



PART 3

**THE
CULTURAL
CHANGE
NEEDED**

7 Sexism and misogyny

Sexism and misogyny describe negative attitudes and beliefs about women ranging from the belief that women are inferior to men to contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against, women. Sexism and misogyny can lead to behaviours such as sexual discrimination, bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assaults, as well as other forms of poor treatment of women.

This chapter sets out the evidence heard by the Commission about the significant issues of sexism and misogyny within the ranks of the Queensland Police Service (QPS). It also considers evidence which tends to suggest that the problem is more prevalent than the organisation understands.

The chapter considers the evidence which demonstrates that, in some cases, poor police responses to domestic and family violence, are underpinned by attitudes of sexism and misogyny rather than simply a lack of training about domestic and family violence, or the procedures which ought to be followed when responding to it. It considers recent failures of leadership to stamp out sexism and misogyny in the organisation.

The QPS has taken steps to address the problem of sexism and misogyny by establishing Project Juniper in 2019 and later, the Workplace Assessment and Support Team and Cultural Transformation Team in 2020, which have recently been reviewed and will require enhancement. The organisation has also encouraged officers to become involved in a number of policing associations that promote, assist and support women in leadership in policing. The chapter concludes by making recommendations intended to assist the organisation to further address the problem.

SEXISM AND MISOGYNY IN THE QPS

At a Commission hearing on 18 August 2022, Police Commissioner Katarina Carroll acknowledged that there are cultural issues relating to sexism, misogyny and racism in the QPS. In respect of those issues, she said:

I think they're significant and I think there's areas of concern. But the numbers of complaints and the data that I have compared to the contacts that we have with people in the community, I don't know if they make it to the definition of "widespread". I admit that there are issues in the organisation.¹

Before the Police Commissioner gave that evidence, most of the submissions the Commission received from QPS members told of cultural issues more specifically related to the ways that the QPS responds to domestic and family violence in the community.

Following the Police Commissioner's evidence, the Commission was inundated with contact from QPS members who wanted to share their experiences of sexism and misogyny in the organisation. After that time, 329 QPS members made submissions, most of which related to issues of sexism and misogyny and racism in the organisation, and disappointment in the organisation's leadership.

Less than five submissions said that sexism and misogyny is not a problem in the organisation. Most said that sexism and misogyny is a problem, with some describing it as rife throughout the QPS. Many officers provided details of sexist conduct, such as sexual harassment, sexual assaults or rapes, that had happened to them or someone they knew in the QPS.

Most of these submissions were made confidentially because of a fear of reprisal by the organisation, or a fear of being seen as a 'dog' by their colleagues, if it became known they had spoken to the Commission.

QPS members repeatedly told the Commission they had not told the QPS about the matters they relayed to the Commission, for various reasons including that they feared:

- the matter would not be dealt with appropriately
- they would be seen as a 'dog'
- they would not be believed
- their career would be damaged as a result of making a complaint.

The Commission has not provided those confidential submissions to the QPS or anyone else and, as a result, the QPS and the other parties do not know the extent of the information provided to the Commission or the details in individual submissions.

The Commission acknowledges that this means that neither the QPS nor the other parties are in a position to comment on their contents. However, in many cases, in addition to the submissions, the Commission obtained disciplinary records and other files from the QPS under compulsion, which supplemented the information contained in them.

Throughout the submissions, QPS members expressed relief that the Commission was examining the issues of sexism and misogyny, as well as hope that, by having a light shone on the issues, there would be some positive change in the organisation.

THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF SEXISM AND MISOGYNY IN THE QPS

The material received by the Commission from QPS members and the organisation shows that sexism and misogyny is indeed a significant problem in the QPS.

The Commission has seen that the problem takes many forms, including sexist language, bullying and discrimination. It also takes the form of sexual harassment, sexual assault and, in some cases, rape by male QPS members of their female colleagues. It impacts women at all stages of their career, regardless of their experience or location.

