reporting a sexual assault

Whether you report a sexual assault to the police is an individual decision only you can make.

There are several different reporting options, which are explained in the following pages:

- **You can make a formal complaint to the police.**
- **You can make an informal complaint to the police.**
- **You can use the Queensland Police Service's online Alternative Reporting Option.**
- **You can choose not to report.**

Some reasons people report to the police are:

- to feel believed
- to feel empowered
- to seek justice
- to ensure it doesn't happen to someone else.

You may have many questions, so consult with your sexual assault support worker or the police—they can provide support and information.

Making a formal complaint

This involves reporting the incident to the police, which may result in an investigation and possible criminal prosecution through the court system. Police call this making a 'complaint'.

Forensic examination

As part of this process, you have the choice to undergo a forensic examination. This examination is conducted specifically to collect physical evidence of what has occurred, and to document any injuries.

Some things to keep in mind:

- It's important that forensic evidence is collected as soon as possible.
- Forensic evidence can be easily lost. If possible, avoid showering, bathing, going to the toilet, eating and drinking until after the forensic examination.

Your clothing may provide additional valuable evidence, so please don't wash or destroy it.

Please note: A forensic examination is different to a general medical examination. Even if you have a forensic examination, you'll still need to seek follow-up medical care.

Making a statement

You'll be required to make a statement to the police. Giving a detailed statement is important because it forms part of the evidence the police are collecting to support your complaint. This may take several hours, during which the police will compile a typed statement to be signed by you. You will be given a copy of your statement.

When undergoing a forensic examination or making a statement, you have the right to have a support person accompany you throughout the process.

Police follow-up

After your statement, the police may begin an investigation. The evidence and information collected will determine whether charges are laid: if the police determine they have enough evidence to support your complaint, and have identified and found the accused person(s), they will formally charge the accused.

If the police are unable to gather enough evidence, there will be no arrest and the investigation will cease. This does not mean the police don't believe that the assault happened. The investigation may be reopened if new evidence is provided. If a charge is made, you can expect a lengthy period of time before your case will be heard in court.

If you're not sure how your matter is progressing, you can contact the investigating police officer for an update:

- CSAS can support you to do this, *or*
- You can enquire directly at the police station at 5 Sheridan Street, Cairns, or by phoning 4030 7000—ask for a CIB detective.

Making an informal complaint

This involves providing details of the assault to the police, without requesting any further investigation. This report collects information about the incident which may be useful if the offender has a history of assault or may be considered a threat to others.

Using the online Alternative Reporting Option

The Alternative Reporting Option (ARO) allows you to provide the police with details of the assault and remain anonymous if you wish.

The ARO is only relevant for non-official complaints, and won't lead to any investigation. However, the police may use this information to assist other prosecutions against an offender, and to protect the community by devising strategies to target an offender and reduce repeat offending.

For further information and to use the ARO, go to www.police.qld.gov.au and follow the links to Programs > Adult Sexual Assault > Alternative Reporting Options. You can then choose whether you would like the police to contact you to discuss the matter further.

Not reporting

You may choose not to report at this time.

If you change your mind, you can still speak with the police in the future. However, please note that delays in reporting may affect the collection of forensic evidence and may impact upon the police's capacity to investigate.

Whichever choice you make about reporting, you can always contact CSAS to access support, counselling and advocacy. CSAS can also assist you with the appropriate medical care to address any physical effects of the assault.

Medical care: Initial

There are a number of personal health issues that may be of concern to you if you have experienced a sexual assault, including treating physical injuries, testing for sexual-transmitted infections (STIs) and addressing the risk of pregnancy.

Your future health depends on the treatment and information you receive immediately, and in the weeks following the assault.

Physical examination

Your immediate medical attention will be triaged to address potential physical injuries you may have incurred.

Forensic examination

Then, if you choose to report your assault to police, you may also choose to have a forensic examination.

A forensic examination's purpose is to take forensic samples to help identify the offender, which will be important if you proceed with legal action. Forensic examinations are performed by specialised forensic examiners.

Medical intervention

Medical care may include swabs for STIs as well as medications for emergency contraception and early STI-exposure intervention.

If you have a forensic examination the examiner will do this at the same time.

If you don't have the forensic examination this will be performed by the hospital or a GP.

Directions for treatment

Please use all medication as directed by the health care professional.

Medical care: Follow-up

It is important you follow up with a doctor to receive your test results and any further treatments.

It is recommended you do this after:

- two weeks
- six weeks
- three months / six months

There are a number of sexual health clinics that provide these services free of charge. True Relationships and Reproductive Health, Cairns, specialises in clinical concerns in relation to sexual health.

Please call 4051 3788 to make an appointment.

Potential tests and treatments

Timeframe	Reason
ASAP	Emergency contraception (if not provided in ED) & prevention medication / vaccination / injection for STIs
2 weeks	Urine test for STIs and pregnancy
6 weeks	Test for STIs, pregnancy & blood borne STIs
10 weeks	Second Hep B vaccination (if required)
3 months	Test for STIs & blood borne STIs
6 months	Test for STIs & blood borne STIs

Tests for Hep B may/can occur over the above timeframes.

