

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

**BRENDA EILEEN BAXTER**

**“Why are so few women  
requesting attendance at  
protected persons’ programmes?”**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for a Degree of  
Master of Social Work (Applied)**

**Massey University**

**1999**

## ABSTRACT

The focus of this study is on the low number of requests made by women in order to attend domestic violence education programmes under section 29 (1) (a) of the Domestic Violence Act 1995. It examines the exchange of information between some Family Court clients and the associated Family Court practitioners when protection orders are obtained. This study acknowledges the low attendance at protected person' programmes and investigates how the information exchange fails to achieve greater numbers of participants on Family Court-funded programmes.

The data is both qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative data comprises in-depth interviews with five protected persons and ten practitioners connected to the Family Court through their work with victims of domestic violence. The quantitative data is based upon a survey of twenty-two Family Court Coordinators. Both the interviews and the survey were designed to trace the processes used in exchanging significant information about the programmes, and to identify the successful methods of engaging more women in programmes.

The study highlight the gap between the Family Court's provision of specialised services for abused women and the utilisation of those resources. The promotion of programmes has developed in an ad hoc manner which is reliant on the drive and commitment of key Family Court personnel. It is timely, three years after the introduction of the legislation, to examine why so few protected persons are requesting attendance at domestic violence programmes.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research project would not have been possible without the generosity of many people. In particular, I acknowledge the contributions made by the participants themselves: a total of thirty-seven women. Fifteen shared their stories personally with me about the information they received or gave as protection orders were obtained.

Thanks go to the twenty-two Family Court Coordinators who also gave their time to report on their practices for DVA programme promotion. Other colleagues have assisted with promoting the research itself, and by encouraging others to participate in this project.

The permission of the Department for Courts for me to undertake this research on a small section of the Domestic Violence Act 1995 is much appreciated.

A special thank you to my supervisors, Dr Christine Cheyne and Richard Shaw of the School of Social Work and Social Policy at Massey University for their wisdom and encouragement.

And lastly, I acknowledge the enduring support of my dear husband, Wayne.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
List of Tables.....	iv
Introduction.....	1
Chapter Two - The Research Design.....	9
Chapter Three - The Dynamics of Domestic Violence.....	19
Chapter Four - Programmes for Protected Persons.....	33
Chapter Five - The Information Seekers Five Protected Persons share their experiences.....	45
Chapter Six - Current practices of Family Court Coordinators.....	68
Chapter Seven - DVA Programme Information Sharing from other perspectives.....	88
Conclusions.....	103
Appendices.....	109
Bibliography.....	116

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.....	71
Table 2.....	73
Table 3.....	75
Table 4.....	78
Table 5.....	79
Table 6.....	80
Table 7.....	82
Table 8.....	84
Table 9.....	85