

MEN'S RIGHTS AGENCY:
THE INSIDE STORY

MONITOR

A month before Peter May killed his family and himself, he visited the Men's Rights Agency for advice. In
The Courier-Mail's Paula Doneman and Michael Ware report on the people behind the contr

DEADLY WEAL

IN the pre-dawn light of January 25, Peter May drove his three children to the secluded Brisbane suburban street where he knew he was going to kill them.

As the rented Fairlane came to a stop on the street in south-western Ellen Grove, Lisa, 11, Andrew, 9, and Natalie, 7, probably were asleep and May would have had time to ready himself and the Winchester 30-30 rifle he had hidden from the children's view.

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There are those who would say that is what May deserves because during their 12 years together May had subjected his wife and children to a living hell. Systematic, brutal physical and psychological violence.

Helen Janet Potter, one of five children raised by English immigrants Jim and Rita Potter in their Inala home, was 16 when she met apprentice printer Pero Max Majstorovic at the Inala skating rink. The young couple soon moved in to the Jindalee home of



Men's agency tracks b

Courier-Mail, Sat. Aug. 17, 1996, p. 1

By PAULA DONEMAN and MICHAEL WARE

THE controversial Men's Rights Agency is to be investigated and new legislation introduced by the State Government to protect victims of domestic violence, after evidence uncovered by The Courier-Mail in a seven-month investigation.

The investigation revealed that:

- The MRA arranges for private investigators to track down members' spouses hiding in secret women's refuges — under the protection of domestic violence orders.
- The MRA is involved in a network of fundamentalist, right-wing family law and pro-gun organisations operating throughout Queensland on a "pro-family, pro-gun" agenda.
- The MRA tried to use a private detective to spy on Family Services Minister Kevin Lingard to gather evidence for a

smear campaign as part of a vendetta against Mr Lingard for his failure to fund the MRA. • A prominent MRA co-ordinator and counsellor, Keith Shew, is a convicted gun runner and drug dealer with a history of violence and psychiatric instability.

The MRA, founded by Reg and Sue Price in 1994, is a family law action group that helps men facing the Family Court and lobbies for improved services for male victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.

The MRA last night denied engaging investigators to spy on Mr Lingard but did not respond as to whether they attempted to engage such an investigator.

The Courier-Mail investigation began after the murder by Peter May of his estranged wife, three children and parents in law, at Hillcrest in January this year. May then shot himself.

A month before the shoot-



MEN'S Rights Agency co-founders Sue and Reg Price... denied engaging investigators to spy on Minister.

ings May, who had a domestic violence order against him, had gone to the MRA for advice. Mrs May was living at a secret address after leaving him following years of abuse. Relatives believe the MRA

may have prompted May to use a private investigator to track down his wife.

The MRA denied referring members, including May, to investigators to track down their spouses.

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After the Hillcrest killings, The Courier-Mail placed pri-

Bond guilty of company fraud

By MARK RUSSELL

ALAN Bond showed little emotion last night when found guilty of fraud over the 19th century French Impressionist

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PM's \$5m drought package fails to



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A day for heroes
30 YEARS AFTER LONG TAN

Agency tracks beaten wives



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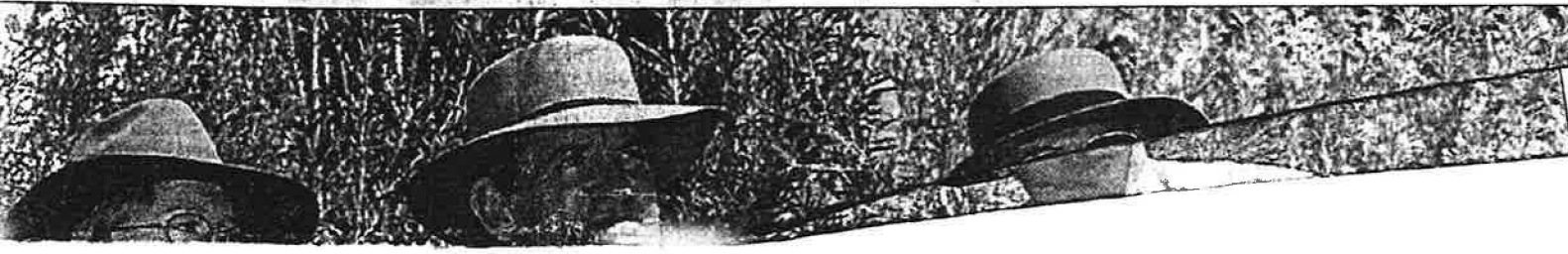
The agency said The Courier-Mail was trying to paint them "as some extreme right-wing organisation". It said The Courier-Mail was "fishing" for information in a list of questions sent at their request. After the Hillcrest killings, The Courier-Mail placed pri-

private investigator Mark Kelly within the organisation. Mr Lingard, in consultation with Attorney-General Denver Beanland, will be introducing new domestic violence legislation to prohibit the use of private investigators to track down women and children hiding in secret domestic violence refuges. The legislation will also secure greater protection of the location of women's shelters. Police Commissioner Jim O'Sullivan and Mr Beanland have been consulted on the investigation into the MRA. Mr Lingard has also referred a range of issues raised by The Courier-Mail to the domestic violence legislation review body, the Domestic Violence Council, which is currently examining an overhaul of the legislation. Serious allegations have been made about MRA members intimidating women and children in women's refuges, and MRA co-founder Sue Price

has boasted that her organisation has a list of the secret locations of the shelters. The Human Rights Commission has received a complaint from domestic violence workers after they discovered Mrs Price had revealed confidential commission documents detailing the Brisbane Domestic Violence Resource Centre's financial records. The organisation refers men to qualified specialists to assist them with Family Court matters and has between 950 and 2000 members. Mrs Price told Mr Kelly she needed evidence to implicate Mr Lingard after an alleged letter concerning proposed funding arrangements was not honoured. Mr Kelly was contracted in writing by Mrs Price to investigate a possible family relationship between the chairwoman of the Domestic Violence Resource Centre and the centre's accountant. Members of the network are

supporters of the radical League of Rights and extremist pro-gun organisations which have advocated the burying of weapons to circumvent gun laws. Mr Lingard said the State Government and Mr O'Sullivan would examine The Courier-Mail's evidence with a view to prosecuting MRA organisers and any private investigators allegedly used to hunt down women in shelters. "I have had discussions with the Attorney-General and the police department, and there is no doubt that any person or organisation that obtains information about residents in a refuge centre and uses that information to aid or enable a breach of the Domestic Violence Act is guilty under the Criminal Code," he said. Mr Lingard said he never intended to fund the MRA because it was a private company and because of a "personal value judgment" about Mrs Price's aggressive nature.

1's \$5m drought package fails to cheer farmers



CJC accused of deleting

recorded evidence supply key documents committee inquiry. Three academics called independent inquiry to be mission

The controversial Men's Rights Agency (MRA)

has been exposed in a seven-month investigation by the Courier-Mail. The investigation has revealed that the MRA has arranged for private investigators to track down members' spouses hiding in secret domestic violence refuges and find restricted information about domestic violence workers. The investigation has also revealed that the MRA tried to use a private investigator to spy on Family Services Minister Kev Lingard to secure government funding, and is involved in a network of extreme right-wing organisations operating throughout Queensland on an anti-feminist, pro-family, and pro-gun agenda.

As a result of the investigation, Family Services Minister Kev Lingard, in consultation with Attorney-General Denver Beanland, will be introducing new domestic violence legislation to prohibit the use of private investigators to track down women and children hiding in secret domestic violence refuges. The legislation will also secure greater protection of the location of women's shelters. Mr Lingard said the State Government and Police Commissioner Jim O'Sullivan would examine the Courier-Mail's evidence with a view to prosecuting MRA organisers and any private investigators used to hunt down women in shelters. Police Commissioner Jim O'Sullivan has since ordered a major investigation by senior police officers into the MRA.

The Men's Rights Agency was set up in 1994 to help right what the founders, Reg and Sue Price, saw as a bias against men in the family court. The MRA is a private company, with Reg and Sue Price registered as the sole directors and shareholders. The agency offers counselling and referral services to men facing family court or domestic violence action, or whose spouses have left. The Prices have claimed differing membership numbers, ranging from 900 to 2000. Neither Reg nor Sue Price have formal qualifications to counsel, assist or work with men in the domestic violence intervention process. As a privately funded organisation, the MRA is exempt from the domestic violence minimum standards practice regulations and public or membership scrutiny of its activities.

Reg and Sue Price believe that feminism has gone too far and that men are now personally and structurally disadvantaged in our society. Sue Price, the public face of the organisation, has even stated to a domestic violence worker that "women have always been more politically and economically powerful than men." They believe that the family court and domestic violence legislation is highly biased against men. They claim men are the victims of domestic violence more than women. This claim has come from badly interpreting select studies and flies in the face of an overwhelming body of evidence saying men comprise only 3-10% of domestic violence victims, with a high proportion of them in gay male relationships or at the hands of other male family members.

At MRA's first Brisbane meeting in April, the Prices' distributed literature written by League of Rights supporter and It's Time editor, Dan McSweeney. McSweeney wrote: "Biblically, women belong to a family; they do not have families. Therefore, if a woman leaves her husband she is leaving the family. If she takes the children with her she is stealing them from the family." At the same meeting, the Prices' blamed the high level of marriage breakdown on women's infidelity.

The MRA has been found by the Courier-Mail to have links with many other extreme right-wing organisations and individuals. These include the infamous League of Rights, the Right to Bear Arms Association, the Firearms Owners Association, Christians Speaking Out, and the Christian Patriots. These organisations run on a strong

pro-family, pro-gun agenda and believe in international conspiracies backed by the United Nations and the feminist movement to promote a "new world order" under a world government.

