

Qld Parliament  
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

## **Submission**

# **Inquiry on strategies to prevent and reduce criminal activity in Queensland**

## **Services and Practitioners for the Elimination of Abuse, Queensland (SPEAQ)**

**July 2014**

### **SPEAQ**

**Services and Practitioners for the Elimination of Abuse Queensland**

*Working with Men and their Families to End Domestic and Family Violence*

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## Executive summary and recommendations

### Some Key Points

- Factors contributing to Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) exist at multiple levels – cultural & social, family and community, and individual. Therefore responses to reduce the incidence of DFV must take account of this diversity of factors, especially in direct work with men who are perpetrating DFV, and in primary prevention work.
- Working directly with perpetrators of DFV is more cost effective than dealing with the aftermath of more violence including potentially homelessness for the victims, costs of the legal system, compensation to victims of crime, emergency relief to victims, accommodation for victims and their children, securing victims' homes so they can remain in their own home, probation and parole, and prison for those perpetrating the abuse.
- The men's DFV Intervention Program sector in Qld is funded at a very minimal level and needs to be expanded within a comprehensive sector development process to provide both better funding for existing programs and more programs across the state. There are some significant gaps in funding for Intervention Programs in some regions of Qld.
- Currently the capacity of Intervention Programs across Qld is more than an order of magnitude less than the need it addresses. The costs of dealing with domestic violence are so high that there is plenty of scope for increase in funding for Intervention Programs to cost-effectively deliver a reduction in DFV.
- The system matters – better system responses in the form of Co-ordinated Community Responses / Integrated Responses are well documented both in Australia and internationally to improve DFV outcomes. There is considerable scope for improving system responses in DFV in Qld with only one IR receiving dedicated funding and others constrained by limited resources.
- In many cases prison is a wasted opportunity for change. Many DFV offenders are incarcerated for less than the 12 months required to be considered for participation in rehabilitation programs. Funding to run programs in jail with those on shorter sentences would address this wasted opportunity. At a minimum, program readiness programs can prepare men for leaving jail and referral to programs in the community.
- Those working with victims of DFV frequently report that, particularly for serious offenders, the system response provides inadequate consequences and therefore too little deterrent to further violence. Serious violence offences within a Domestic Violence Context should be treated in a comparable manner to similar offences in the community.

## Recommendations

1. Fund collaborative partnerships between schools and domestic violence specialist services to identify and where necessary further develop or adapt, existing successful DFV primary prevention programs, and provide funding to implement these more widely.
2. Increase the number of funded DV Intervention Programs across the state in a systematic and staged manner, within a comprehensive sector development process.
3. Address the gaps in state funding for programs across Queensland, particularly in the Gympie to Bundaberg region which is facing an imminent loss of existing federally funded programs.
4. Develop and fund a comprehensive sector development strategy for the Intervention Program (men's DFV behaviour change program) sector, to facilitate growth into the future, including: increase in number of programs; education and training; professional network development; funding for delivery of enhanced programs.
5. Facilitate the establishment of a training and education facility, including a formal qualification for facilitators of Intervention Programs, in partnership with a Queensland university, for working with perpetrators of domestic violence.
6. Fully fund Intervention Programs including provision for partner contact work; delivery of enhanced programs addressing complex needs and high risk perpetrators; active engagement in Integrated Responses; active engagement in professional network activities and professional development.
7. Investigate options for the sustainable financial support for SPEAQ as a key element in an ongoing sector development strategy for the Intervention Program sector and require service provider engagement with SPEAQ as part of service agreements.
8. Establish specialist Domestic and Family Violence programs within Queensland prisons. Consider in particular the introduction of programs for separated fathers who have perpetrated DFV, with a focus on responsible fathering and co-operative co-parenting.
9. Establish pre-release programs for DV offenders serving short terms (<12 months), focussing on program-readiness and motivation for change, safety planning and addressing expectations on the relationship after release; in conjunction with assisted and mandated referrals to community programs on release.
10. Increase Police capacity to respond effectively to DFV by providing full-time Domestic Violence Liaison Officers at all major police stations.
11. Ensure the Supportlink system is maintained with adequate funding.

12. Fund men's DFV respondent court work to be maintained and expanded into all Magistrates Courts in Qld where a significant number of DFV matters are heard, along with court support workers for aggrieveds.
13. Fund the development of "good practice" guidelines for men's DFV respondent court work.
14. Encourage magistrates to work closely with respondent court workers when Voluntary Intervention Orders are made, to facilitate successful referrals into Intervention Programs.
15. The effectiveness of Voluntary Intervention Orders should be reviewed by the end of 2015 with reference to the original aims of its introduction, with the purpose of determining the most suitable ways for Courts to refer respondents to Intervention Programs.
16. Fund case management for DFV respondents subject to ouster orders.
17. Funding be made available for specialist parenting programs designed for fathers who have perpetrated DFV, as follow-up to men's DV Intervention Programs, to promote safe fathering practices and co-operative co-parenting.
18. Once harm due to DFV has been substantiated, the child protection system should place the onus on the perpetrator of DFV to show that they are safe, and be assisted to do so, rather than for those affected to show that they remain unsafe.
19. All regional Integrated Responses to DFV be supported with dedicated funding for a co-ordinator, and to support a case management approach to high-risk cases.
20. Include a requirement for engagement with the regional Integrated Response into service agreements for Men's DFV Intervention Programs, and ensure program funding supports this.
21. Re-establish the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Unit within the Office of the State Coroner.

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## Introduction

### Who is SPEAQ?

SPEAQ (Services and Practitioners for the Elimination of Abuse Qld) is a network of practitioners and services who work with men who have perpetrated domestic and family violence. The network has been operating in Queensland for over 20 years, with a permanent part-time secretariat part funded by membership subscriptions since 2009.

We have been liaising with the Department of Communities Violence Prevention Team for a number of years in relation to Intervention Programs (also known as Men's Domestic Violence Behaviour Change Programs), and played a key role in the development of the Department's Professional Practice Standards for Working with Men who Perpetrate D&FV, published in 2007.

We have made a number of submissions to the Qld government on domestic violence matters over the last few years, in response to:

- Consultation Paper - Queensland Whole of Government Strategy to Target Domestic and Family Violence (2008);
- Review of the Qld Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989 (2010);
- Consultation Draft - Domestic and Family Violence Protection Bill 2011 (2011).

Membership of the network currently includes most of the services currently funded by the Department of Communities to provide men's Domestic Violence Intervention Programs in Qld, as well as some federally funded services. We also welcome the participation of a number of other individuals and organisations with an interest in the field. We are the only collective voice representing practitioners and services in this field in Qld.

### About the contributors

Contributors to this document are practitioners with expertise in work with men who perpetrate domestic and family violence, in the Court context, in Intervention Programs and counselling, and with their partners. Our response collectively embodies many years of practical experience in the field, a number of us having worked in the field for 10 years or more. The opinions expressed in this submission are not necessarily those of member organisations.

### Principal Author

The principal author for this document is Paul Monsour, SPEAQ Secretary. Paul has been in the role of SPEAQ secretary for over 7 years, and has been working as a counsellor and facilitator of Intervention Programs for over 10 years. He was a member of the Domestic and Family Violence Strategy Implementation Advisory Group reporting to the Minister for Communities, from 2010 to 2012, and a member of the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Expert Advisory Group in 2011 and 2012.

### **Scope of this response**

This submission specifically addresses the prevention and reduction of domestic violence.

