



# **BEHIND THE CALL FOR CHANGE**

**A companion report to *A Call For Change*, the report delivered by the Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service Responses to domestic and family violence.**

## CONTENT WARNING

Please be advised this report contains language and descriptions of incidents that are offensive, disrespectful and demonstrate racism, sexism and misogyny. They are included to show the types of cultural issues that the Commission has discovered in the Queensland Police Service (QPS) during the course of its inquiry and to underscore the findings that have been made. The Commission in no way condones nor supports the behaviours that are demonstrated.

This report includes details of many forms of violence, and attitudes towards violence and victim survivors, which may be confronting for readers. Reader discretion is advised.

Throughout this report, case studies are used to reference police actions, activity or instances of domestic violence. All names of individuals and officers referred to in these case studies have been changed to protect the identities of those involved.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised this report contains references to deceased persons.**

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# BEHIND THE CALL FOR CHANGE

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*The institutional culture of a police force is of vital importance to a community. A police force is numerically strong, politically influential, physically powerful, and armed. It stands at the threshold of the criminal justice system and is in effective control of the enforcement of the criminal law.*

*Each police officer has extensive authority over all other citizens, however powerful, coupled with wide discretions concerning its exercise. Subsequent stages in the criminal justice process, including courts and prisons, are largely dependent on the activities of the Police Force, and will inevitably be affected by its deficiencies, especially any which are cultural and therefore widespread.<sup>1</sup>*

*Investment in cultural change and strong leadership will remove any last vestiges of a culture that does not value women nor understand the costs to us all of allowing domestic and family violence to continue.<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> GE Fitzgerald, Commission of Inquiry into Possible Illegal Activities and Associated Police Misconduct, (Report of a Commission of Inquiry Pursuant to Orders in Council, 29 June 1989) [p 200].

<sup>2</sup> Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence, *Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland* (Report, 2015).



**If you, or someone you know, need support please contact a relevant support service:**

- **1800Respect** is a national 24/7 domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information and support line – 1800 737 732, [www.180orespect.org.au](http://www.180orespect.org.au)
- **DVConnect** is a Queensland-wide 24/7 crisis response line for women affected by domestic and family violence – 1800 811 811, [www.dvconnect.org.au](http://www.dvconnect.org.au)
- **DVConnect Mensline** is a support, advice and referral service for men who are seeking support around their experiences or use of DFV – 1800 600 636 (9am – midnight, 7 days)
- **Mensline Australia** is a national 24/7 counselling support service for men across a range of relationship and wellbeing issues – 1300 789 978, [www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)
- **Lifeline** is a 24/7 telephone counselling and referral service across a range of support areas – 13 11 14, [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)
- **Kids Helpline** is a 24/7 counselling service for young people between 5 and 25 – 1800 55 1800, [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)
- **Suicide Call Back Service** is a 24/7 crisis and counselling line for anyone who is feeling suicidal or worried about someone's suicide risk – 1300 659 469, [www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au)
- **Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service (QIFVLS)** is a community legal service that provides free support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples affected by family violence or sexual assault, established to deliver culturally appropriate services across Queensland – 1800 887 700, [www.qifvls.com.au](http://www.qifvls.com.au)
- **Women's Legal Service Queensland (WLSQ)** is a community legal centre that provides free state-wide legal and social work help to Queensland women. WLSQ provides assistance in domestic violence, family law and sexual violence matters. State-wide Legal Advice Helpline 1800 WLS WLS (1800 957 957), [www.wlsq.org.au](http://www.wlsq.org.au)

The Queensland Police Service also offers wellbeing and support services for members and families throughout their career and beyond – visit <https://wellbeing.ourpeoplematter.com.au/> or call 1800 Assist (1800 277 478) for confidential counselling provided by the QPS' independent employee assistance provider.

The Domestic and Family Violence Media Guide provides information for journalists about responsible reporting of domestic and family violence – [www.justice.qld.gov.au/initiatives/end-domestic-family-violence/resources](http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/initiatives/end-domestic-family-violence/resources).

Guidelines for journalists regarding safe reporting in relation to suicide and mental illness can be found at [www.mindframe.org.au](http://www.mindframe.org.au).

## Cultural Acknowledgement

We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestors of this land, their spirits and their legacy. The foundations laid by these ancestors — the First Nations peoples — give strength, inspiration and courage to current and future generations towards creating a better Queensland.

We pay our deepest respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities, and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

We walk together on a shared journey of reconciliation where all Queenslanders will be equal and the diversity of Aboriginal cultures and Torres Strait Islander cultures and communities across Queensland are fully recognised, respected and valued by all.

We also give special acknowledgment and thanks to all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, from all walks of life, who provided their insights, experiences and expertise to the Commission in any way.

We thank you for your generosity and courage.

## FOREWORD

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The Commission heard from hundreds of victim-survivors, police and other parties about the current approach to policing domestic and family violence, what is and is not working, and where there may be opportunities for improvement. These are stories from real people, who had real experiences that deserve to be heard. These are the stories that are behind the call for change.

The purpose of sharing these stories is to demonstrate the depth and breadth of the issues that are impacting on the QPS response to victims of domestic and family violence, and for victim-survivors to have their experiences acknowledged. This companion report provides a snapshot of these stories, drawn from hundreds of submissions and survey comments.

The Commission's findings in *A call for change* are clear. They build on multiple reports and reviews over the past decade which have sought to strengthen policing responses to domestic and family violence.

Many police officers work tirelessly across the state to protect victim-survivors and hold perpetrators to account. This work is difficult, complex and there are few rewards.

The Commission heard from victim-survivors, police, service providers and other experts about the importance of timely, informed, and collaborative responses to domestic and family violence, and were provided with clear examples where this has worked well.

However, the Commission also found compelling evidence of failings in the way the QPS responds to domestic and family violence. Many cultural issues were identified including evidence of sexism, misogyny, and racism. These issues are compounded by resourcing deficiencies, and impact work practices across the QPS.

Victim-survivors are turned away from stations and misidentified as perpetrators. Police avoid domestic and family violence related calls for service and do not undertake investigations to the expected standard.

The current response is not working – for victim-survivors, their children, or police. These issues are not isolated. There are not just a few bad apples.

The Commission acknowledges the strength and courage of those who have shared their experiences and extends its gratitude to the multitude of voices that have joined together to make a collective and compelling call for change.

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## ABOUT THIS COMPANION REPORT

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The Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence (the Commission) was established to examine whether there are cultural issues within the QPS that negatively affect police investigations of domestic and family violence. The Commission was also tasked with investigating if any cultural issues identified contribute to the overrepresentation of First Nations peoples in the criminal justice system. It was also required to consider the adequacy of the current conduct and complaint handling process against officers.

This companion report is a compilation of case studies, perspectives and experiences shared with the Commission by victim-survivors, police, and other persons. The information is intended to be a snapshot of the evidence gathered from hundreds of submissions and comments provided to the Commission.

The stories and case studies about victim-survivors' experiences have been taken from submissions from victim-survivors' and organisation and the free text answers from the victim-survivor survey conducted by the Commission. The survey was answered by 848 people.

Information and case studies from or about police members, have been taken from 365 submissions, 53 interviews of current and retired QPS members by Mark Ainsworth, free text answers from the QPS DFV-Q survey 2022 (completed by 2,733 members) and a sample of the approximately 6,200 free text responses to the Working for Qld Survey 2021. Case studies were primarily taken from police material provided under notice to produce documents.

The views expressed do not profess to be the views held by all members of the QPS. They are instead a representative sample of the evidence the Commission has drawn its conclusions from.

This report is intended to be read alongside *A call for change (2022)*, which outlines the Commission's findings and recommendations. Where names have been used, these are pseudonyms to provide anonymity. Any other identifying details have also been removed to protect the confidentiality of the people involved.

Many of the extracts in this report come from submissions that were provided to the Commission on a confidential basis. In each case consent to publish the submission has been obtained from the author. To the extent possible, the Commission has sought to accurately represent the diverse views and experiences that have been shared. The Commission does not necessarily endorse or support the views outlined within this report.



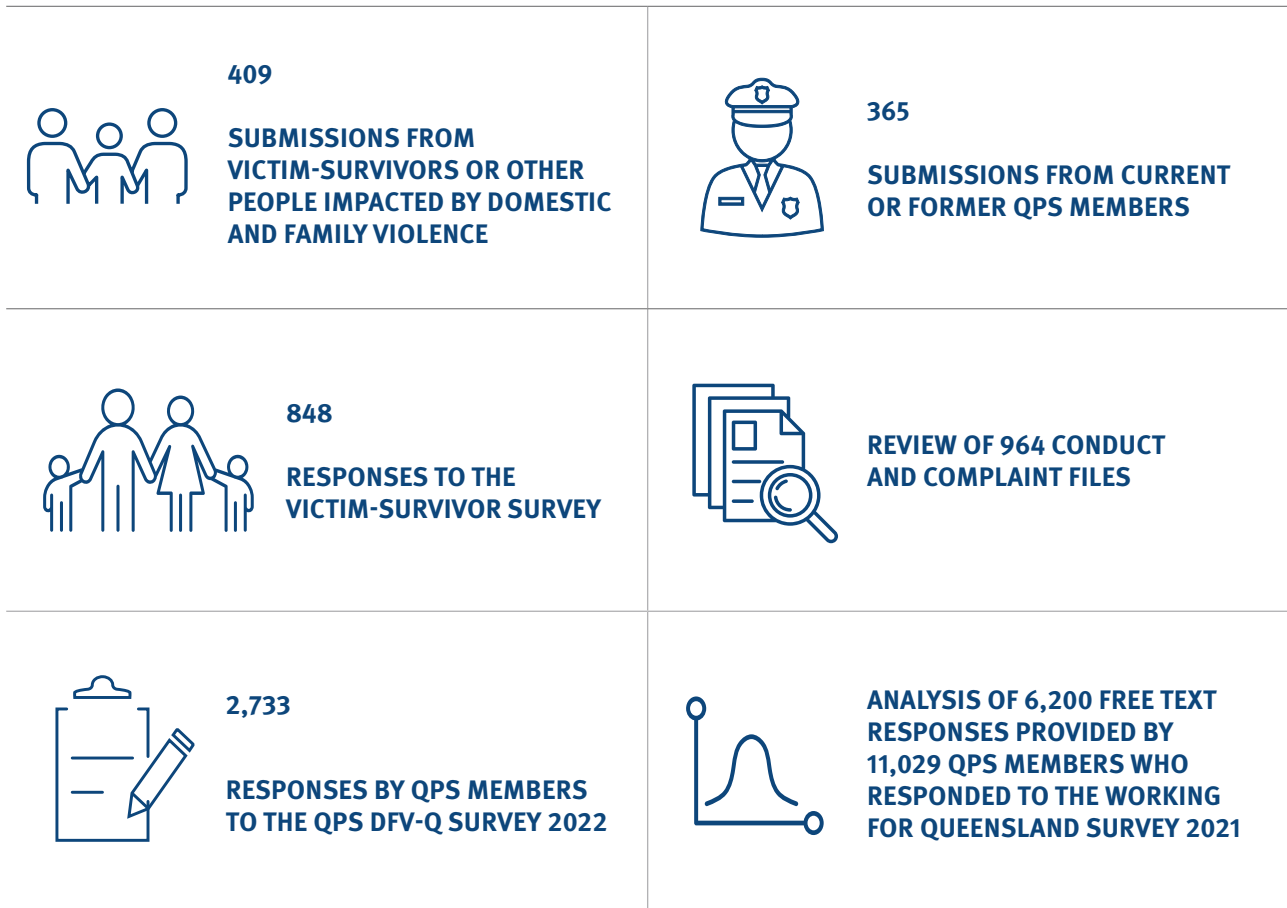


Figure 1: Sources used for compiling Behind the call for change (2022)

# WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED

*“When a man perpetrates domestic violence which emerges out of his desire for coercive control over his partner, it is a deliberate, purposeful, and intentional choice. It isn’t random, or accidental, or isolated. His violence is a decision he has made to gain power and control over his partner. It is a dynamic pattern of behaviour, driven by his beliefs of ownership of her, superiority to her, and his rights over her. Even if a man is a first-time offender, with his first contact with police, and courts, he is a long-time abuser.”*”

Victim-survivors and community organisations told the Commission of inconsistent responses to policing domestic and family violence. There have been instances of excellent police responses which have helped the victim-survivor escape from a dangerous situation. The Commission also heard of many instances where the police response was lacking. This occurred at all stages of police contact and at times had a devastating impact.

The extracts and case studies included in this section have been collated from responses to the Commission’s victim-survivor survey, submissions from victim-survivors and information provided by community organisations. It provides a sample of what the community told the Commission about inconsistent police responses to domestic and family violence.

## Sample of responses to questions posed in the victim-survivors survey conducted by the Commission<sup>4</sup>

*What were your perceptions of police when you were reporting domestic and family violence to police?*

“More interested in protecting the perpetrator and his career as he is a police officer. My daughter was also subjected to threats by CPIU because she spoke about the abuse, they wanted to shut her up because the perpetrator is an officer. Not one officer asked her if she was ok or feared for her safety. No investigation was carried out in relation to the violence committed against her by her father. They intimidated her to keep her quiet.”

“I felt like they were on my ex-husbands side and didn’t take me seriously. They kept making the matter about family court stuff and deflecting the conversation away from the domestic violence.”

“Very varied. I had officers that were amazing. But I also had officers that made me feel like the abuse was my fault, that I was wasting their time and that I was making a big deal out of nothing.”

“I had unfortunately many occasions even in the last year when I needed to report DFV to QPS the respondent would never get charged, reoffend time and time again and after 8 reports in 2 months he only received 2 months jail time. Given there was so many reports I have had both good and bad experiences. But that’s the thing. There shouldn’t be bad experiences when us as victims need help with DFV and it needs to be taken more seriously.”

“They didn’t want to listen. I had to beg for reports to be made on breaches of DVO order, beg to have welfare check done on children after physical violence. Even then the welfare check was conducted in presence of alleged perpetrator. Children would never say anything standing next to him, because they would be punished for it. Then had to beg police to say that welfare check was insufficient.”

“Professional and thoughtful. The officer even printed out my application form at the station so that I could drive and submit it to the Magistrates Court. The person was also caring enough to recommend me seeing my doctor to discuss potential stress on the baby since I am giving birth in 4 weeks and told me to look after number 1.”

“That I was treated with utter disrespect, made to think I was wasting their time and belittled.”

“Friendly, kind and I feel they truly listened to me. I attended my local station to enquire what I could put in place to protect my daughters. The police sergeant took the time to dig deeper and asked my story. He then advised me that I was the victim of DFV coercive control. The relief I felt to be heard, to be believed and to be helped is a feeling I will never forget.”

"I was scared, but the police made me feel heard and explained what was going to happen next and moving forward to get myself and other family members protected."

"Police were genuinely caring and respectful and validated me during a traumatic incident."

"They were impartial but supportive. They seem understaffed. Support services probably need to be based at the same place as where I gave my affidavit because Police have enough to do already, without having to remember to provide details of support services."

"It was a huge thing to walk in and ask for their help as I was unsure they would believe me. Right from the beginning I was reassured I would be taken seriously and support and assistance would be given."

*Do you feel reporting to police is easy and accessible for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence?*

"I felt police believed me. This was extremely important as it strengthened me to leave and never return to abusive relationships."

"Not at all. If not life threatening (physically harmed) you are told to call Police Link which immediately deescalates and invalidates the threat to safety of other forms of violence and actual police don't respond. Should be a dedicated line."

"Initially it's difficult because there's shame being in a DV relationship and you don't want to feel like you've overreacted. When incidents happen a few times it's embarrassing and you feel stupid and guilty for using police resource. I think that was more of a 'me' problem, police were quite understanding."

"No it's intimidating, male dominated and not trauma informed."

"Not in the slightest. It's terrifying. You don't believe us until it's too late."

"No I don't, it is very daunting walking into a police station and having to tell them why you are there at the front counter while other people are in there."

"No. It is easy to call a phone number, however for breaches of DVO I have been told to go into a station which is not always possible. There has been a few times where police responses have made me feel like I am the perpetrator and like the facts I was reporting to them were untrue or silly."

"No. Recently I reported a breach of a DVO order - over the course of the Police investigating that breach I spoke to 8 different Police Officers (this does not include the Police Officers I spoke to on the telephone at the VPU)."

"Yes, but people don't expect it to be for some reason. The things that are difficult are living arrangements and financial matters and social isolation and parenting. We need better support to start new lives, and children who've witnessed coercive control need heaps of professional support."

"For a same sex relationship, absolutely not. I believe a lot has been done to change perception and process for those in heterosexual relationships but I would love to see more done in the LGBTIQ+ space- more visibility - especially as stats indicate this minority group has a high- non report rate due to historical issues with Police and other institutions."

"Yes. It is the legislation within which police have to operate, that creates the perception of difficulty. Police can't make things easier and more streamlined if they don't have the powers to do so."

"No I do not. Police do not care unless they can see physical injuries. They don't have the time to listen and understand. They don't understand psychological and finances abuse, they don't understand coercive control, gaslighting, and they are often used to further threaten the victim with false allegations. 70% of the police I dealt with were in a hurry and became agitated and or aggressive."

“Yes, the email/online reporting was absolutely invaluable.”

“Absolutely not. It was so traumatic I would rather put up with the abuse than traumatise myself by going to the police and not being believed.”

