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**Public Submission Independent Commission of Inquiry
into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic
and family violence**



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Mural Entrance Specialist Police Station, Argentina translated reads “Break the Silence”

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Contents

- Executive Summary 2
- Background: Why this Inquiry Is Important for Women’s Safety in Qld? 4
- TOR 1: whether there are any cultural issues within the Queensland Police Service that negatively affect police investigations of DFV 4
- Could increasing the number of women entering mainstream policing in QPS improve the police response to domestic family violence?..... 4
- TOR 2: if there are any cultural issues, whether they have contributed to the overrepresentation of First Nations people in the criminal justice system 5
- TOR 3: the capability, capacity, and structure of the Queensland Police Service to respond to DFV..... 6
- Should Qld Trial Specialist Police Station designed explicitly to receive survivors domestic and family violence? 8
- Concluding submission 15
- References 16



Executive Summary

The Independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence is in my view the most important external review of the Qld Police, since the 1991 Fitzgerald Inquiry into Police Corruption.

My responses in brief to the terms of reference (TOR) appear below:

- 1. whether there are any cultural issues within the Queensland Police Service that negatively affect police investigations of DFV*

Policing was historically a male only profession, and continues to be a male dominated profession where masculine culture exerts a pervasive influence over everyday police work. The masculine culture of policing has adverse consequences for how police typically respond to gender-based violence. The masculine culture of policing leans toward 'himpathy', taking sides with men, who are nearly always the perpetrators of DFV. This makes law enforcement officers either not well skilled or adequately equipped to respond appropriately to survivors of gender violence, who are mainly women. In Queensland, extensive evidence of cultural issues within the QPS that negatively affect police investigations of DFV, can be drawn from Coronial Inquests, Death Reviews, former Inquires, and scholarly research.

- 2. if there are any cultural issues, whether they have contributed to the overrepresentation of First Nations people in the criminal justice system*

Less than 2 percent of officers in Qld are from First Nations backgrounds. A particularly vexed issue in First Nations communities is the police response to DFV. In Qld, and indeed across all Australian jurisdictions, the police response to domestic violence has had its most adverse impacts on First Nations People and their communities (Langton et al. 2020). Those consequences include the removal of children from Indigenous women experiencing DFV, arrest and imprisonment of victims,



and even deaths in custody. First Nations women are five times more likely to be victims of domestic family violence, 32 times more likely to be hospitalised as a result of that violence and twice as likely to be killed as the result of domestic homicide compared to non-Indigenous women (AIHW, 2019, p. 6). Due to the historical role of police as instruments of colonisation, dispossession, forced removal to missions, and the removal of Aboriginal children from their families, First Nations women are not likely to seek their help (Langton et al, 2020:31). There is a dire need for systemic changes to police culture, training and recruitment that address these historical issues of racialized policing (Dywer, Scott and Staines, 2021, p. 208).

- 3. the capability, capacity and structure of the Queensland Police Service to respond to DFV, and the adequacy of the current conduct and complaints handling processes against police officers.*

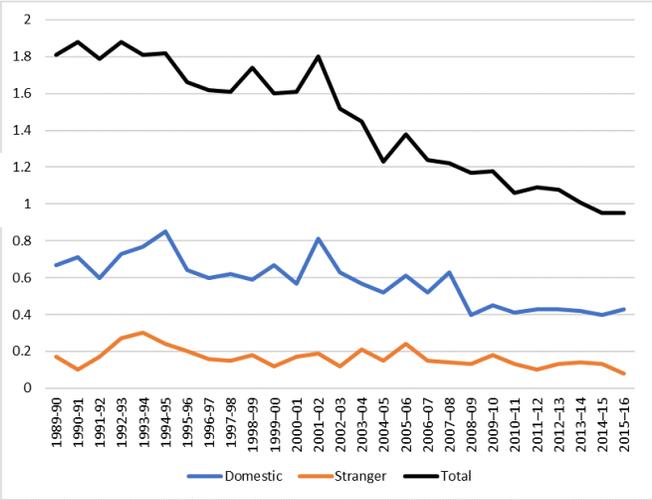
A great deal needs to be done to enhance the capability, capacity and structure of the Queensland Police Service to respond to DFV. This section outlines how a gender responsive police model for responding to DFV has enhanced the police response in other countries.