A former MRA member told the Courier-Mail that when he visited the Prices' Bethonia home, Reg made him a coffee and "started to talk conspiracy stuff". He (Reg) said the feminist movement was a cover up, that the United Nations wanted to have women in all positions of power and it was time for men to have a couple of thousand years of being the slaves. He was saying things like, if you don't start proceedings (against his former wife) soon then you'll wake up one day and find three carloads of Federal Police at your front door and they'll take your son away."

The investigation began shortly after the Hillcrest Massacre of January 25th, 1995, when Peter May, a client of the MRA, murdered his estranged wife, his two children and both his wife's parents. Peter May then fled to Mrs May was living at a secret address with her parents, leaving him following years of physical, psychological and sexual abuse.

Relatives of the victim and friends of Peter May believe the MRA may have provided the means to use a private investigator to track down his wife. They also believe that May's four-hour visit to the MRA was a crucial factor leading to the massacre, convincing him he had no chance of seeing his children again. Police would later find an MRA information pamphlet claiming to outline men's treatment in family law, with fluorescent highlights of points the agency considered pertinent to May's situation. A former MRA member told the Courier-Mail that he felt it wasn't his counselling, he received by Relationships Australia, that led to him joining MRA, he "would have done what Peter May did".

After the Hillcrest Massacre, the Courier-Mail placed private investigator Mark Kelly within the MRA. Less than two months after offering his services to the MRA, Kelly received a call from Sue Price on behalf of an MRA member asking "Do you have any contacts that would enable us to locate someone in a refuge?" Kelly said he would see what came up "via general inquiries".

Kelly was later asked to track down the wife of another member, under the protection of a domestic violence protection order, so he could serve court papers on her. He was also asked to access restricted Social Security records about the members wife. Kelly asked why the domestic violence order had been granted and the member replied "She got one and extended it so I can't see my children".

Sue Price told the Courier-Mail's private investigator, Mark Kelly, that the MRA had not only identified the locations of a number of secret women's shelters, but had information about the location of the private residences of domestic violence workers and Family Services Department staff. Sue Price also admitted she had obtained restricted information on the employment of two male domestic violence workers held by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training.

Domestic violence workers have complained to the Human Rights Commission after they discovered Sue Price had revealed confidential commission documents detailing the Domestic Violence Resource Centre's financial records. Sue Price also contracted Mark Kelly in writing to investigate a possible family relationship between the chairwoman of the Domestic Violence Resource Centre and the centre's accountant.

The MRA achieved the height of their audacity and stupidity by attempting to spy on the Family Services Minister Kev Lingard in an attempt to gather evidence for a smear campaign as part of a vendetta against him for his failure to fund them. Sue Price told investigator Mark Kelly she had received a letter from the Coalition before the Mundingburra election promising the MRA they would be "doing well" under a Coalition government. She said the letter had not been honoured and as part of an initiative to become "more devious", tried to contract Kelly to conduct video surveillance of Lingard in a bid to establish he was having an affair with a member of his staff so she "could compromise him in his decision-making situation." Kelly advised both Sue and Reg Price not to go ahead with the surveillance.

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Lingard has referred the matter to police and the Prices are now under investigation. Lingard said the matter did not trouble him personally but passed the matter to police because of the dangers involved with any group seeking to receive funding by trying to compromise a government minister. He said he had never had a personal relationship with the staffer targeted by the MRA, only a long-term working relationship.

The Courier-Mail's investigation was a long and tedious one, as most domestic violence workers and ex-MRA clients were too fearful of their safety to go on record with information they had, even anonymously. Reg and Sue Price are currently protesting their innocence to anyone who will listen but are obviously believed by few. The expose of MRA activities will hopefully prevent the many similar men's organisations acting in similarly. The Family Services department has appointed a special investigator to examine men's support groups. A spokesman for Men Against Sexual Assault (MASA) said

**MEN'S RIGHTS AGENCY:
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MONDAY

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It is understood the first to be killed was Andrew. Ellen Grove residents phoned police at 3.50am to report the first shot. They said it was the loudest of the shots that morning and police believe May might have taken his son out of the car to interrogate him one last time before shooting him.

Perhaps May was trying to learn the exact address where his estranged wife, Helen, and her parents were living. They had taken the children 10 weeks before so Helen could escape the brutal and near-penal existence of a 12-year marriage.

The thunderous sound of the rifle — a large calibre weapon normally used for hunting wild pigs — would have woken the girls. One was shot dead and her blood splattered the other. A final blast and the other little girl died.

May's attempts to clean up the carnage proved futile and he concealed the bodies with a woolen blanket. He vomited on the dashboard — the only outward sign that he had pangs of conscience over what he had done.

How he spent the next hour remains unclear, but eventually he drove to Helen May's Hillcrest home and parked the car on a neighbour's lawn. As he stalked along the side of the house, Helen and her parents, Jim and Rita Potter, were awake in the lounge.

Potter, in a fit of grief, penned the headstone he felt Peter May deserved: "Here lies a gutless, selfish piece of filthy trash who killed six of our family because they refused to live with his violence. Rot in Hell forever."

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An unplanned pregnancy led to a simple registry office marriage in the spring of 1984.

May's father Dragan Majstorovic bought the newlyweds their first home in Pallert St — on a neat, Middle Park estate in the city's western suburbs. For the next 12 years, May's parents financially helped the family through his series of failed businesses and bad debts from his chronic gambling.

Their income was derived from two main sources: Nada and Dragan's generosity as their son preyed on their emotional and physical frailty; and May's never-ending series of small-time scams, rip-offs and deceptions.

Helen worked intermittently in her husband's struggling video stores (relatives said May retained a formidable video library including violent and pornographic movies and tapes of TV murder and crime shows) and at local cinemas. Both collected social security benefits even while Helen was working, and May fed off the concerns of the Potter family.



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May got into the house — police would later find a flyscreen torn from a bedroom window — and strode up the hall. Helen and her parents had no warning. May rammed the rifle barrel in Rita's mouth and fired. Jim, trying to protect Rita, was bludgeoned to the floor.

May shot Rita a second time before pinning Jim with his foot and shooting him in the head. His body was found behind his wife's, an arm outstretched toward her.

AN open sliding door, found later by police, suggests Helen tried to escape. May grabbed her and took her back to the lounge.

He lowered the rifle and brought it to rest on her forehead. The point-blank shot left her face intact. Finally, May turned the gun on himself.

In a chilling irony, relatives later were told of 29-year-old Helen's final defiance — continuing to breathe as May lay dead, momentarily surviving her husband.

In the aftermath of what was Australia's worst family murder-suicide, two questions stand out: how did May obtain a weapon despite having his firearm licence automatically revoked when police served a domestic violence order on him; and how did he track down those who had gone to such extraordinary lengths to conceal their whereabouts?

When relatives and friends bring themselves to speak of the man behind the Hillcrest killings, one epithet assumes universal accord — Peter the Monster.

Helen May's brother Roger

apprentice printer Pero Majstorovic at the Inala skating rink. The young couple soon moved in to the Jindalee home of Nada Majstorovic, May's ailing mother.

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JIM and Rita paid up to \$200 a week rent to share a downstairs flat at the two-storey Middle Park home — outlaying more than \$60,000 over their nine-year stay — while Helen's younger sister was drawn into one of May's doomed business ventures and was left to face his creditors in court.

Proceeds from 34-year-old May's criminal enterprises, including insurance fraud, theft and a host of other suspected illicit activities, enabled him to have what police say was more than \$300,000 flowing through various bank accounts and investments.

According to relatives of both families, Helen May was beaten regularly. May's brutality also was directed at the children. The youngest, Natalie, would run and hide under her bed whenever her father raised his voice. Although she and sister Lisa were not immune from May, his ferocity was most often directed at the one he hoped would grow to emulate him — son Andrew.

Family members tell horror stories of the impossible demands and expectations May placed on the boy. Perceived failures were punished with cruel beatings.

The children's only sanctuary was to run downstairs, as they often did, to the protection of their 65-year-old grandparents. In times of crisis, or when their father's mood took a telltale swing, the children were said to curl up by Jim and Rita's chairs and wait for May's rage to subside.

Jim kept a baseball bat near his bed but the Potters' age prevented them from interceding to deter May's impending assaults.

The Mays' Middle Park neighbours spoke of their infrequent



FAMILY horror . . . Peter May with the family

contact with May and his wife, but recalled that the intensely private family appeared to be "ordinary and unexceptional".

In 1989, Helen's brother confronted May when he discovered May had bashed his sister. Roger warned if he ever heard of May abusing Helen again, he would "be straight around there with a baseball bat to see how you like it". The phone call so infuriated May that he battered Helen mercilessly, causing the family to flee for the night.

The beatings resumed within weeks, accompanied by threats from May that if Helen ever left again he would hunt down and kill them all.

Finally, on November 16, 1995 Helen finally left. In driving rain, a team of Helen's relatives had arrived in a convoy of vehicles to carry out a five-hour, military-style operation to evacuate the family to the secret Hillcrest location.

When May returned home in the early hours of the next morning from a gambling spree at Jupiters Casino, on the Gold Coast, he walked into an empty house.

Helen's diary records her fears: "I go to work as normal but I'm not going . . . I go to Angela's house (her sister) and wait . . . I nearly go crazy waiting. Finally at about 4pm Mum rings and tells me Peter has gone to the casino. I go straight home, the things we need are packed up and we leave. Everyone is exhausted, but we've done it. Pe-

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FAMILY horror . . . Peter May with the family he slaughtered: wife Helen, and children, from left, Andrew, Lisa and Natalie.

Here lies a gutless, selfish piece of filthy trash who killed six of our family because they refused to live with his violence. Rot in Hell forever

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ter doesn't arrive home until 1am. He rings my sister Angela and leaves a message on the answering machine."

Helen selected the Watling St, Hillcrest, house because it had the best security arrangements of any that she had looked at in her search three days before.