“No absolutely not in my experience. I had minimal support and contact by police even during contested police application to vary DVO. I had to constantly chase up the police to find out what was happening and what to do.”

“No. The process was never clear. My reports were met with the response that I should apply for an order myself. This made me second guess whether it really was DV, and many in my position would have gone back. I did my application to the magistrates court and it was not until the moment I was before the court that the police prosecutor looked at the paper work and decided to speak to the matter. The magistrate then described the matter as a significant case of long-term domestic violence. The police prosecutor fumbled through having not read anything. The magistrate knew more from my application than the prosecutor. I sat there alone. Feeling unsupported. Having prepared to do it myself. Having it taken off me at the last moment by the prosecutor who fumbled through. Thank goodness the magistrate had read my application and knew what to do. I received a 5 year protection order with comprehensive conditions. Finally I felt seen by the system.”

“I found police link staff amazing- they asked many questions. The second time police were quite busy and asked me to attend station, which was intimidating but I was able to do that.”

“No. There is so much stigma and judgement around reporting to the police. The police officers themselves need more training and to learn how to be more empathetic.”

“Yes. Making the complaint is physically easy to do. However, knowing that you may be met with an officer who already has their mind made up and treats you poorly, makes it difficult.”

*What would you like to see provided to victim-survivors of domestic and family violence to assist them when reporting to police?*

“They should be allocated a DV trained police officer to help them make statements and investigate and have the appropriate charges laid against perpetrators rather than just saying we have the power to do nothing.”

“A safe place and police that understand the non-physical signs of dv.”

“Specialised dv officers actually investigating reports. Social workers getting sent out with cpiu/ dv responding officers. Someone who knows what abuse is and doesn't just go by the perspective “I've seen worse”.”

“Listen to women, follow up on investigations not just added to a pile of breaches that never get followed up. Specialist DV officers that you can go to first available all hours, instead of fronting up to police station with kids in tow because no else to look after them and them watching other people come in for bail checks and listen to other people's complaints whilst I deal with our issue. There is no privacy at front counters. Women need a safe and secure place to report to specialist officers, a place they can return to when they need advice, a place where information can be accessed. Listen to the children, they often report what is going on but rely on parents to act on this information. Link in with community group to provide security for house and car. Link with DV group to provide ongoing support.”

“A Domestic Liason Officer whom is on shift at each station, who understands. Going into make a statement should make you feel like a criminal and disbelieved. In my experience, it hasn't been an inviting environment at all.”

“Dvlo in each station, someone that understands all forms including systematic, psychological, emotional and that dv isn't just physical, brusies. Your scars can be internal. The psychological effects and prolonged systematic after separation with the use of children and family court is just as devastating to a survivor then just physical.”

“Female only police stations. DFV and trauma informed responses from police. Police not to continuously refer victims to Brisbane Domestic Violence Service and other services that have already said they can't help.”

**“Police stations where you’re not stuck behind a glass window having to tell you story in front of whoever else is waiting so everyone can hear your business.”**

“Officers who are trained in DV, can recognise coercive control and its risks. For them to ask key questions to help identify the risks and what is going on, including with perpetrators. The willingness to take action. The presence of a trained DV support worker present. The need to only tell you full story once, not over and over again each time. For police to record all incidents, reports, and responses and actions arising on a system, with a follow up to see how you are doing. For checks to be in place that they have written it up and acted appropriately. For early referrals to DV support area, and police working with DV support areas (ongoing), not just handing it on and forgetting about it. To be willing and have the authority to address perpetrators and hold them accountable.”

**“Officers who are trained in DV, mental health first aid and trauma informed. Information to the public of where and how to contact these officers. Availability of these officers on weekends and at night when DV is highest as the perpetrator is home or drinking more after work hours.”**

“To be listened to, heard and helped. To be taken seriously and given the time to be listened to properly and a file and notes taken.”

**“Be notified when the other party has been served and a follow up by social worker or counsellor.”**

**“Take us seriously!! Our lives are at risk so why would we lie?”**

“More detailed education on how they can escape and what help is available to them. Not just a pamphlet.”

**“Support in knowing that they do not deserve what is happening to them. They do not deserve it. And they do deserve the help and to be treated decently. They need to know they are not alone, they can be safe and there will be follow through.”**

“Police should know about support services, I was told to apply for my own DVO which took me some time to go to the court to do as I knew it wasn’t going to be easy. When I got to the court, they told me there was a support service there that could help me, which made it easier. If police had told me of this support service, I wouldn’t have taken so long to go in and apply for the order.”

**“Complaints to be followed up, taken seriously and offenders to be actually charged. All of the systems need to start taking this seriously. Women die due to police failures and those of us who haven’t yet been killed, live in constant fear.”**

**“Police officers who are educated and aware of the signs of domestic violence more particularly coercive control but also capable of understanding and recognising the characteristics and behaviours of survivors.”**

“In my case, I was provided with information, a copy of the materials, contact numbers for support services, contact numbers for the police officer and the station and put on notice about the plans for contacting my ex-husband (which allowed me to be semi prepared for the possibility he’d react poorly to police contact about this). I found this assisted me greatly. The important contact numbers were provided to me on one card which I’ve been able to keep in my wallet and close to hand. I found that comforting and it was easy to draw upon when needed.”

**“I was offered counselling through the magistrate’s court & the police station. The counsellor said ‘I don’t know how to help you. I’ve never talked with a gay man before.’ I’d like to see properly trained counsellors available to DV survivors. I’d like to see nonjudgemental policemen & women at the front desk. Pride flag stickers to indicate the station is a LGBTQIA+ safe space. Easy access to a LGBTQIA+ liaison officer.”**

“Perhaps have a trained disability advocate attend the incident and the follow up visits from the police officers.”

**“A DV survival package. It’s basically an information package of everything you need to do if you need to escape/leave. I didn’t understand the patterns of DV until I went to a DV service. I know the police refer you to them but majority of the time they’re full and it takes weeks to see them.”**

“Police who are trained in dv and coercive control and the dynamics of reactionary abuse from survivors. Respect and believing women who come forward. Actually taking action to enforce breaches of protection orders no matter how small.”

*Is there anything the QPS could have done to support you better?*

“Yes, instead of asking “what did you do to trigger this” perhaps be less cynical.”

**“Anything. I had to go to the library and search what options I had and then attended a court house and asked for forms, filled them out and returned them. Once I attended court, the DVO was immediately approved. I was extremely lucky that I didn’t need to face this person in real life as the individual had been arrested again after reoffending. This was really hard to do, and I wished as a young 18 year old the police had supported my decision in someway.”**

“I was one of the lucky ones having been through domestic violence for almost 20 years with two violent and abusive relationships I knew what I had to do to get help. I felt I had the support of the police and I felt I had the support of the domestic violence support workers of the area. I was given information by the dv support group, by the police and by my dv counsellor. So I say I am one of the lucky ones. There have been far too many domestic violence deaths. It needs to stop. It took me 10 years to leave each time leaving and going back leaving and going back. Quite often the victim believes she is worthless and no one will want her like she is told over and over again. So I think every woman who leaves is brave and it is damn scary you basically have to start again and try to feel safe as you have no idea if he knows where you are. So I think for the real violent offenders jail straight up for a month or so. And that is if he has badly hurt her each time. Otherwise once an incident is reported 24hrs in the watchhouse so the victim can have the means to get her belongings, children, and to go somewhere safe.”

**“Pretty much everything. They were called out 16 times before he went to jail. And whilst there were a few officers that were brilliant. The sgt particularly was awful and got me hurt. Their attitude of putting down and victim shaming is terrible.”**

“Let police receive feedback from families they helped!!!! Give hope to helping families become free of abuse and DV the result of protection families get because Police guard our safety and keep us safe. A way to thank police for their effort - questions they ask and the value they hold dear to caring about our families as they would their own. THANK YOU.”

## Sample quotes from submissions made to the Commission by victim-survivors

“I have permanent mental health problems due to the qps response to my family’s situation.”<sup>5</sup>

**“My ex-partner sent me a death threat with a domestic violence order and it was not a breach as it was a ‘joke’.”<sup>6</sup>**

“Instead of asking the witness that called them, the police went to my abuser and decided they needed to write a protection order protecting my abuser and his friend that was helping him harass me because “someone had to get a protection order before the issue was resolved”.”<sup>7</sup>

**“I went to the police station seeking assistance and advice on completing a Protection Order. I spoke to a Sergeant who told me all I had to do was go home to my husband. He knew my husband from our children’s school and our local Church. He told me that there was nothing wrong with my marriage. In fact, my marriage was the type society needed more of. He refused to help me.”<sup>8</sup>**

“The lady Police Officer we first saw was excellent and explained the process...The male Police Officer let us down and as a result, put my family in danger. I have no faith in the Queensland Police Service and continue to feel let down every time we continue to receive abusive messages to this very day.”<sup>9</sup>

**“My neighbor witnessed the incident and rang the police. More than eight hours later the police knocked at my door. By this time I was so sick with stress I could hardly answer the door.”<sup>10</sup>**

**“One instance I phoned in the afternoon to complain of an incident, police were banging on my door responding to that at midnight. Police need to be mindful of frightened women and children and the hours they are banging on your door to respond, or how they respond.”<sup>11</sup>**

“QLD Police responses to me from the very beginning, when I reached out for help in a Domestic Violence Crisis have continually made things worse for myself and children.”<sup>12</sup>

**“If the officers had carried out their duties correctly it would of saved my 2 year old and myself from a night of true horror.”<sup>13</sup>**

“QPS responded quickly were very supportive and made referrals for support groups in my area.”<sup>14</sup>

**“On the day that the police place the protection order on me, I told them on numerous occasions that I was in fact the victim of domestic violence and had been for years.”<sup>15</sup>**

“I called the police stating that I was afraid that my ex partner would hurt me and when they came to speak to me the first thing one of the male officers said was: This is to get leverage in your family law matters”.<sup>16</sup>

**“I am more terrified of dealing with the Police than I am my husband....and he tried to kill me.”<sup>17</sup>**

**“I was left sleeping homeless in my car for 2 nights freezing cold after the local police cancelled my “keep the Peace appointment” twice as they were too busy to accompany me to get basic needs like medication, blanket and warm clothes.”<sup>18</sup>**

“I lodged reports both online and in person and have been on the phone with the police. My matters were treated with the least amount of seriousness possible and I have been left in a state of not worth being believed.”<sup>19</sup>

**“The police officer dismissed my request for protection on the phone and discouraged me to lodge a report without even taken notice of the court orders.”<sup>20</sup>**

“I felt that the police officers, which were all male, rather talked to my former husband who presented himself as friendly and calm and I was treated as an overreacting mother, who was making up stories and couldn’t be believed, even when presenting the evidence.”<sup>21</sup>

**“I fled the family home carrying my then three year old daughter, running up the road as I called 000.**

**Several police cars arrived. They rushed over to my daughter and I. After asking me various questions and looking me up and down seeing no bruises or blood, they quickly became disinterested.”<sup>22</sup>**

“Each time I went to the police station, the officers were dismissive of the domestic violence my daughter and I had been subjected to for years and highly sympathetic of my ex.”<sup>23</sup>

**“Whenever I spoke to the police, I felt as if my ex was somehow the victim.”<sup>24</sup>**

“My experience with the police was that they are extremely uneducated in domestic violence. They were dismissive and disinterested. I am grateful that one year on, my daughter and I are alive, safe and are no longer being abused, because I would hesitate in ever calling 000 for anything related to domestic violence again.”<sup>25</sup>

**“My experience with a senior officer at QPS was excellent.”<sup>26</sup>**

“Police were called to my address concerning a VERBAL threat made to me by my partner in late 2022. Police turned up to my address and drew guns on my children aged in their teens... QPS are a joke and will never be called for anything again. I do not trust any member of QPS and never will again. They do not serve and protect the community, only themselves!”<sup>27</sup>

**“My friend was successful in leaving her abusive husband due to the diary and video evidence that she was able to send to friends then delete from her phone, the support of friends and family who helped her hide money and pay for lawyer appointments, secret calls to multiple lawyers and DV help lines, the experience and support of her duty lawyer, and the experience and attitude of the magistrate.**

During the two years of safety planning, it was clear to my friend and I, after all the research we did, that the police were not going to be helping my friend escape. To the contrary, they were a hurdle that we had to navigate to ensure a temporary protection order was issued immediately. Because of this, my friend stayed with her husband for much longer than she should have so that she could capture video evidence that was convincing enough to the police. It is evident from the videos that if my friend had not left that day, she and her daughter would have been strangled that night or the next day.

Almost one year on, my friend and her daughter are safe and busy rebuilding their lives not because of the police response, but in spite of it.”<sup>28</sup>



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# CASE EXAMPLES

The below case studies are representative of the real-life experiences of victim-survivors, their families and organisations supporting them, as reported to the Commission.

## FAILURE TO TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO ENSURE VICTIM SAFETY

### DAISY'S EXPERIENCE

Daisy was a mother in her early 20s and was pregnant when she was repeatedly referred to a High Risk Team (HRT).

They were considered one of the highest at-risk families.

There was a Protection Order in place which her partner, Damian, continually breached. The abuse included forced drug use, physical violence resulting in hospitalisations, abuse during pregnancy, physical violence towards her young children, sexual abuse, stalking, property damage and threats to kill Daisy, her children and their pets. Damian had prior convictions for violence towards other intimate partners and he refused to engage with services.

Some examples of the police responses to Daisy included:

- an officer told her that they would not take out another Protection Order as she was not helping herself by staying in the relationship, so why would they help her
- on one occasion, Daisy escaped from home to the police station with support from the local domestic and family violence service. She was made to sit at the station for several hours because no one was able to see her. Due to her fear of the perpetrator finding out she had left the house, she snuck back into her home before he found her missing
- another time, Daisy called the QPS after a prolonged episode of physical abuse. The police told her she had caused the violence as she had met Damian that morning. After this occasion, she again sought assistance at the police station to vary the Protection Order; however, no further action was taken by QPS with the Protection Order remaining with mandatory conditions only.

The HRT member contacted the QPS Superintendent and requested that further action be taken. It was explained that Daisy was the highest risk case and there was a concern she would be killed. The next day, QPS attended the property and searched the home, where they located drug paraphernalia.

While Damian was not present, Daisy was subsequently arrested and charged with drug possession.

Three weeks later, Damian was taken into custody.

Daisy wanted to make a formal complaint to police but was worried she would not get any police assistance.

The HRT member attended the station with Daisy where they were made to wait for an hour. An officer was reluctant to take her statement and told Daisy he did not think he could help her. The officer was under the impression the HRT member was Daisy's mother and when the HRT member told the officer who they were, he apologised to them and took Daisy's statement.<sup>29</sup>

### INDIRA'S EXPERIENCE

Indira was physically and verbally assaulted by her ex-partner Paul, who resided with her at the time. The police were called by a friend who had witnessed the assault. When they arrived they identified Indira as the victim and arrested Paul for a breach of a Protection Order and for physically assaulting her. The police removed Paul from her home and took him to the police station to be charged, where they noted he had a very high blood alcohol level.

While removing him they asked Indira if he could return to her home once released. She advised police he could only return the following morning, once sober.

Two hours later, at approximately 1am, the police dropped Paul back to Indira's home. She told the police he could not come in as he was still intoxicated. She was afraid for her safety and reacted fearfully in front of the police. The police told her she had to let him in, even though Paul had commenced swearing and threatening Indira by this time.

Indira locked herself in the bathroom and was reacting to the police who were trying to enter the room. They eventually got into the bathroom, where they used pepper spray on her, and she became verbally abusive towards the officers.

The police subsequently arrested Indira, took her to the watchhouse and charged her with serious assault. She was required to stay the night in the watchhouse. At one stage, an officer asked whether an ambulance should be called for Indira, given the use of the pepper spray. Another officer stated "*no, that little bitch can go to the watch house.*"<sup>30</sup>

## MISIDENTIFICATION OF THE VICTIM

### CASSIE'S EXPERIENCE

Cassie was in a relationship with Aaron which was characterised by coercive control.

Cassie was having an argument with Aaron while they were in a car. She reported that she slapped him in the 'heat of the moment' before he punched her in the face at least twice and, while yelling he was going to kill her, he strangled her until she fell unconscious.

Cassie was taken to the hospital and had significant bruising on her face and body. She wanted to proceed with a criminal complaint, so met with a detective to make her statement.

The detective had her medical records and photos of her injuries. When Cassie told the detective she had slapped Aaron in the face first, the detective yelled at her and told her that Aaron could have her charged for assaulting him, and that his punches were self-defence.

While the detective finished taking her statement, Cassie felt he did not believe her.

The detective later contacted Cassie and said he was dropping the charges against Aaron as she had assaulted him first and that Aaron had been 'restraining her.' The detective told Cassie that Aaron should get a Protection Order against her.<sup>31</sup>

### MAI'S EXPERIENCE

Mai had previously been in a de-facto relationship with Chris. She attended a lawyer's office in a highly distressed state having earlier been in hospital with suicidal ideation after being non-lethally strangled.

The night before, Mai was strangled by Chris. She locked herself in the bathroom and called 000 for assistance.

While police attended, the officers did not believe her, and wrongly identified Mai as the primary aggressor. A Police Protection Notice was subsequently taken out against her, despite Mai playing a recording of Chris admitting to the non-lethal strangulation.