Given the serious on-going shortcomings of traditional policing responses to DFV, as born out by a large body of research, and Qld DFV Death Reviews referred to in this submission, the case for trialing specialist DFV police stations in Qld is strong. It offers a structural solution to a structural problem. It's a win win for everyone, police, victims, the criminal justice system, and most importantly for women, their families and communities. In sum, specialist police stations offer an integrated victim centric response from a multi-disciplinary team of police, social workers, counsellors and lawyers, in a one stop shop, a model proven to reduce the risk of lethal domestic violence. In turn, this leads to earlier reporting to police, increased satisfaction with police responses, and enhancements in women's safety. There is considerable evidence also, that both the DFV and Police workforces in Australian jurisdictions are supportive of their establishment (Carrington et al 2020; 2022).

Finally the submission set out the principles of how a trial of specialist police stations designed to receive the survivors of domestic and sexual violence could enhance the capacity of the QPS to better respond to DFV in Qld.

Background: Why this Inquiry Is Important for Women’s Safety in Qld?

Figure 1. Homicide rate per 100,000 people by type, Australia, 1989-90 to 2015-201



In Australia today, domestic violence is a “national emergency”, an on-going crisis with no remedy in sight (Nancarrow 2019). Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2020) confirms a steep increase in female victims of domestic violence over the last 5 years. Domestic homicides of women (a proxy measure for femicide) account for a third of all homicides in Australia (Bricknell, 2020, p.3).

While rates for all other homicide types have been declining over the last three decades, the rate of domestic homicide has remained steady.

Victims/survivors of DFV remain deeply reluctant to report to police, with only 2 out of 10 (18% or 226,000) women reporting to police (AIHW, 2019, p. 19). For Indigenous women the proportion is much lower, with only 1 in 10 reporting domestic violence to the police (AIHW, 2019, p. 19). The Commission of Inquiry provides an ideal opportunity to put forward evidence based proposals for systemic changes to enhance the capability, capacity and structure of the Queensland Police Service to respond to DFV. Only then will women have the confidence to report to the police to seek assistance early in the cycle of domestic violence to prevent it from escalating into lethal domestic partner homicide. This is why this commission of inquiry is so important. Its recommendations for action could potentially save women’s lives.

TOR 1: whether there are any cultural issues within the Queensland Police Service that negatively affect police investigations of DFV

Historically policing was a male only profession in Qld, Australia and other parts of the world until well into the 20th Century (Prenzler, and Sinclair 2013). Policing continues to be a male dominated



profession where masculine culture exerts a pervasive influence over everyday police work (Hunt, 1990; Loftus, 2008: 757; Prokos and Padavic 2002: 242; Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission [VEO], 2015). Structured strictly hierarchically with significance attached to rank is a masculine formulation (Shelley et al 2011). Policing is also regarded as rough and risky men's work (Punch 1976; Shelley et al 2011; Wadds 2018), and as a boys' club (Hunt 1990; VEO 2015). These cultural aspects of policing may stem from an outdated protectiveness towards women or a paternalism that perceives female officers as weak (Fielding and Fielding 1992; Prokos and Padavic 2002; Rabe-Hemp 2008; Dodge et al 2011). Ideals about commitment to police work are another way masculinity is performed in policing (Brown 2007; Silvestri 2017; Newton and Huppertz 2020). When all these elements of police culture combine they can manifest as unconscious or conscious bias that discriminates against female officers (Martin 1990; Seklecki and Paynich 2007; VEO 2015). Unless police fit the narrow masculine stereotypes, they risk being perceived as inappropriate for leadership or career-path roles in policing (Brown 2007; Silvestri 2017; Morabito and Shelley 2018; Porter and Prenzler, 2019).