While many domestic violence matters are dealt with in the legal system as civil rather than criminal proceedings (prior to breach of Domestic Violence Protection Order - DVO), this is in some sense a mere technicality, as in many cases, the facts on which DVO applications are based would in any other social situation be classed as criminal acts (e.g. assault). Further, domestic violence matters dealt with in civil proceedings can quickly escalate to the status of criminal matters (in some cases, within a matter of hours) if the respondent does not adhere to the civil sanctions put in place. The view taken in this submission therefore is that addressing domestic violence at any stage is relevant to any discussion about reduction in crime.

Where possible, attribution to the source of ideas expressed in this submission has been made. Any omissions are inadvertent or a consequence of limited capacity to identify the source.

## Impact of Domestic and Family Violence

The impact of domestic violence on families, on individuals, particularly women and children, on our communities, our workplaces, our economy and our society as a whole is enormous, and well documented. A few key points are highlighted below.

Domestic violence and abuse, particularly as it affects children, feeds into so many problems within our society including child protection issues, relationship issues and relationship breakdown, alcohol and other drug abuse, homicide, suicide, social isolation, mental health problems, physical injury and health issues, school behavioural issues and bullying, homelessness, poverty and the continuation of domestic violence in the next generation. The costs exist on many levels and economic cost is difficult to accurately estimate.

In 2008-09, violence against women and their children was estimated to have cost the Australian economy \$13.6 billion per annum<sup>1</sup>. Using a population share estimate, it can be extrapolated that the cost to Queensland was approximately \$2.7 billion per annum. Without a significant and successful change in the way we are addressing the problem, the national figure would rise to approximately \$15.6 billion in 2021-22, or \$3.3 billion for Qld<sup>2</sup>.

Similarly, the legal system costs (all aspects from Police costs through to perpetrator incarceration) was estimated to be \$298 million nationally in 2004<sup>3</sup> - equating to \$91 million for Qld in 2014 allowing for inflation and population increase<sup>4</sup>. The greatest proportion of these costs is the cost of incarceration of offenders.

For “first responders” – police and ambulance, domestic violence incidents are among the most dangerous situations to attend, as the risk of violence directed towards those intervening is high.

## Social and economic contributors to DFV

**All violence is at its core an exercise of power over another in order to control the person and the outcome of a situation/s. However the patterns of violence and control vary considerably among those who use D&FV<sup>5,6</sup>. Similarly, there are a range of key factors contributing to the choice to use violence.**

As DFV is found predominantly to be committed by men against women, male attitudes towards women play a major role. Belief in men’s entitlement, privilege

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<sup>1</sup> KPMG Management Consulting, 2009, *The cost of violence against women and their children*, p 7

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Access Economics, 2004, *The cost of Domestic Violence to the Australian Economy*, p. 54

<sup>4</sup> Calculated using Qld population share estimate in 2004; increase due to inflation of 30% from 2004 to 2014, and population share increase to 2014 based on official population figures.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson, M, *A* (2008) *Typology of Domestic Violence*, Northeastern University Press, Boston MA.

<sup>6</sup> Stark, E, (2008) *Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life*, Oxford University Press.



and superiority; expectations of women; rigid gender roles; adherence to hyper-masculine male stereotypes; as well as a range of other social and individual psychological factors predispose some men to use violence and abuse.

Other factors significant in the relationship behaviour of men who perpetrate DFV include lack of skills in relation to self awareness, emotional self-regulation, rational thinking, communication and conflict resolution; the impact of the man's own childhood trauma and experience of violence; and problematic attachment styles.

We know that alcohol and illicit drug taking, particularly methamphetamines, increases the likelihood, frequency and severity of domestic violence; though very rarely can be said to be the cause of domestic violence in the absence of other factors.

In lower socio-economic areas; employment instability, housing insecurity or homelessness and poverty are contributing factors. Working class families also tend to embrace traditional patriarchal views of the father's role more than middle class families<sup>7</sup>. Changing economic conditions, e.g. where men have lost their jobs but female partners still working, contribute to stresses which touch directly on violence-supporting attitudes.

**Responses to reduce the incidence of DFV must take account of this diversity of factors, especially in direct work with men who are perpetrating DFV.**

## Primary prevention

Interventions that reduce risk and increase protective factors at multiple levels such as school, home, and community appear to be most effective and intervention in the intergenerational transmission of violence is vital<sup>8</sup>.

Feedback from Intervention Program participants often includes "Why wasn't I taught this stuff at school?" or "I wish I had learned this 20 years ago". Clearly, attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns are formed early in life, and learning of respectful behaviour and alternatives to violence early in life creates a platform for healthy relationships and a constructive life.

## Primary Prevention work in Schools

Primary prevention work in schools has been shown to be valuable, but across the state, it is piecemeal and inconsistent. For example the "SUPA Kids" program has been run at some Gold Coast primary schools for 10 years, and has shown very

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<sup>7</sup> De Keseredy, W, (2013) *Male peer support and violence against women*, CDFVR Research Seminar.

<sup>8</sup> Flood, M., and B. Pease (2006). *The Factors Influencing Community Attitudes in Relation to Violence Against Women: A Critical Review of the Literature*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth).

positive results<sup>9</sup>. However funding limitations mean that a similar program does not continue in the critical years of Secondary school.

Similarly, the “Love Bites” program is used in a number of secondary schools and has positive impacts<sup>10</sup>, but is a short (one day) program. At a minimum, similar programs should be run in all secondary schools, but further, they should operate over a longer period of time. More information is contained in Appendix A.

Another program shown to be effective is the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) program which is suitable for high schools, sports clubs etc, and teaches young people not only about the basis of violence, including gender-based violence, but how to effectively respond as a bystander. Shannon Spriggs at Griffith University is a very experienced and effective trainer who has brought this program to Qld. A brochure is contained in Appendix A.

Emotional self regulation practices such as breathing practices and mindfulness-based interventions have been shown to be effective in assisting children and adults to manage intense emotions and thereby control their behaviour. There is great value in teaching these skills at an early age and it is relevant to a broad primary prevention strategy against violence in schools.

Ultimately, any strategies that help address not just individual attitudes and behaviours but that also create culture of respectful relating and intolerance to violence and abuse is to be encouraged. This is so particularly, but not exclusively, with boys and young men.

We are mindful of the many demands put on schools and particularly teachers, to address all manner of issues beyond standard classroom curriculum. We are also aware of the significant benefits that addressing these issues can bring to students

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<sup>9</sup> Anderson, T and Wilesmith, N; *SUPA Kids Gold Coast Program Evaluation Report*, Domestic Violence Prevention Centre Gold Coast, December, 2012 (unpublished)

SUPAkids aims to address the increasing number of children impacted by domestic and family violence each year, the purpose of the program is to break the cycle of domestic violence. It has been delivered in Labrador State Primary School since 2004, Oxenford State Primary School since 2006, and Eagleby State Primary School since 2012. The goals of the program are to:

- Assist students to develop protective factors;
- Assist students to build self-esteem;
- Assist students to gain knowledge and skills to develop healthy and respectful relationships with peers and the wider community;
- Reduce student referral to school behaviour management teams.