At the scene, police stated that they sighted no visible marks on her throat, however on examination that night in hospital, minor redness was noted around Mai's neck, as were multiple bruises.

Mai provided a statement to police at a different station to clarify her version of events; however, no action was taken by these officers either.

The QPS withdrew the Police Protection Notice against Mai only after having filed the affidavits of police officers, body worn camera footage, and recordings made on the night by Mai, which included multiple admissions made by Chris that he had choked (non-lethally strangled) Mai.<sup>32</sup>

### JUNE'S EXPERIENCE

June was subjected to a prolonged episode of domestic and family violence perpetrated against her by her male intimate partner Ahmed. This included being held hostage in a room for hours by him. Ahmed rammed her head into the walls of the room, creating holes in each of the walls.

She presented to hospital with large chunks of hair ripped out of her skull and facial injuries.

Despite June's extensive injuries and evidence of significant property damage, QPS issued a Police Protection Notice against her as the respondent. Her complaints of domestic violence or assault were not investigated.

At the hearing of the Protection Order application, June's lawyer made submissions on her behalf that the magistrate should decide there was insufficient evidence, and therefore dismiss the application. The magistrate warned the QPS to "seriously reconsider the making of this application."

There were several court events that followed in the same manner. The police prosecutor was clearly at odds with the arresting officer and their supervisor's attitudes towards naming June as the respondent.

Despite this, the matter proceeded to a final hearing after the filing of extensive affidavit material. Only at this time did QPS indicate that "they were considering to withdraw." A discussion about costs followed.

June reported being traumatised by the whole experience and has remarked that she will never again make a complaint to the police.<sup>33</sup>

### NOLA'S EXPERIENCE

Nola, who had a psychosocial disability and an acquired brain injury (likely caused from a previous episode of domestic violence), regularly called QPS to report physical assaults against her by her partner, Pat.

On occasion, Nola had used physical force as a form of self-defence. This led to police imposing a Protection Order against her, as well as Pat. Police did not appear to consider whether Nola's actions might be a reasonable response given Pat's violence against her. Over time, and having consistently received a limited response from police, Nola reported a loss of confidence in making any further reports.

On one occasion, a disability advocate attended a scheduled home visit and was unable to locate or contact Nola. The advocate observed damage, including what appeared to be a punched hole in the wall, which made her concerned for Nola's safety.

The advocate called police and requested that they urgently carry out a welfare check. The advocate reported a poor response by police – including disclosing the name and address without clarifying the advocate's identity and refusing to go to the home to check.

The advocate later discovered that Nola had been forced to flee her home with assistance from a domestic and family violence support service. As a result, she was non-compliant with reporting conditions associated with the order imposed upon her. A warrant was issued, and Nola was arrested. The reasons for her non-compliance were not considered by police.<sup>34</sup>

## SIENNA'S EXPERIENCE

Police made a cross-application for Protection Orders against both Sienna and the perpetrator of domestic and family violence against her, Scott. The Protection Order made against her followed her disclosure to police that she had physically harmed Scott in self-defence.

Scott had an extensive and documented history of committing high-risk violent acts, and breaches of Protection Orders, against multiple victims.

The police did not identify that Sienna was clearly the person most in need of protection.<sup>35</sup>

## FAILURE TO INVESTIGATE PROPERLY

### CHERYL'S EXPERIENCE

Cheryl was physically and sexually assaulted by her ex-partner Nigel in mid-2020. This included Nigel throwing Cheryl to the floor and bashing her head into the ground.

Her neighbour, who had witnessed some of the physical violence, called the police. There was a delay of over eight hours before they attended.

When they finally arrived, Cheryl felt they were more concerned about COVID-19 than her wellbeing. She was reluctant to make a statement to police as she was worried that this would aggravate Nigel and make him retaliate. The police did not speak to her neighbour, who had witnessed the assault, but rather spoke to Nigel about what had occurred. The police ultimately took out a Protection Order naming Cheryl as the respondent, after she was told that *"someone had to get a Protection Order before the issue was resolved"* and given her reluctance to speak to police they determined it would be her.

With support from her counsellor, Cheryl went to the police station approximately a week later to make a complaint regarding the sexual assault. The police told her they did not have enough evidence to charge the offender and encouraged her to drop her complaint, which she ultimately did.<sup>36</sup>

## FAILURE TO INVESTIGATE PROPERLY

### ORLA'S EXPERIENCE

Orla was in a relationship with her male intimate partner Dev, which was characterised by domestic and family violence.

He had a significant history of perpetrating domestic and family violence against other persons and was listed as a respondent on multiple Protection Orders.

On one occasion, Orla's parents went to her house after Orla had been assaulted by Dev and she attempted suicide. They arrived and saw Dev throwing boxes of medication at her and suggesting that she take them. Her parents called an ambulance, who took Orla to hospital.

Orla was in significant pain for a lengthy period following this assault. Medical scans eventually revealed that she had a cracked pubic bone and tail bone, which she thinks were caused by Dev kneeling her groin on the night of her suicide attempt.

Orla and her parents reported this episode of violence to their local police station. Police took statements from Orla and her parents. Despite the statements and medical evidence (including a photo of Orla with a black eye), police took no further action.<sup>37</sup>

### ANGELA'S EXPERIENCE

Angela called police and said that she was afraid her ex-partner Gavin would hurt her. When the police officer arrived and spoke to Angela, he told her 'this is to get leverage in your family law matters'. He went on to say his mate in the police force had just gone through something similar and he had been supporting him. Angela was told that police were attempting to find out her motive in making allegations against Gavin.

Angela told them she wanted to let police know where she and Gavin were, so that if anything happened, they would have a record of her experiences of domestic and family violence.

Police did not take any further action.<sup>38</sup>

## FAILURE TO TAKE OUT A PROTECTION ORDER/ APPROPRIATE CONDITIONS

### MONICA'S EXPERIENCE

A young mother, Monica, was referred to a community legal centre by a social worker at a women's refuge. Her husband Allan had perpetrated acts of serious domestic violence against her throughout their relationship, including strangulation and sexual violence.

One episode of violence resulted in facial injuries that affected her ability to eat and drink. Police had previously attended the home on three occasions but had not taken any action. The children were present each time.

A lawyer assisted with preparing a Protection Order on Monica's behalf. At the first court event, the magistrate queried why police were not involved. The lawyer highlighted the lack of police action in the past. The magistrate ordered police to urgently serve the application for a Protection Order on Allan and suggested that police become involved in the court proceeding.

The community legal centre obtained a Temporary Protection Order for Monica at the next mention. Several adjournments later, Allan filed a cross-application against Monica. Police advised they would not assist in either application.

After multiple requests and robust advocacy from the community legal centre, police agreed to assist with respect to Monica's application only.<sup>39</sup>

### ALANA'S EXPERIENCE

Two police officers attended Alana's house after receiving a call from a counselling service on her behalf. Her ex-partner Avi had said that he wished to kill himself and 'take out' Alana with him. Officers told Alana that due to the severity of the statement and Avi's history of violence, they intended to file a Protection Order on Alana's behalf and would return in an hour with the paperwork.

The police did not return.

Alana called the police station multiple times but was unable to speak with anyone until two days later. She was advised:

- officers had conducted further investigations and did not believe that she was in danger
- that the threat had been taken out of context
- they would not be applying for a Protection Order.

They advised she could make a private application.

Alana was concerned for her personal safety and the safety of her children and engaged a lawyer to apply for the Protection Order.

A five year Protection Order was made by the magistrate, with a condition that Avi have no contact with Alana or her children.<sup>40</sup>

### PENNY'S EXPERIENCE

QPS issued Hal with a Police Protection Notice to protect Penny. It contained only the mandatory condition (to be of good behaviour and not commit domestic and family violence).

Penny sought legal advice. On review of the Police Protection Notice initially filed by QPS, the lawyer identified that there were allegations of significant

assaults committed by Hal against Penny. These assaults had resulted in visible injuries and were supported by medical evidence and police statements confirming that they had seen the injuries.

The mandatory condition did not fit the high-risk nature of the matter.

Penny's lawyer successfully applied on her behalf to vary the conditions of the Protection Order.

Hal was charged with substantial criminal offences relating to assaults against Penny. She went into the witness protection program.

## **FAILURES WHEN DEALING WITH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE VICTIMS**

### **LEE'S EXPERIENCE**

Lee, a migrant from a non-English speaking background, was a victim of ongoing domestic violence perpetrated by her husband Dai, with physical abuse occurring in front of her small child and her visiting parents.

After neighbours called the police, officers arrived and spoke only to Dai, as he was the only one in the household who spoke English.

He told police that Lee was the problem, and after multiple callouts the police proceeded with an application for a Protection Order naming her as the perpetrator. Much later, Lee reviewed QPS records that were subpoenaed during parenting proceedings in the Family Law Court. It was only then that Lee learned police actions had been taken solely on Dai's account of events.

These records formed part of the evidence in the parties' family law proceedings, where Dai was attempting to portray Lee as a perpetrator of domestic and family violence.<sup>41</sup>

## **FAILURES WHEN DEALING WITH VICTIMS AT THE FRONT COUNTER**

### **MELINDA'S EXPERIENCE**

There was a Protection Order in place between Melinda and her ex-husband Shane in 2020. The order had been granted because of stalking and aggressive behaviour towards Melinda and their children by Shane.

On two occasions during the period of the order, Melinda attended a police station to report a breach. She was asked to recount the details of the breach while standing at the front desk, in hearing of everyone else in the waiting area. On both occasions she was told to take a seat and wait for a private room to become available, where she had to repeat the information.

On one occasion, while she was waiting, another victim came in to report a breach of a Protection Order and no privacy was afforded to this woman either.<sup>42</sup>

### **COLLETTE'S EXPERIENCE**

Collette and her husband attended the police station to make a complaint about her mother Sue for serious threats of violence, which had been ongoing for several years.

Collette had hundreds of pages of abusive text messages from Sue. The threats included threatening to harm Collette and to steal her young children.

Collette reported that the police officer they spoke to was excellent and offered to apply for a Protection Order on their behalf. However, Collette felt conflicted because the perpetrator was her mother, so she wanted to consider it overnight.

When she returned the following day, the original officer was not working and Collette instead spoke to another officer. That officer was rude, did not listen, looked at their watch several times during the discussion with Collette, laughed about the content of some messages and ultimately told Collette they did not want to waste time on a family matter that would eventually resolve itself.

The officer did not assist Collette with an application for a Protection Order.<sup>43</sup>

### **JOANNA'S EXPERIENCE**

Joanna went to her local station and requested to speak to someone. She had a folder full of evidence of the coercive control, harassment and intimidation her husband had subjected her to – she was ready to finally tell her story.

She started to explain the harassment (30+ phone calls a day), the physical assaults, the intimidation, the threats to kill her pets and the threats to bash her until she couldn't crawl. Joanna expected the officer to take her statement, but they did not. They gave her a sympathetic look, thanked her for sharing and referred her to a support service.

Joanna realised the QPS would not help her. She successfully applied for a Protection Order.<sup>44</sup>

# THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP

Despite previous reviews and recommendations aimed at improving QPS responses to domestic and family violence, police responses continue to be inconsistent and fall short of meeting community expectations.

The fact that past reviews and recommendations have not yet led to QPS responses which consistently meet community expectations demonstrates that any further improvements will require a renewed and sustained commitment from a strong and respected leadership.

This is likely to be a significant challenge for the QPS.

The Commission heard from many QPS officers that the membership feels abandoned by its leader in its efforts to respond to domestic and family violence. Many police, and importantly those on the frontline, feel that the stated commitment of the QPS leadership to improving police responses to domestic and family violence has not been matched in practice, which would allow the frontline to do their job well.

If the QPS is to improve its responses to domestic and family violence, it will be important for its leadership to hear and genuinely acknowledge the voices of its people who feel abandoned, disillusioned and silenced. It is unlikely that present and future commitments by the leadership to improving police responses to domestic and family violence will be effective unless it does so.

These are but a sample of some of those voices. They come from submissions provided by QPS members directly to the Commission, extracts from responses by QPS members to the 2021 Working for Queensland survey and responses to the QPS DFV-Q 2022 survey about police perceptions of QPS responses to domestic and family violence.

## Sample quotes from a survey of QPS members conducted on behalf of the Commission<sup>45</sup>

“The culture is bad and Commissioner’s messaging that we have pockets of poor culture is offensive - where are the pockets of poor culture and what is she doing about it. Suggestion to improve - own the culture, measure the response to the issue.”

“If the QPS Leadership truly want an effective response to Domestic Violence then they would cease decimating the ranks of General Duties Stations and make Domestic Violence related positions, and support positions such as the Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU), DTACC and Station DVLO’s separate permanent positions, with their own position numbers.”

“Middle management need to step up and make their staff accountable. The news story recently published of the shift supervisor that essentially admitted that he openly watched misconduct happen in front of him for decades speaks volumes. This kind of leadership/management is rife. Start making people accountable for their laziness and unwillingness to even do the most basic job properly.”

“Reform needs to be a multi agency approach between lawmakers, law enforcement and the judicial system. Something I doubt will ever happen due to appallingly

weak leadership by the executive. And should heavily involve the input of troops on the front line. Something which also rarely occurs to any meaningful level.”

## Sample quotes from the 2021 Working for Queensland Survey – QPS<sup>46</sup>

“I would not recommend this job to anyone under this management, as they have clearly lost touch of what’s important within the work force. Their staff. Most senior management I’ve encountered have lied to cover up theirs or other senior management mismanagement, to the extent of falsifying documents ect. The Our People Matter slogan is the biggest joke ever stated within this management era of QPS.”

“There are incredible inconsistencies in the behaviour and messaging of senior executives and this issue continues to impact on the credibility of Senior Officers, which in turn stifles optimism concerning the future of the organisation. There are some very real and apparent integrity issues around the promotion and transfer process - as was recently identified in a high court challenge. Whether knowingly or not, there is a degree of arrogance slipping in to the leadership culture and it needs to be dealt with, both appropriately and quickly, of the organisation is to meet the challenges of the future in policing. Salaries are not the issue in the contemporary QPS, it is very much down to the poor quality of leadership.”

“Where is the Commissioner now with supporting front line police? We need the ‘brass’ to actually support front line police, not just talk about it. We are under staffed to the point of being dangerous, yet we keep creating fluffy ‘teams’ who sip tea and manage their own time, get OSA and work gentlemen’s hours. The worst part is they are pulled straight off the front line, decreasing an already stretched front line. What a joke! Front line are exhausted!!! Look down from your ivory tower and see what is actually happening.”

**“I’m confused daily about what is expected of me so imagine how the recruits feel. No one is valued unless you are in the circle.”**

“I believe my job as a sworn QPS officer is very important and has been a good career. I am proud to have served, but currently do not believe I could recommend it as a job. For the most part, I have little faith in the senior leadership of the QPS (Superintendent & above). Some individuals aside, the majority of senior officers lack fundamental skills in leadership and are clueless in how to deal with modern problems. There is a pervasive culture of bullying in the QPS that is so ingrained that most of us don’t even realise that it is present until we are exposed to other organizations...”

“Overall being a police officer is very satisfying and the comradery that comes with the job is second to none. However the higher the rank it seems the soft skills disappear and the actual care for our staff seems to diminish. Wellbeing and support of our staff in every capacity should be a priority. Treating people fairly and the consideration for people and their personal circumstances is overlooked way too much.”

“I would tell them that I feel more hopeful about the future of my organization now, than I did in the past. While there is still a lot more work to do, I have a lot of faith in our current Commissioner to lead our organization in a more positive direction. I am encouraged by positive recognition and change that has been occurring since the current Commissioner has taken up the role.”

“It pains me to say that I cannot speak positively of the QPS at the moment. In my plain clothes days I used to feel I was blue blooded. I loved coming to work, solving crimes and helping the victims receive justice. Now I feel tired and worn out; my days are long and I cannot wait for Friday. I have witnessed the poor behaviour of senior

management and am disappointed by the ‘do as I say not as I do behaviour’. I am also saddened by the fact that so many of the members at my rank all say the same thing; long hours, no flexibility and no managed time. However we no longer do this for the love of the job. We do it out of fear of upsetting management or how it might affect our careers. I do not think the QPS know how lucky they are that their members just keep giving. Most of all, the time I give to work affects my home life. Most of the time I catch a train in the dark and get home in the dark. I have not exercised for months. And yet, that decision is up to me ... but is it. I am hoping the coming year brings positive change. But I won’t hold my breath.”

“I would tell them that the promotion system is broken and a long way from being fixed. We are starting to reap what we have sown from a decade or more of poor service policies encouraging faulty promotion processes - inexperienced middle and senior managers promoted beyond their capability and let’s face it, rubbish rolls downhill. I have given up trying to get promoted. I love this job and still believe in it but it has broken my spirit. The senior leadership of this command is not a shadow of what it used to be.”