It is now well known that sexual harassment and assaults are under-reported in the wider community. Under-reporting is likely to be magnified for women in the QPS where there is a culture of fear and silence which inhibits the making of complaints within the organisation. This means that it is difficult for either the Commission or the QPS to measure the extent of the problem of sexism and misogyny generally, and the prevalence of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape specifically.

In considering the evidence of sexism and misogyny within the QPS, the Commission is cognisant that many male officers do not hold these attitudes and beliefs or engage in such conduct. It should not be thought that, because this chapter sets out evidence of sexism and misogyny in the organisation, the Commission considers that all male officers behave in such a way. That is plainly not the case.

However, as will be seen, the issue is a significant and seemingly deeply entrenched one that will require considerable effort by the organisation to successfully address.

SEXISM AND MISOGYNY AT THE ACADEMY AND IN THE EARLY YEARS

The Commission heard from QPS members that sexism and misogyny in the QPS starts at the Queensland Police Service Academy (Academy). One woman explained:

During my recruit phase at the Academy when I was twenty years old, there were several male training officers who ogled me and made inappropriate comments toward me. I was aware that I was not the only woman targeted and rumours flew about sexual indiscretions among the ranks toward female recruits.²

That woman, who was a recruit nearly 15 years ago, said that the female recruits were given a warning to watch their reputation. She explained:

During assessment phases, the class facilitators ran verbal feedback sessions. On one of these sessions I was lectured to “watch my reputation”. It was insinuated that this advice related to sexual exploits within the Service. I was taken aback and surprised that I was given this advice and felt shamed, judged, and undermined for the hardworking professionalism I had contributed to the organisation at that point. I also found the advice to be confusing, as the only thing I had done to earn this lecture was to be young, single, and female. I wondered if they singled me out for a reason and asked fellow recruits about this. I found that the facilitators had given the same lecture to many other young single females in my intake but not to any men that I knew of.³

Another QPS member explained that women in her cohort at the Academy were given similar lectures which included a warning that their male colleagues would try to hit on them. She said:

When I was at the Academy, all the girls were taken aside and given a talking-to as a group by a female Snr Sgt that policemen would try to hit on us and to be aware of it. The male recruits were not given anything similar. On courses until recently and it may still exist, the attendees are told to not go near the recruits as the recruits ie the female ones would fall for them and that can cause trouble. At the Academy we “learned” the four things that can get you into trouble as a police officer “Paperwork, Property, Piss and Pussy” and this is still around.⁴

The Commission heard from QPS members that these sorts of warnings had been given to female recruits at the Academy for a long time and were still occurring.

Material provided by the QPS confirms the accuracy of this information.

The information provided by the QPS demonstrates that, for at least the last 10 years, female recruits at the Academy are given “a talk about their reputation and what to do if they [are] subjected to sexual harassment” prior to their induction. This talk was most recently given to women in the second recruit intake for 2022.⁵

The facilitator who gives the talk, who is a Sergeant, informs the women about what they can expect when they start as First Year Constables. Recruits are informed that First Year Constables, especially women, are sometimes referred to as “fresh meat” and that, although most male officers are respectful of women, “there are the occasional bad ones who can be predatory”.⁶

The facilitator shares her own experience of sexual harassment in the organisation and reassures the women that if it ever happens to them, they must tell someone they trust. The facilitator then warns them about protecting their reputation as women in the organisation. In a statement provided to the Commission, she explained her practice in this regard as follows:

I then discuss the importance of their reputation and credibility. I discuss the reality that if they are intimate with a colleague, the male officer will be labelled a ‘hero’ and the female a ‘slut’. I reinforce that this is wrong and that female officers should never be labelled with this term but I remind them that the reality of being in a male dominated work place means that this is what happens.⁷

The Commission notes that this session is not part of the formal curriculum, but that time is scheduled for it at the end of the recruit program and before induction. In the Commission’s view, the fact that at least one facilitator considers it necessary to warn women recruits about the existence of the occasional predatory male officer they may or will encounter speaks to the culture of the organisation.