Two days later, police served an interim domestic violence order on May — naming all those who lived at Middle Park and several of Helen's relatives — and confiscated his .22 rifle. His gun licence was automatically revoked.

Over the next month, May started finalising his pending criminal charges (instructing his solicitors he would plead guilty to five out of six fraud charges), his estate which he unexpectedly bequeathed to his estranged sister, and re-established tentative contact with Helen.

In what relatives and friends have described as a turning point, May visited the controversial

Men's Rights Agency, a family law action group, on December 21, spending a tearful four hours. Police would later find an MRA pamphlet — purporting to outline the true measure of men's treatment in family law — with fluorescent highlights of points the agency considered pertinent to May's situation.

The agency referred him to a family law solicitor who eventually arranged access to the children, enabling May to take them to casinos and hotels for a two-week spending spree as a last ruse to win their affection.

May's telephone records show that on the morning of January 8 — 18 days after contacting the MRA — he called two private investigators in a 30-minute period. The first investigator said a man named Peter, posing as the owner of a landscaping business, approached him to find a "former employee" and some "bad debtors". It is clear

now that the supposed employee was his wife and the debtors were her parents.

When a standard search of public information databases proved fruitless, May pressed the investigator to gain access to Telstra and SEQEB records. The investigator refused, saying it would be unethical. This incensed May.

Speculation that May still did not know his wife's address on January 22 is fuelled by his attempt to contact Helen at her Sunnybank workplace the previous day.

Many family members believe he only learnt of her whereabouts in the next three days.

According to the Potter family, the only people who were still in contact with May, and who knew the location of the Hillcrest house, were his best friend and his friend's partner, who had helped Helen find the rental property. The best friend was in regular contact with May throughout the 10 weeks before the killings.

The other mystery is where May obtained the gun he used. Police are investigating a range of possibilities, the most likely of which is that he got it through an innocent third party or one of his many criminal associates.

A coronial inquest is not expected for some time. Until then, more questions than answers surround the events at Hillcrest on January 25.

More reports, Pages 22-24

Continued Page 22

number of issues. Several members of the network and their organisations have been under close scrutiny by federal law enforcement agencies — including the Australian Federal Police and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation — after public comments by some of them and their associates advocating the burying of guns.

MRA co-ordinator Keith Shew has been linked to outspoken pro-gun lobbyist and Sunshine Coast gun dealer Bob Doring. Doring is the co-founder of the Right to Bear Arms Association and the Firearms Owners Association, and has publicly admitted links to militia's operating on the north coast.

In 1987, when Shew formed a bullet-proof vest manufacturing company, Australian Ballistics Control Systems, he conducted live-fire tests on the vests at Mr Doring's Mooloolah property.

At least two members of the network have been questioned by law enforcement agencies or have publicly admitted their association with militia groups believed to be operating on the Sunshine Coast.

Bob Osmak, director of the radical Christians Speaking Out newspaper *It's Time*, was interviewed in March by federal police about whether an alleged terrorist group calling itself the Christian Patriots Society was a paramilitary wing of his fundamentalist group.

This week, Osmak told *The Courier-Mail* the federal police visit to his property to question him about the Christian Patriots was a ruse to elicit information on the *It's Time* newspaper.

The Christian Patriots group has warned it is conducting a guerrilla campaign to combat what it claims is a conspiracy by politicians, bankers and the judiciary to destroy Australia's sovereignty and the moral fabric of society.

The group is suspected of vandalising a telecommunications line south of Caloundra and has been accused of sending hoax bombs to two northern New South Wales National Party politicians, Larry Anthony and Ian Causley.

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Group's rightist links

THE Men's Rights Agency is linked to a right-wing network of pro-gun extremists and Christian fundamentalists, including those questioned by state and federal police over suspected terrorist activities.

The network is comprised of several radical family law and men's rights action groups promoting a "pro-family, pro-gun" agenda.

It also includes members of Sunshine Coast-based extremist gun lobby organisations — the Right to Bear Arms Association and the Firearm Owners Association — and supporters of the Infamous League of Rights.

According to a key member of the extremist network, the organisations involved, including the MRA, maintain regular contact by fax and co-ordinate their activities on a number of issues.

Several members of the network and their organisations have been under close scrutiny by federal law enforcement agencies — including the Australian Federal Police and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation — after public comments by some of them and

Understanding stats that don't figure

Courier-Mail
Sat. 17 Aug. 96

By CHRISTINE JACKMAN

FEW people would deny that men are the greatest victims of much of the violence in modern society.

The recently released National Crime Statistics for 1995 revealed that the majority of murder victims (58 percent) were male. Men also comprised the majority of victims of attempted murder (68 percent) and assault (57.9 percent).

But men also inflict most of that violence. Figures released by the Australian Institute of Criminology last year show male perpetrators are responsible for 91 percent of homicides, 90 percent of assaults and nearly all sexual assaults (with men also the victims in 16 percent of cases).

But what about at home? Again, few would argue that men are never victims of domestic violence. While it is a relatively recent field of study in Australia, most studies here consistently estimate men comprise 3-5 percent of domestic violence victims (although, in the United States, some widely accepted studies put the figure between 5-10 percent).

That does not necessarily mean those men are beaten by their wives. Some are assaulted by other male family members; some are gay men living in violent relationships, although violence between homosexual partners is probably the least recognised form of domestic violence.

Certainly, others are abused by their wives or de facto partners.

But one of the greatest myths currently being espoused by extremist groups in the men's rights lobby is that there is a silent epidemic of "husband-bashing", which is being deliberately ignored by the domestic violence sector.

Statistics have become a vital weapon in the armoury of such men's groups. The Men's Rights Agency frequently quotes statistics taken from the Internet (which is yet to be recognised by academics or other social or scientific analysts as a legitimate source for research).

Other commentaries frequently cited by MRA and others are authored by one man — John Coochey, a Canberra-based economist within the Department of Defence.

Mr Coochey has been extremely vocal — and has received widespread publicity — in a campaign against what he calls "widely exaggerated claims about violence against women".

In doing so, he dismisses commonly accepted research from a range of sources, including the Federal Government, academics, the police, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the United Nations, in favour of a small selection of his own preferred studies. Yet he ac-

cuses others of selective use and abuse of statistics.

His most commonly quoted source is *Behind Closed Doors*, an American study conducted in 1980 by Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz. This study, and a range of others which have since produced similar results, use what is called the "Conflict Tactics Scale", or CTS, or very similar methodologies.

Under this regime, information about how couples settled domestic disagreements was gathered via telephone surveys and collated according to the CTS (which comprises a range of 18 acts, from discussing calmly or crying to throwing something at one's partner or beating him/her).

Quoting this study, Coochey — and subsequently groups like MRA — argue domestic violence is "pretty much gender neutral". That is, the study found one in three households would suffer from some degree of domestic violence, but "in half the cases the woman would be the perpetrator".

But do these figures tell the whole story? Closer inspection reveals some significant methodological flaws in the use of the CTS in these studies.

The first is that it fails to adequately define or differentiate between acts of violence. For example, kicking, hitting or trying to hit, biting, beating up, choking, threatening with a knife or firing a gun are all categorised as "severe violence". Thus, pushing back in self-defence and pushing someone down the stairs are considered equally violent acts, as are a slap which stings and a punch that breaks ribs, or trying to hit back when being held down or against a wall.

Additionally, sexual assault — rape in marriage, for example — is not considered to be physical violence by the CTS, or those who apply it.

Finally, by focusing on physical violence only, these studies completely fail to recognise the wider context in which such acts often occur. Nor do they consider the varying cause-and-effect of such incidents.

They fail to recognise that physical domestic violence is often reinforced by a range of other forms of violence designed to control, terrorise and disable other members of the household.

But perhaps what is saddest about this "statistics warfare" — and some women's lobby groups have been equally guilty of misquoting or misinterpreting research studies, including, ironically, *Behind Closed Doors* — is that it detracts from the fact that violence is destructive in all its forms, regardless of whether its victims are male or female.

Talk c

IT'S a hot evening in February as the first meeting of the Men's Rights Agency for 1996 convenes in the upstairs of the Southport Bowls Club.

Members, both men and women, are welcomed by co-founders Reginald and Sue Price. Beers are available downstairs.

Sue Price opens the meeting saying she felt the old year had "gone out with a bang and the new year had started with a great bloody explosion".

That "bloody explosion" was Peter May gunning down his family before killing himself at their Hillcrest home only 11 days before.

The MRA had been accused of triggering May's decision to kill his family by painting a negative picture of his future family life. An MRA pamphlet, sections picked out with marker pen, was found later in May's home by police. Queensland domestic violence groups said the MRA had "blood on its hands".

But Price told the Southport meeting she found the allegations that the MRA had provoked the Hillcrest incident by convincing May he would have little hope of seeing his children after his wife left him "quite shattering".

"I think the very action of access organised for him disputes that fact anyway," she said. "I firmly believe that Helen May, her children and parents would still be alive today if she had not been advised to leave the house."

"There was no need for her to leave the house at that stage. Peter was facing a lot of problems and the police raided his house the day before she left, and he was up on quite serious fraud charges and looked like he was going to jail, and that is the story of Peter May."

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Males net

From Page 21

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Friends are convinced that visit-
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Males network links

From Page 21

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Sue Price said at the time there was no justification for what May had done, but it was the agency's responsibility to tell him the truth about what he was facing.

"He was pretty depressed after he saw us and saw the solicitor but that's pretty normal for most men," she said.

"Nothing he said alerted us to what he was going to do, and we would have told the authorities if there was. A lot of men don't realise how horrendous the Family Law Act is and how much they're going to lose, their children, their families.

"But fortunately most men don't do what Peter May did."

During the few hours May spent at the MRA he tearfully recounted coming home to find his house empty of family and furniture.