<sup>10</sup> Love Bites is a Respectful Relationships Program that aims to provide a safe space to discuss relationship violence and sexual assault for year 9 and 10 students. The program takes a holistic approach to engaging young people in conversations about gender equality, respect, valuing difference and anti-bullying. An independent evaluation, run by TAFE, Mid North Coast NSW in 2007, which was based on interviews with year 10 and 11 students 6 months and 18 months respectively after attending the LOVE BiTES training, identified that:

- 70% indicated that love bites is a good way to get the message about healthy relationships across to young people.
- 88.5% indicated that love bites had a positive impact on young people's behaviour.
- 76% indicated that since attending love bites they had seen a positive change in the attitudes and behaviour amongst young people.

and to schools. **We therefore recommend a collaborative approach where schools work with local services with domestic violence expertise to identify or develop and deliver programs that fit local needs and are based on sound DFV primary prevention practice.** This requires a funding commitment as the existing resources available to DFV services cannot be stretched further. A good starting point would be to identify existing successful programs, with the advice of the regional DFV services and provide funding to expand these further.

#### **Recommendation 1.**

**Fund collaborative partnerships between schools and domestic violence specialist services to identify and where necessary further develop or adapt, existing successful DFV primary prevention programs, and provide funding to implement these more widely.**

## **Crime prevention strategies**

### **Work with men who perpetrate Domestic and Family Violence**

In relation to the prevention of domestic and family violence, an approach that is as yet underutilised is working directly with those who perpetrate the violence (who are predominantly men) to effect change. The 3 main contexts for this work with men who perpetrate DFV are:

- in Magistrates Courts, by Men's Respondent Court Workers;
- in Intervention Programs/ Men's Behaviour Change Programs, by group facilitators (community or prison based)
- in individual counselling programs, by domestic violence counsellors.

One of the fundamental principles supporting our work is that **effective work with the person who is perpetrating violence – is more cost effective, more just and has less disruptive impact on the community than assisting only those experiencing the violence;** for several reasons including:

- In assisting only those experiencing violence we are attempting to keep safe multiple persons – a partner, children and others who may be affected by his violence – without bringing accountability to the one person who is destroying that safety.
- By working with those perpetrating the violence, as well as those subject to it, we are working to change future outcomes and prevent further disrespect, violence and abuse, as well as dealing with the impact of the problem.
- Targeting violence and abusive attitudes early reduces the long-term impact on families and individuals, and increases the possibility that children can go on to have improved, respectful relationships with their fathers, thus breaking the cycle for future generations
- although the current relationship with a partner may break down, abusive men often go on to have new partners, who in turn have children. Working with the man using abusive behaviour can prevent the cycle of abuse being repeated with further partners and children.

We strongly support the continuation and increase of services to victims of DFV, predominantly women and children, and recognize that the demand for these services can ultimately be reduced only if those persons causing the violence, predominantly men, are directly and effectively dealt with and assisted to end their violence. These services to families include the Partner Advocate / Women's Advocate role, which is a feature of all Intervention Programs. The Women's Advocate provides support and opportunities for counselling to partners/ ex-partners and children of the men in the Program, many of whom do not independently seek assistance with dedicated women's DV services for a complex variety of reasons.

## Intervention Programs

Men's Domestic Violence Group programs, known as Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs), or Intervention Programs in the D&FV Prevention Act 2012, are the preferred Domestic Violence intervention for most men who have used DFV<sup>11</sup>. Where men are unsuitable or unable to attend a group program, specialised individual domestic violence counselling may be useful.

Intervention programs are not just about assisting men to cease their use of D&FV through behavioural and attitudinal change – they also work to create safety in ways that don't depend on the man's change, through<sup>12</sup>:

- supporting the safety and wellbeing of women and children directly through partner contact, referral to counselling or other services for her and her children<sup>13</sup>
- supporting women's agency, decision making, safe resistance and her own informal processes to hold him accountable (when safe), and to make decisions for her family<sup>14</sup>
- risk assessment and risk management work through a coordinated approach involving services to the man, his (ex)partner and children, and involving information sharing and multi-agency work with other systems agencies where appropriate<sup>15</sup>

## The experience of SPEAQ members

The passion of SPEAQ members for the work we do is sustained by our commitment to improve the lives of those affected by domestic and family violence, and **the experience of seeing positive outcomes happen:**

- Hearing a man admit for the first time how atrocious his behaviour has been, and acknowledge that “it's me, it's not her”;

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<sup>11</sup> Urbis, *Literature Review on Domestic Violence Perpetrators*, 2011

[www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/09\\_2013/literature\\_review\\_on\\_domestic\\_violence\\_perpetrators.pdf](http://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/09_2013/literature_review_on_domestic_violence_perpetrators.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Vlasis, R. (2014) *Financial cost analysis of running a men's behaviour change program in Australia*, draft in preparation, No To Violence.

<sup>13</sup> Chung, D. (2013). *Practice approaches towards partner contact in MBCP work*. Retrieved from <http://ntv.org.au/conference/workshops/nov-15-s5-1/#s5-5a>

<sup>14</sup> Smith et al., (2013) *The Central Place of women's support and partner contact in men's behaviour change programs* Ending Men's Violence Against Women and Children: The No To Violence Journal, Spring, 7-28.

<sup>15</sup> O'Malley, R. (2013). *CollaborACTION*. Ending Men's Violence Against Women and Children: The No To Violence Journal, Spring, 51-71.

- hearing a man report his use of new behaviours, avoiding violence and creating a better atmosphere at home, and hearing from his partner that this is in fact happening;
- a partner talking and being really heard for the first time about their experience of abuse over many years, feeling supported and being assisted to create a safety plan for herself and her children;
- seeing systems agencies work together to prevent another serious assault in response to a program worker providing information about the development of a high risk situation
- seeing a man's demeanour change over time from the hard, angry man to someone more open, more accepting, with some humility

We are also very aware of the limitations of these programs – not all men make significant changes. Some men need more intensive interventions, over a longer duration to deal with their own experience of trauma and violence, or to address very entrenched and rigid violence-supporting beliefs and attitudes; some men aren't in a place of readiness or motivation for change. **These limitations do not however negate the value of these programs overall – they point to the changes that can be made to improve their effectiveness, if resources are made available or systemic changes are put in place.**

### **Current capacity of the Intervention Program Sector**

There are currently approximately 17 group programs and several other counselling services across Queensland for men who use DFV. Approximately 800 group program places and 400 counselling places are offered each year<sup>16</sup>.

To put the number of program places in perspective:

- In Qld as a whole there were approximately 1200 program places compared to 11 000 breaches of DVOs (9 times the number of places), 17 000 final DVOs issued (14 times the number of places), a greater number of DVO applications (e.g. 30 000 – 25 times the number of places).
- In Brisbane (population 2 million) there are 2 programs with around 150 places per year for group or individual counselling. By comparison there were about 1700 breaches of DVO<sup>17</sup> (11 times the number of program places) and 3000 final DVOs issued<sup>18</sup> (20 times the number of program places) in the Brisbane metropolitan area in 2011-12.

**The disparity between the need and the capacity of the sector to service that need is stark.** The above figures do not include the very significant number of men who perpetrate domestic violence who have not (yet) come before the courts. Almost all Intervention Programs in Qld see 'voluntary' clients (as well as mandated clients), some of whom have had no contact with the police or legal system.

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<sup>16</sup> Estimates based on SPEAQ members survey and some educated guesses. Accurate figures were not available from Dept Communities.

<sup>17</sup> *2011-12 Annual Statistical Review*. Queensland Police Service, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> *Magistrates Court of Queensland Annual report 2011 – 2012*. Judge Brendan Butler, Chief Magistrate 2012.