## Sample quotes from submissions made to the Commission by QPS members

“I encourage the commission to look at the past several years of the QPS working for Qld survey, in particular the workplace culture and bullying questions as it clearly demonstrates the ongoing poor culture and leadership of the organization. It baffles me that year after year these poor results are obtained and yet there does not seem to be any accountability from the executive leadership team/Commissioner.”<sup>47</sup>

“Watching the evidence given by the Commissioner in this hearing is embarrassing. I am embarrassed to be a member of this organisation. I am embarrassed at the lack of action over serious complaints against serving police. How is it that continued sexist, bullying, harassing behaviour can be dealt with by way of managerial guidance? How is it that the Commissioner today gave evidence that LMR is an over used answer to internal investigative problems, yet used the same LMR to correct the behaviour of 2 extremely senior officers; one of whom was in the executive leadership team? You can’t have it both ways. You can’t, as the commissioner make public comment about the poor use of LMR then excuse your own use of it because you thought “there were other more serious matters” to come. Nobody investigating anything ever used that as an excuse for not doing their job properly.”<sup>48</sup>

“I... have watched things evolve since I joined some 35 years ago. I used to love this organisation and what it stood for. Now I have...to go until my age retirement and it can't come quickly enough. I have zero faith in the executive leadership of the QPS to achieve anything except for excessive rhetoric. Every person who has contacted you and felt they would be ostracised or had some sort of unofficial sanction placed against them for speaking out has been correct to feel that way. The QPS blocks, ostracises and obfuscates when there is a possibility of public embarrassment. This is particularly so in relation to senior commissioned officers. I feel so deeply for the women in this organisation who have been treated like they don't matter on one hand then get continually bombarded with QPS corporate propaganda emails about “Our People Matter.”

Finally, the way the commission of inquiry is listening to these stories about how people have been treated; and how victims of domestic & family violence have been treated is a huge win for the 98% of police officers who want to make a difference. Nothing would have ever changed if it was left to the leadership group because it is obvious the police commissioner is not even aware of the behaviour that has been condoned over the years.”<sup>49</sup>

**“There has been a growing issue over the years in leadership within the QPS. There are huge trust problems often caused from poor communication and examples set by Senior and Executive Leadership. There has become a culture of do as I say and not as I do. There are tactics of coercion and bullying, through threats and intimidation from senior officers to subordinates.”<sup>50</sup>**

“Being labelled a ‘useless copper’ from his/her work colleagues begs for the higher-level management to promote or release this officer from their substantive rank/ position and go elsewhere so they will be the new station’s problem child. In essence, if you ‘fuck up’ or you are ‘useless’ than you are going to progress through the ranks very quickly. They are called ‘the squeaky wheel’ or ‘the problem child’.”<sup>51</sup>

**“I would share the view that many of our problems start at the top of the hierarchy, however we cannot afford for wait for individuals to retire or move on in order to change our culture...”**

**I believe that generally the QPS is behind in relation to leadership and management. This is partly a product of our Management Development Program which was in place**

**for a very long time up until recently. There is a culture where officers are promoted for being a good police officer, rather than having good management and HR skills. HR management and leadership skills are critically important for ranks of Sergeant to District officer as these officers are often in charge of teams.**

**The health and wellbeing of the team and the staff in it are critical to how we respond to DV. There are many places where staff can become hardened or mentally ill due to a lack of support, being ostracised, bullied or mismanaged by their line supervisors or above. I would suggest that most of the workforce is affected by some sort of mental health issue at any given time. These factors impact how our staff relate to and empathise with victims and perpetrators. I am sure that you have had many submissions relating to the volume of work and lack of resources, which I will not harp on here. My point would be that as an organisation, the hierarchy is not taking care of the resources that it does have, or its leaders and is therefore letting frontline staff down.”<sup>52</sup>**

“Further to that, the internal histories of some of the “leaders” or people who were “leaders” within the QPS leaves a lot to be desired. You could imagine a young Constable seeing these things happen and then thinking this is the norm if you want to get promoted and then the cycle continues on and on.”<sup>53</sup>

**“The QPS is a broken Organisation, filled with morally corrupt management who rule with a culture of fear. I have referred to working within the Organisation as ‘QPS Survivor’, where to get anywhere you need to align yourself with the ‘right’ people, and be willing to stab people in the back when necessary. To those of us that aren’t game players, but can’t sit back and just watch the internal injustices, QPS management makes sure to harass, intimidate and target you to the point of either resignation or medical retirement.”<sup>54</sup>**

“I am sending this submission for consideration after watching some of the live stream evidence. I do so very cautiously as the QPS is not an organisation that is insightful with regards to its own cultures and associated behaviours.”<sup>55</sup>

**“I never reported it. I was in my 20’s and was a constable. There were senior officers in the room that did nothing but watch. It was built into us not to ‘dog’.”<sup>56</sup>**

**“I wish to write this anonymously due to the fear of the repercussions this submission may have.”<sup>57</sup>**



“I was investigated on a matter that after three years and a show cause was deemed unsubstantiated. This is what the service does to members they deem to be troublesome and harass them until they finally give in and leave which is what I eventually did.”<sup>58</sup>

“Thank you for what you are doing in raising these issues. I hope it leads to actual change within the organisation so we can get back to actually serving the community. I do wish to make a point regarding the Commissioner’s responses minimising the prevalence of sexual harassment within the organisation and utilising the WFQ survey results. The Commissioner stated that the results are anonymous and therefore it is a reliable avenue for members to express their concerns, and therefore, the results are representative. That is not the case. I am spoken of behind my back as a ‘dog’ who made a complaint to further my career, as are all women who make complaints in the QPS. The real fact of the matter is that making a complaint drastically harms your career and ruins your reputation. The perpetrators are often written out of it, promoted or not punished sufficiently, and the victims are given no support and bullied.”<sup>59</sup>

“I didn’t know whether to send this today or not, but what I have heard today in the hearing disturbs me greatly. I will put my name to this but I understand why a lot of police have chosen to remain anonymous. There is a culture of chasing people who are “whistle blowers” in the QPS. Most police are aware of this. I can guarantee that some of the information that has come out today in this hearing will have certain people wanting to know who leaked some information so that they can deal with them.”<sup>60</sup>

**“I know that most police officers won’t come forward and make a complaint as it’s well known in the QPS that you must shut up and put up or risk the repercussions that follow with speaking up.”<sup>61</sup>**

“The rules are - You don’t make a complaint no matter what. You won’t be successful anyway so there is no point and you will be ostracised both openly and in the underground. Officers above and below the perpetrator of bad behaviours will look the other way and you will become the “bad guy”. You may get a few words of encouragement from some on the quiet, but no one will step in for fear of what it will cost them.”<sup>62</sup>

# WHY STRUCTURAL CHANGE IS NEEDED

The Commission heard there are structural deficiencies that adversely impact the ability of the QPS to respond to domestic and family violence in a way which consistently meets community expectations.

These include a lack of resourcing for the Domestic, Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Command with the result that the Command is unable to guide the strategic response to domestic and family violence it is intended to provide. In addition, the QPS does not have the ability to measure domestic and family violence demand on its workforce, or the success of its responses. As a result, the work of responding to domestic and family violence is not sufficiently resourced to allow frontline and specialist officers to perform their job as well as they could.

The QPS leadership has failed to match its stated commitment to domestic and family violence with the resources necessary to allow the organisation's frontline and specialist officers to deliver on that commitment.

These deficiencies explain some of the inconsistent police responses to domestic and family violence and they let the community down. They also let down the police officers who are tasked with responding to domestic and family violence who are not given the time, training, support or resources necessary to do their job well.

These are some of the voices of the victim-survivors and QPS members who want to see an improvement in the resourcing and structures dedicated to QPS responses to domestic and family violence.

## Sample quotes from a survey of victim-survivors conducted by the Commission<sup>63</sup>

"Need more officers who understand and are special trained to deal with these things."

"I was promised follow-up from the DV liaison officer, that never happened. I was told to calm down, and when I was calm I could go back to the situation I had just fled from."

"As breaches of DVO were reported the police response declined as the paperwork involved is substantial especially if the respondent is fighting / contesting / pleading not guilty. Most police officers only have an understanding of the obvious DFV incidents not emotional, psychological, coercive control abuse."

"They need a structured approach to help officers understand coercive control, this may be questions to follow, flags to help identify behaviours, and clear direction on what action they need to take, and support options to follow. A consistent approach is needed. Every interaction was different, making it seem like lotto to get any assistance, with many people just giving up and managing on their own."

"There is a lot. Primarily learning from other incidents and understanding that not all DV is physical and all threats, particularly if communicated to and reported by third

parties, should be considered serious enough for them to take more action than simply completing a welfare check on the threatened party. Better and faster communication when changes to the orders have been made by agreement between the perpetrator and the Prosecution that directly impact the victim (such as removing restrictions to communications that then allow the perpetrator to phone and harass the victim again which only got communicated once the harassment reignited and the victim queried the actions with Police)."

"Have the DV Command staffed by permanent officers who have an expertise or passion for the work. Have proper training - OLP's [online learning platforms] are not training - they are ways to supply information - if you want to change culture you need F2F [face to face] training conducted by those with the expertise and passion to make a difference (and who have training experience/ qualifications)."

"The laws need to urgently change to empower the police to act. Police education and culture is needed so they understand the seriousness of all forms of domestic violence and can step in where DV is escalating before an event occurs where it's irreparable. Perhaps safe and discreet reporting opportunities at local areas such as within Westfield shopping centres where victims can go instead if they are finding it hard to report or talk to someone. QPS shouldn't believe a victim is ok just because they say they are. Every report needs to be investigated. QPS need more power in the courts."

## Sample quotes from a survey of QPS members conducted on behalf of the Commission<sup>64</sup>

“After almost 14 years in the QPS in GD’s (General Duties), I’m actively looking to get out and it is solely down to DV and the stress that it now causes. It has had such a significant impact on my mental health to the point where I have actively had to seek counselling. I know I am not alone in this.”

**“Officers will avoid attending DV jobs due to the time requirements. Make the job easy to deal with from a first response perspective and you will find an improvement in the culture of dealing with DV.”**

“Cops are terrified of not attending to DFV properly; yet they do it badly. Sometimes applications are submitted when not required - it is not necessary or desirable to grant an order. The corro for applications is terrible, and confusing.”

**“They were honestly so taken in by my ex-partner’s tactics. I was talking with a social worker later who was a bit embarrassed by that, that they could just believe his lies and his manipulation so easily. Police need to know that there is someone they are talking to who is looking to con them into doing what he wants - that’s a big part of coercive control I learnt about later. It’s called systems abuse - and I think most people being violent want to make sure one of the systems they can fool is police because that’s where it starts, the whole court process too.**

“Simplify the process. Too much time and effort is wasted on people who use the current system to manipulate their partners and use QPS as a way to achieve what they want. It has a negative impact on how DV is viewed and those that are genuinely in need of help may not get it.”

**“Less paperwork. Less duplication of effort. Easier service of documents. More time allowed for a thorough investigation; ie if you’re neck deep in DV then you need to be cut some slack on all the other work that’s being lumped on you; ACORN reports, traffic complaints, shop steals, drive-offs, frauds. And how about CIB don’t dodge strangulation complaints? Call them up to advise that an aggrieved says she’s been strangled and they don’t want to hear about it.”**

“To recognise that DV is more important to tackle than drug crime and resource it accordingly. Remove the reliance on general duties officers to respond to all incidents and follow the job to completion. Establish a unit (Similar to a CIB/CPIU) where the matter can be handed over and completed to a consistent, high standard.”

## Sample quotes from the 2021 Working for Queensland Survey – QPS<sup>65</sup>

“...the amount of red tape we dance around is phenomenal. DV doc service and associated paperwork is a drain on the front line. Youth and Juvenile crime is rife and police do not feel supported by the courts to remand serious offenders. There is a significant issue with how often more senior officers within the work unit get feedback on performance. The current work performance review is a joke and I have not had a constructive conversation with a manager about my development or how effectively I am doing my job in the last 12 months. There is a significant issue managing staff that don’t pull their weight or do just the bare minimum and no reward for officers that work hard and achieve results. Furthermore, I am unable to develop any leadership skills, I can’t enrol in MDP and there is no new alternative that has been released.”

**“At the station level people are doing their very best to assist the community and to solve crime. The Senior Executive has lost touch with frontline policing needs... The current situation with Vacancies is a farce. With 60 plus long term Commissioned Officer vacancies there are people ‘Acting’ everywhere. We all know performance and discipline issues are a problem when a position is vacant but this does not seem to be a priority for the service. And the issues are felt all the way down to the frontline as officers backfill the position above. This is exactly the kind of situation that can de-stabilise what is ordinarily high performing station.”**

“As an organization, we rely on the junior frontline staff to get the job done as fast as possible, while simultaneously failing to provide them with adequate training to do the tasks professionally. There is a culture within the QPS where training is seen as getting in the way of “actual work”. More effort should be employed to reduce the paperwork burden rather than get the job done as fast as possible to run to the next job. Domestic violence is a classic example of this - police are required to do paperwork which is more applicable to the courts and as a result, DV jobs take far longer than they should, thus reducing the presence of police on the frontline for extended periods.”

**“The organization is critically short staffed. There is a significant yearly increase in calls for service particularly domestic violence and yet rarely any increases in staff resulting in excess workload and significant stress and burn out amongst staff. There is no consistency in the**

staffing across divisions with some divisions facing a massive increase in workload per officer compared to other divisions. Domestic violence is a significant issue in society and the calls of service to domestic violence increase significantly each year. The government and police management seem to believe that police intervention is the answer to all domestic violence incidents no matter how minor. This results in significant paperwork and time spent on domestic violence jobs that are not serious in nature and ties up a huge amount of resources and takes away from the time that could be spent on the more serious incidents. The idea that the increases in domestic violence are due to a lack of police intervention is false, but this idea permeates all policy making, as the yearly increases in domestic violence is met with an increase in policy and paperwork, resulting in an excessive workload and time taken per incident.”

“General Duties Officers are overloaded with data collecting and reporting. Too many things are put on General Duties to do instead of focusing on dealing with the community. Support services should be able to extract data from a simple reporting process freeing up police to be proactive.”

“The reporting systems that ten years ago were very straight forward to use have now been overloaded with the collection of mandatory statistical data and wishes of external stakeholders that adds layers of complexity which takes additional time to complete that directly reduces the time that police can spend having a presence out in our communities. An example of this is the completion of a Domestic Violence Order Application which I previously was easily able to complete within three (3) hours and now due to the complexity in the reporting system can take several hours more, all for the same result. The organisation I work for appears to have consciously sacrificed efficiency and simplicity in order to cater for the those that spend huge amounts of time and effort justifying their own existence.”

“The Service has changed and I believe it is going down the wrong path, the creation of new units and Commands take away from the frontline officers and affects the core of policing (general duties). There are too many people undertaking projects and creating new ways of delivering services and not enough officers actually doing to the work. Leadership team as a real disconnect from the troops and this is evident in the comments and views held in dayrooms and meal rooms across the state.”

“The QPS is a rewarding organisation with some great people. However, the QPS struggles to make and implement decisions. Sometimes, big decisions are held over and/or consultation is prioritised too much. In my opinion, I think the general workforce just wants senior management to make, communicate, and implement the necessary decisions. In my experience, being in a continued state of uncertainty is worse than the decision itself.”

“The Police Liaison office is a great concept within the Queensland police service but the concept lacks clear direction and role descriptions. Even most senior management in the police does not understand our roles and what we do in the police service. The police liaison role is not measured and so only a kind of discretionary in nature. No proper training or staff development but only orientation or induction of the employment. Police liaison office expected to do much like street checks without proper training. No career development or progression for higher pay level.”

“The organisational culture for corporate staff, largely driven by a corrupt, negligent and ineffective HR department, is toxic. HR appear to act with impunity. I have witnessed them target “trouble-makers” and use internal policies and processes to threaten and intimidate staff. People are scared to put in complaints either to HR or about HR. Many people have left the organisation because of the way HR treats employees.”

“My role is one I love and am proud to say I have. It’s been my dream job since I left uni and I’m constantly so happy with the variety of things I get the opportunity to do in a day, the outlets for my creativity and the fact they I get to support people and the Service. Would I recommend a job in my unit in its current standard to a friend then? Not unless I didn’t actually like them. While our unit is not perfect, neither is the Service as a whole. It astounds me that things can happen over a dragged out period that directly impact a team and their work output and not even direct managers let alone whole work units are informed nor consulted or SUPPORTED. The complete and utter disregard for a unit’s team and work environment, wellbeing and work management through a HR/ employee wellbeing process that removes a team member makes me embarrassed to say I work here.”

“The QPS is not a constructive workplace for non-police staff and indeed most police officers look down upon civilian staff as being lesser beings, regardless of expertise, qualifications or experience. And career progression is virtually non-existent compared to other government departments for non-police staff.”



# WHY CULTURAL CHANGE IS NEEDED

As noted earlier in this report, police responses to domestic and family violence are inconsistent and often do not meet the community expectations. A sample of the voices of those who told the Commission about these matters are set out earlier in this report.

In addition to the cultural issues highlighted by the experiences of those people who had received unsatisfactory police responses, the Commission heard from QPS members about additional cultural attributes which adversely influence QPS responses to domestic and family violence.

They included a reluctance to responding to domestic and family violence, as well as underlying issues of sexism, misogyny and racism across the organisation.

## SEXISM AND MISOGYNY

The Commission has repeatedly heard that sexism and misogyny is widespread throughout the QPS, manifesting as sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assaults and bullying as well as other forms of inappropriate behaviour towards women. The Commission consciously adopts the term 'widespread' as evidence of these behaviours were identified across all areas of the organisation.