Counselling and support

Counselling provides a safe, private place where you can reflect on your feelings and reactions. Staff at CSAS are trained to understand the unique concerns you may have, and offer ways to help you manage the physical and emotional effects of sexual assault.

Some people who have experienced sexual assault feel that, if they avoid talking about the assault, they will be able to forget about what happened. Most people find they need to deal with the assault eventually.

Support and counselling is also available for non-offending partners, family members and friends. This provides an opportunity for those close to you to explore their own reactions and how best to support you.

At CSAS we provide compassionate and respectful specialist therapeutic counselling, advocacy and support.

To make an appointment or find out more information you can call, email or visit CSAS at:

The Solander Centre
182 Grafton Street, Cairns Q 4870
(across from Munro Martin Parklands)

P 07 4031 3590

F 07 4031 6017

E csas@true.org.au

W www.true.org.au

CSAS services are free and confidential.

Myths and facts about sexual assault

Myth: They must have 'asked for it' by dressing seductively.

Fact: People dress to feel comfortable and attractive. No one asks to be assaulted, abused or injured. This line of thought blames the victim for what happened, instead of the perpetrator who chose to commit the crime.

Myth: If someone doesn't fight off a perpetrator, then it is not really rape.

Fact: Not resisting a sexual act does not mean it was consensual. Some people do not scream or fight. It is common to become paralysed by fear; the threat of physical violence may also make it safer for someone to not fight back. All responsibility for a sexual assault belongs to the perpetrator.

Myth: It is okay to pressure or talk someone into sexual activity.

Fact: Coercion is a tactic used to intimidate, trick, or force someone to have sex with them without physical force, and is still sexual violence.

Myth: It's not sexual assault if it happens after drinking or taking drugs.

Fact: Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs is not an invitation for non-consensual sexual activity. A perpetrator may take advantage of a situation and sexually assault someone because they are vulnerable. A perpetrator may have encouraged the victim to use alcohol, or identified an individual who was already intoxicated.

Myth: Most sexual assaults are committed by strangers. It's not rape if the people involved knew each other.

Fact: Most sexual assaults and rapes are committed by someone the victim knows. Sexual assault can occur within marriages, partnerships and friendships, and amongst co-workers and acquaintances. It does not matter whether there is a current or past relationship between the victim and offender: unwanted sexual activity is still sexual assault and is a serious crime.

Common feelings after sexual assault

If you have been sexually assaulted you may experience a wide range of emotions that can be distressing. This is quite normal for someone who has been through such a traumatic experience.

Feelings immediately following sexual assault may include:

- shock or disbelief
- shame and embarrassment
- fear
- sadness and helplessness
- anger
- guilt and self-blame
- anxiousness / panic attacks
- feeling physically unwell.

Longer-term effects of sexual assault may include:

- feeling responsible for the assault
- constantly thinking about the assault
- difficulties thinking clearly or concentrating
- feeling that you cannot trust anyone
- feeling isolated, scared and/or unsafe when you are alone
- feeling no-one understands your experience
- not wanting to be touched by anyone
- feeling differently about sex, even with your regular partner.

People react differently, and this may change from one day to the next. Talking to someone about the experience can help you to cope and to heal

Useful contacts

True Relationships & Reproductive Health

Cairns Clinic Services
4051 3788
The Solander Centre, 182 Grafton Street,
Cairns
(opposite Munro Martin Parklands)
Open Monday to Friday

Cairns Hospital (non-urgent)

4226 0000
www.health.qld.gov.au/sexualassault/
For all recent sexual assaults, hospital
personnel or the police will contact CSAS's
24-hour on-call service.

Queensland Police Service (non urgent)

4030 7000
www.police.qld.gov.au > Programs > Adult
Sexual Assault

Statewide Sexual Assault Helpline

1800 010 120
www.dvconnect.org > sexual-assault-helpline
Telephone counselling, support, information,
advice and referral Available 24/7

1800 RESPECT

1800 737 732
www.1800respect.org.au
National sexual assault and domestic violence
counselling service
Available 24/7

Victim Assist Queensland

1300 546 587
A victim who has sustained an injury as a
result of an act of violence (including sexual
violence) committed in Queensland can
access support services and financial
assistance through Victim Assist Queensland.
CSAS can help you access Victim Assist
Queensland, or you can call direct.

Lifeline

131114
Available 24/7

Mensline Australia

1300 78 99 78
Available 24/7

Living Well (for men)

1300 114 397
www.livingwell.org.au
Online counselling, information and support

Parentline

1300 30 1300
Available between 8 am and 10 pm

Kids Helpline

1800 55 1800
Available 24/7

For all emergencies call 000

Checklist

Examinations

- Physical injury
- Forensic examination

Tests

- STI bloods, swabs / urine

Treatments

- Azithromycin
- Hepatitis B vaccine
- Emergency Contraception
- Preventative treatment for STIs
- Other

CSAS On-Call Attendee:

QH Nurse/Dr:

FNE/FMO:

QPS Officer/Detective:

Other:

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Notes

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