The acknowledgement that a sexual relationship between colleagues will result in a woman’s reputation being damaged, and a man’s enhanced, also speaks to the culture of the organisation and the level of sexism that prevails in it.

Given the evidence of sexual harassment in the organisation, the Commission considers that this is an issue which should be addressed as part of the formal curriculum and a recommendation to this effect is made at the end of the chapter.

The session should be directed to ensuring new recruits understand the nature of sexual harassment and what the mechanisms are for reporting it. A strong undertaking from the QPS that they will be supported if they make a complaint is also required to make it clear such conduct will not be tolerated by the organisation. Of course, for this to work, the QPS will need to ensure that a cultural change occurs which makes reporting such matters consistently safe for female QPS members. This is not presently the case, as will be discussed later in this chapter and in Part 5 of the Report.

QPS members told the Commission that the sort of predatory behaviour they are warned about at the Academy does in fact happen to First Year Constables.

One woman, who has since left the QPS, shared her experiences as follows:

[A]s a First Year Constable I worked with a male officer whose opinion of female police officers was to refer to them as ‘front bums’. I also had two married, higher ranking colleagues cross boundaries with me as a younger female officer. Lots of excessive drinking, poor behaviour & infidelity & entitlement. A colleague of mine was driven to a secluded place one evening during a shift & propositioned by a male colleague. Others propositioned & bullied.⁸

Officers told the Commission of instances of women being rated on their attractiveness when starting at a new workplace within the organisation. One QPS member’s experience was:

When I commenced as a First Year Constable at my first station, my level of attractiveness had already been evaluated among the male population in the station because, I later found out, that male officers make a habit of looking up new female officer’s service (badge) photograph on our internal computer system to assess if they are attractive or not. My husband, who is a serving member of this station confirmed that is what happened when I commenced at my first station and told me of other occasions where his fellow officers look up the photographs of incoming policewomen. I have never understood why a woman’s attractiveness matters professionally and was especially frustrated knowing that most of the officers engaging in this behaviour are married men. I felt objectified and judged before I even worked one shift and was also self-conscious about how I appeared in front of my colleagues.⁹

The Commission found further examples of sexual harassment and predatory conduct by male officers towards junior female colleagues in material provided by the QPS.

In one instance, in December 2020, a Sergeant, who was a shift supervisor, harassed a First Year Constable by giving her extra attention, sitting overly close to her and arranging for the two of them to be alone at the station together by changing their taskings. Despite being asked to cease his behaviour, he continued until the First Year Constable left the station.¹⁰

In May 2021, the same Sergeant harassed another female Constable by touching her needlessly, stretching his groin in front of her and commenting on her appearance.¹¹

In another example, in February 2021, a Senior Constable harassed a First Year Constable immediately upon her placement at his station. He asked for her phone number on her first shift, added her on social media, sent her daily messages, called her pet names and requested that she massage him.¹²

The Commission accepts that conduct of this kind is likely to be under-reported. In addition to the other factors (discussed later in this chapter) which are likely to result in under-reporting, the power imbalance between a First Year Constable and another, usually more senior officer, is likely to exacerbate the fear of speaking up.

However, given the material seen by the Commission, and in light of the warnings given to new recruits about predatory behaviour and the sexist views held about women in the organisation, the Commission is satisfied that sexism, sexual harassment and predatory behaviour towards First Year Constables and junior female officers is a significant issue.

SEXIST LANGUAGE AND BEHAVIOUR

Even after their early years in the QPS, women experience sexism and misogyny in the form of sexist language, bullying and discrimination.