One of the principles by which the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 should be administered is that “perpetrators of domestic violence should be held accountable for their use of violence and its impact on other people **and, if possible, provided with an opportunity to change**”<sup>19</sup>. Further, the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, to which Queensland is a signatory, notes that “**Perpetrator interventions are now recognised as an essential part of an effective plan to reduce violence against women and their children**” and that “Focusing just on punishing perpetrators will not bring about behaviour change. Perpetrators need assistance to end their violence.”<sup>20</sup>

**Yet only a small percentage of those perpetrating abuse will have access to a program in Qld, and there are significant areas of the state where no programs exist at all**, for example, the Mackay region, Emerald to Longreach, and the Redlands district near Brisbane.

### **Impact of Federal Funding Changes**

Currently, group based Intervention Programs in Gympie, Maryborough, Hervey Bay and Bundaberg operate on federal government funding. Imminent changes to the federal government’s funding due to policy changes, mean that **all of these programs will cease to operate after December 2014**. This will leave a huge service gap across this part of Qld where the prevalence of DFV is high. The use of federal government funding for this purpose has occurred because of the absence of state funding in those areas. The federal government has made clear that service responses to domestic violence are state responsibility. The Qld Government must address this gap.

#### **Recommendation 2.**

**Increase the number of funded DV Intervention Programs across the state in a systematic and staged manner, within a comprehensive sector development process.**

#### **Recommendation 3.**

**Address the gaps in state funding for programs across Queensland, particularly in the Gympie to Bundaberg region which is facing an imminent loss of existing federally funded programs.**

### **Voluntary Intervention Order referrals**

Voluntary Intervention Orders (VIOs) were introduced into the 2012 D&FV Act as a mechanism for getting men who perpetrate abuse into programs at an earlier stage – prior to a breach. To date, the use of this provision across Qld has been

<sup>19</sup> Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012, S4(2)(b), page 15.

<sup>20</sup> The National Plan, 2010. The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010 - 2022, Council of Australian Governments, Australian Government (page 29).

patchy, with the number of VIOs being issued being highly dependent on the practice of the local magistrate.

Where the use of VIOs has been taken up, they have made a significant difference to the workload of Intervention Programs – guaranteeing virtually overnight that they are fully utilised, and for many, now managing waiting lists. In a number of areas, programs must now inform the courts when waiting lists get too long, to limit the number of VIO referrals.

Of the few programs that aren't currently operating at capacity, this is due not to a lack of need in the community but to referral pathways not operating effectively, and to small number of VIOs in that area. In all areas of the state, the number of program places available is one or two orders of magnitude lower than the need, and recent experience with VIOs shows how quickly referral numbers can change.

### **Intervention Program Effectiveness**

Intervention Programs are of use across the spectrum from early intervention to tertiary intervention. Currently there are so few programs operating that each program must work with the full range of participants from many backgrounds, circumstances and stages of readiness for change. Within limits, this diversity can add to the learning environment in group programs, however it also creates some challenges and difficulties.

There is however research indicating that allocating participants to different programs according to their level of motivation for change would provide better outcomes<sup>21</sup>. Repeat participants who return after a period of time following further DV offences, are often more successful in making and maintaining real change on the second occasion. When asked about what made the difference, the answer is often “I was ready to hear it this time” or “I was ready to change”. Program-readiness programs, which specifically target the level of motivation for change, can be of value for these participants to attend prior to the Intervention Program itself. Other approaches include a flexible first stage of the Intervention Program where participants are engaged in individual interventions aimed at developing motivation for change, and do not progress to the second stage until they are ready for the work.

There has in the last decade been an increase in our knowledge of what makes programs effective. Some key points relevant to this submission include:

- Operation of Intervention programs within an integrated/co-ordinated community response with key systems agencies as active members<sup>22</sup>
- **Moving beyond a ‘one size fits all’ approach to tailoring interventions to individual perpetrators, informed by risk-need-responsivity principles<sup>23</sup>** particularly for those at high risk of perpetrating further DFV, such as:

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<sup>21</sup> Edelson, J, *Groupwork with Men Who Batter: What the Research Literature Indicates*, VAWnet 2012, [www.vawnet.org](http://www.vawnet.org) retrieved July 2014

<sup>22</sup> Laing, L, *What is the Evidence for the Effectiveness of Perpetrator Programmes*, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2003

- Inclusion of individual counselling sessions alongside the group program as needed
- Integration of counselling for alcohol or other drug use
- Integration of therapeutic responses to the man's experience of trauma
- Program capacity to address complex needs
- Integration of higher level monitoring, risk assessment and risk management activity for high risk offenders<sup>24</sup>
- Increased program duration. In Qld, the Professional Practice Standards (now 7 years old) specify a minimum of 32 hours; in the UK, the minimum group program duration required for accreditation is 60 hours<sup>25</sup>; in the US, programs of 50 h or longer are common. While some studies have shown that group duration has little or no impact on outcomes overall, it is clear that for certain sub-groups within the perpetrator population, particularly high risk offenders, increased duration of interventions (along with increased intensity) is essential for successful outcomes<sup>26</sup>.

Current funding levels for most service providers however make the implementation of programs with these attributes impossible. This point is addressed in more detail later in this submission.

In the past, mixed results from the evaluation of Intervention Programs (men's behaviour change programs), particularly from overseas, has been used as a reason to avoid further investment in these programs locally. However this type of program is also notoriously difficult to evaluate rigorously, and further, there are multiple outcomes as discussed above<sup>27</sup>. **Despite the shortcomings, significant reviews of men's DV behaviour change programs point to their value, and the need to continue to explore the possibilities for further enhancing their effectiveness**<sup>28,29</sup>.

**From the perspective of the practitioners who work directly with those perpetrating the violence, and with their partners, there is no question that these programs are worthwhile!** Intervention program practitioners are highly skilled, professional and passionate about improving the lives of those affected by domestic violence. Many have been in the role for enough years to have a perspective over time, regarding efficacy of programs, and have seen their important role in improving the safety of women and children, and even in preventing homicide. We are very much aware of the difficulties and limitations of the work, but also see positive outcomes on a regular basis and are aware of the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Salter, M, *Managing Recidivism Amongst High Risk Violent Men*; Issues paper 23, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, January 2012

<sup>25</sup> *The Respect Accreditation Standard*; Respect UK, 2012; <http://respect.uk.net/work/workperpetrators-domestic-violence/accreditation/>

<sup>26</sup> Salter, M. op cit.

<sup>27</sup> Westmarland, N., Kelly, L. and Chalder-Mills, J. (2010) *What Counts as Success?* London: Respect.

<sup>28</sup> Babcock JC, Green CE, and Robie C, *Does batterers' treatment work? A meta-analytic review of domestic violence treatment*, Clinical Psychology Review 23 (2004).

<sup>29</sup> Gondolf, E. W. (2012). *The future of batterer programs: Re-assessing evidence-based practice*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press



possibilities for even better outcomes that program enhancements and appropriate levels of resourcing could enable.

### **Post-Intervention-Program services**

Post- Intervention Program services are available in a somewhat ad-hoc manner, if at all. The question remains as to how all parties can be assisted to take the next steps in family resolution (whether that be separation or remaining together) in a way that maintains the principles of safety and accountability to victims that are essential in domestic violence work<sup>30,31</sup>.

**A major need for follow-up work for men who are fathers, having completed a “standard” Intervention Program, is for fathering programs specifically designed for this client group.** Generic parenting programs do not address the specific issues of repairing relationships with children and maintaining the principles of safety, respect and facilitating secure attachment, as central to fathering practice.