The masculine culture of policing has adverse consequences for how police typically respond to gender-based violence (Prokos and Padavic 2002; Loftus 2008; Goodman-Delahunty and Graham 2011; Douglas 2019). The masculine culture of policing leans toward 'himpathy', taking sides with men, who are nearly always the perpetrators of DFV, while at the same time lacking empathy with survivors of gender violence, who are mainly women (Martin 1980; Heidensohn 1992; Brown and Heidensohn 2000; Martin and Jurik 2007; Silvestri 2017).

In Queensland, extensive evidence of cultural issues within the QPS that negatively affect police investigations of DFV, can be drawn from Coronial Inquests, Death Reviews, former Inquires, and scholarly research. The evidence base is substantial and can be summarised as follows:

- ambivalence and lack of empathy toward the victims/survivors of DFV (Douglas and Fitzgerald 2018; Douglas 2019; Carrington 2022; Nancarrow 2019)
- failure to provide women with adequate information (Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland 2015, 230);
- lack of referral to appropriate support services in emergency and non-emergency situations (Nancarrow 2019; Carrington 2022);

- 
- victim blaming (Douglas 2019; Carrington 2022; Nancarrow 2019; Qld Death Review 2017),
 - lack of knowledge of the Qld Family Domestic Violence Act in relation to police responsibilities (Carrington 2022)
 - unwillingness to take action when breaches of DFV orders are reported to them, and instead telling survivors to go away (i.e. what happened to Doreen Langham, see Carrington 2022)
 - reluctance to believe or take complaints seriously (Douglas 2018, 2019; Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland 2015, 251; Carrington 2022)
 - ‘siding with the perpetrator’ and regarding victim’s complaints as ‘too trivial and a waste of police resources’ (Special Taskforce 2015, 251).
 - mis-identification of the person in need of protection, many of whom are Indigenous women in Qld (Douglas, 2019; Douglas and Fitzgerald, 2018; Nancarrow et al 2020; Qld Death Review 2017)

In my view, Doreen Langham could have been alive today if she had been offered an appropriate police response to her increasingly desperate pleas for help (see Carrington 2022). I concluded in my report for the State Coroner:

“Ms Langham’s experience of the QPS as a victim of domestic violence fell far short of minimal expectations of taking her seriously or responding in an effective timely manner. Over a period of two weeks, from 7 February 2021 to 21 February 2022, Ms Langham reported 5 breaches of the DVO to three different QPS police stations, two phone calls to PoliceLink, and two emergency calls to 000. Of the 16 or more QPS officers, from three different police stations, who either interacted or responded to her repeated and increasing desperate pleas for assistance, only one responded with appropriate skill and empathy...”

(Carrington, 2022)



A Qld death review of victims of domestic violence found that almost half (12 out of 27) of the deaths of female victims that year had been misidentified by police as perpetrators (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board 2017). Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety study into misidentification by police concluded that it 'undermines confidence in the legal system, denies victims/survivors appropriate support, may inadvertently collude with perpetrators in exerting further control over their (ex)partners through systems abuse and has significant, potentially life-long, harmful impacts' (Nancarrow et al. 2020, p. 9). Domestic Violence Death Reviews have also stressed that effective police front-line responses may save the lives of those who have experienced DFV (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board 2017: 23; NSW Team 2019: 132-133; Special Taskforce 2015: 12; State Coroner, WA, 2016).

Could increasing the number of women entering mainstream policing in QPS improve the police response to domestic family violence?

One response to improve the policing of gender violence has been to increase the number of women who enter policing (Prenzler and Sinclair 2013; Silvestri 2017; Rabe-Hemp and Garcia 2020). However, this has been shown to be insufficient to improve police responses to domestic family violence (Brown and Silvestri 2020). While women's participation in policing in countries like United Kingdom and Australia has increased to 30% or more, the stubborn masculinist culture of policing as an institution persists (Porter and Prenzler, 2019; Silvestri, 2017; Brown and Silvestri, 2020).