Some of the conduct reported to the Commission illustrated the warning given to female recruits at the Academy about the ways men and women are viewed and treated differently within the organisation if they engage (or are rumoured to engage) in relationships with colleagues. One male QPS member provided this illustration of that difference:

The QPS has a bad culture of turning a blind eye when it comes to extra-marital affairs. I confronted a male colleague who was in a committed relationship when he was taking advantage of a drunk younger female officer. As a result of the confrontation his partner found out and their relationship ended, however the OIC... pulled me into his office about this and suggested it would be my fault if the officer's partner became depressed or suicidal rather than placing the blame on the individual who had done the wrong thing. He stated he has witnessed similar behaviour in his career but chose to ignore it rather than speaking up and recommended that I do the same. I find this a horrible stance and believe this attitude would have an adverse effect on how female officers are treated at work. We should be speaking up for women being treated poorly both in and outside of the workplace. This same OIC spoke to a married female colleague I have worked with for years, since her first year, in regards to a baseless rumour circulating that we were having an affair based solely on the fact that we are friends and get along really well. She was told that it could be perceived that more was going on due to our friendship rather than attempting to stamp out such nonsense. Meanwhile, as a male officer I was never spoken to by anyone which would indicate that my behaviour was fine while hers was not, clearly placing different standards on the behaviour of men and women. Instead of confronting the issue, myself and that officer have noticed that we are no longer rostered to work together, despite it being a regular occurrence previously and achieving results significantly higher than the majority of the station. This

measure has not been mentioned to myself or my colleague, but we believe this measure has been put in place by our OIC and gives the perception to other staff that our behaviour was inappropriate. It is extremely disappointing that the perception that men and women can't be friends still exists in 2022 within an organisation that claims to want equality and that this perception is perpetuated by senior management.¹³

Material obtained by the Commission from the QPS included a record of a male QPS member subjecting his female colleagues to the sort of treatment referred to above. In 2021, a Senior Constable spread baseless rumours about two officers, junior in rank to the Senior Constable, having an affair. He was told to cease, but did not, even going so far as to tell the partner of one of the officers.¹⁴

It appears that sexist language in the organisation is also commonplace.

Two senior ranking officers made sexist comments at senior leaders' conferences, shortly before the Commission was established, in March and April 2022. It is unsurprising, then, that the Commission heard from officers of sexist language being used at different levels throughout the organisation. One QPS member gave the following example about sexist language used in relation to women:

An OIC in a regional area was introducing a new female officer at a public meeting and introduced her as the "new vagina" in the office.¹⁵

One of the senior leaders referred to above used the term "*vagina-whisperer*" at a conference. It is perhaps almost inevitable that similar language would be used by other officers in the organisation when it is modelled by a senior leader.¹⁶

Sexist language, and other sexist behaviours which exclude women, have the effect of devaluing and isolating women in the workplace. One QPS member informed the Commission of the following example of sexist language and behaviour directed to a female Sergeant:

A female Sergeant ... was harassed and bullied by senior male police at her station [until] she had to take long term sick leave and was ultimately medically retired. The officer was bullied simply for being a female Sergeant. Inappropriate, disrespectful and offensive comments often made to the Sgt by senior male officers:

Calling her a "Princess" in front of junior staff

Being told "to get me a cup of tea wench"

Being told "we don't need any more girls at the station"

A picture of a 1970's police woman wearing a

skirt and carrying a handbag was stuck to the hot water urn (sic) and senior male police would often point to the picture and say “that is where police women should be...in the kitchen making men tea and scones”.¹⁷

The Commission also saw evidence of conduct of the kind described above in material obtained from the QPS. In one case, an Officer in Charge of a station declared, in respect of two female applicants for positions in his station, that “*these lickers will never get a job in this station*”. In that same station, sexist material was permitted to be displayed on the station fridge, including a picture of a woman in a swimsuit with the words, “*tap and go*” on it, and other magnets of women in lingerie.¹⁸

SEXISM IMPACTING CAREER DEVELOPMENT

In addition to sexist language and behaviour, there is also a strong perception among QPS members that women are not treated fairly when it comes to job opportunities and promotions in the QPS. Officers reported that women are less likely than their male counterparts to get promotions and relieving opportunities. By way of example, one QPS member said:

I personally have been a victim of sexism. No surprise when the QPS is heavily male dominated, and it’s always been a ‘pissing contest’ between them to see who gets on what course or promotion first. If you are a female trying to get on a course, promoted or wanting to relieve in a different unit or higher rank position, it is near to impossible. I personally have had males who were younger in both age and in service get to go on special training courses with no ‘waiting their turn’ or being told ‘we don’t have enough staff’, or ‘you are too junior in service to be eligible to go on this course’. I had to wait my turn.¹⁹

Officers told the Commission that, when women do get promotions, comments are often made which suggest the promotion was not achieved on merit, or was only achieved because of the woman’s gender or, even worse, was achieved because the woman had engaged in sexual favours to obtain it. A woman who had such an experience told the Commission:

Officers who were personally supportive but who were indoctrinated by this negative culture, told me to just ignore the behaviour and no matter what not to respond in anyway. I was told the behaviour would pass if I did so. I was reassured that I was deserving of the promotion but it was happening to all the girls who got promoted at that time. There is never a time when a woman is promoted in the QPS that does not generate responses that she only got it because she was a woman or she slept her way there.²⁰

In a similar vein, the comment made by one of the senior leaders at a QPS conference earlier this year suggested that a high-ranking female police officer received sexual favours from a male police officer applying for a promotion. The ‘joke’, which relied on the suggestion that the female QPS officer had “*shut her legs*” on the face of a man applying for a promotion, was plainly disrespectful of the woman involved in that process.²¹

In addition, officers told the Commission that there is still a perception that women must work twice as hard as men to get recognised or promoted. In this regard, one QPS member said:

I was accused by a senior female officer of sleeping my way to promotion and have been told by others that “it’s easy for me because I am a pretty girl” and somehow that is a compliment. Being told by other women that you will be automatically be labelled a “lesbian or a slut” by the men you work with I know still occurs too. The guy that told me my “tits look great in that shirt” was laughingly told it wasn’t funny and that was it. Every woman I know has a story about how they were given a promotion or a work placement due to their gender, sexuality, race or perceived promiscuousness but I have never heard a man being accused of the same thing.

We still have to work twice as hard to be taken half as seriously and I am so glad that this Commission is occurring to let the general public know that this is a very different and hard job for a woman.²²

It is quite clear that the views about the disadvantages faced by female QPS members in relation to job opportunities and promotions are held by more than a few in the organisation. The 2021 Working for Queensland survey results for the QPS show that many people consider that it is harder for a woman than a man to get ahead in the organisation.

The results show that:

- only 55% of respondents consider that gender is not a barrier to success in the QPS. This result is 14 points lower than the result for the Queensland public sector generally
- only 55% of respondents consider that women and men have equal access to work experiences that support career progression. This result is 12 points lower than the result for the Queensland public sector generally
- only 25% of respondents consider that recruitment and promotion decisions in the QPS are fair. Three quarters of the respondents disagreed with that statement or were unsure. This result is 13 points lower than the result for the Queensland public sector generally.²³

The full range of responses to these questions are set out below:

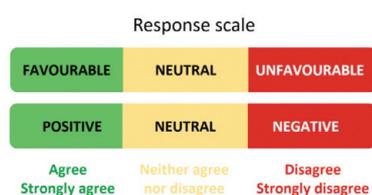
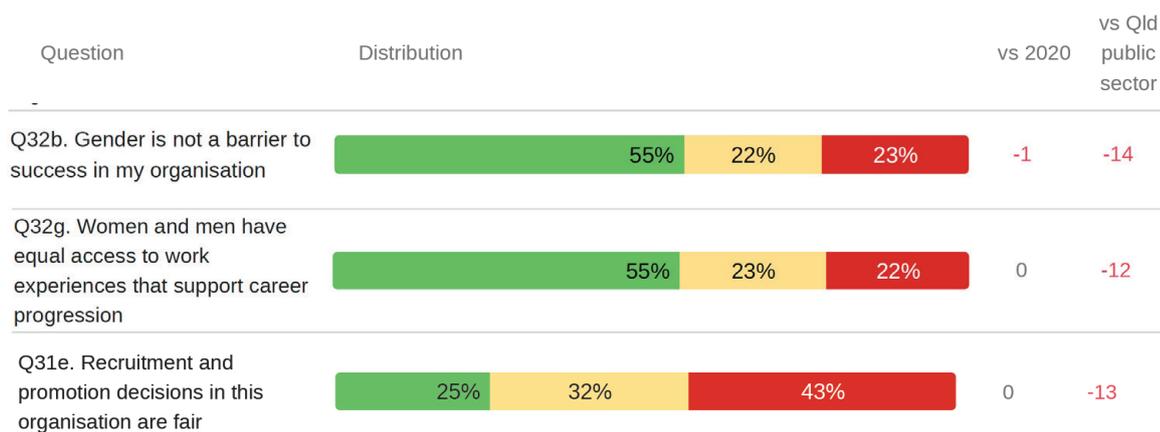


Figure 22: Responses to questions related to gender and recruitment in Working for Queensland Survey 2021

On the question of job opportunities within the organisation, one QPS member explained that the issue goes beyond one of unfairness and extends to male officers expressing a preference for attractive women. That officer said:

... the sexualisation of females is rampant, with it acceptable for members to explicitly state preference for younger/attractive female staff members. Conversations that may have once been appropriate at the pub amongst mates is generally considered totally acceptable in the workplace. When I describe the QPS culture to new employees, I typically warn them that it is like the 1980s - the men have just learnt they're not allowed to touch the women's bottoms but they still don't really understand why.²⁴

The Commission found evidence of the sort of sexist conduct referred to above in material obtained from the QPS, including in complaint files.

In one case that came to light this year, a Detective Senior Sergeant told members of his work unit that he wanted a particular female officer to work at the unit because he had a sexual interest in her. He introduced her to other members of the unit, later telling unit members that he had seen her genitals.²⁵ In another instance, in respect of a complaint lodged in 2021, a Sergeant at a Police Citizens Youth Club

told colleagues that they needed a “*hot little piece*” such as a particular female QPS member to work at the club in order to attract men to join.²⁶

The Commission also received submissions which remarked on the respectful male officers submitters had worked with. Such submissions noted that their experiences of the organisation were generally greatly improved when they worked with respectful and inclusive supervisors and colleagues.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, SEXUAL ASSAULTS AND RAPE

Officers told the Commission that sexual harassment is common in the organisation. In a smaller number of submissions, women also reported instances of sexual assaults and rape by male colleagues.

The Commission also saw recent examples of sexual harassment in records obtained from the QPS. In one case, a Senior Constable harassed three female Constables over a six-month period in 2021. He made sexualised comments to the women at work, and asked them inappropriate questions, such as whether they enjoyed anal sex. He commented on their appearance, telling one that he “*just wanted to watch [her] bend over*”, and told another that looking through her social media profile gave him “*pleasure*”. He invaded the personal space of all three women and took photos of one while she was sitting at her desk, telling her he had uploaded it to Snapchat for his friends to see. All three women were made to feel uncomfortable by his behaviour, with one describing that she felt physically sick going to work when he was there.²⁷

In another case from 2021, a Sergeant, who was an Officer in Charge of a station, repeatedly asked his male colleagues whether they would “lick the moot” of female officers and members of the public and hounded them until they answered him.²⁸

In a further example from 2021, another Sergeant made inappropriate comments to a female QPS member which included remarking on her appearance in a sexually suggestive way.²⁹