Where police officers hold views which are sexist or misogynistic in nature, it is likely that those officers will respond poorly to women affected by domestic and family violence. The link between attitudes and behaviours reinforces how critical it is that the QPS acknowledge the depth and breadth of sexism and misogyny within the organisation and take steps to address the problem.

What follows is a sample of extracts from surveys and submissions received by the Commission from victim-survivors and QPS members about the issue of sexism and misogyny.

### Sample quotes from a survey of victim-survivors conducted by the Commission<sup>66</sup>

"Reputation in community is that police are very misogynistic and sexist and do not believe women nor want to and perpetuate the problem. I have friends who have had terrible feedback when reporting such as "thats just his culture" (about perpetrator)."

**"Change the culture of police who feel sorry for men and find women annoying. I feel like they only care about women when we are dead bodies because murder is "sexier" for them to investigate whereas average DV is messy and boring to them."**

"They should not have told my perpetrator where I was fleeing too. They shouldn't have let my perpetrator watch me pack essential items. They should have made me feel respected and validated my feelings. Police made me feel like they were a part of the boys club and I was just

a whinging wife. I was so badly traumatised by the whole incident including the way the police responded. My perpetrator still tries to intimidate me to this day even though I have a DVO he told everyone that police took his side."

**"I felt they were annoyed with me and one officer in particular was rude and aggressive in her communication with me. One male officer said to me 'you women bring this on yourself and then want us to save you'."**

"I called the QPS when my partner snuck back into my home after we had separated and I had submitted a DVO to the court. They were friendly and chatting to my partner like they were mates/friends and mocked me in my home when I was absolutely terrified. They made him leave after what felt like ages and they made me feel like I was a crazy woman that was overreacting and lying."

**"(Officers were) homophobic and wouldn't take me seriously being in a same-sex relationship."**

“I was in a same sex relationship which ended with an incident of intimate partner violence perpetrated by my former partner. Police were quick to gender typify the relationship and assumed my then partner was male.

Police seemed to have little understanding of the dynamics in gay relationships and I believe they minimised/ swept aside various issues that are now recognised as coercive control.”

## OFFICER BRICK

### Case Study

A recent Working for Queensland survey identified very poor results for a particular QPS unit.

The Work Assessment and Support Team engaged with members of the unit to identify the issues in the workplace. The members were reluctant to speak up about their concerns related to the unit’s leader, Officer Brick, as they were worried about repercussions. The Working for Queensland results and the unit were subsequently formally investigated, with members directed to participate in interviews with investigators.

The investigation determined that Officer Brick had engaged in workplace sexual harassment and bullying over a two-year period which had a significantly negative impact on the workplace culture.

Officer Brick engaged in sexual harassment of female members involving repeated sexualised comments, making comments about a female officer’s genitalia to junior members, showing a pornographic video to junior members, downloading an image of a woman in activewear from a female member’s private social media account, sharing it with others and adding sexual comments, and inviting female members to come into his office and sit at his desk which was rounded at the end, saying “*come and have a seat on my knob*”.

Male officers variously described him as a “*creepy old man*” who made repeated comments about his “*dick*”, whose behaviour was outrageous, and who only made the sexualised comments if there were female members present. Another male witness said that every conversation Officer Brick had with female members would gravitate back to something sexual. One male officer said he was taking long service leave because he was sick of the sexualised comments.

Officer Brick told staff that he had attended a briefing with the Police Commissioner, and he had trouble concentrating because she kept looking at him with “*come-fuck-me eyes*”. He also repeatedly told people about a sexual encounter he had (apparently) had with a named high-profile politician when they were at school.

One female member told investigators that Officer Brick’s sexualised comments were so disgusting she would put headphones in when he was in the room so she did not have to hear him. His behaviour was a factor in her leaving the organisation. One of the female officers being harassed said that she did not want to make a formal complaint because of the impact it would have on her career.

Additionally, Officer Brick was found to have bullied two members of the unit. In relation to one officer, the persistent and ongoing bullying caused anxiety and stress to the officer, and ultimately caused him to move workplaces.

In relation to the second officer, the bullying was carried out over a period of years and was described by others as a campaign of character destruction.

One officer told investigators that Officer Brick’s actions created a negative workplace culture. Another said that “*he lies so much that no one believes anything he says,*” and that he was “*so disparaging about other people that you lose your sense of trust in him.*”

Disciplinary proceedings substantiated all the allegations, with the sanctions still being determined.<sup>67</sup>

## OFFICER CYAN

### Case Study

Officer Cyan is a current member of the QPS. In 2017, police received separate complaints from two women, his then-girlfriend and his former fiancée, each alleging domestic violence. Police took out Police Protection Notices to protect both women. Officer Cyan consented without admissions in each case to a Protection Order naming him as the respondent. He was temporarily stood down while the QPS investigated the allegations. In addition to finding evidence that supported the allegations of domestic violence, police also found evidence that Officer Cyan had misused QPS systems to access information on one of his partners. They also found he had engaged in unprofessional conduct by visiting a private residence and engaging in sexual activity in QPS uniform when he was supposed to have been on duty. Disciplinary sanctions were imposed in the form of community service and a two-month freeze on his ability to be promoted.

Over the next few years, Officer Cyan received Local Management Resolution for placing his hands around the throat of a suspect who was restrained, and for referring to a female first year constable as “*a little blonde thing*” and “*it*.”

More recently, a third woman, Sally, also an ex-partner of Officer Cyan, contacted police concerned about Officer Cyan’s latest partner, Kate. Sally provided police with copies of social media messages Kate had sent her about Officer Cyan having been physically violent towards her, including by grabbing her throat, and exerting control over her reproductive choices. When police spoke to Kate about the messages, she initially claimed they were lies, and she refused to make a complaint about Officer Cyan. Police however remained concerned about Kate’s safety, and issued a Police Protection Notice. A Temporary Protection Order was subsequently made, and Officer Cyan was placed on restricted duties with his access to QPS firearms revoked.

Over the course of the next four months, Sally told police about the coercive control she had experienced during her relationship with Officer Cyan, and Kate gave police a full account of the domestic and family violence Officer Cyan had perpetrated against her. Kate’s account included allegations of physical violence during the operation of the Temporary Protection Order. In response to Kate’s statement, the QPS suspended Officer Cyan with pay.

While Officer Cyan was being investigated in relation to his behaviour towards Kate, police received an entirely unrelated complaint from a teenager about unsolicited social media contact she had received from Officer Cyan. The QPS commenced an investigation to establish whether Officer Cyan had used QPS information systems to make that contact. Investigations remain ongoing.<sup>68</sup>

### Sample quotes from a survey of QPS members conducted on behalf of the Commission<sup>69</sup>

“The QPS remains a largely patriarchal institution, this is often downplayed by executive leadership in the organisation. I have observed comments about women manipulating men through the clothing they wear and comments about it being ‘nice’ to have good-looking women in the office. Cultural attitudes towards women within the organisation impact the ability to effectively respond to DFV.”

“More staff so the numerous DFV incidents that QPS are attending and subsequent investigations are not burning the frontline out, which is contributing to the poor culture. Remove the misogynistic middle management.”

### Sample quotes from the 2021 Working for Queensland Survey – QPS<sup>70</sup>

“Don’t bother unless you are female, LBGTI or some other minority group.”

“If you are a straight Caucasian male born in Australia you can forget about promotion. If you’re a transgender indigenous female who speaks Chinese you will be a commissioned officer, if not you haven’t whinged enough”



“...although in some circumstances you are disadvantage depending on your gender. (specific email sent 22/09/2021 stated females are particularly encouraged to apply) giving an overwhelming impression that gender bias is still prevalent throughout position applications and development opportunities. Police being made to complete mandatory OLP’s on the Gender pay gap in police is outright disgusting as this gender pay gap does not exist and is further an uneducated force of someone’s/department’s opinion on QPS staff. a male senior Constable receives the same wage as a female senior constable. male constable receives the same wage as a female constable and so on.”

## Sample quotes from submissions made to the Commission by QPS members

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“There are no openly gay Senior Police Women above the rank of Inspector, and very few First Nations people. Identifying as something other than, white, heterosexual, middle-aged in the commissioned officer cohort is hard. Commissioned officers are an homogeneous group, regardless of their gender.”<sup>71</sup>

**“Female officers continue to feel they need to prove they belong, have been subjected to sexual harassment and discriminatory behaviour and experience unequal access to opportunities enabling them to compete on merit for promotion. There remains a low percentage of females at all ranks and at the time of writing this submission.”<sup>72</sup>**

“Anyone who speaks out, or draws any attention to wrongdoings, bullying, nepotism, homophobia, sexism immediately gets targeted, which then when witnessed by other officers encourages them to remain silent for fear of reprisals. Speaking out about or in the QPS often comes at great personal risk, with individuals hounded until they either comply, mentally beaten into submission, or resign. A case of shoot the messenger rather than address the problems.”<sup>73</sup>

## Examples compiled by the Commission from QPS complaints material provided under Notices to Produce.

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### ALL COMPLAINTS WERE RESOLVED BY LOCAL MANAGEMENT RESOLUTION<sup>74</sup>

- Concerns were raised about the conduct of a Sergeant, with it being reported that he encouraged a ‘boys club culture’ at a community centre he worked at, where female staff were pushed hard, picked on and blamed for mistakes while males were protected by the officer. It also included reports of inappropriate comments

he made to employees about female members. This included stating they needed a “*hot little piece like [female employee name]*” to attract males to the club, and telling another that he undercharged a female as a result of her standing there “*with those big tits.*” One employee described that his continued sexualised and derogatory comments about a particular female made her feel sick.

- The Officer in Charge of a station was alleged, over a period of seven months between late 2020 and early 2021, to have displayed negative workplace behaviour, bullied QPS members, and created an uncomfortable work environment. In addition to his poor treatment of those he was supervising, he continuously made sexualised comments relating to female officers and members of the public. This included asking junior officers whether they would “*lick their moot*”, pointing at or suggesting female persons. He would hound the officers for a response if they ignored him.
- A Senior Constable sexually harassed three female officers to varying degrees, two of whom were constables, over a six month period in 2021. He made sexualised comments and displayed sexualised behaviours while they were rostered with him during a shift or in the workplace. He asked them personal questions such as if they enjoyed anal sex or attempt to discuss sex with them. In relation to two officers, he commented on their appearance, stating “*I just wanted to watch you bend over*”, or advising their “*ass*” looked like a pancake and she should let him help her by taking her to the gym to make it bigger. He advised one officer that going through her social media profile gave him “*pleasure*”. He invaded the personal space of all three and in relation to one, took photos of her sitting at her desk, and told her he had uploaded it to Snapchat for his eight friends to see. His behaviour was unwanted and made all three uncomfortable. One officer described feeling physically sick coming to work if he was at the station and constantly feeling like she was going to throw up and cry.
- In early 2021, a Senior Constable harassed a first year constable who had just started her rotation at his station. He asked for her phone number on her first shift, added her on social media, sent her daily messages on various platforms, and would call her pet names such as, “*love*”, “*darling*”, “*my lovely*”, and “*babe*”. It culminated in him inviting her to massage him, at which stage she ceased contact. She felt physically sick after the comment and uncomfortable being in the same workplace.
- In early 2022, a Senior Constable was completing an online learning program related to domestic and family violence and made discriminatory comments overheard by other staff such as, “*it is easy to see this was written by a fat lesbian with hairy armpits*”. On two other occasions around this time, the Senior

Constable commented on what two female officers were wearing, telling one, who was wearing a white shirt while it was raining, *“you are wearing the wrong shirt for this type of weather”*. On another occasion a female staff member was walking down the hall when the Senior Constable, who was in a nearby room, leant out to glare at her as she walked away from him.

- In mid-2021, a Sergeant made an inappropriate comment of a sexualised nature to a female employee. He approached her at her desk, engaged her in conversation and, before walking away, he told her, *“I’m not trying to be a creep or anything but I really like what you’ve got going on here”*, while moving his arms and hands around in a waving motion towards her.
- A Sergeant was a shift supervisor of a station. He sexually harassed three female constables who were under his supervision. In 2020, he directed unwanted

attention to a female first year constable that made her feel stressed and uncomfortable. He paid her extra attention, sat on her desk, sat overly close to her and would find reasons for them to be alone at the station together by changing taskings. He discussed her social media profile with other officers. In mid-2020 he sent a text message to another officer: *“is it obvious I think she is breathtaking”*. She continually told him she wasn’t interested. Despite being spoken to about his behaviour, it continued until she left the station. In mid-2021, he harassed a female constable throughout a shift who had just returned from maternity leave. The conduct included him putting his hand on top of hers to move a computer mouse, stretching his groin in front of her and groaning, telling her she had nice *“pins”*, and singing to her, *“oh [name removed] you’re so fine you blow my mind. Hey [name removed]...hey [name removed]”*.

## OFFICER RUSSET

### Case Study

As the result of an initial complaint to Operation Juniper\*, nine officers within one squad were investigated, and six officers were found to have engaged in negative workplace behaviours, including systemic bullying, against eighteen members.

The outcome for each officer was Local Managerial Resolution.

The worst of the behaviour was carried out by the Officer in Charge, Officer Russet, who had engaged in repeated negative workplace behaviours towards a number of complainants over a 13-year period between 2006 and 2019, and systemic bullying of three different complainants. In addition, a significant number of people who were interviewed raised unacceptable workplace behaviours directed towards them by Officer Russet but did not wish to make a complaint.

Officer Russet also bullied two more junior officers, with behaviors including offensive and demeaning commentary, unjust criticism, unfair work practices, workplace alienation, providing a workplace where negative workplace behaviours manifested themselves, denying development and relieving opportunities, and the preferential treatment of others.

Officer Russet allowed sexist material to be displayed. He engaged in racist behaviour towards an officer, referring to him as *“Osama”* or *“Towel Head”* and allowing mock training certificates including *“Al Qaeda Car Bombing Course”* to be displayed on the notice board. He called people *“fuckhead”*, *“useless cunt”*, *“stupid Irish cunt”*. He sent pornographic images to members. In reference to female job applicants, he said *“these lickers will never get a job in this office”*.

The outcome for Officer Russet was Local Managerial Resolution. He continued in his role and was also provided opportunities to relieve in higher roles.

Three officers were found to have bullied the same female officer. Behaviours towards her included threatening her on two occasions, failing to provide her with support, accusing her of faking her work-related injuries, facilitating the service of a summons on her and threatening to suspend her driver license while she was on sick leave for a work-related injury, harassing her off duty, setting unrealistic tasks, signing off on factually incorrect adverse work performance reports without considering any response by her, yelling at her, and refusing to provide professional assistance.

The female officer whose bullying complaint instigated the investigation felt she had no choice but to transfer to a different workplace, as Officer Russet and the other senior officer who bullied her were both returning to the workplace after being provided with opportunities to relieve in higher roles elsewhere.<sup>75</sup>

\*A now discontinued QPS cultural reform initiative for former or current employees who have witnessed or been subjected to severe negative workplace behaviour.

- An officer had a history of making sexist and racist comments and was on a performance improvement plan as a result of those behaviours and his work performance. His sexist comments continued while he was subject to the plan, the most recent example, when his female supervisor was using the vacuum, he asked her if she was going for a “ride.” He had also previously received a formal direction from the same officer to cease referring to her and another female colleague as “sir”.
- A Senior Constable of a regional police station was an administrator of a Facebook group that was accessible by staff members of that station. His conduct involved:
  - posting a photo of a nurse holding a baby while the mother could be seen naked with her legs spread
  - on a post from a fellow officer, about being in hospital he commented, “any pic’s of your wife- just so we know who to look for after the wake...”
  - on a post about another officer’s injured hand, he commented, “one of those glass butt plugs broke in his hand...terrible accident-could happen to anyone really”
  - on a post from another officer about a splinter being removed, he commented, “from [name of female person removed]’s bedhead.”

## VALUES, ATTITUDES, AND BIASES

The Commission heard that many QPS members have a reluctance to respond to domestic and family violence. This seems to arise from the unrelenting and thankless nature of responding to domestic and family violence, a sense of futility and apathy, and a fear of getting it wrong. All of these issues appear to have contributed to a growing sense of burnout and fatigue which, in turn, feeds into a reluctance to respond to domestic and family violence.

The extracts from surveys and submissions are set out below. Evidence before this Commission reveals that the unrelenting and thankless nature of responding to domestic and family violence, a sense of futility and apathy, and a fear of getting it wrong contribute to this aversion. They highlight the importance of the organisation taking immediate steps to address these cultural issues in order to improve QPS responses to domestic and family violence.

### Sample quotes from a survey of victim-survivors conducted by the Commission<sup>76</sup>

“A few weeks after I reported to police, I was in my local Cafe where a large group of uniformed officers were having coffee. One of the male officers playfully shoved another male officer, who said, “Hey mate, don’t touch me, that’s DV!” They both laughed and the insinuation was clear - that DFV is contrived. It was an ugly reflection on police culture and, had I heard the conversation a few weeks prior I may have felt differently about reporting.”

“Police did not understand coercive control or the manipulative and coercive behaviour I had been subject to. I was told it was a ‘child custody dispute’ and wasn’t DV.”

“Yes, they could have refrained from snarky comments that “maybe if you let him see your child, he wouldn’t be

doing this” when the reason he wasn’t seeing his child was his dangerous behaviour.

Being told that no one will investigate my smashed up car because “this isn’t America, this isn’t like on the movies” and being told “yes basically you have to be severely hurt and/or dead for anything to happen to him.”