Sue Price said May told them he had not heard anything from his family since their departure from their Middle Park home five weeks before. He apparently neglected to tell the Prices that his mother-in-law Rita Potter had brought the children to see him for his birthday.

May said he feared something serious had happened to the children and no one, including police, would give him information about their whereabouts.

"... He couldn't quite understand this at the time but we explained to him that if the furniture was gone, it seemed likely that it was planned leaving, so we sent him off to the solicitors," she later told the Southport meeting.

May spoke about his two-year domestic violence order, which had been granted by the Beenleigh Magistrates Court three days before he went to see the MRA. He told the Prices he had run out of options to locate his family.

He declined the agency's offer of a counsellor in favour of Relationships Australia, where his wife was receiving counselling. It is still not known whether he used the MRA's referral service to private investigators.

The Prices booked an appointment for May to see a MRA-referred solicitor the following morning. Sue Price said the solicitor contacted Helen and, with her permission, organised for May to take the children on a two-week holiday.

In an interview with The Courier-Mail in February, Price asked why May was given access if he was so bad and Helen was so scared.

Contemporaneous notes taken by Roger Potter, Helen's older brother, in the days following the murders, raise questions about the depth of involvement of the MRA between May and Helen.

Roger Potter says his mother, Rita, had told him Helen had been advised that allowing May access was in her "best interests".

During a conversation with The Courier-Mail's private investigator in April, a MRA member said the Prices had been the ones who had "fought for him (May) to get access to see his kids, you see, and as soon as he did get access, he blew them away".

File notes from May's solicitor said May believed he and Helen would not reconcile.

According to Price, speaking at the Southport meeting, the Domestic Violence Act did not work. Hillcrest was adequate proof that a piece of paper would not protect someone from another who really wanted to kill them, she said.

But Helen May had taken more precautions than a domestic violence order to safeguard her family.

She resigned from her job, realising that that was an obvious place for May to look for her. She sought advice from a solicitor, went to the Department of Social Security to make new arrangements for the payment of her benefit and found alternative accommodation.

Her diary entry for Sunday, November 11 reveals the trauma she was living: "I haven't slept or eaten for two days now. I decide to go to police at Sunnybank Plaza. I tell the officer everything. She gives me a list of things I must do."

Ian Smith, who is married to May's sister, Helen, believes the tragedy could have been avoided had workers involved with the case communicated with one another and both families.

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Osmak said he was not a League of Rights supporter and did not agree with their anti-semitic views. But he described them as patriots and said he respected several of its members.

MRA co-founder Sue Price publicly defended a Christians Speaking Out member who was jailed by the Family Court in January in a well-publicised case involving 54

against Defence minister Robert Ray to prevent the melting down of 100,000 defence force rifles and machineguns.

He said the move was treasonous and left Australia open to invasion. His supporters in court included Osmak, Lock Stock and Barrel publisher Ron Owen and Doring.

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Males network linked with far-Right groups

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"He said the feminist movement was a UN cover-up, that the UN wanted to have women in all positions of power and it was time for men to have a couple of thousand years of being the slaves."

Osmak said the Government employed many feminists who had "tremendous resources at their disposal to fight for the cause of feminism which is anti-family and anti-male".

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Another organisation at the Albany Creek seminar, the Family Law Reform Party, was founded by family law activist Barry Weedon.

Labor MLA Henry Palaszczuk told Parliament in 1988 that Weedon was shonky, evil, unprincipled and dangerous.

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Desperately seeking the victims

THE Men's Rights Agency was set up in 1994 to help right what the founders, Reg and Sue Price, saw as a bias against men under family law.

But the range of tactics and practices it uses have been criticised as endangering the safety of women and children victims of domestic violence.

The Courier-Mail's seven-month investigation has revealed the MRA refers members — some of whom have domestic violence orders against them — to private investigators in a bid to locate their estranged spouses.

And former MRA members have divulged to The Courier-Mail that the agency's inflammatory and fatalistic "counselling" — alleged to have incited Peter May before the Hillcrest killings — is common practice in the organisation's dealings with perpetrators of domestic violence.

MRA is a private company, with Reg and Sue Price registered as the sole directors and shareholders. The agency offers counselling and referral services to men facing Family Court action, or whose spouses have left. The Prices claim the organisation has anywhere from 900 to 2000 members nationwide.

Neither Reg nor Sue Price have any formal qualifications to counsel, assist or work with men in the domestic violence intervention process. As a privately funded organisation, the MRA is exempt from the domestic violence minimum standards practice and public scrutiny of its activities.

Described by one former member as "doom merchants", the MRA's practice of informing distraught men of the "evils" of the Family Court and espousing allegedly distorted statistics has

an initial \$150 fee, of which \$100 is promoted as giving "immediate access" to family law specialists.

However, it has been alleged the professional firms and practitioners rarely, if ever, receive any payment from the MRA. The specialists include family law solicitors, psychologists, counsellors, accountants and "worldwide" private investigators.

MRA literature claims one of the organisation's aims is to "monitor the performance of all 'professionals' to ensure an adequate standard of service is provided, complying with the interests of our members".

It also claims the MRA does not receive any commissions from the "professionals" to which members are referred. "We preferred to retain our independence and integrity so that we could perform a monitoring and, in some cases, a critical role."



GRAEME Page . . . warning.

The MRA is said to have an extensive network of sympathisers and contacts in a number of government departments and police

law or within an accepted code of conduct of normal behaviour."

The MRA's use of private investigators has come under close scrutiny by police and Family Services Minister Kev Lingard following suspicions raised about the organisation's involvement in Peter May's alleged use of private investigators to try to find his wife and children.

Kelly rang Sue Price in early February, informed her of his occupation and offered his services to the organisation. She then invited him to attend the MRA's first meeting for the year at Southport Bowls Club.

More than 10 members were subsequently referred to Kelly by the MRA. At 3.02pm on March 29, Sue Price telephoned Kelly on behalf of a member and asked him: "Do you have any contacts that would enable us to locate someone in a refuge?"

Kelly said no and asked if the man had a domestic violence order against him. Sue Price told him there was no order and the man was not violent. She claimed the man's wife and daughter had left the family after their son committed suicide.

"He just wants to talk with her. Once he gets to see her he says that he can calm her down," she said.

Kelly said he would take the man's details and if "something pops up via general inquiries" he would let them know.

Then, in April, an MRA member with a domestic violence order against him called to ask Kelly to track down his wife so he could serve court papers on her. When the member asked if Kelly could access restricted Social Security records Kelly told him he could only use "legal and discrete means".

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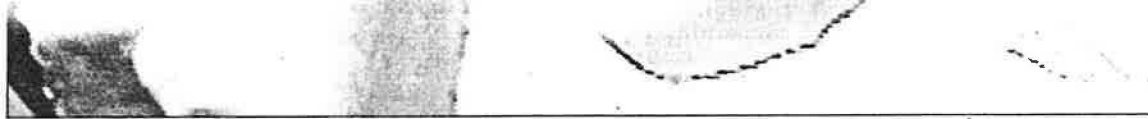
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VEST INTERESTS ... Keith Shew tests his bulletproof vests. Picture: ABC TV.

Lingard surveillance target

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Lingard has referred the incident to police and Price is now under investigation.

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The agency has also been accused of publicly "crucifying" domestic violence workers and organisations in a bid to undermine what they describe as the "femme-Nazi" conspiracy hijacking government funding and institutions.

Members of the legal fraternity condemned the MRA for fuelling men's anger towards their spouses and the courts, instilling unrealistic expectations in their members and hindering Family Court litigation.

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Judges in the Sunbury District Courts ordered psychiatric counselling for Shew who was heavily medicated during his incarceration.

Shew attracted national media attention in February when he launched legal action in the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission citing gender bias because of an alleged failure by domestic violence workers to assist him as a victim of domestic violence.

Shew, who was unsuccessful in his application, had claimed his wife had beaten him with a vacuum-cleaner pipe. He later offered to take a Courier-Mail journalist to the secret location of a women's refuge. Several refuges were placed on a security alert as a result.

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Television news footage shows an unlicensed Shew firing rounds into the jackets in a demonstration for then industry and technology minister Peter McKechnie at Doring's Mooloolah property.

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In a letter to The Sydney Morning Herald newspaper, Sue Price said of Shew's criminal history: "Our ardour was not dampened as Mr Shew has never hidden his past conviction and has always been quite open and honest with us".

Guns, drugs links

MEN'S Rights Agency organiser Keith Shew is a convicted gun-runner and drug trafficker with a history of psychiatric instability and links to extremist members of the gun lobby.

MRA co-founder Sue Price told The Courier-Mail's private investigator that Shew, the agency's north-side convenor, would assume control of the organisation in the event of her or her husband's absence.

Mackay-born Shew was jailed in May 1992 for having received a sub-machinegun, five pistols, SLR assault rifle parts and ammunition stolen from Brisbane's Enoggera army barracks — the largest military base in Australia.

At least one of the stolen 9mm Browning pistols has not been recovered.

Shew was also convicted in the Brisbane Supreme Court of having dealt substantial quantities of marijuana over a seven-year period from his home and business.

He was sentenced to 3½ years jail for the weapons offences, and 18 months for the drug dealing, but only served 5½ months.

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Reg and Sue Price registered as the sole directors and shareholders. The agency offers counselling and referral services to men facing Family Court action, or whose spouses have left. The Prices claim the organisation has anywhere from 900 to 2000 members nationwide.

Neither Reg nor Sue Price have any formal qualifications to counsel, assist or work with men in the domestic violence intervention process. As a privately funded organisation, the MRA is exempt from the domestic violence minimum standards practice and public scrutiny of its activities.