The entry of women into policing as equal to men has not been a panacea for improving police culture. Policing services globally face difficulty in attracting and retaining women members (Prenzler and Sinclair 2013) and even greater difficulty attracting female officers of Indigenous or ethnic minority backgrounds (Fleming 2020). An extensive overview of available research by Brown and Silvestri (2020, p. 471) found that the difference women could bring to bear on feminising police culture and leadership is yet to be realised in England and Wales even though it has attained 30% of its workforce as female. Consequently, policing gender violence in Australia, the US, the UK and many other countries continues to be carried out by male dominated institutions ill-equipped to respond to victims/survivors of gender violence.



TOR 2: if there are any cultural issues, whether they have contributed to the overrepresentation of First Nations people in the criminal justice system

Less than 2 percent of officers in Qld are from First Nations backgrounds. This means First Nations communities continue to be policed by officers either ill-prepared or not suited for policing in culturally diverse contexts (Dywer, Scott and Staines, 2021, p. 208). A particularly vexed issue in these communities is the police response to DFV.

In Qld, and indeed across all Australian jurisdictions, the police response to domestic violence has had its most adverse impacts on First Nations People and their communities (Langton et al. 2020). Those consequences include the removal of children from Indigenous women experiencing DFV, arrest and imprisonment of victims, and even deaths in custody (Blagg et al 2018; Douglas and Fitzgerald 2018; Langton et al 2020; Nancarrow 2019; State Coroner 2016). DFV is the most significant reason for Indigenous children entering into state care (Langton et al 2020, p. 13).

One of the reforms of the Queensland Government inquiry into DFV (Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, 2015), was to introduce terms of imprisonment for breaches of DFV orders. This reform has backfired, increasing the imprisonment of Indigenous women, who account for 66% of women imprisoned because of a contravention of a Domestic Violence Order, yet they comprise only 3% of the population (Douglas and Fitzgerald 2018, p. 42).

First Nations women are five times more likely to be victims of domestic family violence, 32 times more likely to be hospitalised as a result of that violence and twice as likely to be killed as the result of domestic homicide compared to non-Indigenous women (AIHW, 2019, p. 6). Yet only 10% of Indigenous women report domestic family violence to police (Fleming, Prenzler and Ransley, 2013, p. 358). They are also more likely to be mis-identified as perpetrators and not victims of DFV (Nancarrow, 2019).

Those who have researched this issue in Australia argue that First Nations women who experience DFV need remedies beyond criminalisation (Langton et al. 2020). They need culturally appropriate services with family violence expertise *'to make initial contact with often highly reluctant victims of violence, to engage and remain involved with them throughout an often-lengthy process of escaping from their partners or other perpetrators, while often facing the challenge of dealing with child protection services to have their children returned'* (Langton et al. 2020, p. 15). Indigenous male perpetrators also need access to Indigenous led behaviour change services in Indigenous



communities (Langton et al. 2020. P. 17). There are however very few Indigenous-led responses to DFV in Australia (State Coroner 2016; Douglas and Fitzgerald 2018; Langton et al 2020; Nancarrow 2019).

Due to the historical role of police as instruments of colonisation, dispossession, forced removal to missions, and the removal of Aboriginal children from their families, First Nations women are not likely to seek their help (Langton et al, 2020:31). There is a dire need for systemic changes to police culture, training and recruitment that address these historical issues of racialized policing (Dywer, Scott and Staines, 2021, p. 208).

TOR 3: the capability, capacity, and structure of the Queensland Police Service to respond to DFV

A great deal needs to be done to enhance the capability, capacity and structure of the Queensland Police Service to respond to DFV. In this section I outline how a gender responsive police model for responding to DFV has enhanced the police response in other countries.

South America established specialist police stations designed specifically to respond to the survivors of gender violence in the 1980s. (Nelson, 1996; Hautzinger 1997, 2002; 2007; MacDowell Santos 2004; 2005). In Brazil they were called *Delegacia da Mulher* (police stations for women) (DDM). An evaluation of DDMs in Brazil assessed shifts in female homicide rates in 2074 municipalities from 2004 to 2009, controlling for a number of variables. The evaluation found that where DDMs existed the female homicide rate dropped by 17 per cent for all women, but for women aged 15-24 in metropolitan areas the reduction was an astonishing 50 per cent (or 5.57 deaths reduction per 100,000) (Perova and Reynolds 2017: 193-194). On this basis Perova and Reynolds concluded that 'women's police stations appear to be highly effective among young women living in metropolitan areas' (2017: 188).