Respectful relationship maintenance or follow-up groups for men, DV-informed couple reviews or couple counselling when safe, counselling for safe separation, mediation around safe and respectful contact for children where family court orders are in place; all have their place.

Counselling offered to partners and children while the man is participating in the Intervention Program can also assist in preparing them for what happens after the Intervention Program. In the absence of well-managed and appropriate referrals people may choose generic counselling services which may not be DFV competent, or go unsupported.

### **Cost Effectiveness**

The costs to the legal system of DV in Qld has been estimated at around \$91 million annually. The greatest proportion of these costs is the cost of incarceration - about \$70 million<sup>32</sup>. The cost of keeping one prisoner for a year is \$70 000<sup>33</sup> (this is operational costs only and does not include the capital expense of building new facilities; inclusive, the figure is \$116,000).

The cost of community supervision of offenders (e.g. probation) is approximately \$5000 per offender per annum in Qld<sup>34</sup> on average.

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<sup>30</sup> Cagney M, and McMaster, K (2012) *Family Resolution and DV Programme Outcomes: What is ‘safety and accountability’ in real terms?* No To Violence Conference on Responses to Men’s Domestic and Family Violence, Melbourne, Victoria. <http://ntv.org.au/conference/workshops/nov-14-s2-1/#s2-2a>;

<sup>31</sup> Cagney M, and McMaster, K (2013) *The next step: a resolution approach to dealing with Intimate Partner Violence* Ending Men’s Violence against Women and Children, No To Violence, Spring 2013.

<sup>32</sup> Based on Access Economics, 2004, The cost of Domestic Violence to the Australian Economy, p. 54, with adjustments for inflation and Qld’s population share.

<sup>33</sup> Report on Government Services 2013, Chapter 8 / Brisbane Times, 6/11/2013.

<sup>34</sup> *Follow up - Management of offenders subject to supervision in the community*, Report to Parliament 4: 2013-14. Qld Audit Office, 2013

Other costs directly funded by the state government include Ambulance; Health Dept funding for hospital treatment of injuries; the costs of services to DV victims; the cost of child protection services and so on. As stated earlier in this submission the overall costs to economy are huge.

Total state funding to Men's Intervention Programs in Qld is currently around \$2.6 million<sup>35</sup> for an estimated 700 places<sup>36</sup>, or approximately \$3700 per program place. A number of programs such as those in metropolitan areas are funded at lower cost – as little as \$1000 per program place. More detailed figures for individual services would be available to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee from the Department of Communities.

An argument for the cost effectiveness of Intervention Programs on the basis of the figures above is not hard to make, even with the approximate and variable figures available. For example, *considering the costs of incarceration alone, if program participation led to only between 1 and 4 out of 100 participants not needing to serve a prison term of 12 months, the program will have covered its costs.* In our experience, it's clear that programs far exceed that level of outcomes.

The amount of funding available to services to run programs is highly variable between programs, and in some cases unrealistically small. There appears to have been an expectation, often coming from historical practices, that programs will be cross-subsidised by other funds available to the service provider. However all funding sources are becoming tighter in the current economic climate, and ongoing cross-subsidisation is becoming impossible.

**The partner advocacy component of Intervention Programs is unfunded,** despite the fact that the Professional Practice Standards, and good practice internationally, identify it as essential. The expectation is that existing victim support services will pick up the work as part of their client load. As the number of Intervention Programs increases, it will become increasingly obvious that it is unreasonable for victim support services to do the additional work without additional funds to do so.

Implementation of the kinds of program improvements indicated to be of value in the research literature, can only be done with a reduction in client numbers and negotiation of a reduced number of groups run each year. For services operating with waiting lists, as many are, this is not an acceptable option. Recent analysis of the true costs of funding best practice programs<sup>37</sup> suggests that some programs are being funded at less than half the required level. We note that the legal system and public health services are not required to cross subsidise their responses to domestic violence!

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<sup>35</sup> Department of Communities, 2014, personal communication.

<sup>36</sup> These figures are based on SPEAQ estimates and survey responses, as the Department of Communities was unable to give an accurate figure.

<sup>37</sup> Vlasis, R, *Financial cost analysis of running a men's behaviour change program in Australia*, draft in preparation, No To Violence 2014

**As the conservative cost-effectiveness calculations above show, there is plenty of scope for increased program funding while remaining cost-effective.**

Domestic and Family Violence has a devastating social and economic impact in our communities. It creates significant needs which government services must respond to. It is in the state government's interest to respond proactively to reduce D&FV. It is imperative for the Qld government to fully fund best practice Intervention Programs which can effectively respond to offenders across the whole spectrum of risk levels, readiness to change, and criminogenic needs, and provide support to their partners and families.

### **Sector Development needs**

There is a need for a significant increase in the number of Intervention Programs operating in Qld. Such an expansion in what is currently a small sector, must be handled in a planned and strategic way, as there are a number of issues that will arise. Further, if the potential of Intervention Programs is to be fully realised, additional funding to address

### **Training and Education**

Intervention programs require staff with a high level of specialist expertise. It takes time to train and bring people up to speed. A number of key Australian documents highlight the need for workers who facilitate Intervention Programs to be trained appropriately, not least the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children<sup>38</sup>, and the Qld Domestic and Family Violence Strategy document "For Our Sons and Daughters"<sup>39</sup>, among others<sup>40,41</sup>.

The Qld Department of Communities document *Professional Practice Standards: Working with men who perpetrate domestic and family violence*, requires Level 3 facilitators to have "the equivalent of a Graduate Certificate of Social Science (Male Family Violence Group Facilitation) for example, as developed by the Swinburne Institute of TAFE in Victoria", and "Each program will have at least one Level 3 facilitator ...". As this qualification is not available in Qld, there is currently only 1 group facilitator in Qld who holds this qualification with one of these no longer based in Queensland, so this part of the standards cannot be complied with. Both the Department of Communities and the service providers they fund would view the availability of such a qualification as an obvious and essential requirement for sector development. SPEAQ has been working on developing such a qualification

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<sup>38</sup> The National Plan, 2010. The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010 - 2022, Council of Australian Governments, Australian Government.

<sup>39</sup> Qld Department of Communities, 2009. *For Our Sons and Daughters*. QLD Department of Communities, Brisbane QLD.

<sup>40</sup> Towards Safe Families NSW, 2012. *Towards safe families: A practice guide for men's domestic violence behaviour change programs*, The State of NSW, Department of Attorney General and Justice.

<sup>41</sup> Webster, A. 2013. "Behaviour change programs: Approaches, challenges and risks", in *The Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research Reader*, Vol 11, No 3, pp 3-6.

for Qld at postgraduate diploma level, in conjunction with Dr Deborah Walsh of the University of Qld.

#### **Recommendation 4.**

**Develop and fund a comprehensive sector development strategy for the Intervention Program (men's DFV behaviour change program) sector, to facilitate growth into the future, including: increase in number of programs; education and training; professional network development; funding for delivery of enhanced programs.**

#### **Recommendation 5.**

**Facilitate the establishment of a training and education facility, including a formal qualification for facilitators of Intervention Programs, in partnership with a Queensland university, for working with perpetrators of domestic violence.**

#### **Recommendation 6.**

**Fully fund Intervention Programs including provision for partner contact work; delivery of enhanced programs addressing complex needs and high risk perpetrators; active engagement in Integrated Responses; active engagement in professional network activities and professional development.**

### **Network Funding**

The work of the SPEAQ secretariat is currently funded at a very minimal level through subscription fees, but the relatively small number of intervention programs in Qld means that there is currently a small base to draw on. Substantial amounts of work (such as the writing of this document) are done on a purely voluntary, unpaid basis. This is clearly not a sustainable arrangement in the long term.