Also in 2021, a Senior Constable, who was the administrator of a closed Facebook group for members of his station, posted sexist and demeaning content to be accessed by members of the station. One of the posts depicted a woman who had just given birth, naked and with her legs spread. In another one, he asked a male colleague who was in hospital for “pics of [his] wife – just so we know who to look for after the wake...”³⁰

In 2022, a Senior Constable completing an Online Learning Product about domestic and family violence said, “[i]t is easy to see this was written by a fat lesbian with hairy armpits”. The same officer also made comments in relation to the appearance of two female colleagues and stared suggestively at another female colleague as she walked past him.³¹

In each of the matters referred to in the preceding five paragraphs, the offending conduct was dealt with by way of Local Management Resolution. Local Management Resolution is considered in further detail in Part 5 of this Report. The Commission considers that Local Management Resolution is an inadequate response to sexist and misogynistic conduct. Not only does it have the effect of confirming the view of many QPS members that there is little point in reporting such conduct, it also sends a message that the organisation does not consider such conduct to be serious.

In this way, the Commission is concerned that the organisation’s responses to sexist and misogynistic conduct at times not only fail to stamp out sexism and misogyny but instead create conditions where they can flourish.

When the Police Commissioner gave evidence to the Commission in October 2022, she appeared surprised by the prevalent use of Local Management Resolution as a means for dealing with sexist and misogynistic conduct.³² In the Commission’s view, there has been a lack of leadership oversight in respect of the organisation’s responses to sexist and misogynistic conduct and in relation to the use of Local Management Resolution generally.

Under-reporting makes it difficult to determine the prevalence of sexual harassment in the QPS. The Commission notes that two per cent of respondents to the 2021 Working for Queensland survey indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months.³³ If correct, and if it is assumed that that percentage can be extrapolated to the population of the approximately 17,000 member QPS workforce, that response would indicate that some 340 QPS members had experienced sexual harassment in the last year alone.

However, the Commission considers the prevalence is likely to be greater than the survey results indicate. There are a number of reasons for this. First, more than 30% of the organisation did not respond to the survey. It is reasonable to assume that a significant proportion of those who are disengaged from the organisation would be among the cohort that did not respond, and that there may well be members who had been subjected to bullying or sexual harassment within that disengaged cohort.

Second, the Commission heard concerns from QPS members, and a number of the free-text responses to the survey point out, that the extent of the demographic data obtained by the survey answers (such as rank, years of experience and location) is likely to lead many respondents to fear they could be identified. The QPS submits that there are safeguards in place to ensure anonymity for people who complete the Working for Queensland survey, but it seems that there are QPS members who do not trust that this is so.

Third, other free-text responses to that survey indicate that some work units were warned by area supervisors that unfavourable results would lead to more scrutiny by the organisation and so were urged to respond favourably. There is a real possibility that survey respondents who received such a warning may not have reported sexual harassment if they had experienced it.

It is, therefore, not possible for the Commission to determine the extent of the problem of sexual harassment in the QPS. On the evidence before the Commission, however, it is clear that sexual harassment is a significant problem and is under-reported.

Any form of sexism and misogyny in the workplace is troubling. However, astonishingly, in the QPS sexism and misogyny extend to sexual assaults and, occasionally, rape by male colleagues, much of which goes unreported and therefore unknown to the organisation. In the Commission’s view, while such serious criminal offences are always inexcusable, it is particularly disturbing when they are committed by those whose duty and responsibility it is to uphold the law and protect the community. The fact that women in the organisation say they are too scared to report the conduct makes it far worse.