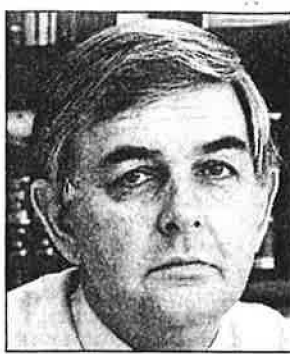
Described by one former member as "doom merchants", the MRA's practice of informing distraught men of the "evils" of the Family Court, and espousing allegedly distorted statistics has been widely condemned.

Dawn Llewellyn, co-ordinator of the Domestic Violence Regional Service at Ipswich, claimed a female client was tracked down by an MRA-referred private investigator.

Sue Price also told The Courier-Mail's private investigator, Mark Kelly, the organisation had identified the locations of a number of secret women's refuges restricted to police, courts, domestic violence workers and Family Services Department staff.

"But she said the MRA was "not interested" in the shelters' locations and "if they (women) want to go and closet themselves away in refuges that's their problem, we will work at it another way".

The organisation advertises each week in The Courier-Mail and holds irregular recruitment and information meetings in Brisbane and the Gold Coast. Members pay



GRAEME Page . . . warning.

The MRA is said to have an extensive network of sympathisers and contacts in a number of government departments and police stations and within the legal and medical communities.

Sue Price admitted to a private investigator she had obtained restricted information on the employment of two male domestic violence workers held by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Training. One of the men has begun formal proceedings to determine the source of the information leak.

The Prices told Kelly they had personally contributed \$10,000 and taken out a \$15,000 overdraft on their Bethania home to fund the organisation.

MRA literature declares its primary aim "is to fill the very obvious void that exists in the assistance provided for men experiencing all forms of discrimination, with particular emphasis given to the Family Law arena".

"We stress that we are not a radical group and we never suggest any action that may not be within the

against him. Sue Price told him there was no order and the man was not violent. She claimed the man's wife and daughter had left the family after their son committed suicide.

"He just wants to talk with her. Once he gets to see her he says that he can calm her down," she said.

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Llewellyn said the private investigators were doing women and children.

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At an April 2 MRA

The figures behind the figures

REG and Sue Price see themselves as the classic victims of family law — a husband stripped of his assets by his first wife and a second wife struggling to pick up the pieces.

But through their work with the Men's Rights Agency — their own privately funded and self-run vendetta against the inherent "bias" they see punishing men in the family law — they have made their mark.

Reg, 63, and Sue, 51, have been labelled by their critics as misogynist, destructive, unprofessional and conspiratorial.

The Prices respond by attacking their detractors as "femme-Nazis" or anti-men. The Prices say they are tackling a void in the family law where the rights of men seem to evaporate.

The MRA's public profile is dominated by Sue Price. Sue, originally from Liverpool, England, is considered to be something of a media

opportunist — regularly featuring on talkback radio and in letters-to-the-editor sections around Australia, as well as generating an endless stream of self-promoting press releases.

In public, Reg takes a more passive role. Even at their home cum office, Reg often answers the phone but usually hands inquiries on to his wife. But at MRA meetings he and Sue present a united front, addressing the gatherings and empowering their members.

In their literature, Reg and Sue trace their motivation back to their personal experience with the family law and Family Court systems. They say they have seen the face of the system's patent bias against men and are now battling to heed the call of the thousands of men who would otherwise go unheard.

It is not known how Melbourne-born Reg and Liverpool-born Sue met and when they married. Sue proudly proclaims herself to be a



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Men who who have turned to Sue for advice speak of her kindly manner and her maternal nature. To these men who find themselves abandoned, Sue is the sympathetic ear — ready to listen, warm to their concerns and eager to take their side.

Many who work in family law, and with families ruptured by domestic violence, openly concede the MRA has a valid point to make. Men's issues need to be addressed. It is clearly time for policy-makers to re-evaluate the stresses men are facing.

Reg and Sue's background can only be traced through the information they provide in their literature — all efforts to explore their past proved fruitless. Neither appears on any electoral roll, despite their

avowed political concerns, and their own public account of their lives seems scant.

In Melbourne, they shared several furniture design and renovation businesses registered with the Victorian Business Names Registry until 1989. The following year, they moved to Queensland and bought their Bethania home, near Beenleigh, for just over \$75,000.

The Australian Securities Commission records show the Men's Rights Agency was registered as a limited shelf company on March 15, 1994, and the programme of male backlash began. Reg was 61 years old and Sue was 49.

"Sue is Reg's second wife and Reg has three children from his first marriage. Reg came away from the first relationship with very little asset value. His first wife gained the majority of the assets from two properties and a business, then later on three-quarters of a third property," one of their pamphlets says.

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ARE NOT

Neither Reg nor Sue Price have any formal qualifications to counsel, assist or work with men in the domestic violence intervention process. As a privately funded organisation, the MRA is exempt from the domestic violence minimum standards practice and public scrutiny of its activities.

Described by one former member as "doom merchants", the MRA's practice of informing distraught men of the "evils" of the Family Court, and espousing allegedly distorted statistics has been widely condemned.

Dawn Llewellyn, co-ordinator of the Domestic Violence Regional Service at Ipswich, claimed a female client was tracked down by an MRA-referred private investigator.

Sue Price also told The Courier-Mail's private investigator, Mark Kelly, the organisation had identified the locations of a number of secret women's refuges restricted to police, courts, domestic violence workers and Family Services Department staff.

But she said the MRA was "not interested" in the shelters' locations and "if they (women) want to go and closet themselves away in refuges that's their problem, we will work at it another way".

The organisation advertises each week in The Courier-Mail and holds irregular recruitment and information meetings in Brisbane and the Gold Coast. Members pay



GRAEME Page . . . warning.

The MRA is said to have an extensive network of sympathisers and contacts in a number of government departments and police stations and within the legal and medical communities.

Sue Price admitted to a private investigator she had obtained restricted information on the employment of two male domestic violence workers held by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Training. One of the men has begun formal proceedings to determine the source of the information leak.

The Prices told Kelly they had personally contributed \$10,000 and taken out a \$15,000 overdraft on their Bethania home to fund the organisation.

MRA literature declares its primary aim "is to fill the very obvious void that exists in the assistance provided for men experiencing all forms of discrimination, with particular emphasis given to the Family Law arena".

"We stress that we are not a radical group and we never suggest any action that may not be within the

man's details and if "something pops up via general inquiries" he would let them know.

Then, in April, an MRA member with a domestic violence order against him called to ask Kelly to track down his wife so he could serve court papers on her. When the member asked if Kelly could access restricted Social Security records Kelly told him he could only use "legal and discrete means".

Kelly asked why the domestic violence order had been granted and the member replied: "She got one and extended it so I can't see my daughter — but that was the domestic violence act — that I bloody smacked her in the head with an ashtray — not hard enough (laughs).

"The order says I'm not allowed to stalk her, not to try and find out where she's living. I am not allowed to know her address. Well it's a load of shit."

Kelly told the member he would have to have a letter of instruction from the member's solicitor, but Kelly never made any inquiries.

Another MRA member rang on April 24 seeking Kelly's advice on planting a listening device in his house to record evidence of his wife's assaults on him. He said he wanted the bashing to stop.

Kelly said planting listening devices, or "bugs", was illegal, but he advised the man he could simply tape record the conversations.

establish he was having an affair with a member of his staff.

MRA co-founder Sue Price called a private investigator and asked him to begin "after-hours" surveil-

In a conversation with Sue Price in May, Kelly asked her "how do you handle it when these guys have DVOs?"

Sue Price said: "Usually we say you've just 'blown it', haven't you? You know you have committed domestic violence. Now don't do it again because if you do it will be a criminal charge this time."

She told Kelly her safeguard was that "if it's a domestic violence order you can do it for his own safety, you can give the address to the solicitor but don't give him the address. And whether the solicitor decides to release where she is, is up to him."

Llewellyn said the use of private investigators was dangerous to the women and children.

"The danger is . . . some of these organisations using private investigators to track down women because that is the most dangerous time for the perpetrator of domestic violence. It's been demonstrated quite clearly throughout the world that that's when women and children are more likely to be killed."

At an April 2 MRA recruitment

the attempt to gather compelling material, Lingard said the plot did not trouble him personally.

He said he passed the matter to the police because of the dangers

meeting at the Mt Gravatt showgrounds — the first in Brisbane — during a conversation about women leaving the family home, Sue Price told Kelly: "I hate the bitches that leave."

The MRA advises its members to cross-register domestic violence orders against their spouses regardless of whether the violence has been reciprocated by the women.

The former member, who said he was both a victim and perpetrator of domestic violence, felt if it wasn't for Relationships Australia he "would have done what Peter May did".

Gold Coast Domestic Violence Resource Centre co-ordinator Betty Taylor said: "The harm that is being done (to men) is that (the MRA) take an extreme view of things and they are not trying to walk the middle ground."

"When violent men are going to where their anger is continually fed and they are not challenged to address that violence then they will seek to act that out."

"Anyone who has contact with men who have committed acts of

The figures behind the fight against

REG and Sue Price see themselves as the classic victims of family law — a husband stripped of his assets by his first wife and a second wife struggling to pick up the pieces.

But through their work with the Men's Rights Agency — their own privately funded and self-run vendetta against the inherent "bias" they see punishing men in the family law — they have made their mark.

Reg, 63, and Sue, 51, have been labelled by their critics as misogynist, destructive, unprofessional and conspiratorial.

The Prices respond by attacking their detractors as "femmes."

opportunist — regularly featuring on talkback radio and in letters-to-the-editor sections around Australia, as well as generating an endless stream of self-promoting press releases.

In public, Reg takes a more passive role. Even at their home cum office, Reg often answers the phone but usually hands inquiries on to his wife. But at MRA meetings he and Sue present a united front, addressing the gatherings and empowering their members.

In their literature, Reg and Sue trace their motivation back to their personal experience with the family and Family Court systems.