The work of No To Violence in Victoria shows what is possible with an appropriately funded sector body, in the development of standards, the provision of training, development of policy, community awareness raising and many other functions<sup>42</sup>. NTV is increasingly taking on a national role in the absence of similarly funded networks in other states. New South Wales has recently recognised the value of such a professional network, providing initial funding of \$31700 in 2013<sup>43</sup>.

SPEAQ has established itself, particularly over the past 8 years, as an indispensable asset to the DV Intervention Program sector, providing support in multiple ways to practitioners and service managers as well as facilitating government's link with the sector. At least two Intervention Program service providers have now

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<sup>42</sup> See No To Violence website <http://ntv.org.au>

<sup>43</sup> NSW Dept of Family and Community Services Media Release, 9/8/2013, *New Focus On Men's Behaviour To Stop Domestic And Family Violence*  
[http://www.women.nsw.gov.au/news/items/new\\_focus\\_on\\_mens\\_behaviour\\_to\\_stop\\_domestic\\_and\\_family\\_violence](http://www.women.nsw.gov.au/news/items/new_focus_on_mens_behaviour_to_stop_domestic_and_family_violence)

incorporated engagement with SPEAQ as part of their service agreements. It is now also recognised as a key network within the broader domestic violence sector. SPEAQ is however constrained from pursuing many worthwhile activities due to lack of funding.

### Recommendation 7.

**Investigate options for the sustainable financial support for SPEAQ as a key element in an ongoing sector development strategy for the Intervention Program sector and require service provider engagement with SPEAQ as part of service agreements.**

### Prison

While for some crimes it can be argued that diversion to rehabilitation programs instead of a prison sentence leads to lower recidivism, for domestic violence offences this option can be counterproductive and unsafe due to the nature of the crime. For some DV offenders, particularly the most serious, only a custodial sentence will interrupt access to the victim and prevent them from continuing to threaten, intimidate, harass or be violent. **A more effective option is program engagement *and* jail time.**

A custodial sentence for the perpetrator gives the victim breathing space and a window of opportunity to seek longer term safety by relocating, establishing new supports and a new lifestyle and getting accustomed to life without the perpetrator. A custodial sentence also sends a strong message of accountability to the person perpetrating violence and can have a deterrent effect.

In our experience, it is not uncommon for Intervention Program participants to name that they “don’t want to go to jail” or “don’t want to go *back* to jail” as motivation for change and willingness to participate in the program. For those who have been to jail, it is the experience of loss – loss of freedom, possessions and income earning opportunities, and missing out on key events such as the birth of a child or the funeral of a beloved relative that they often name as the turning point in their thinking.

However jail may not be enough in itself, and if a turning point in an offender’s thinking is to be reached, it may not happen on the first prison term. Victims of domestic violence often express concern about “what will happen when he comes out” if relocation is not a suitable option for them.

Our view is that jail is largely a wasted opportunity unless the offender is also engaged in a program to address the offending behaviour. There are currently a number of options for this, but also a number of barriers.

- Firstly, current policy within Corrections is that offenders are not offered programs of any kind if their prison term is less than 12 months. Many DFV related prison sentences are short.

- Corrections should be funded to support a policy change to ensure that correcting offending behaviour encompasses respectful relations, living without violence and safe parenting as the core of the life skills and pre-release courses provided to all offenders doing prison sentences regardless of the length of the sentence.
- At a minimum, DFV offenders should be directed into pre-release programs addressing motivation to change and safety planning, to assist in their referral into community based programs after release
- Recent gap analysis has identified **that there are currently no specialised domestic violence behaviour change programs within Qld prisons or Probation and Parole**. While there are generalised violence elimination programs, specialised programs are known to be more effective for domestic violence offenders.

#### **Recommendation 8.**

**Establish specialist Domestic and Family Violence programs within Queensland prisons. Consider in particular the introduction of programs for separated fathers who have perpetrated DFV, with a focus on responsible fathering and co-operative co-parenting.**

#### **Recommendation 9.**

**Establish pre-release programs for DV offenders serving short terms (<12 months), focussing on program-readiness and motivation for change, safety planning and addressing expectations of the relationship after release; in conjunction with assisted and mandated referrals to community programs on release.**

## **Police**

### **Police responses - DVLOs / DFVCs**

Police are the front line of response in many DV situations. Their role is therefore a crucial one in which knowledge of DV dynamics and skill in working with both parties will have a concrete impact on the outcome.

Currently the Domestic Violence Liaison Officer (DVLO) role at Police stations is an additional duty taken on along with other duties. Dedicated full-time DVLO positions for each station would allow officers to better monitor police responses to DV situations, and take further action where necessary. For example, in some cases women subject to domestic violence may be reluctant to make a statement at the time of an incident, but a few days later they may be more open to co-operating with police – this is the experience of DFVCs (Domestic and Family Violence Co-ordinators). Currently dedicated DFVCs only exist for a region and are unable to get regularly involved in policing at this level. Full-time DVLOs could provide the specialist expertise in many aspects of best practice police responses to DFV.

### **Recommendation 10.**

**Increase Police capacity to respond effectively to DFV by providing full-time Domestic Violence Liaison Officers at all major police stations.**

#### **Supportlink**

The experience of regional DFV services is that the Police Supportlink referral system is working very effectively to provide victims with timely contact with support and assistance services. While the number of perpetrators consenting to Supportlink referrals and then engaging with services is much smaller, this channel does provide another opportunity for addressing the perpetration of violence.

It is however noted that no additional funding was provided to services to support responses to Supportlink referrals, nor has funding increased despite the steadily increasing number of referrals through this channel.

### **Recommendation 11.**

**Ensure the Supportlink system is maintained with adequate funding.**

#### **Courts**

##### **Respondent Court Work**

Currently, on figures available to SPEAQ, specialised men's DV court work is carried out in 19 Magistrates' Courts across Qld, with 6500 men being seen each year. As the great majority of men are respondents in DFV matters, men's court workers are providing information about the court process, discussing options, facilitating referrals to services such as intervention programs, and may, within an accountability framework, support the man in the courtroom.

Feedback from the courts shows consistently that respondent court work reduces the number of contested DVO applications, and facilitates a smoother court process, reducing court costs. Respondents' anxiety and confusion is reduced and the window of opportunity that court proceedings provide can be used for warm referrals into Intervention Programs. In Brisbane Magistrates Court, close co-operation between the Magistrate and the respondent court worker has been responsible for higher rate of take-up and much reduced contravention rate for Voluntary Intervention Orders – i.e. more successful referrals into Intervention Programs <sup>44</sup>.

Funding for DV court work with men is currently piecemeal across the state, with a variety of funding sources, funding levels, and levels of expertise in domestic violence matters. Outcomes could be improved with a more consistent approach.

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<sup>44</sup> Personal Communication with Ms Robyn Carmody, Judicial Registrar, May 2014.

