

More males in Far North tell police of sexual violence as assaults on women decline

Men report sex attacks

Complaints up after #metoo campaign

SHERELE MOODY AND
JANESSA EKERT

MORE men are seeking help following "violence by gangs of men", sexual assault and childhood abuse as the number of male sexual assault victims in the Far North has increased.

Police statistics reveal there were 2613 rape and sexual assaults in the Far North in the five years between July 2012 to June last year.

It comes as a Manunda man is expected to plead guilty to sexually assaulting a woman after he allegedly groped her near the Cairns Esplanade.

The 45-year-old appeared in the Cairns Magistrates Court yesterday on one count of sexual assault, which allegedly occurred on Pier Point Rd about 1am on Sunday. His bail was denied and matters were adjourned until later this month.

Cairns Sexual Assault Services practice manager Georgia Babatsikos said her organisation had noted an increase in Cairns residents seeking counselling, particularly men reporting violence by "gangs of men" and past abuse.

Online police data figures show an increase in reported juvenile male victims from 2016 to 2017. Reported adult male victim figures remain the same.

Juvenile and adult female victim figures have decreased but still form the majority of numbers reported to police.

But Ms Babatsikos said there was a massive gap between incidents of sexual violence and official figures.

"Our intake of male clients has increased - they are reporting violence by gangs of other men, recent sexual assaults by males and childhood sexual assaults mainly by males but with some female perpetrators," Ms Babatsikos

said. "We think the #metoo campaign and the royal commission has given people the impetus to come forward."

Domestic violence professionals fear the number of victims could be higher.

A 2018 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report shows 20 per cent of women and 5 per cent of men have experienced sexual violence.

Queensland Police acknowledged rape and sexual violence were "significantly under-reported".

Women's Legal Service Queensland solicitor Julie Sarcozy claimed a high proportion of women felt unable to report cases of abuse to the police when it happens within a relationship.

"Women often feel like it is their fault, or they might rely financially on their abuser, or

they have children with the abuser and these reasons make it difficult for them to disclose to police," Ms Sarcozy said.

FNQ FIGURES

LAST year the number of reported sexual offences increased by more than 100 to 686 from the 583 reported in 2016. Between January and March this year there were 154 sexual offences reported.

The number of female victims, adults and children, reported to police in 2017 decreased to 384 (215 juveniles and 169 adults) from the 420 (239 juveniles and 181 adults) in 2016.

Reported male victim numbers increased from 76 (56 juveniles and 20 adults) in 2016 to 95 (75 juvenile and 20 adults) last year.

Between January and March this year there were 119 female victims (75 juveniles and 44 adults) reported to police and 22 male victims (16 juvenile and six adults).

Data shows 2613 rapes, sexual assaults in FNQ in 5 years and increase in male victims

STATS REVEAL HORROR

**SHERELE MOODY
AND JANESEA EKERT**

MORE men are reporting rape and sexual assault attacks in the Far North.

New figures also show an overall increase in cases involving women, men and children, up by 100 to 686 last year.

Male victims grew by nearly 20 to 95 last year while female victims fell from 420 to 384.

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