“Police showed very casual and not particularly professional behaviour in relation to reporting sexual assault. The door was left open when I was making a statement, I could hear the other male police officers in the station laughing and swearing, carrying on whilst I was making this statement to another male officer. The male officer admitted to me he didn’t have much experience in DV and would do his best. This didn’t allow me to have a lot of confidence in him. He repeatedly reminded me that he has hundreds of DV cases he deals with and that I was just a number essentially.”

## Sample quotes from a survey of QPS members conducted on behalf of the Commission<sup>77</sup>

“I believe there needs to be more public education on what the police role EXACTLY is when responding to DV matters and why we report matters the way we do. Also there needs to be more onus on AGG [an aggrieved] when reporting and there needs to be ramification for supplying a false statement to police. Police are inundated with false reports and false allegations of DV and it is always discouraged to pursue the aggrieved for doing the wrong thing. This only encourages further DV and leaves the AGG to abuse their position as an AGG in a DVO, to use the DV legislation as a “cheap” alternative to family law (custody) and civil courts. Police are only worn thin by this behaviour and feel as referees between the parties. It’s the petulant behaviours in adults on which police are endlessly managing and have taken too much onus away from the citizen and their own accountability from potential criminal behaviours.”

**“The sheer volume of DV matters impacts on culture as it reduces the ability to do other meaningful work.”**

“The message from above does not seem to be getting through to the troops on the ground. I have heard accounts over the last six months from DV victims in multiple patrol groups and regions in South East Qld which absolutely horrify me and embarrass me as a police officer. Something drastic needs to be done to change the culture of the GD’s who see DV as an irritation and annoyance.”

**“In 35 years I have never seen a poor culture around DFV in ANY station I have worked - and I have worked across the State. Sure, some officers express frustration at having to go to the same couples repeatedly, to try and help them when they won’t even help themselves - but I have NEVER seen the behaviours that are getting aired at the Inquiry and spread across the media. I am sick and tired of it. Use this Inquiry as an opportunity to fix things - not bash the coppers over and over because we are over it.”**

“...not a lot (is working well), treating every single DV as a homicide is total overwork. I feel that I am being undermined as a very experienced officer at making my own assessment of a situation. I also feel training is geared towards blaming men for all DV when that simply isn’t true.”

**“We are erring on the side of caution and sometimes classifying matters as DV when they should not be. Current culture sees Police scared to not call it a ‘No DV’, even when it is clearly not DV.”**

“Improve the male police officer culture when it comes to DV, instead of setting up female officer only stations for women to report of DV. It is absurd and unacceptable that the QPS work around the poor culture with male police officers instead of addressing bad behaviour.”

**“Legislation needs to be redrafted allowing for a streamlined approach to dealing with these instances. Presently the process is soul destroying and we are seeing the results of it now. Officer will do anything they can to avoid responding or flicking and this has created a culture of flicking alot of jobs whether it be Dv, assaults, traffic complaints because they are just to burned out.”**

“QPS has created a culture of avoiding DV. Officers are rewarded for avoiding jobs.”

**“Police Officers are demoralised by the constant implication that they are always to blame for DV shortcomings. Even the latest inquest is titled “inquest into Police culture in responding to DV”, as if ‘Police Culture’ is solely to blame. Reduce the ridiculous complexity of DV investigations and paperwork.”**

“The poor attitude of police toward DV is where the problem lies. Police are not held to account for their poor work with DV and somehow it has become acceptable to consider DV an inconvenience. It’s police work. Police who complain about the difficulty of dealing with DV need to be called out as incompetent. It’s the equivalent of teachers complaining about having students or doctors complaining about patients turning up with cancer or the flu. It’s what we do. If police don’t like doing police work then they need to stop being police. DV is police work and everyone, including the Commissioner, needs to stop making excuses that its difficult, or time consuming, or complicated, or overwhelming, or the legislation is poor or training is bad. It’s not, these are excuses and perpetuate the culture that DV is an inconvenience. The abysmal negative attitude of most police toward DV is the problem and this is exacerbated by the commissioner agreeing that DV is difficult and then going on to say police are doing a good job under difficult circumstances. They are not doing a good job and the majority of poor work goes undetected as its buried before anyone even has the opportunity to hear about it. DV is what police work is, so stop whinging about it and stop making excuses for the poor response.”

“DFV is an absolute joke. It is a complete waste of police resources because it is so OVER policed to the point that even when we know it is total bullshit because the ‘agg’ has openly told us the lawyer has told them to say this and get a DV to get the house etc we have to do hours of paperwork. The requirement to constantly deal with people who 100% do NOT need protection and have called police for petty ridiculous things that are part of any break up or divorce is draining police of any empathy or care they have for actual victims. In todays environment as well of no rental housing etc the amount of complete bullshit calls we get from ‘agg’ where they have just broken up and the ‘agg’ now claims they are scared for their safety, for no actual reason, based on nothing and with no history of anything, so that we HAVE to do an ouster and kick someone out of their house jjust bcause that’s is the current environment. It is a waste of police time, people are just using the system because they have seen it advertised to death. I love GD’s and have been doing it for 12 years with no intention of ever going to another area, however the DV overload has actually caused me to now hate and be done with GD’s. Police joined to do POLICE things and enforce the LAW, not civil bullshit. I honestly hope that male ‘resp’ who are getting kicked out of their homes on nothing more than someone saying ‘im scared of him’ when they may actually be the ‘aggs’ since they are less likely to report and equally likely to be emotionally coerced start committing suicide and naming QPS in the notes. Maybe after a few coronials and civil law suits there will be some actual burden of proof or requirement for people involved in break ups to actually deal with their own break up. Supervisors spend HOURS per shift conducting DV audits and reviewing BWC. It is more time spent overwatching this than ANYTHING else in the QPS, which is an absolute disgrace when our core business is really preventing and responding to CRIME. We are doing 4 full days of training for DV. We have officers killed while working and we have never got that much extra training on driving skills, OST, negs, TDD etc. Clearly says to every officer the importance you place on us over QPS reputation from the public.”

### Sample quotes from the 2021 Working for Queensland Survey – QPS<sup>78</sup>

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“DV is out of control. We are doing excessive reports for matters that aren’t DV, and attending jobs we shouldn’t even have to. One example is No DV reporting. We shouldn’t be required to enter a No DV report if the parties involved in the incident don’t even fit the criteria of a DV relationship - that is not what the report was created for! I understand there is currently an attempt to change this but it is frustrating and time consuming when we already have enough work to do.”

“More effort should be employed to reduce the paperwork burden rather than get the job done as fast as possible to run to the next job. Domestic violence

is a classic example of this - police are required to do paperwork which is more applicable to the courts and as a result, DV jobs take far longer than they should, thus reducing the presence of police on the frontline for extended periods. There are many similar examples of this where police are forced to deal with issues that should actually be the task of other departments. The QPS is also focusing far too much on being perceived as “woke” and responsive to social media complaints.”

### Sample quotes from submissions made to the Commission by QPS members

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“I have on many occasions observed on behaviours such as:

- downplaying incidents
- victim blaming
- minimising versions/evidence
- referring to victims as ‘crazy bitches’, psycho, ‘just doing it for family law’ etc
- fundamental failures in risk assessment and applying the dynamics of DFV to incidents being unable to identify coercive behaviours or escalation in risk
- ‘flicking’ persons to the court by both police and administration staff at station front counters, imploring them to take out a ‘private applications’
- operational police at the station being ‘too busy’ to respond to enquiries over the counter
- complete confusion from officers about how to proceed, what steps to take and seeking conflicting advice from more senior officers
- constantly being told to ‘cover their asses’ (COA)
- being so risk adverse they apply for cross-orders or refuse to withdraw applications/charges in circumstances where there was no evidence or contrary evidence had come to light at a later stage
- inability to make decisions and an unwillingness to proceed in the absence of ‘physical evidence’ to support a version of events
- not having the required understanding of how trauma and mental health may impact a person’s presentation (constantly comparing victims to the ‘perfect victim’ standard and when falling short not taking steps).”<sup>79</sup>

## RACISM AND A LACK OF CULTURAL CAPABILITY

The Commission heard from community members and QPS members, both sworn officers and Police Liaison Officers, of their experiences of racism within the organisation. They told the Commission that, in their lived experience, racism is a significant and pervasive cultural issue within the organisation. A lack of cultural capability within the organisation makes it difficult for the issue of racism to be addressed. This was particularly evident in the stories shared by First Nations officers and Police Liaison Officers.

The Commission also heard about the link between racism and poor responses to domestic and family violence, particularly for First Nations peoples, families and communities. Evidence reviewed by the Commission reveals that there are differences in services delivered to First Nations peoples when called to a domestic and family related occurrence, with victim-survivors left feeling unheard, under-supported or over-policed.

The comments and case studies below reflects the information provided to the Commission about the experiences and perspectives of First Nations peoples, both QPS members and community members.

### Sample quotes from a survey of victim-survivors conducted by the Commission<sup>80</sup>

*What were your perceptions of police when you were reporting domestic and family violence to police?*

"I felt the police didn't believe me at times or were inhuman at times by trying to stay impartial to the situation. They said they checked with the neighbours if they heard anything, I asked the neighbours the next day if the had the police knocking on their doors, they didn't, not sure if that actually happened."

**"Police took 7hrs to respond to 000 calls regarding a serious assault I had reported 6x dv assaults and a conviction recorded each time."**

"I felt that the Police did not see my call for help as a crime being committed as they took so long to respond in the first place, then dismissed my serious assault as 'just an argument that got out of control'. They made me feel like I was being silly for reporting my husband beating the crap out of me."

**"We had 6 officers come out on the day. Out of them 2 were lovely. The other 4 were assholes (and because the two nice ones were lower ranked we couldn't be helped). They sent a 15 year old into a dv situation when he said he didn't wish to leave. The perpetrators had broken into our house, along with his own son with a machete and they did nothing."**

"Like they deal with it all the time and are over it. Some wanted to help and other just didn't care."

**"They made me feel safe, both physically and emotionally."**

"The reporting part was easy being believed was harder. The police officer advised me after a 1hr video statement that he would have to call the perpetrator to see if the events that happened were true and correct. He denied everything and i was dismissed. That phone call then escalated the issue."

**"Unhelpful, they didn't not take me seriously. They didn't think my ex partner snatching my child out of a moving car was suffice to make a DVO."**

"The police didn't believe me even with video footage."

*Do you feel reporting to police is easy and accessible for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence?*

"No. It's a complicated, convoluted process - far more difficult than reporting an assault by a stranger."

**"No it's not. You get told it's a matter of he said she said, family dispute or simply something they can't do anything about. We even got told it was a waste of their time when we kept calling trying to get help."**

"Easy to report but extremely hard to believed by police."

*What would you like to see provided to victim-survivors of domestic and family violence to assist them when reporting to police?*

“More details given of where to go for assistance in paper form or website so that I could have followed up later, DFV specialised Liaison / support officer available on site at hospital or police station.”

**“For female complainants - a female advocate at the time of the initial police response - a ‘ride along’ so to speak - who is trained to identify the signs that a victim may not be able to speak freely, and to identify the physical signs of assault in the hour immediately following the reported assault. This advocate should also be trained in photographing injuries, so that there is immediate proof for any impending court action.”**

“...officers that actually know what they’re doing. Don’t send me out an officer that doesn’t know about family laws, how to identify when the perpetrators are being manipulative.”

**“I had to find DVO support services on my own. Police did not pass on any of this information as they did not believe me.”**

“Specialist officers - the only police office to help went above and beyond and she was a specialist officer. Until then police failed me.”

*Is there anything else you feel the QPS could have done to support you better?*

“Respond faster! Don’t make personal value judgements about the seriousness of that ONE particular event. Domestic and Family Violence is systemic and long term. At the reporting end, you are seeing the result of months, probably years of emotional, financial and physical abuse, and this might be the first time she has reported it because THIS TIME she felt like he was going to kill her.”

**“Actually put out a dv order against him. Ask him to leave/remove him. And realise that not all situations are identical.”**

“Actually take male dv victims seriously instead of just laughing at us.”

## Sample quotes from a survey of QPS members conducted on behalf of the Commission<sup>81</sup>

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“I work in an area where there are many, many first nations people. A protection order does not prevent DV as it is almost part of their culture to commit Domestic Violence and most aggrieved’s are not even supportive of Police help. Most DV jobs I go involve 1st nations, who, for example, just want police to remove their family member from their residence, they claim DV, so police have to spend endless hours reporting on these kind of matters. This needs to be reviewed. I really feel the work load is ridiculously over whelming for DV in an area that is SERIOUSLY understaffed. Moral is the lowest I’ve ever seen it due to the work load being so high due to calls for service for DV.”

**“DV amongst indigenous persons is almost a way of life.”**

## Sample quotes from the 2021 Working for Queensland Survey – QPS<sup>82</sup>

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“Police recruiting should always be merit based regardless of whether you are female, male, LBGTI or from any race or nationality. The QPS continually targets people from minority groups and lowers the entrance tests to those people, so they can turn to the government and say that they are inclusive and accepting of all. Also it shouldn’t matter that there are more males than female joining the police. Policing is a male dominated job so it is evident that there will be more males applying. The QPS needs to accept those who are the best regardless of who and what they are. I am sick of the QPS scraping the bottom of the barrel just to get someone from a minority group to join the QPS. And when they get to the Academy they struggle through and eventually graduate to go on to provide a poor performance in the community.”

## Sample quotes from submissions made to the Commission

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“The police became totally complicit with the abuser, my former husband, and I felt that as a female and migrant my matters will be ignored and not taken seriously. I’m still in utter disbelief that the police doesn’t even care the slightest bit if they are lied straight into their faces... I also believe that racism had an aspect on my reports as I couldn’t verbalise the abuse in the needed vocabulary and had to circumscribe. I felt at one stage that I was laughed at. There did not seem anybody around properly trained in DV. No support was offered. It leaves victims on their own and being sent their way.”<sup>83</sup>

**“As a First Nations woman...I still feel unsafe when talking or seeing QLD police officers because of the racism that I and many others have experienced.”<sup>84</sup>**

“In January 2011, he hit me once, and because it was a third instance of violence from him, I knew I had an obligation to leave him. The public housing lease was in my name, but I left him there, and walked barefoot to the nearest public phone, and phoned 000 for police assistance. But when the police arrived to the public phone box, at first they refused to remove him from my home.

I had a long and involved conversation with the two police constables who attended. This was inside the shopping mall, beside the phone box. Both police constables attempted insisting that because the perpetrator was Aboriginal, and because I myself was engaged in belief in the Aboriginal culture with him, that therefore I would accept him back into my home, as if thereby they had no obligation to remove him from my home.”<sup>85</sup>

“At the end of my meeting with police, police asked me to wait and have a health check because of my heart conditions, but when paramedics arrived, they told me it was a mental health check. Paramedics had a computer with my confidential health record from the hospital, they questioned me with the door open and police waiting outside, checked my medication, were satisfied I did not have mental health issues and left, but a police request for a mental health check is now on my medical record, and has the potential to undermine my personal rights, and my rights and roles as Cultural Community Elder, Leader, and community advocate.

I felt betrayed, misled, intimidated and stigmatised by police, because instead of respecting my role as Aunt, Cultural and Community Elder, and advocate, and responding to my complaint about the behaviour of a DFV perpetrator, which had caused multiple complaints to police over several years, and was a risk to the safety of my family, police gave me a mental health check.

My experience causes me to question the ability of police to hear complaints about police failure, to provide care for people in abusive situations, or to trust police to act appropriately to deal with perpetrators as required by law. My experience tells me people making complaints to police may not be heard, respected, or safe, and I am concerned Police are unaware that people who have PTSD can be fully competent and contributing members of society. I am also concerned the mental health check may have been ordered because I made a complaint.”<sup>86</sup>

“During the briefing for “Black Lives Matters” protest marches in 2020, the Chief Superintendent said to the PLOs, in front of everyone, “It’s your time to shine”.”<sup>87</sup>

“I regularly hear officers make disparaging remarks about Aboriginal people “e.g. the ATSI’s are out of control”, “what do we expect? He’s a savage.” and imitating accents, etc. The officer in charge of my station, during the predominantly African-American protests following George Floyd’s murder in the USA, walked out in to the dayroom and loudly stated to a group of police, “Go Trump! Shoot them all!””<sup>88</sup>

“Cultural awareness and cultural capability are not one of QPS’s strong points when the decision makers are not culturally appropriate and or are pulling together quick plans. This is evident with the Police Liaison Officer scheme thirty years on still a tokenism and tick the box exercise that has not had the afforded respect when it comes to reviewing and updating strategies, policies and procedures etc.

I also feel that there has been very little movement in the hierarchical space of QPS to show genuine acknowledgement, respect, consideration and consultation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, First Nations employees.”<sup>89</sup>

“When it comes to First Nations issues, when you bring up the topic it is so difficult to get things processed. It feels like there is always some hidden agenda. The QPS don’t want to give you too much empowerment, it still wants to keep you down, suppress your development. Colonialism is still there it is just more hidden these days.