**Recommendation 12.**

**Fund men's DFV respondent court work to be maintained and expanded into all Magistrates Courts in Qld where a significant number of DFV matters are heard, along with court support workers for aggrieveds.**

**Recommendation 13.**

**Fund the development of "good practice" guidelines for men's DFV respondent court work.**

**Court Responses - VIOs**

To date, in some jurisdictions, Voluntary Intervention Order contravention rates have been high. The way in which VIOs are used, and the processes in court that support the respondents' referrals, have considerable bearing on this. For example, the way magistrates talk to respondents about the VIOs, and the involvement of the respondent court worker are important factors.

As described above, In Brisbane Magistrates Court, close co-operation between the Magistrate and the respondent court worker has been responsible for higher rate of take-up and much reduced contravention rate for Voluntary Intervention Orders.

Some magistrates are not actively using the VIO provisions. In one jurisdiction, the magistrate prefers to use the mechanism of including program attendance as a condition of a DVO, which is a much stronger mandate with possible criminal sanctions.

In finding ways to obtain respondent consent to VIOs and motivation to comply, the safety of aggrieveds should not be compromised. SPEAQ takes the position that the practice of trading off a reduction in DVO conditions or duration against consent to a VIO should be avoided, as program attendance does not guarantee that the man will be a safer person. Some men do make significant changes but some do not. SPEAQ takes the view that consideration of the making of a VIO should have no bearing on the details of a DVO, which should be based on consideration only of the respondent's demonstrated behaviour and the wishes of the aggrieved.

**Recommendation 14.**

**Encourage magistrates to work closely with respondent court workers when Voluntary Intervention Orders are made, to facilitate successful referrals into Intervention Programs.**



### Recommendation 15.

**The effectiveness of Voluntary Intervention Orders should be reviewed by the end of 2015 with reference to the original aims of its introduction, with the purpose of determining the most suitable ways for Courts to refer respondents to Intervention Programs.**

#### Ouster Orders

When ouster conditions are given on domestic violence orders, or when ‘no contact conditions’ are put in place, practical arrangements to facilitate the man’s move to another location can reduce the likelihood of a breach of the order.

Using the Stay Safe at Home program funding, DV Connect Mensline can provide support, through transport or accommodation for a few days while the man, complying with an ouster condition, sorts out longer term arrangements or connects to relevant local services. Magistrates and Police need not back away from ousters because of concern about lack of support for the man. **This and other kinds of accommodation and transitional support for ousted men may reduce breaches of DVO no-contact conditions and ouster conditions.**

Men who have perpetrated DFV pose more danger when they “drop out of sight” of services. Providing case-management support for the man to establish himself separately and manage changes in his life due to no-contact DVO conditions and Ouster conditions can reduce the likelihood of criminal breaches of those orders. Our experience in working with men who perpetrate DFV is that **there is a significant proportion of men who are in the right place for change, and with appropriate, skilled support, will engage productively with services.**

Given that separation can be a time of greatly increased risk for a significant group of respondents, close supervision and support for the respondent provides a way of assessing and managing this risk. **A case management model** involving regular contact and assistance with the provision of practical options, allows for monitoring of the respondent’s risk of further violence and level of engagement in the change process, and initiating the appropriate safety responses as needed.

### Recommendation 16.

**Fund case management for DFV respondents subject to ouster orders.**

#### Other measures to reduce criminal offending

##### Making contact with children safer

There are situations where “no contact” conditions and having children named on DVOs are an appropriate safety response, however when supervised contact is ordered or allowed, limits to the availability of contact centres may mean that these contacts will happen in unsafe ways and increase the likelihood of DVOs

being breached. Funding to provide more timely access to contact centres may assist in reducing this risk.

Changeovers, when children are moving from the care of one parent to the other, are often the site of further abuse. Increasing the options for safe, supervised changeovers would reduce the possibility of further abuse and breaches of DVOs.

### **Principle of equitable and proportionate response to DV as a criminal offence**

Those working with victims of DFV frequently report that, particularly for serious offenders, the system response often provides inadequate consequences and therefore too little deterrent to further violence.

In offences other than Domestic Violence, e.g. assault, rape, if the offence occurs within the context of a relationship of trust, this is treated as an aggravating factor, and the severity of the penalty is increased. If assault or rape occurs within a domestic relationship, which is a relationship of trust, it is considered as Domestic Violence and penalties are lighter.

**This distinction leads to the inconsistent application of justice, and must be addressed if the justice system is to send strong messages of deterrence to those perpetrating the violence.**

### **Child Protection**

Domestic Violence is the cause of a great number of Child Protection cases. Historically however, the child protection system has worked with the “protective parent”, and the perpetrator is often not engaged in the process. The protective parent’s actions become the focus of Child Protection efforts, while the person (usually man) who has caused the problem remains “invisible” to the system and unaccountable.

The child protection system presents an important opportunity to engage perpetrators of Domestic violence. To end the “invisible man” syndrome, child protection processes need to find ways of working with the person (predominantly male) perpetrating the violence.

**There is a real need for upskilling in relation to working with men who perpetrate DFV within the child protection sector**, as those who perpetrate domestic and family violence present particular challenges and at times ‘trickiness’ for workers. Any training needs to be very practice based, rather than purely theoretical.

An approach taken in New Zealand involves working with the man about being a safe person, no contact for at least 6 weeks, and **onus on the man to show that he is safe, not for those affected to show that he remains unsafe**. This issue highlights the need for follow-up to men’s DV Intervention Programs specifically

oriented towards safe fathering, for men who are fathers and perpetrators of domestic violence.

**Recommendation 17.**

**Funding be made available for specialist parenting programs designed for fathers who have perpetrated DFV, as follow-up to men's DV Intervention Programs, to promote safe fathering practices and co-operative co-parenting.**

**Recommendation 18.**

**Once harm due to DFV has been substantiated, the child protection system should place the onus on the perpetrator of DFV to show that they are safe, and be assisted to do so, rather than for those affected to show that they remain unsafe.**

## **System responses to Domestic and Family Violence - increasing collaboration and co-operation**

### **Integrated Responses**

There is a great deal of literature highlighting the value of Integrated Responses or Co-ordinated Community Responses to Domestic Violence<sup>45</sup>. Some of the features of Integrated Responses can be summarised as:

- a common philosophical approach which prioritises victim safety
- development and ongoing refinement of evidence-based "best practice" policies and protocols for member agencies
- reduce fragmentation in the system's response
- monitoring, assessment and responding to risk are built into the system
- operates in a way which sends messages of accountability and change to the man perpetrating the abuse; messages of hope and support for the women and children experiencing the violence; and messages around change/breaking the cycle for the next generation
- system agencies hold those perpetrating the abuse accountable and deter the future use of violence
- Focus on the safety and well-being of victims - women and children - and minimise the harm that violence done to mothers has on their children
- Hold the victim's experience central to all evaluations of the system's response

In terms of crime reduction, a key issue is the management of risk. This depends on having information that assists in the accurate assessment of risk, and on the capacity for action to manage that risk. Frequently, individual agencies have only part of the story, and it is in information sharing that significant understandings arise, allowing agencies to work proactively together to mitigate risk and create

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<sup>45</sup> Wilcox, K, (2013) *Governance and interagency responses: Improving practice for regional governance – a Continuum Matrix - Part 1: Overview of the National Picture of Coordinated Domestic Violence Practice: An Introduction*, Issues paper 21, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse.

safety for victims. The common understandings, risk assessment tools and protocols developed and agreed among integrated response member agencies is what facilitates this to happen.

