

# Some have not dealt with 'scars'

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"Almost without fail people have said 'we thought we had dealt with it but clearly we haven't.' They are still scarred, to this day, by, for example, being sjambokked by the police or being that scared 13 year-old hurtled into the back of a police van. As a result, what we have now is a series of inter-generational traumas that continue to play out in our society today."

The Trauma Centre's director, Valdi van Reenen-Le Roux concurs. The Woodstock-based organisation, which aims its services at survivors of violence and torture by addressing trauma through inclusive healing processes, compiled a report, titled *Apartheid's Violent Legacy: a Report on Trauma in the Western Cape*.

The report, written and edited by Donald Skinner, found that "torture and political imprisonment were the most visible and horrifying of the forms of repression".

The report adds: "With the unbanning of political organisations, the release of political prisoners and the establishment of a democratic government in South

Africa in 1994, many organisations that had provided support to the victims of apartheid repression ceased to function. However, the repressive past and uncertain present continue to have negative consequences for many individuals, families and communities."

Ms Van Reenen-Le Roux adds: "There is an invisibility emerging between the trauma people suffered during the 80s and the trauma of the present. We would, for example, have people coming in here for cases of domestic violence or criminal violence who are really struggling to deal with these incidents. And it is only after really working with them that we find that there were these traumatic incidents in their past, during the political struggle, that makes it that much harder for them to deal with their present trauma."

Dr O'Connell adds: "One of the most jarring moments for me was seeing somebody who was imprisoned as a teenager reduced to the shadow of what a human being should be. And although the manifestations of these traumas are different for various people – humans react differently to different things,

after all – many of those I spoke to find it difficult holding down a job or maintaining successful relationships. What those moments did in the 80s forever changed the trajectory of their lives.

"If you look at things from this perspective, the anger and bewilderment so many of our people sit with today makes absolute sense. There are those who were involved in the Struggle that have gone on to achieve magnificent things, but some who have fallen through the cracks.

"With this project I am really hoping to highlight what happens when we stand together across the lines; what happens when we mobilise something within ourselves to strive for something greater than ourselves. But, more importantly, I want to highlight our responsibility to hold those among us who have not been able to come to terms with their sacrifices – sacrifices they have made for us."

● The documentary, *An Unconscionable Amnesia*, will be screened at the Baxter theatre on Thursday October 29, at 7pm. Entry is free, though booking is essential and can be done through Computicket.



■ The documentary *An Unconscionable Amnesia* looks into the post-traumatic stress suffered by those involved in South Africa's liberation

## What's On

### Church market

The Pinelands Congregational Church will have a market on Saturday October 3 in Nerine Avenue, Pinelands, from 9am to noon. Tea and cake will also be on sale. For more information call 021 531 1400.

### Seniors' march

The Senior Citizens United Front will march to parliament about pension grant issues on Tuesday September 29.

The march will start in the Company's Garden, at 11am. All seniors are welcome to join. Call Noor Bantum and David le Roux at 078 170 7835 for more details.

### Beach walk

Clean C will hold a full-moon beach walk at Big

Bay on Saturday September 26, at 6.30pm. Participation is free, and all are welcome. Call Gregory Player at 082 873 1962.

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