In the eyes of the QPS, we are way less than second class citizens. I have been told by Police Officers that, “You (PLOs) are nothing. Police dogs have more powers than you.” Realistically that is how we are thought of and it is true.”<sup>90</sup>

“Police Liaison Officers are nicknamed “police leftovers”.”<sup>91</sup>

**“I was sitting in a discussion with Sergeants and Senior Sergeants about women in policing. A colleague turned around to me and said ‘You should be grateful you made it because 50 years ago you were looking for tracks’.**

**At a staff meeting following the PLO conference I raised the discussion about cultural safety, to which my two colleagues nudged each other and eye rolled.”<sup>92</sup>**



“A Protective Services Officer at Police Headquarters was overheard asking a colleague about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and said “I am sick of this Black Lives Matter stuff” and walked off.”<sup>93</sup>

“A non-Indigenous officer was given one week to create Domestic and Family Violence Cultural Training. This officer consulted with staff from the First Nations Multicultural Affairs Unit who queried his knowledge about domestic and family violence, First Nations, and his connections to First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities. The officer replied he knew nothing about DFV and FN and CALD communities. This officer was a firearms instructor and had been told to produce the training package for approval before the Commission of Inquiry hearings commenced.”<sup>94</sup>

“A police officer was overheard talking about pulling over an Indigenous man and that he only pulled him over because he was Indigenous. The officer asked a colleague for advice on how to handle these situations, who suggested that ‘if he was a dick or questioned police for being pulled over because he was Indigenous to give him a ticket’.”<sup>95</sup>

“It does seem they have a very big chip on their shoulder and they don’t understand that pretty much their whole existence relies upon white people and what government gives to them. They will be so quick to throw it back in your face that they were a stolen generation, you’ve done this and you’ve done that and you made us not practice our culture. But these are the people that are the same age as me so they have no idea what’s going on. They’ve always just lived this lifestyle, they get handed everything and they have never had to do anything to deserve it or worked for it.”<sup>96</sup>

**“We elected not to charge the person, but that person still called us racist, saying that we were picking on her and that sort of stuff. We treated her as well as we could have and she still turned around and called us racist. Those sorts of situations definitely put a dent in your relationships.”<sup>97</sup>**

“I had no idea about basic things like their culture, how that will impact you, what you can wear, what you can say, you know like I had never heard of men’s business and women’s business. On my first week here I just walked up to the PCYC and I saw some people sitting down and I went over and I had a chat to them and apparently I was very

offensive because I was in men’s business and that wasn’t allowed. I wasn’t allowed to be there or when we had another death the did a smoking ceremony, but I didn’t know I wasn’t allowed to be there, that’s not for women to be there.”<sup>98</sup>

**“The QPS does not understand. As much as the upper management say they do understand, they just do not understand how these communities work. They do not understand how they are traditionally run. They do not understand the cultural considerations.”<sup>99</sup>**

“A Sergeant told his fellow officers “Stay away from Black Lives Matters, they’re a bunch of racist socialists. They’re crazy. If they let me loose at a protest it would be very, very bad, because I’d be skulldragging them into the car, and that is my definition of policing”.”<sup>100</sup>



# CASE EXAMPLES

The case examples below are a snapshot of the real-life experiences of First Nations victim-survivors, their families and organisations supporting them.

## FAILURES WHEN DEALING WITH FIRST NATIONS VICTIMS

### JAYLA'S EXPERIENCE

Jayla called the police for help after her partner Glenn assaulted her. The attending officer from a remote station engaged in small talk with Glenn, discussing the motorbike in the backyard. When the officer did speak with Jayla, she felt he was short with her and did not believe her.

Instead of taking action to protect Jayla, the officer mediated an arrangement between the pair that Jayla would not press charges in exchange for Glenn leaving the home the next day. As soon as the officer left, Glenn stood over her and yelled at her that there was no way he was leaving, and she should try and make him. Jayla was terrified and went to retrieve her keys only to find that Glenn had them and refused to give them to her, saying *'fuck you bitch.'*

Jayla called the police and the same officer arrived, who was met by Glenn at the front door. Glenn apologised to the officer for the inconvenience and said that Jayla had just lost her keys. Jayla went to the front door to speak to the officer however he expressed his annoyance at her for calling him out again because she had lost her keys. No action was taken to protect Jayla.

After she was assaulted again by Glenn the following day, Jayla drove a significant distance to another station to make a report as she did not trust the officer in the station closest to her. This station was closed. Jayla subsequently presented at the local hospital for treatment of her injuries and called 000 from there. A male and female police officer came to the hospital and while the female officer listened to Jayla and took her statement, the male ignored her. He called her the next day to advise he would not be charging Glenn as he was of the view that Glenn was the victim.

Jayla sought an urgent Temporary Protection Order as the couple were still residing together. The officer advised her that he would be informing Glenn that she had privately applied for a protection order.

Jayla's Temporary Protection Order was granted with an ouster condition. There was a delay in the service of this order by a week.

Jayla drove home four hours after being told the order had been served only to find Glenn still in the home with the doors locked. It took officers 30 minutes to arrive and they allowed him a further hour to leave, during

which time he cut power cords, smashed photo frames, and immersed the internet modem in water.

Jayla had to ask the police if this was a breach before they advised her it was and that they would charge him. The police escorted Glenn back twice to retrieve more items from her home. On both occasions, they arrived at times which she had expressly said were inconvenient to her. On the last occasion, the officer assisted Glenn and constantly referred to him as 'mate.' Jayla was not spoken to unless it was necessary. <sup>101</sup>

### MARGARET'S EXPERIENCE

Margaret is a deaf First Nations woman. She had care of her grandchildren through Child Safety because of concerns about her daughter Lauren's capacity to care and protect them.

Lauren, hoping to get custody back, made a false report of violence against Margaret, which resulted in police attending the house, communicating only with Lauren and taking out a Protection Order against Margaret. When Margaret tried to communicate with the police and gesticulate, they interpreted her actions as aggressive.

The Protection Order triggered a notification to Blue Card Services, who revoked Margaret's positive notice. This caused Child Safety to take the grandchildren off her and place them temporarily with Lauren.

Margaret went to court multiple times to have the Protection Order dropped. In the meantime, the children ended up in general foster care.

Eventually, the Protection Order was revoked, Margaret's Blue Card was reinstated and, after six months, the grandchildren were returned to her care.<sup>102</sup>

## MARIAH'S EXPERIENCE

Mariah is a First Nations woman who was assisted by a legal service after police failed to vary a Protection Order against her to add the names of her children.

Mariah had five children with her ex-partner Morris. For years he had been physically and emotionally abusive to her. Multiple Protection Orders had been issued to protect Mariah from Morris.

One night toward the end of the relationship, Morris assaulted her while they were staying in a hotel for an event. Mariah called the police. When they arrived, Morris calmly said Mariah had attacked him. Mariah was heightened and upset and was forthright with the police.

Officers decided to apply for a Protection Order against Mariah. Mariah could not attend the court event because of her caring commitments with her children, and the order was made against her.

One morning after the parties had separated, Morris arrived at Mariah's home in a state of intoxication as Mariah and her mother were trying to get some of the children into the car for school. After verbally abusing her, Morris chased Mariah around the car with a large stick, swinging it at her. Mariah's mother called police for help.

By the time officers arrived, Morris had stopped his abuse, however because Mariah was yelling at him and had lashed out and scratched his face when he had cornered her, she was arrested. Mariah was detained in the watchhouse overnight and charged with a criminal offence. Mariah said she would never call the police again.<sup>103</sup>

## KATH'S EXPERIENCE

Kath attended a police station to report a campaign of harassment and threats against her by her ex-partner Deon. This included him threatening to blow her house up.

Kath gave police copies of the multiple texts and videos from Deon, only to be told that "*it could be turned back on her for domestic violence against him*" because of the tone of her responses.

All Kath's messages were in response to Deon's harassment and threats, and all were telling him to leave her alone. The police would not help her because she had not been "*nice*" in many of her messages.<sup>104</sup>

## PATRICIA'S EXPERIENCE

Patricia and her partner Joe were separated but living under one roof where Patricia was the primary carer for the children and had maintained primary responsibility for household duties.

Joe was employed. He was considerably bigger and stronger than Patricia. The house, which they had lived in together on a long-term basis, was in his name only.

Police were called after a minor altercation between Patricia and Joe, which was mainly a verbal argument. Patricia was distressed and overwhelmed by her circumstances, and she had a serious physical illness at the time.

Toward the end of the argument Patricia swore and knocked over an item which she had herself bought and which was of no value. She did this out of frustration with what was happening.

Joe called police. He admitted he was not in fear, but he just wanted to bring the argument to an end.

Patricia became confused and upset, damaging another small household item. Police immediately arrested her for domestic violence and after enquiring whose name the house was in, they escorted her off the shared property, citing property damage as the reason.

Patricia's conduct was not intended to and nor did it cause fear in Joe. There was no indication that Joe needed a Protection Order for his protection. He admitted this in detail to the officers.

In fact, Joe had a history of violence against Patricia within this relationship, which included acts of systems abuse.

Patricia chose to consent to a Protection Order due to her medical condition and to avoid further traumatic interactions with the police and courts. Her solicitors were able to negotiate more reasonable conditions in relation to the Protection Order.<sup>105</sup>

## ANDREA'S EXPERIENCE

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Andrea, a First Nations woman, called police after being assaulted by her partner. When the police arrived, her partner was calm and collected but Andrea was emotional and distressed. The police removed Andrea from the property to further investigate whether she had breached a Protection Order that had been made against her. Andrea was placed in handcuffs and put in the back of the police car.

When she arrived at the police station, Andrea stumbled and fell face first from the back of the police vehicle. The police officer picked her up by the handcuffs, which resulted in Andrea's wrist being broken. Andrea was insulted and felt the police officer did not care for her wellbeing. Andrea spat towards the officer, who then charged her with assault. No action was taken regarding the assault Andrea had experienced.<sup>106</sup>

# BARRIERS TO CHANGE - CONDUCT AND COMPLAINTS

The QPS has a vital role in keeping the community safe. Policing is difficult, challenging and, at times, dangerous. Every QPS member should have the confidence that when they go to work, they will not be subjected to sexism, misogyny, or racism from within the service. Similarly, every QPS member should feel comfortable in addressing and reporting these types of cultural issues in their workplace without fear of retribution.

Based on the evidence provided to the Commission, this is not always the case under the current system. Indeed, persistent problems with the QPS conduct and complaints system were evident in submissions and survey responses. The comments and case studies provided below illustrate the evidence heard by the Commission about the inadequacy of the current conduct and complaints process.

## Sample quotes from a survey of victim-survivors conducted by the Commission<sup>107</sup>

“Independent complaints system to manage the reporting of officers’ misconduct. Not only did QPS fail to protect my children from repeated abuse, but a senior detective gave false information to Victim Assist Queensland which prevented us being able to access any financial support to assist with medical and counselling costs. The internal Ethical Standards Branch of QPS protects their own, and the internal complaints system relies on other QPS officers reviewing decisions of their colleagues, which is futile given the QPS culture.”

“My whole experience of interactions with police was incredibly traumatic, made me feel like I was crazy and it must all be in my head, that the perpetrator actually isn’t really doing anything wrong. I was referred to a suicide counselling service but never referred to any DFV support services. The further up the chain of command I went with the complaint the more strongly they backed in the original officers I reported to, and intensified the gaslighting by telling me whatever I was saying must be wrong because what the original officers had written in their reports was very good work that didn’t identify any issues of concern. When I explained that what they were telling me was in the original reports was not reflective of the conversations that I had with those officers they completely dismissed me and doubled down on backing their officers. They refused to accept that there may be even the slightest error of fact in the original reports and throughout my contact with all 4 officers was made to feel like a huge inconvenience and that I was wasting their precious time. So yeah pretty much the opposite of everything that they actually did.”

## Sample quotes from submissions made to the Commission by QPS members

“There is lack of transparency and consistency in receiving, processing and investigating complaints. Focus is not on what occurred but what the QPS feels will be perceived and the image that will have on “*the reputation*” of the service without consideration of the officers involved. There appears to be arrangements made behind closed doors as to what will happen and how it will happen.

Sufficiency of evidence in internal investigations is of a poor standard and then bullying, coercion and threats are made to “*play the game*” and do as you are told - “*or else*”.”<sup>108</sup>

“What is the purpose of making a complaint if the complaint is not investigated properly?”

There are approximately 7500 senior constables and constables throughout Queensland. All sworn and obligated to report misconduct if and when it is encountered, so why would we report it going forward knowing that it’ll be covered up, or not investigated properly. Is that the sort of Queensland that we want to live in?”<sup>109</sup>

“This whole experience has left me feeling victimised, blamed and punished for making my complaint as a female officer against a male officer. I also feel unprotected and humiliated as a male officer was allowed to make sexual remarks about me in open court and his punishment was to be moved to my station and into my team forcing me to have to move to maintain my mental health. This makes me feel unsupported as a woman in the QPS and that the organisation is making light of my complaint. I also feel as if their management of my issues is an act of intimidation by them to keep me quiet in the future because I have experience in how my complaints will be dealt with. I felt as if my mental health and wellbeing was not considered at all by my male managers and in fact felt as if they thought I was just another emotional female.”<sup>110</sup>

## **OFFICER GRANITE**

### **Case Study**

Officer Granite was the subject of numerous complaints of bullying and negative workplace behaviours relating to his management at three separate locations over a seven-year period.

The allegations commenced in 2009 and involved issues with his management and performance, particularly regarding his communication, work performance and interaction with females. He was counselled a number of times during that period by an Assistant Commissioner, who monitored him intensely, and ultimately recommended that he be subject to a Management Initiated Transfer. The Assistant Commissioner believed Officer Granite lacked the skills or knowledge to continue in the role, and that his lack of leadership had a direct and adverse impact on staff.

Officer Granite was also the subject of allegations in another district, where he had failed to take any action regarding sustained workplace bullying, harassment, and intimidation by a number of officers which had been reported to him.

Officer Granite went on leave for a period of 15 months. When he returned to work in 2013, a performance management plan was put in place which required him to be supervised, subject to oversight, and to undergo training. He was transferred to the same position in another district, where he engaged in sustained and persistent negative workplace behaviours and bullying, without any performance management, supervision of his performance or monitoring of his progress.

In 2016 senior leadership attended the district to discuss a range of organisational issues with female members and were made aware of protracted bullying and behaviours by Officer Granite over the previous three years. An investigation by Ethical Standards Command (ESC) was commenced.

### **INVESTIGATION FINDINGS**

The ESC investigation found there were 10 complainants, eight of whom were women. The bullying of the eight women was targeted, sustained and persistent. Officer Granite repeatedly failed to treat members with respect, and his bullying of the complainants created an unsafe workplace. There were significant effects on the health of the female complainants, as well as cumulative impacts on workgroups across the station and district office. The power and authority of Officer Granite combined with a perceived fear of reprisals impacted on the complainants' willingness to report the behaviour.

The investigation identified considerable risk to the health and welfare of all members involved. It was apparent that a significant managerial intervention was required. Investigators concluded that consideration should be given to the nature and extent of any future supervisory role by Officer Granite and found that he displayed a distinct lack of self-awareness and the leadership behaviours expected of a commissioned officer within the QPS. The investigation found that Officer Granite had not been adequately supervised by the District Office Superintendent.

Officer Granite resigned before his disciplinary hearing.<sup>111</sup>

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## OFFICER INDIGO

### Case Study

In 2015 Officer Indigo's wife made an application for a Protection Order against Officer Indigo. The QPS became aware of this when Mrs Indigo's father made a complaint to police that Officer Indigo had left defamatory comments about his daughter on social media using an online pseudonym. Although police thought it was 'highly likely' that Officer Indigo was behind the account that allegedly posted the comment, the complaint was unsubstantiated because the post had been reported and taken down before police could obtain a record of it. No action was taken by QPS in connection with the Protection Order.

Some years later, QPS received multiple complaints that Officer Indigo was behaving inappropriately toward female staff at a convenience store. The complaints included that he:

- repeatedly asked female staff for their phone numbers, and followed them around the store
- told one attendant he would *"love to get in [her] space"* and *"have [her] breath in his mouth"*
- verbalised fantasies about what he would do to female staff, and told one woman that *"if [he] was younger and single, [she] wouldn't be with [her boyfriend] very long"*
- came up behind a store attendant while she was restocking shelves, reached around to take hold of her chest near her breast and *"tickled"* her without her consent.

While QPS determined there was insufficient evidence to bring criminal charges against Officer Indigo, the complaints were substantiated at a disciplinary hearing. The sanctions imposed consisted of a transfer to an alternate police station, and a requirement that Officer Indigo complete three online courses on Interpersonal Communication, Ethics, and Professional Practice.

Officer Indigo has been the subject of 25 complaint allegations over his career, most of which have been resolved as 'unsubstantiated' for insufficient evidence. Three of those complaints relate to Officer Indigo having shot or killed domestic animals, including in the presence of young children.

More recently, Officer Indigo was stood down and placed on alternate duties in connection with having been named as a respondent to a second Protection Order.<sup>112</sup>

### Sample quotes from the 2021 Working for Queensland Survey – QPS<sup>113</sup>

"Do not trust the QPS to back a junior officer over a senior officer regardless of who is actually right. Record everything because you cannot trust anyone. Do not trust anyone from or who has worked at Ethical Standards Command. Corruption is alive and well in the QPS."

"Some areas are good to work in, some are dreadful. It depends on the management. Mine will only respect you if you are young, have big boobs, will crawl up to them or have a degree. As I don't fit any of that and have made a complaint of bullying, I have been called a liar, unwilling to change and a negative influence on a unit where I have

been a respected member for 27 years. When I made a WorkCover claim, the person who was the subject of the complaint/claim prepared the WorkCover response so as to cover his backside. He refused to acknowledge the conflict of intervention though he is a barrister."