A key part of an effective Integrated Response is the use of a common dangerousness assessment / risk assessment tool. The Western Australian Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework (CRARMF)<sup>46</sup> and the Victorian Common Risk Assessment Framework (CRAF)<sup>47</sup> are example of risk assessment tools which have been implemented across agencies on a statewide basis.

Comprehensive assessment of risk allows a differentiated approach to the provision of services, with a resource intensive high risk response (e.g. in the form of a high risk team, or the activation of high risk protocols) being reserved for identified high risk situations, and less intensive service responses put in place as needed in other cases.

Integrated responses can provide training and information to assist non-DFV-specialist services to become competent in responding to DFV. For example, information for Child Protection and Family Court staff and Magistrates around what services are available and what is effective for working at the interface of Child Protection, Family Law and Domestic Violence.

◀ **The co-ordination of a well functioning Integrated Response is a significant role that requires funding** if the response is to progress beyond the level of a interagency group to a proactive collaborative effort that can respond effectively to minimise harm. The success of the Gold Coast Integrated Response, in terms of risk management and prioritisation of victim safety, has only been possible due to the funded Integrated Response manager role that is central to its operation. No other regional co-ordinated community response to DFV has such a funded position.

For the multiplicity of reasons outlined above, **Intervention Programs should be closely linked with integrated / co-ordinated system responses**, to enable effective risk assessment and risk management to be shared across agencies, especially in high risk cases, for the prevention of further criminal abuse, violence or potential homicide.

#### **Recommendation 19.**

**All regional Integrated Responses to DFV be supported with dedicated funding for a co-ordinator, and to support a case management approach to high-risk cases.**

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/CrisisAndEmergency/FDV/Pages/CRARMF.aspx>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.dvrcv.org.au/training/family-violence-risk-assessment-craf>

### **Recommendation 20.**

**Include a requirement for engagement with the regional Integrated Response into service agreements for Men's DFV Intervention Programs, and ensure program funding supports this.**

## **Death Review Process**

While regional Integrated Responses review their processes and outcomes in an ongoing way, reviews of the service system response in cases of domestic violence homicides are especially important.

The costs for domestic violence homicides are huge, in terms of personal costs for those close to the victim, for our community and society, as well as economically. It has been estimated that the overall cost of a single homicide to our community is in the vicinity of \$1 million<sup>48</sup>. There were 144 domestic violence homicides in Qld in the 6 years from 2006 to 2011<sup>49</sup>, or about 24 each year on average.

In 2011, the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Unit (DFVDRU) was established within the Office of the State Coroner, in response to the work of the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Panel<sup>50</sup> and the earlier work of the Domestic Violence Death Review Action Group<sup>51</sup>. This unit, consisting of 3 staff, worked with other similar units on other states as part of the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network. Some very useful work was done by this unit, including identifying for the first time what the statistics actually were. The coroner conducted one inquest, into the murder suicide of Antony Way, Tania Simpson, Kyla Rogers and Paul Rogers. The unit was wound down in 2013, impacted by changes across the entire public service in Qld.

The need and the value of a Death Review Unit remains – the DFVDRU performed very useful work but was wound down before it was able to demonstrate its full potential.

### **Recommendation 21.**

**Re-establish the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Unit within the Office of the State Coroner.**

SPEAQ - Qld Inquiry into Prevention Criminal Activity.docx

<sup>48</sup> Mr Michael Barnes, Qld Coroner, Personal communication 2011.

<sup>49</sup> Office of the State Coroner, (2012) *Findings of the inquest into the deaths of Anthony Way, Tania Simpson, Kyla Rogers and Paul Rogers*.

<sup>50</sup> Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Panel – Final Report (2010)  
<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/communityservices/violenceprevention/death-review-panel.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> Taylor, B (2008) "Dying To Be Heard" - *Domestic and Family Violence Death Reviews Discussion Paper* Domestic Violence Death Review Action Group. <http://www.wdvcs.org.au/files/D315135830.pdf>

## Appendix A



### ***Mentors In Violence Prevention Program***

Mentors In Violence Prevention (MVP) Program is a leadership program focused on preventing all forms of violence. The program views all participants as empowered bystanders who can confront, interrupt or prevent violence. It seeks to enlist all people in the fight against violence by equipping them with the skills to be effective bystanders.

#### ***The Training Model***

MVP training sessions open dialogue about leadership around issues such as: battering, sexual assault, fighting, and bullying. The program strives to challenge participants to understand and embrace the necessity of their action as leaders and proactive bystanders when faced with violent situations.

The highly interactive training sessions are utilized to develop concrete options for participants to employ during a range of school or social situations – ranging from the rather harmless-seeming to actual violence.

#### ***Training Goals:***

- Raise awareness
- Challenge thinking
- Open dialogue
- Inspire leadership

#### ***What makes MVP unique?***

- the trainings provide the context necessary to empower participants to be proactive bystanders
- the program employs a discussion-based educational philosophy to make training sessions dynamic and interactive. You Can Prevent Violence training sessions are not lectures
- it utilizes teaching materials including Playbooks which consist of realistic scenarios involving various forms of violence
- Mentors In Violence Prevention works with men and women in both mixed and single gender sessions
- the staff create a “safe space” for participants to learn from one another

#### ***Background***

Mentors In Violence Prevention is a highly successful program created by Jackson Katz in the United States in 1993. MVP is an industry leader and was on the cutting-edge in the early nineties, utilizing a bystander approach to violence prevention. MVP is the premier program in the US working with hard to reach populations, such as college and professional athletes, the military, and fraternities and sororities, on the issues of men’s violence against women for over a decade.

#### ***Contact Us***

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# AN OVERVIEW OF THE LOVE BITES PROGRAM CONTENT

## INTRODUCTION SESSION

- Introducing the *Love Bites* program to students.
- Introducing the facilitators to students.
- Discussing the group agreements.
- Discussing safety for the day.
- Talking about why *Love Bites* is happening.
- Emphasising that although the majority of perpetrators of domestic violence are male, the majority of men are not violent towards women.
- Talking about the creative sessions and the Community Campaign.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SESSION

- Sharing the Angela Barker Story — a young person's experience of relationship violence.
- Small group activity exploring young people's perspective on what defines a healthy or unhealthy relationship.
- Defining different forms of Domestic and Family Violence for young people and the importance of developing ethical and respectful relationships. Looking at the implications of how certain behaviours impact on others.
- Scenarios to assist the challenging of attitudes and behaviours that support Violence against Women.
- Exploring what to do if relationships are unhealthy, how to talk about it, who to talk with, where to go.
- Exploring the concept of a bystander.
- Deconstructing the myths around Domestic and Family Violence.



## SEXUAL ASSAULT SESSION

- Deconstructing the myths around Sexual Assault and establishing if these myths are pertinent in local communities. Focusing on the fact that although perpetrators are overwhelmingly male the majority of men are not perpetrators.
- Understanding and defining sexual assault.
- Understanding what consent is; how to ask for and give consent. This activity focuses on young people's sexual rights and responsibilities, establishing boundaries and understanding that 'only yes means yes'.
- How to support a friend and where to go for support.

## ART/MUSIC/DRAMA SESSION

The purpose of the *Love Bites* ART/MUSIC/DRAMA/RADIO ADVERTISEMENT workshops is to develop a student-led community engagement campaign.

## LOVE BITES FINAL SESSION

The final session brings the *Love Bites* program to a close. This session showcases the outcomes from the workshops and reinforces messages from the education sessions, including where young people can get support.