

'Make sex-offender registers public'

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THE PE Lobby for Change is planning to push next year for violent and sexual offenders' registers to be open to the public.

The group, in conjunction with Yokhuselo Haven in Port Elizabeth and the DNA Project – a group which has been lobbying parliament to implement the DNA bill – hosted a workshop on Monday to discuss matters like the correct procedures for retrieving DNA.

The DNA Project awareness workshop was attended by various non-government

organisations, police, victim support unit staff and lawyers.

The workshop was presented by Lee Ah Kun of the DNA Project, who gave vital information on crime scene do's and don'ts.

Port Elizabeth family practice attorney Joanne Anthony, of PE Lobby for Change, said a DNA database would have "significant impact to track down criminals". She said: "The legislation to implement the DNA bill has been passed, but the budget must be fast-tracked to make this a reality,"

Yokhuselo Haven manager Lindsay Ziehl said the workshop was important, especially for people who worked with ab-

use victims. "It is good if we know about the law and what to do at a crime scene and how to work with victims of abuse and rape. We have invited Lee to come back and host a course on crime next year."

She said they would lobby next year for violent and sexual offenders' registers to be made available to the public.

"There are sexual offenders out there and we don't know who they are. We also want this database to be available to schools so they know who they employ," Ziehl said. "We want every police station to have the database. We have the right to know who lives in our neighbourhood."