"There is nowhere to go for us victims of bullying and favouritism within the QPS. I have tried on numerous occasions to seek assistance from senior members of the QPS to no avail. I have witnessed serious matters being swept under the carpet and no real punishments handed out to those that require it."



## OFFICER PEWTER

### Case Study

In 2004, police responded to a domestic and family violence related call for service involving Officer Pewter and his wife, during which Mrs Pewter alleged that Officer Pewter had made threats to kill her during an argument. Officer Pewter accepted there had been an argument but denied making any threats. Nevertheless, QPS removed Officer Pewter's firearm and arranged for him to meet with relevant QPS health and safety officers. After considering whether to pursue a private application for a Protection Order, Mrs Pewter ultimately decided against it, noting that *'she didn't want to ruin her husband's career... but would [seek an order] if there was any further trouble of a like nature.'* With the consent of Mrs Pewter, Officer Pewter's firearm was returned to him, and he was placed on a period of 12 months supervision by a senior officer.

In 2016, the Crime and Corruption Committee (CCC) received a complaint alleging that, some two to three years prior, Officer Pewter accessed the QPRIME database to obtain the address of a person named as an aggrieved person in a Protection Order, and had provided the address to a personal friend, who was the person named as the respondent in that order. The CCC referred the complaint to the QPS on a 'Refer – No further advice' basis, which meant that the QPS handling of the complaint was not overseen by the CCC.

Initially, the investigation of the complaint was assigned to an officer stationed in Officer Pewter's district. Shortly after, a prominent Queensland newspaper ran a front-page article on the matter, and significant media interest ensued. The investigation was then removed from the regional investigator and assigned to an investigator in the Ethical Standards Command's Internal Investigation Group. That investigation found that several months prior to the Protection Order, Officer Pewter accessed QPS systems to search for the aggrieved's information before passing this information, including her address, to the respondent. The disciplinary investigation also found that over a period of years, Officer Pewter had accessed QPS systems to obtain and provide a range of other information, including warning the respondent that his licence had been suspended, and encouraging him to make relevant repayments.

Criminal charges were not initially recommended on the basis that much of the evidence from the disciplinary investigation would not be admissible in criminal proceedings. However, the matter progressed to a disciplinary hearing in 2017, which found that allegations of unauthorised access to the QPS systems were substantiated. A disciplinary sanction was imposed in the form of a reduction in salary for 12 months, at the expiration of which Officer Pewter would need to complete a Professional Development Assessment before his previous salary could be reinstated.

The complainant was dissatisfied with that outcome, citing concerns over the objectivity and independence of the investigation, and in mid-2018, following further media coverage, the investigation was re-opened at the request of the Police Commissioner. In late 2018, criminal charges were brought against Officer Pewter in relation to his access of QPRIME systems, and he was issued with a stand down notice.

In 2019, Officer Pewter pleaded guilty in the Magistrates Court to nine charges of computer hacking. On each charge, he was sentenced to two months imprisonment, wholly suspended for an operational period of 18 months. Because the punishment was a term of imprisonment, convictions for each charge were automatically recorded.

Officer Pewter filed an appeal against his sentence. Following his conviction, but pending the appeal, QPS suspended Officer Pewter with pay.

In 2020, the District Court overturned the sentence imposed in the Magistrates Court, instead imposing community service for some charges and simply convicting, but not otherwise imposing punishment, for the remaining charges. No convictions were recorded.

The Commissioner of Police filed an appeal against his sentence.

In 2021, the Court of Appeal reinstated the magistrate's initial sentence. Shortly afterwards, Officer Pewter resigned from the QPS.<sup>14</sup>

# CASE EXAMPLES

The case examples below illustrate the lived experience of victim-survivors, their families and organisations supporting them.

## FAILURE TO TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO ENSURE VICTIM SAFETY

### JOSIE'S EXPERIENCE

Josie had a Protection Order in place against her ex-husband David. In late 2020, Josie received concerning text messages from David. She contacted the police to request a welfare check. He was in a public car park, with a high blood-alcohol level. He was taken to the police station, where police contacted Josie asking if she agreed to police sending David to her house to 'sleep it off.' Josie was assured by police David was in good spirits, so she agreed with the request. Shortly after, she received a call from David stating 'you fucked my life, now I'm going to fuck yours.' Josie contacted police to tell them that David was no longer welcome at her home. The officer on the phone said her only option was to wait for police to arrive and tell them what had happened.

When the police arrived with David, Josie begged the officers not to leave him there and told them David had a gun and their two children were in the house. She told them she was worried for their safety, but the police ignored her and did not investigate whether he had access to firearms, despite David joking with the officers about having a weapon. Josie was crying and clearly distressed, but the police left. Once inside the house, David retrieved the rifle and pointed it at Josie and her young son. He threatened to kill her, their children and then himself. She was able to call Triple Zero and police arrived after 45 minutes.

Ultimately, David was charged with several criminal offences (including serious acts of domestic violence perpetrated against her on an earlier occasion), pleaded guilty in the District Court and was sentenced to a lengthy term of imprisonment. Josie made a complaint about police misconduct but ultimately withdrew it. However, she received a letter from the QPS advising that 'deficiencies which were identified [in the police behaviour] were brought to the attention of both officers and were rectified through managerial guidance.'<sup>115</sup>

### ALICIA'S EXPERIENCE

Alicia had a Temporary Protection Order in place when her ex-partner Dane attended her house and violently assaulted her in the presence of her children. Her allegations included an act of non-lethal strangulation, but Dane was only charged with assault occasioning bodily harm.

Alicia fled the house with her children and was assured by police that her address details would be kept confidential. Dane then received a copy of the brief of evidence, having pleaded not guilty to the charges. The brief contained Alicia's new address.

Despite being on bail and wearing an electronic bracelet, Dane attended Alicia's house. She was petrified but nothing adverse occurred, with Dane just boasting that the police had told him of her new address. Alicia did not call the police as she believed the electronic bracelet would immediately alert officers. Police attended the address an hour later.

Alicia made a complaint to the police the following day about her address being provided to Dane. She requested an investigation into how her the disclosure occurred. There was no acknowledgment of her complaint. It was not until she attended a community legal centre and a further complaint was made on her behalf that an apology and admission was received – more than 18 months after the breach occurred.<sup>116</sup>

## FAILURE TO TAKE OUT A PROTECTION ORDER

### MONIQUE'S EXPERIENCE

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Monique was in a relationship with Police Officer Crimson (who was married to another person). When their relationship ended and Monique asked Officer Crimson to cease any attempts at contact, he started stalking her, including parking on her residential street, and being near her work and her route home.

When attempting to make a complaint to QPS about Officer Crimson, Monique was interviewed by officers working in the same district as him. She was concerned her complaints would not be kept confidential.

Monique spoke with an Inspector at the QPS. When Monique advised she was considering applying for a Protection Order with the help of a solicitor, the Inspector was dismissive because the behaviour did not include acts of physical violence.

The Inspector suggested to Monique that as she was not Officer Crimson's wife, she did not have a reasonable basis to make a complaint about his behaviour.<sup>117</sup>



# ENDNOTES

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- 3 Exhibit 17.3, Statement of Dr Brian Sullivan, Annexure 1 (What QPS needs to know about perpetrator intervention programs), Tender Bundle K, tendered 27 July 2022.
- 4 Domestic and family violence survivors' experiences of the QPS survey, conducted by the Commission of Inquiry via Qualtrics, July 2022.
- 5 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 3, 4 June 2022.
- 6 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 4, 4 June 2022.
- 7 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 13, 9 June 2022.
- 8 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 19, 10 June 2022.
- 9 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 24, 11 June 2022.
- 10 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 13, 9 June 2022.
- 11 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 33, 13 June 2022.
- 12 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 72, 20 June 2022.
- 13 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 88, 23 June 2022.
- 14 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 99, 23 June 2022.
- 15 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 106, 24 June 2022.
- 16 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 322, 22 August 2022.
- 17 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 342, 23 August 2022.
- 18 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 473, 2 September 2022.
- 19 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 526, 4 September 2022.
- 20 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 526, 4 September 2022.
- 21 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 526, 4 September 2022.
- 22 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 527, 4 September 2022.
- 23 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 527, 4 September 2022.
- 24 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 527, 4 September 2022.
- 25 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 527, 4 September 2022.
- 26 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 529, 4 September 2022.
- 27 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 555, 5 September 2022.
- 28 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 528, 5 August 2022.
- 29 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 55, 16 June 2022.
- 30 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 16, 9 June 2022.
- 31 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 62, 17 June 2022.
- 32 DV Lawyer, Commission of Inquiry Submission 118, 24 June 2022.
- 33 DV Lawyer, Commission of Inquiry Submission 118, 24 June 2022.
- 34 Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia, Commission of Inquiry Submission 125, 24 June 2022.
- 35 Brisbane Youth Service, Commission of Inquiry Submission 93, 23 June 2022.
- 36 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 13, 9 June 2022.
- 37 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 375, 26 August 2022.
- 38 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 322, 22 August 2022.
- 39 Caxton Legal Centre, Commission of Inquiry Submission 136, 24 June 2022.
- 40 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 275, 31 July 2022.
- 41 North Queensland Women's Legal Service, Submission 146, 24 June 2022.
- 42 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 172, 29 June 2022.
- 43 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 24, 10 June 2022.
- 44 IFYS, Commission of Inquiry Submission 70, 20 June 2022.
- 45 Queensland Police Service DFV-Q Survey 2022, conducted by Nous Group, July 2022.
- 46 Working for Queensland Survey – Queensland Police Service, conducted by the Public Service Commission, 2021.
- 47 Anonymous, Commission of Inquiry Submission 466, 2 September 2022.
- 48 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 701, 5 October 2022.
- 49 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 701, 5 October 2022.
- 50 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 520, 5 September 2022.
- 51 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 578, 5 September 2022.
- 52 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 577, 5 September 2022.
- 53 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 537, 5 September 2022.
- 54 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 718, 7 October 2022.
- 55 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 721, 7 October 2022.
- 56 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 722, 7 October 2022.
- 57 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 606 12 September 2022.
- 58 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 720, 7 October 2022.
- 59 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 704, 5 October 2022.
- 60 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 701, 5 October 2022.
- 61 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 578, 5 September 2022.
- 62 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 589, 6 September 2022.
- 63 Domestic and family violence survivors' experiences of the QPS survey, conducted by the Commission of Inquiry via Qualtrics, July 2022.
- 64 Queensland Police Service DFV-Q Survey 2022, conducted by Nous Group, July 2022.
- 65 Working for Queensland Survey – Queensland Police Service, conducted by the Public Service Commission, 2021.
- 66 Domestic and family violence survivors' experiences of the QPS survey, conducted by the Commission of Inquiry via Qualtrics, July 2022.
- 67 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement NTP 2.047, Item 1, requested 22 August 2022 and NTP 2.058 Item 1, requested 12 September 2022.
- 68 Disciplinary file, provided by Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.055 Item 15, requested 7 September 2022.
- 69 Queensland Police Service DFV-Q Survey 2022, conducted by Nous Group, July 2022.
- 70 Working for Queensland Survey – Queensland Police Service, conducted by the Public Service Commission, 2021.
- 71 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 721, 7 October 2022.
- 72 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 12, 9 June 2022.
- 73 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 573, 5 September 2022.
- 74 Disciplinary files and complaints information provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.042, Item 18, requested 22 August 2022; NTP 2.054, Item 11, requested 7 September 2022; NTP 2.059, Item 15, requested 12 September 2022; and NTP 2.061, Items 13, 16 – 17, requested 16 September 2022.
- 75 Disciplinary files, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.051, Item 31, requested 2 September 2022; NTP 2.059, Item 24, requested 12 September 2022; and NTP 2.060, Item 13, requested 15 September 2022.
- 76 Domestic and family violence survivors' experiences of the QPS survey, conducted by the Commission of Inquiry via Qualtrics, July 2022.
- 77 Queensland Police Service DFV-Q Survey 2022, conducted by Nous Group, July 2022.
- 78 Working for Queensland Survey – Queensland Police Service, conducted by the Public Service Commission, 2021.
- 79 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 214, 14 July 2022.
- 80 Domestic and family violence survivors' experiences of the QPS survey, conducted by the Commission of Inquiry via Qualtrics, July 2022.
- 81 Queensland Police Service DFV-Q Survey, conducted by Nous Group, July 2022.
- 82 Working for Queensland Survey – Queensland Police Service, conducted by the Public Service Commission, 2021.
- 83 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 526, 5 August 2022.
- 84 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 335, 22 August 2022.
- 85 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 630, 15 September 2022.

- 86 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 131, 26 June 2022.
- 87 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 492, 4 September 2022.
- 88 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 6, 7 June 2022.
- 89 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 523, 5 September 2022.
- 90 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 599, 7 September 2022.
- 91 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 384, 29 August 2022.
- 92 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 384, 29 August 2022.
- 93 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 384, 29 August 2022.
- 94 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 384, 29 August 2022.
- 95 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 384, 29 August 2022.
- 96 General Duties Constable, quoted in Anna Dwyer, 'Understanding police-Indigenous relations in remote and rural Australia: Police perspectives' (Master of Philosophy Thesis, No. 121455, Queensland University of Technology, 2018) [p 95].
- 97 General Duties Constable, quoted in Confidential, 'Understanding police-Indigenous relations in remote and rural Australia: Police perspectives' (Master of Philosophy Thesis, No. 121455, Queensland University of Technology, 2018) [p 98].
- 98 General Duties Constable, quoted in Anna Dwyer, 'Understanding police-Indigenous relations in remote and rural Australia: Police perspectives' (Master of Philosophy Thesis, No. 121455, Queensland University of Technology, 2018) [p 109].
- 99 General Duties Constable, quoted in Anna Dwyer, 'Understanding police-Indigenous relations in remote and rural Australia: Police perspectives' (Master of Philosophy Thesis, No. 121455, Queensland University of Technology, 2018) [p 114].
- 100 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 400, 30 August 2022.
- 101 North Queensland Women's Legal Service, Commission of Inquiry Submission 146, 24 June 2022.
- 102 Caxton Legal Centre, Commission of Inquiry Submission 136, 24 June 2022.
- 103 North Queensland Women's Legal Service, Commission of Inquiry Submission 146, 24 June 2022.
- 104 North Queensland Women's Legal Service, Commission of Inquiry Submission 146, 24 June 2022.
- 105 North Queensland Women's Legal Service, Commission of Inquiry Submission 146, 24 June 2022.
- 106 Associate Professor Marlene Longbottom, Commission of Inquiry Submission 184, 6 July 2022.
- 107 Domestic and family violence survivors' experiences of the QPS survey, conducted by the Commission of Inquiry via Qualtrics, July 2022.
- 108 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 520, 5 September 2022.
- 109 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 531, 5 September 2022.
- 110 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 521, 5 September 2022.
- 111 Disciplinary history, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.048, Item 13, requested 25 August 2022.
- 112 Disciplinary history, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.055, Item 16, requested 7 September 2022.
- 113 Working for Queensland Survey – Queensland Police Service, conducted by the Public Service Commission, 2021.
- 114 Disciplinary table and files, provided by the the Queensland Police Service to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.051, Items 1 and 2, requested 2 September 2022.
- 115 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 88, 22 June 2022.
- 116 Caxton Legal Centre, Commission of Inquiry Submission 136, 24 June 2022.
- 117 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 58, 17 June 2022.

# ABOUT THE SURVEYS

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## DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE SURVIVORS' EXPERIENCES OF THE QPS SURVEY

Victim-survivors were invited to participate in a survey about their experiences when reporting domestic and family violence to police. The online survey was circulated to community organisations across Queensland that support victim-survivors, who then shared it with their contacts. 848 individuals completed the survey.

The comments included in this companion report have been taken from free-text responses to four questions:

- *What were your perceptions of police when you were reporting domestic and family violence to police?*
- *Do you feel reporting to police is easy and accessible for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence?*
- *What would you like to see provided to victim-survivors of domestic and family violence to assist them when reporting to police?*
- *Is there anything the QPS could have done to support you better?*

## QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE DFV-Q SURVEY 2022

The police members survey, which was conducted by independent consultants with the support of the QPS and the Queensland Police Union of Employees, asked members about their experiences of what worked well and what could be improved in the policing response to domestic and family violence. The survey largely replicated one conducted by the QPS in 2018. This allowed the Commission to compare the data and look at changes over time. 2,733 QPS members responded to the survey.

## WORKING FOR QUEENSLAND

The Working for Queensland Survey (WfQ) is an annual survey which measures Queensland public sector employees perceptions of their work, manager, team, and organisation. The WfQ survey is administered centrally and circulated across all government agencies. External providers safeguard participant anonymity which encourages public service employees to confidentially share their views and contribute to creating better workplaces.

Conducted since 2013, 68 per cent or 11,029 QPS staff members responded to the survey in 2021.

The comments included in this companion report have been taken from more than 6,200 free text responses to Question 48:

- *A friend has decided to apply for a job in your organisation. They have asked you to tell them what it's like to work there. What do you tell them?*





## **BEHIND THE CALL FOR CHANGE**

A companion report to *A call for change*, the report delivered by the Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence.