



A history of sexual assault reporting in *The Age*, 2011-20

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[Zara Saunders](#) is a Media, Gender and Cultural History PhD Candidate in the National School of Arts and Humanities at the Australian Catholic University. Her PhD thesis was recently submitted for examination. She has written for *History Australia*, *Lilith: A Feminist History Journal* and *The Conversation*.

In this paper I discuss findings from PhD research examining representations of sexual assault against women and teenage girls in Melbourne's *The Age* print newspaper between 2011 and 2020. This decade witnessed significant social and political events relating to sexual assault and violence against women and their children in Australia that attracted significant media reporting, such as the national Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, major reforms to the state of Victoria's rape and sexual assault laws, the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence and the global #MeToo Movement. A textual and visual analysis of *The Age* provides meaningful historical insight into how sexual assault was represented and narrativised within an Australian mainstream media outlet during the 2010s. By investigating *The Age*'s reporting, I demonstrate how the newspaper shaped certain meanings and narratives about sexual assault. I illustrate how individual stories from victim-survivors were utilised by *The Age* to educate readers' understandings around the issue of sexual assault against women and teenage girls in Australia. I argue that *The Age*'s concern and interest in sexual assault was conditional, contradictory and highly gendered throughout the 2010s.

Join the seminar

CONVENORS

Professor Nell Musgrove (NSAH)
Dr Clare Davidson (IHSS)

DATE & TIME

Tuesday 24 March, 1-2pm AEDT

IN-PERSON VENUE

MEL-412-1-01, Arts Precinct
36-38 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy
(access via Graham St)

VIDEO LINK

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