Variations of the model have spread across other parts of the global south, such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay and India (Jubb et al. 2010; Amaral et al. 2018; Natarajan 2008). They have been particularly successful at attracting more women of ethnically diverse backgrounds into policing (Hautzinger, 2002, 2016; Jubb and Pasinato, 2003; MacDowell Santos, 2004; 2005; Sardenberg et al. 2010; Miller and Segal 2018; Amaral et al. 2018). Critically, they also provide women from poor and vulnerable communities access to a wide range of legal, medical, social and



psychological support that enhances their security and strengthens their citizenship (Jubb and Pasinato, 2003). This growing body of research suggests these specialist police stations enhance women's willingness to report, preventing further re-victimisation (Hauztinger 2003; Jubb and Pasinato, 2003; MacDowell Santos, 2004, 2005; Natarajan 2005; Jubb et al. 2010; Sardenberg et al. 2010; Pasinato 2016; Miller and Segal 2018), while enhancing police legitimacy (Córdova and Kras 2020).

Our Australia Research Council funded research specifically explored the Argentinian context, in which the first police station of this kind was established in 1988 in the Province of Buenos Aires (PBA) (Carrington, et al. 2020, pp. 44-45). Initially called *Comisaría de la Mujer*, which translates into English as Police Stations for Women, they are now called *Comisaría de la Mujer y la Familia* (CMF), which means Police Stations for Women and Families. For simplicity, the term specialist police station is used in this submission as since 2006, they employ male officers, although men make up around only 10% of station employees (Carrington, et al 2020). Since 2019 LGBTQI officers have been employed in La Plata to deal with complainants from sexually diverse backgrounds.

By the end of 2018, there were 128 stand-alone CMFs and 16 offices co-located within existing government departments in the province of Buenos Aires, employing 2300 officers that work alongside multidisciplinary team members, responding to around 250,000 complaints of DFV and 8000 of sexual violence per year. Every Police District and one in five police stations in the province provide a specialised service to survivors of gender violence. Like traditional police stations, CMFs offer a 365-day emergency response service, employ uniformed and armed officers, have the authority of the state, and the same powers and training as general police. Unlike traditional police stations, officers in the CMFs have additional mandatory specialist training to respond to gender violence, are designed to receive victims/survivors and work alongside multi-disciplinary teams of social workers, counsellors and lawyers to respond to the survivors who seek their assistance. More recently they have only recently developed capacity to receive survivors from trans-gender and queer relationships (Hauztinger, 2020).

While the CMFs do conduct investigations and process domestic violence 'denunciations', this comprises around a third of their work. The CMFs also provide childcare and offer victims/survivors a gateway to other support beyond criminalisation and have unique powers of prevention, under the *National Law to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women* (Law No. 26485). This

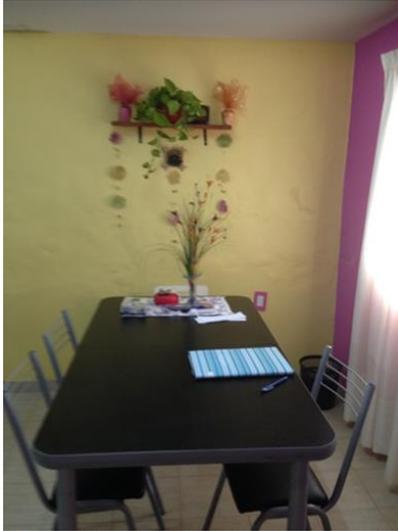


law gives police discretion to engage in a range of prevention responses and activities, which are explained below.

By emphasising community-based prevention over a punitive approach, Argentina's specialist police stations offer a gateway to a range of supports instead of just funnelling victims/survivors into the criminal justice system. In the process, victims/survivors retain their autonomy from the state, avoiding some of the negative outcomes of the mandatory reporting regime, and criminalisation of domestic violence breaches, experienced in places such as the United States (US) (Goodmark 2018; Gruba, 2020, Kim 2018) and especially among First Nations women in Australia (Douglas & Fitzgerald 2018, Langton et al. 2020; Nancarrow, 2019). You can read more about this research and the model by accessing the publications, briefing papers and resources [here](#).

Should Qld Trial Specialist Police Station designed explicitly to receive survivors domestic and family violence?

Yes absolutely. Given the shortcomings of traditional policing responses to DFV, as born out by a large body of research, and Qld DFV Death Reviews referred to in this submission, the case for trialing specialist DFV police stations in Qld is strong. It offers a structural solution to a structural problem. It's a win win for everyone, police, victims, the criminal justice system, and most importantly for women, their families and communities. Specialist police stations offer an integrated victim centric response from a multi-disciplinary team of police, social workers, counsellors and lawyers, in a one stop shop, a model proven to reduce the risk of lethal domestic violence. In turn, this leads to earlier reporting to police, increased satisfaction with police responses, and enhancements in women's safety. There are a number of principles that underpin how these specialist stations operate. These are set out below.



Photos 1 and 2 Interview and Reception Rooms, Women's Police Station, Argentina



Photos 3 and 4 Interview and Reception Rooms, QPS

1. Create specialist victim-centred police stations specifically designed to deliver an integrated response for victims/survivors or DFV, staffed by suitably qualified multi-disciplinary teams, of police, DFV workers, social workers and legal advisors

Most police stations in Qld, indeed across Australia, are designed to receive and process alleged offenders. They are spartan, uncomfortable and unwelcoming spaces, especially for victims and children. Women's police stations in Argentina are specifically designed to receive victims/survivors of domestic family violence and their children, as explained above. They do not receive or detain perpetrators in custody. This is undertaken by a common police station in the neighbourhood. This ensures victims and perpetrators are segregated and do not wait in the



same waiting rooms, or cross paths in the same police station. Any specialist police station needs to be designed to be welcoming, family friendly and encourage early reporting, build trust, and provide specialist interview rooms for taking statements from victims, not alleged offenders.

Women's police stations need to be open 24-hours a day, every day of the year, staffed by multidisciplinary teams specially trained to respond to domestic family violence. Multidisciplinary service delivery is critical to effectively responding to the complexity of DFV (Asquith and Bartkowiak-Théron 2021; Rodgers et al 2022). Importantly responding to DFV is not something police can do alone, and many now acknowledge the need to work with relevant organisations and services to act effectively (Mundy and Seuffert 2021; QPS 2021; The Police Association of Victoria 2015). Cohesive multidisciplinary work is also central to delivering a victim-centric DFV response (Chung et al. 2018; Fine et al. 2000).

Multi-disciplinary teams need to include at a minimum: police, domestic violence or social workers, psychologists or counsellors, and legal advisors to provide an integrated response. As a team they would then possess complimentary skills to undertake competent risk assessments, to implement and interpret the law correctly, to offer an integrated response to the multidimensional problems typically experienced by those who experience domestic family violence (DFV).

2. Create a supportive command structure within the QPS whereby the police leaders of these specialist stations report to the appropriate Deputy Commissioner.

One of the keys to the success of women's police stations in Argentina is their unique command structure, reporting to their own commissioner. This has allowed the exponential growth of critical mass in DFV police who now comprise 2300 police, and one in five police stations in the Province of Buenos Aires. It has also spawned a whole new culture of policing, with a different set of values and practices much more victim-centric and prevention focused. As a side-product women's police stations have provided a career structure not available to women (and especially women of colour and from diverse ethnic backgrounds) integrated in traditional policing models in Argentina or indeed elsewhere (Natarajan, 2008:18; Prenzler and Sinclair 2013; Carrington et al 2019; Carrington, Sozzo, et al 2021).

Consequently, it is essential that the leaders of specialist victim-centred police stations designed to respond to DFV, report to a supportive QPS command structure that provides a career structure, and a promotes a police culture that values and rewards this model of victim centred policing, which

departs significantly from the law and order focus of much public facing policing. Currently Deputy Commissioner Brian Codd occupies the responsibility for the oversight of QPS respond to DFV. It could be regarded as appropriate for this responsibility to fall within his span of oversight.

3. Ensure these specialist stations are child and family friendly



Photo 5: Space for Children

The provision of a space for children is critical to encourage women to report domestic abuse to police. A separate space for children is regarded as essential to prevent the traumatisation and re-victimisation of children by having to listen to their mothers recount their experiences of domestic family violence. In the Australian context, professional childcare workers will be required during day-time hours Monday to Friday.

4. Ensure these specialist stations provide gateways to emergency support

Often victims leave their houses in emergencies and arrive with nothing. These specialist stations need to be equipped to provide basic emergency supplies or at least provide a pathway for easy access to emergency provisions, such as iphones, clothing, food, sanitary and baby products. Having domestic family violence social workers co-located with QPS greatly facilitates securing these forms



of crisis support, as demonstrated by the co-location trial at QPS Toowoomba with DVAC (see Rodgers et al 2022).

5. Ensure stations include culturally appropriate staffing of police and other workers mirroring community demographics

In an Australian context it is critical that a culturally diverse workforce is employed in specialist stations to provide culturally appropriate support. A history of violence by police against Indigenous people and other people of colour are key reasons for the underreporting of family violence from these groups. Other reasons include lack of understanding by police around cultural concerns and fears by victims around involvement from immigration authorities (Sergrave et al, 2021).

6. Encourage QPS to be more victim-focused, to engage in community prevention activities, ideally co-designed with local community groups, to challenge local norms that sustain domestic family violence

Officers who work in women's police stations in Argentina are mandated by legislation to conduct community facing primary violence prevention work at least once a month. Any implementation plan could consider the inclusion of QPS engagement in primary prevention activities, tailored to the local community and co-designed with local organisations, such as the local domestic violence service providers, schools, religious and neighbourhood and community centres. This would mean shift away from a priority focus on law and order public policing, to community policing that aims to build trust and rapport at a neighbourhood level, of the kind recommended by the Qld Productivity Commission, that concluded after an exhaustive inquiry into criminal justice in Qld:

'A system more focused on the restoration of victims may also benefit offenders, and the general public, through lowering reoffending and the prison population.'
(QPS, 2019: 251).



Photo 6: Police from CMF on Patrol Argentina



Photo 7: Police on Patrol Brisbane, Qld

7. Host support groups to empower victims to break the cycle of domestic family violence and coercive control

Several (but not all) of the women's stations we studied in Argentina hosted women's support groups, supplemented with online self-governing chat groups. Initiated by station psychologists/counsellors, victim support groups provide ongoing empowerment and support for women. These therapeutic groups enable victim/survivors to sustain the decision to report or leave relationships, and helps survivors deal with ambiguous emotions of guilt and shame. Individual support is provided by psychologists, counsellors and other DFV workers may provide assistance in identifying personal strengths and networks, and emotional and resilience capacity building to break the cycle of DFV violence and coercive control. Where this service is already provided by a domestic violence non-government organisation, establish formal links and protocols for information sharing, and mutually supporting clients using both services.

8. Have the power to refer men to perpetrator programs (regardless of whether an DVO is sought or in place)

Under the 2009 legislation in Argentina, as explained in this report, police have a prevention power to refer men to programs established by local authorities to "unlearn" their violent conduct, regardless of whether or not a DVO is in place, or even sought. In Australia these would be equivalent to male perpetrator programs. Consideration could be given to refer men to perpetrator programs (i.e. of the kind offered by DV Connect), in addition to or instead of a domestic violence order, should



this align with the wishes of the victim/survivor, and regarded as consistent with the level of assessed risk. In Qld this may require amendments to *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (S. 100) to provide police with the discretion to use this alternative pathway instead of mandatory reporting requirements. This could enhance reluctant groups, like women of colour or Indigenous families, to come forward earlier in the cycle of DFV, to seek police assistance.