They have seen the face of



REG and Sue Price . . . family law used

Kelly: "I hate the bitches that leave."

Reg and Sue say men are dying at their own hands because of the torments forced upon them by the courts, and that a lack of access to children is the greatest trigger for male suicide.

According to one former MRA member he counselled, Reg claims to have lost access to his children and his family home. He now advises other men of the futility of their struggle with the courts.

The former member said when he visited the Bethania home, Reg had coffee and "started to talk about cy stuff".

"He said the feminist

QUESTIONS OF A

Sat. Aug. 17, p. 24

The Courier-Mail requested an interview with the Men's Rights Agency to respond to the issues raised in this series of articles, but the offer was declined. At the MRA's request, The Courier-Mail submitted a series of questions to which the Prices have provided written answers. Their answers arrived late last night, after the usual deadline for the Monitor section, which meant their response to our questions could not be presented more prominently in these articles.

USE OF PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS:

1(a): Has the MRA engaged or attempted to engage a private investigator or private investigators to collect information on the activities of the Family Services Minister Mr Kev Lingard?

A: The MRA did not engage a private investigator.

1(b): If yes, what information was obtained?

A: Not applicable.

2(a): Has the MRA engaged or attempted to engage a private investigator or private investigators to collect information on the activities of Betty Taylor, chairperson of the Domestic Violence Council?

A: No.

2(b): If yes, what information was obtained?

A: Not applicable.

3: Has the MRA ever encouraged members to use private investigators to find the location of the members' wives or partners despite standing Domestic Violence Orders?

A: No.

3(b): If yes, why was this encouragement given?

A: Not applicable.

MRA FINANCES:

4(a): Has the MRA ever received donations or other funding from groups such as The League of Rights, The Sporting Shooters Association, the Firearms Owners Association, Christians Speaking Out and the Right To Bear Arms Association?

A: No.

4(b): If yes, how much?

A: Not applicable.

5(a): Has the MRA ever received a letter from the state Liberal-National Party Coalition promising or outlining funding arrangements?

A: The MRA received a letter indicating that a funding application would be favourably considered. A copy of that letter has already been provided to your journalist, Alan Revell.

5(b): If yes, are you prepared to produce this letter?

A: Further copy of the letter is attached.

6: How are membership fees utilised or distributed?

A: Membership fees are utilised in providing the services set out in answer to Question 7.

7: What services does the MRA provide in return for fees?

A: MRA provides a seven-day-a-week, 24-hour-a-day contact service for both telephone and personal inquiries; a freecall line for such inquiries; referral to specialist family lawyers, counsellors/psychologists, accountants, financial advisers and private investigators who have agreed to provide free consultations; provision of emergency accommodation; employer liaison as required; regular meetings involving guest speakers speaking on a wide variety of topics, such as family law, domestic violence issues, Child Support Agency matters, etc; reduced cost group counselling sessions; regular newsletter.

8: Does the MRA engage qualified counsellors, psychologists, solicitors and accountants to assist members?

A: No.

9: Can you produce documentary evidence of these engagements?

A: Not applicable.

10: Do your members report satisfaction with these services?

A: Yes.

11: Can you provide documentary evidence that initial membership fees are always utilised, as advertised, to pay for these services?

A: We don't understand what this question is meant to imply. We have no other means of providing the services as listed above other than through membership fees. We receive no government funding.

PETER MAY:

12: What advice did the MRA give Peter May when he attended a meeting on December 21, 1995?

A: MRA counselled Peter May as follows: advise re custody, access, child support matters, domestic violence and property set-

tlement; recommendation that he see a counsellor; referred him to a solicitor.

13(a): Did the MRA give him any written information?

A: Yes.

13(b): If yes, are you prepared to produce a copy of that written information?

A: Attached are copies of the Men's Rights brochure and a copy of the Men's Rights Aims and Objectives which were provided to Mr May.

14: Did the MRA encourage Peter May to find the whereabouts of his wife and children?

A: We recommended that Mr May speak with the police and the domestic violence hotline concerning the whereabouts of his children and otherwise referred him to a solicitor.

15(a): In this regard, did the MRA support Peter May in his desire to gain access to his children?

A: Based on the information provided by Mr May, yes.

15(b): If yes, in what way was this support given?

A: Refer above.

16: Did the MRA refer Peter May to a private investigator to assist him in finding his wife and family?

A: No.

17: Did the MRA instruct May to use a firm of solicitors to gain access to his children?

A: We did not "instruct" Mr May, but recommended that he see a solicitor regarding access to his children.

KEITH DOUGLAS SHEW:

18(a): Is the MRA aware of the true nature of Mr Shew's criminal convictions?

A: Yes. We believe we are aware of the nature of Mr Shew's criminal convictions.

18(b): Is the MRA aware of Mr Shew's long-term involvement in the trafficking and use of illicit drugs?

A: No. We are only aware of a conviction for personal use of marijuana a number of years ago, and are not aware of any

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SHEW . . . an area co-ordinator for the MRA.

long-term involvement in the trafficking of illicit drugs.

18(c): Is the MRA aware of Mr Shew's court-ordered psychiatric treatment and medication?
A: No.

19: What is Mr Shew's official position with the MRA? What is his role and what functions does he perform in the MRA?
A: Mr Shew is an area co-ordinator for MRA. He is available to speak to people in the first instance and assist them in completing application forms and then refer them to MRA.

Apart from a fee of \$25 that MRA pays for its area co-ordinators in respect of each completed application form, he acts on a voluntary basis.

The fee is paid to assist co-ordinators with their administration costs and expenses.

20: How was Mr Shew recruited to the MRA?
A: Mr Shew initially sought our help as a client.

21: Does the MRA know of Mr Shew's involvement, past or present, with Bob Doring?
A: Since the matter has been raised by you, we have learnt that Mr Shew had some involvement with a Mr Bob Doring in 1989.

22: Was the MRA aware of these issues at the time of commencing Mr Shew's association with the MRA?
A: Apart from his criminal conviction, no.



JIM and Rita

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FAMILY TRAGEDY



JIM and Rita Potter . . . forced to hand over \$13,000.

Parents caught in money rort

PETER May had been investigated by Queensland police for a number of criminal endeavours, primarily suspected fraud and stolen property offences and had also been referred to the Australian Federal Police for possible tax rorts.

When police first raided his home in 1995 and seized a mountain of financial records, May had already been convicted for a minor stealing offence. The documents revealed in excess of \$300,000 flowing through the long-term unemployed May's accounts and "investments".

May was subsequently charged with six counts of fraud over a finance company rip-off involving a Suzuki sedan bought from a major car yard using forged pay receipts from a phony landscaping firm.

Also involved in the scam were May's best friend and another man — a known heroin dealer and small-time criminal who was questioned over a botched rape and abduction. The second man also told police about other alleged offences and hoaxes in which May was involved.

He also forced his wife, Helen, to persuade her parents, Jim and Rita Potter, to surrender their \$13,000 retirement nest egg.

When his wife asked why he needed the money, he replied: "Just because I need it."

A solicitor's file showed May was allegedly being blackmailed by the second man into paying his court fines in return for his silence about

May's involvement in other crimes. The file stated the pair fell out when May refused to pay a \$45,000 extortion demand.

Neighbours said cars would often appear at May's Middle Park home and, after being worked on in the yard, would then disappear — only to be replaced a short time later with another. Family members believe he and one of his friends were illegally obtaining the cars, doing them up and selling them. May sold up to 12 cars in a year.

May's sister Helen Smith said the fear he instilled in their father and the way he opened the veins of the old man's financial reserve and bled it dry.

When "Doug" — the family's name for Dragan Majstorovic — considered altering his will to make his grandchildren sole beneficiaries, Helen says her brother went "berserk" and threatened Doug into a doleful capitulation the morning he was to sign the papers. So much so, that he signed over the \$150,000 house he had bought them for \$45,000.

Her mother was even forced to take legal action against May in an attempt to recover her \$118,000 he had tied up in the Forest Lake property where he and Helen dreamed of building a three-storey "mansion" with tennis courts, stables and a seashell bath that yawned open.

And Helen Smith said several years ago her brother had openly boasted about the success of a \$140,000 insurance fraud.

SHEW . . . an area co-ordinator for the MRA.

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Traffic Alert

Motorists and pedestrians, the City's Traffic Guidance Services Unit

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 Brisbane City
 ss - A Better Brisbane

Lingard target of surveillance plan

From Page 23

PPRICE told investigator Mark Kelly she had received a letter from the Coalition before February's Mundingburra election promising the MRA they would be "doing well" under a Coalition government.
 She said the letter had not been honoured and, as part of an initiative to become "more devious", she tried to contract Kelly to photograph, tape record and video Lingard and his staffer.
 Price informed Kelly that she wanted "proper proof" of the Minister's alleged illicit affair, which she claimed "could compromise him in his decision-making situation".
 "I think we need to get a little bit more devious in what we're doing," she said. "I think... if you've got to become political then you've got to become political."
 "I'm serious about it Mark, I want to know if you can do it... (and) what actually it's going to cost..."
 "I need things like that, this is getting so frustrating what we're

trying to do and I'm not getting through to any of them, either him or her, and she's (a member of staff)."
 Price told a February 6 MRA meeting she had been advised by some politicians to "lay low" and let the furor surrounding the Hillcrest killings "blow over". She then urged the meeting to support the Coalition.
 Mr Lingard this week said he had never advised Price to "lay low", but confirmed that she had called him about the Hillcrest killings at his home on his morning "hotline" — when he takes calls from any member of the public with an issue to discuss.
 He said Price's call was prompted by articles in The Courier-Mail in February that raised concerns about the MRA's involvement with Peter May.
 He said the State Government had never had any intention of funding the MRA because of a "personal value judgment" about Price's aggressive nature and the fact that the agency was a private organisation.
 He said he was not surprised that

she had attempted to embarrass him in this way.
 "It doesn't surprise me following the type of phone calls that she used to ring me about," he said. "She had direct access to me (through his hotline) in which she was very aggressive."
 "I don't think she was ever told funding was not coming to her but she was told they had not been allocated funding."
 "I don't think there was ever any doubt that I was going to shrink away from my word."
 "I'd be surprised if she ever thought that she could even use that sort of activity to get funding. This is an inappropriate means of lobbying."
 Kelly was invited to the Bethania home of the Prices to discuss the investigation on August 8, and he was asked to provide a quote.
 He then advised both Sue and Reg Price not to go ahead with the surveillance.
 During the conversation, Sue Price said she had not thought how she would use any material obtained, only that she would have to use it "wisely" to avoid any repercussions.



LINGARD... called police.

Mail Sunday Mail
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 the three tokens you need for a chance to win an getaway. Entry coupons in



HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL

WEST MORETON ANGLICAN COLLEGE

Police will probe MRA spy claims

By **PAULA DONEMAN**
and **MICHAEL WARE**

POLICE Commissioner Jim O'Sullivan has ordered an investigation into the controversial Men's Rights Agency following evidence uncovered by The Courier-Mail.

The MRA, a family law action group, arranges for private investigators to hunt down members' wives who are hiding in women's refuges under the protection of domestic-violence orders.

Mr O'Sullivan said he was extremely concerned that women in domestic-violence situations may have been put in further danger.

The Courier-Mail's seven-month investigation also revealed the MRA tried to use a private detective to spy on Family Services Minister Kev Lingard in a futile bid to establish he was having an affair.

Mr O'Sullivan yesterday said he was concerned at the bonafides of the MRA, which is run by co-founders Reg and Sue Price from Bethania, near Beenleigh.

MRA northern co-ordinator Keith Shew, who would take over the organisation's operations in the Prices' absence, is a convicted gun runner and drug trafficker with a history of violence and psychiatric instability.

Mr O'Sullivan said he has already briefed senior police officers to have a "very close look" at the MRA.

He said the officers were told to particularly investigate the organisation over any breaches of the state's domestic-violence legislation.

Mr O'Sullivan said he regarded the Queensland Police Service as the Australian leader in its administration of domestic-violence legislation and was deeply concerned about the evidence uncovered by The Courier-Mail.

The officers will also examine the MRA's activities in relation to its request to have a private investigator — placed in the MRA by The Courier-Mail — conduct video and audio surveillance of Mr Lingard.

The baseless move was part of a vendetta against Mr Lin-



JIM O'Sullivan

gard over his failure to provide funding to the organisation — a private company whose sole directors and shareholders are the Prices — after the MRA believed he had failed to honour a letter offering to consider any funding application.

Mr Lingard said last week he never intended to fund the MRA because of a "personal value judgment" about Mrs Price's aggressive nature and because the MRA was a private organisation.

The MRA's activities were referred to Mr O'Sullivan last week by Mr Lingard, in consultation with Attorney-General Denver Beanland. The State Government is introducing new domestic-violence legislation to further protect women.

All three MRA organisers refused to respond yesterday to the serious allegations raised about their operation and the apparent inconsistencies in their answers to written questions sent on their request about the evidence uncovered.

The Prices said they had no comment to make to this newspaper and said they "found it amazing that you would have the gall to ring up".

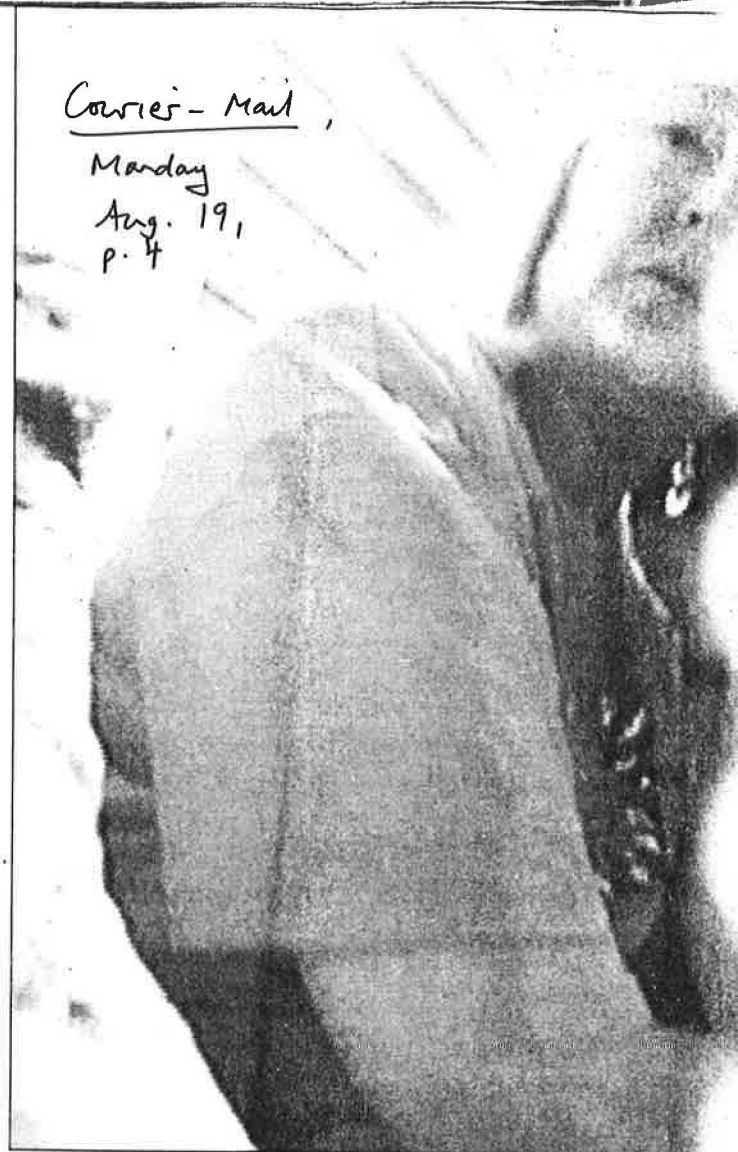
Mr Shew also said he did not wish to make any comment.

Office for Women executive director Meredith Jackson said the State Government presented a briefing paper on the impact of men's advocacy on abused women to a federal/state ministers' conference earlier this year.

Ms Jackson said the ministers were interested in good family counselling groups for men. She said the MRA was not one of them.

Courier-Mail

*Monday
Aug. 19,
p. 4*



RECEPTIVE audience . . . Sue Price, who co-founded

Counsellors claim

By **PAULA DONEMAN**
and **MICHAEL WARE**

TWO counsellors of people who commit domestic violence claim the Men's Rights Agency had a detrimental effect on men seeking help after family breakdowns.

A family care counsellor, who wished to remain anonymous, said three of his clients who visited the Men's Rights Agency said they felt they were being pushed to get in touch with their anger rather than getting help with relationship issues.

Five clients now seeing the counsellor had raised concerns about their experiences with the MRA and three gave him permission to speak on their behalf.

The counsellor said his clients, all domestic violence perpetrators, felt despondent after visiting the MRA.

They told the counsellor they felt the MRA was encouraging them to "up the ante".

"One guy was saying they were giving information about the fact you may lose your children and another guy was saying, in terms of the domestic violence issue, they (MRA) were saying, 'You may have to put a domestic violence order on your partner as well,'" the counsellor said.

None of the counsellor's clients said they had been victims of domestic violence.

The counsellor said the MRA was "feeding the anger" of its members and could create an unsafe environment for families, as well as harming the men concerned.

A domestic violence victim said her life became more difficult after her former husband joined the MRA.

The woman's husband

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Fervour as co-founder holds court

THE Men's Rights Agency meeting have a familiar feel — much the same as an evangelistic bible gathering.

But instead of a preacher standing before a receptive audience, at MRA meetings it is co-founder Sue Price who holds the predominantly male audience in thrall.

Only a few women can be seen in the audience.

On April 2, the MRA held its 10th Brisbane meeting. In the hall at Mt Gravatt Showground, there was an atmosphere of expectation — and some apprehension.

During the day, rumours had spread of a possible confrontation at the meeting involving groups who had clashed philosophically with the MRA in the past. But the dissenters failed to appear, although Keith S. kept a constant vigil.

During the meeting, the supporters listened intently to Mrs Price's rhetoric. Using a whiteboard, she took the audience through the history of the laws affecting broken families.

Her fervour carried the audience, some of whom interjected with emotional outbursts.

Supportive mumblings from others in the crowd were immediately taken up by Mrs Price who, with her husband, Reg, and Mr Shew, shaped the discussion.

Working as a team, they answered questions from the floor and expounded the group's views.

She told the faithful that the Family Law Act was created to make divorce easy, but that it merely hampered custody access and property settlement.

RECEPTIVE audience . . . Sue Price, who co-founded the Men's Rights Agency with husband Reg.

Counsellors claim agency fed anger

A DONEMAN
LAEL WARE

Counsellors of people afflicted with domestic violence from the Men's Rights Agency had a detrimental effect on men seeking help.

By care counsellors, they were encouraged to remain anonymous. Three of his clients at the Men's Rights Agency said they felt they were being pushed to get in touch with their anger rather than help with relaxation.

Now seeing the agency had raised concern about their experiences, the MRA and three gave permission to speak on the issue.

The counsellor said his clients with domestic violence problems, felt despondent after joining the MRA.

They told the counsellor they felt the MRA was encouraging them to "up the ante".

"One guy was saying they were giving information about the fact you may lose your children and another guy was saying, in terms of the domestic violence issue, they (MRA) were saying, 'You may have to put a domestic violence order on your partner as well,'" the counsellor said.

None of the counsellor's clients said they had been victims of domestic violence.

The counsellor said the MRA was "feeding the anger" of its members and could create an unsafe environment for families, as well as harming the men concerned.

A domestic violence victim said her life became more difficult after her former husband joined the MRA.

The woman's husband

became even angrier after their divorce and joined the agency when she took out a domestic violence order against him, she said.

The woman alleged the MRA encouraged her former husband to cross-register a domestic violence order, despite her not being violent towards him.

A Gold Coast-based psychologist said all three of his domestic violence clients became belligerent after seeing the MRA and "did an almost complete turnaround" in taking responsibility for their actions.

Until their visit to the MRA, they had been making progress in dealing with their violent behaviour, he said.

The psychologist, who declined to be identified for security reasons, said all three clients were "wound up" after being allegedly told by the

MRA that half of divorced fathers never saw their children.

All three men had domestic violence orders against them.

One had the order taken out against him after visiting the MRA.

"He didn't have a domestic violence order to start with and got one after he had seen the MRA. I'm surprised if they (MRA) hadn't had any influence," he said.

Another of his clients who visited the MRA at the end of 1994 told the psychologist he would not accept responsibility for his violence.

"They can become professional victims, which makes them untreatable because they won't take responsibility for their violence," he said.

"One client, who had custody of his children, became so incensed after seeing them (the MRA).

"He started using the MRA as a psychological foothold and denying the mother access because he was so frightened that she would take them away."

Family support organisation Mercy Care executive director Mick Devlin said the MRA did not accept the primary purpose of working with men was to stop the violence.

Mr Devlin said the MRA needed to be accountable to the community support sector that dealt with domestic violence.

"If they want any credibility with the sector, they have to be accountable," he said.

"In fact, they have shown evidence that their attitude is anti-women and misogynistic, that there is no point in attending network meetings."

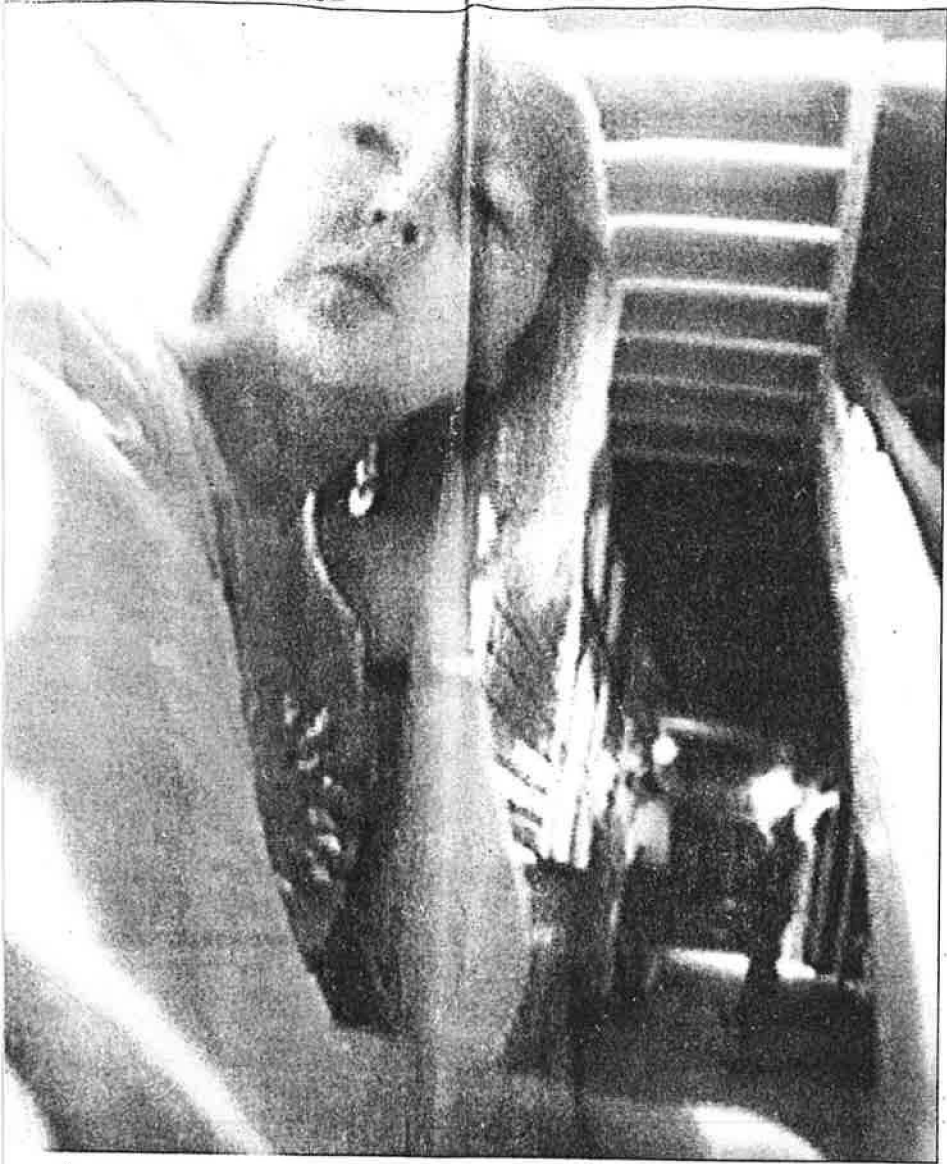
"The sector would not tolerate their attitude."

Bond to be sentenced today

ALAN Bond, the man once

Bond, the former head of

to a finance company



Sue Price, who co-founded the Men's Rights Agency with husband Reg.

Fervour as co-founder holds court

THE Men's Rights Agency meetings have a familiar feel — much the same as an evangelistic bible gathering.

But instead of a preacher standing before a receptive audience, at MRA meetings it is co-founder Sue Price who holds the predominantly male audience in thrall.

Only a few women can be seen in the audience

On April 2, the MRA held its first Brisbane meeting. In the hall at the Mt Gravatt Showground, there was an atmosphere of expectation — and some apprehension.

During the day, rumours had spread of a possible confrontation at the meeting involving groups which had clashed philosophically with the MRA in the past. But the dissenters failed to appear, although Keith Shew kept a constant vigil.

During the meeting, the supporters listened intently to Mrs Price's rhetoric. Using a whiteboard, she took the audience through the history of the laws affecting broken families.

Her fervour carried the audience, some of whom interjected with emotional outbursts.

Supportive mumblings from others in the crowd were immediately taken up by Mrs Price who, with her husband, Reg, and Mr Shew, shaped the discussion.

Working as a team, they answered questions from the floor and expounded the group's views.

She told the faithful that the Family Law Act was created to make divorce easy, but that it merely hampered custody access and property settlements.

Two ro

A WOMAN died she was travelling with her band and two of the Bruce Highway yesterday. A truck killed in an accident at the outer suburb of Corinda people were injured when a mini-bus carrying 10 people was struck near O'Rourke near Canungra hinterland, on Sunday.

Highwa

FATAL accidents way in New South Wales by up to 80 per cent since the NRMA said it welcomed the announcement that the state and federal governments will fund a \$360 million program of work on Queensland roads. Queensland road crashes cost the community \$100 million a year.

Surplus

QUEENSLAND'S special position with the State Opposition will tell business today. Mr Beattie's business and incentives for Queenslanders said recently that Sheldon had been statements that Queensland's position was a retreat from election.

Kill-bid

A BOY, 14, has three counts of murder Thursday night in an Australian settlement. It is alleged he drove through a residential area killing three policemen in the Halls Creek area Saturday with 27 western desert faced burglary, and riotous behaviour.

Seniors

VACCINATION against pneumococcal pneumonia for the elderly to become as routine as the latest Australian report says. The common form of pneumonia and meningitis requiring hospitalisation, the AMA said pneumonia rates rose sharply but vaccine use was low.

Officer

A POLICE officer was injured with head injury when he was bashed at a party at a Brisbane suburb of St. Paul's Sunday night. Police said the man was assaulted and who came to her attention, a black eye on his father and son were injured.

Bellors claim agency fed anger

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"The sector wouldn't tolerate their attitude."

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ALAN Bond, the man once heralded as a national hero

Bond, the former head of Bond Corporation, is to be

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Lingard moves on MRA work

By **PAULA DONEMAN**
and **MICHAEL WARE**

FAMILY Services Minister Kev Lingard has appointed a special investigator to examine men's support groups.

The move follows evidence uncovered by The Courier-Mail investigation into the controversial Men's Rights Agency, a family law action group which refers members to private investigators to locate members' wives in secret refuges.

The investigator will look into funding arrangements and the performance of eight men's support groups.

Mr Lingard said the appointment was to avoid the possibility of government funding being supplied to a group similar to the Men's Rights Agency.

Mr Lingard said on Saturday that he would introduce new domestic violence legislation to prohibit the use of private investigators to track down women in refuges.

He also said he would be implementing legislation to secure greater protection of women's shelters.

Opposition Family Services spokeswoman Margaret Woodgate said she would support any move by Mr Lingard to improve the lives of domestic violence victims and the security of women's shelters.

Mr Lingard has also asked his department to review the domestic violence order process, including putting structures in place to assure men of their children's wellbeing.

Ben Pennings, a community worker for the men's support group, Men Against Sexual Assault, welcomed the appointment of the Family Services investigator.

Mr Pennings said MASA, which is funded by the Brisbane City Council, would apply for government funding.

The MRA's activities — exposed by a seven-month investigation by The Courier-Mail — were referred to the Police Commissioner by Mr Lingard, in consultation with the Attorney-General.

Police Commissioner Jim O'Sullivan yesterday ordered an investigation into the MRA saying he was extremely concerned that women in domestic violence situations may have been put in further danger.

Clinics' ads 'misleading'

THREE clinics which treat male impotency, including a branch in Mt Gravatt in Brisbane's southside, have made misleading claims in national advertisements, federal consumer