9. Allow victims of men’s violence to choose a specialist trained female police officer to take her statement and be supported by a trauma informed DFV co-located worker

This choice is guaranteed in Argentina, but it is not in any Australian jurisdiction. It’s a lottery, except where police have adopted co-location trials, as in Toowoomba Qld, where DFV victims are initially assessed by a DFV worker inside the station (see Rodgers, Carrington, Ryan, 2021). When women come to a specialist police station to report a DFV, it is important they are first met by a trauma informed social worker or DV worker/counsellor. Should they wish to report a DFV incident or breach they must be given the option of the trauma informed worker also attending the police interview, as they were in the QPS/DVAC co-location trial in Toowoomba (Rodgers, et al. 2022). They should also be given the choice of being interviewed by a female police officer, should this be their preference.

10. Possess specialist training in responding to DFV delivered by an independent quality educator as an essential eligibility requirement to work in a specialist police station

Police who work at women’s stations in Argentina undertake mandatory training from a gender perspective, provided by the Gender Policy Unit. Specialist training such as a graduate certificate, in Responding to Domestic Violence, or completed undergraduate degree with specific subjects on responding to domestic family violence, should ideally be the set standard for recruitment to a specialist police station designed to receive victims of DFV. In-house QPS training is simply not sufficient. It may well be possible for the co-located DFV workers to offer additional training at a station level, as they did during the Toowoomba Co-location Trial between DVAC and Toowoomba QPS (Rodgers, et al., 2022).

11. Practice the art of policing through an intersectional understanding of DFV as opposed to a one size fits all approach

To work in diverse communities with a diverse range of victims/survivors specialist police stations need to inform their practices and decision-making with an intersectional, as opposed to a one size fits all response to DFV (Nancarrow, 2019). Qld's police and criminal justice systems need fresh approaches for responding to diverse cohorts of DFV survivors who also tend to be the most reluctant to seek help, the most suspicious of police, and/or the most disadvantaged in relation to their access to mainstream services.



Photo 8: Specialist Police embed themselves deep into the community to build trust

Concluding submission

Police have a significant role in the front-line response to domestic and sexual violence; contact with police is often a victim's first contact with the criminal legal system, and the broader system of services and support (Royal Commission 2016: 1; Special Taskforce 2015: 215; Voce and Boxall 2018: 1). DFV is a substantial portion of policing work with Australian frontline estimates reporting that DFV takes up 40% to 70% of police on duty time (Garcia 2021; NSW Committee 2021; The Police Association of Victoria 2015). A single attendance averages 2.5-3 hours (Queensland Government Statistician's Office 2021), increasing to 3.5-4 hours including paperwork (The Police Association of Victoria, 2015). DFV policing and legal reforms have expanded police role and responsibility increasing the time spent on each call out and resulting in significant triaging of call outs due to chronic understaffing (Queensland Government Statistician's Office 2021; The Police Association of Victoria 2015). Policing DFV effectively involves police taking on a joint social work



and police role, requiring victim support, conflict mediation, and conducting investigation (Maple and Kebbell 2020; Rodgers et al, 2022).

Given the shortcomings of traditional policing responses to DFV, as born out by a large body of research, and Qld DFV Death Reviews referred to in this submission, the case for trialing specialist DFV police stations in Qld is strong. It offers a structural solution to a structural problem. It's a win win for everyone, police, victims, the criminal justice system, and most importantly for women, their families and communities. In sum, specialist police stations offer an integrated victim centric response from a multi-disciplinary team of police, social workers, counsellors and lawyers, in a one stop shop, a model proven to reduce the risk of lethal domestic violence. In turn, this leads to earlier reporting to police, increased satisfaction with police responses, and enhancements in women's safety. There is considerable evidence also, that both the DFV and police workforces are supportive of their establishment in Australian jurisdictions (Carrington et al 2020; Rodgers et al 2022).

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