Officers told the Commission of being sexually assaulted or raped themselves or knowing colleagues who have been. The Commission heard from a number of women who had been sexually assaulted by their male colleagues in police cars or been sent unsolicited photographs of their colleagues’ penises. One woman told the Commission:

Regarding QPS culture, I don’t really know where to start but misogyny is alive and well but sometimes you are so used to it you don’t even realise. Plus as a women I am used to giving up some of my power just to get at the table with the men. It’s about having a training officer stroking your leg while you go code 2 to a job telling you he will look after you, it’s about being told you are lucky to have a job when you are pregnant by your boss, it’s about senior sergeants sending dick pics to subordinates or asking subordinates to send them nudes, its about senior officers sleeping with subordinates, it’s about walking into a room of managers and being one of only a few females, it’s about watching the boys get access to relieving and then promoted while you can’t even get a performance conversation going with your male boss. If the men in the organisation can’t respect the women they serve beside how can they respect the women they serve? ³⁴

Some officers told the Commission of instances of sexual assaults at work functions. In that regard, one QPS member told the Commission:

There are many instances of male QPS members behaving inappropriately in work/social settings like Christmas parties, or after work drinks. On several occasions, I was either verbally sexually harassed by male QPS officers, or physically sexually assaulted...

There is a certain amount of leeway given and sometimes comments are just banter and male officers want to get a negative reaction out of you. And I will acknowledge that police officers do see the worst of society and over time, that skews your view of the world. However, I think this is indicative of a larger problem with devaluing and dehumanising women and people of different cultural background who exist outside of the norm, which is predominately white, straight and male.³⁵

Another QPS member told the Commission that she was sexually assaulted and threatened with rape by two officers in the last decade, but did not report the matters for fear of being seen as a 'dog'. She said:

I joined the QPS as a young, fit 21 year old female. I never realised when joining that I would be subjected to continual sexual harassment, sexual assault and misogyny that must be accepted, because if you make a complaint, you are seen as a 'dog.'³⁶

Some of the reports made to the Commission were of recent sexual assaults. Others occurred many years ago but continue to affect the victim because it had not been reported and the incident was, therefore, still unresolved. One QPS member relayed a sexual assault perpetrated on her by two male colleagues, in the presence of other male colleagues, that occurred 22 years ago. It was a serious incident which involved her being physically restrained and assaulted. She said:

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'. I blamed myself and probably still do to a point. I am easy going and friendly and I think this made me a target. The fact is I didn't get raped and I tell myself that it wasn't that bad anyway. 22 years later and I can still remember it like it was yesterday. I have trouble attending police gatherings at times as I am always waiting for something bad to happen. We arrest people for this behaviour, yet they felt it was OK to do this to another employee.³⁷

Another QPS member told the Commission of being sexually assaulted in 2020 by a superior officer as she was leaving her station. She said:

He reached out to hug me. Whilst hugging me [he] reached his hand down towards my buttocks with an open hand before grabbing and squeezing on my buttocks. I can't recall exactly how many times but I remember it being a few. Whilst doing this (he) also made a grunting noise.³⁸

Material obtained from the QPS included records of male police officers who had sexually assaulted female colleagues, usually junior colleagues. Serious sexual conduct or assaults which were known to the organisation, committed by two officers against many female QPS members, included the female QPS members being:

- followed into a female bathroom on nightshift by a senior officer who said, "*I thought you told me to come in here for a blow job*"³⁹
- touched on the bottom and back immediately prior to a job interview by a more senior male police officer on the interview panel⁴⁰
- hugged and having her breast cupped by a supervising male police officer⁴¹
- touched, massaged, having their hair played with and being hugged and kissed⁴²
- rubbed on the vagina, outside the clothes, without consent⁴³
- asked to permit a more senior male officer to perform oral sex on her⁴⁴
- threatened with rape.⁴⁵

A small number of women reported instances of rape to the Commission. One QPS member informed the Commission that she was raped by a male colleague many years ago. While she reported her rape, she also knows of five female colleagues who have not disclosed their rapes for fear of retribution.⁴⁶

A now-retired QPS member told the Commission that she knows of many women who had terrible things happen to them, many of whom left the QPS over the years without making a complaint to the organisation. That woman was recently contacted by a QPS member who informed her she was raped by a male colleague but never reported it to the organisation.⁴⁷

Another QPS member told the Commission that she did report her rape but was discouraged from making a formal complaint because her complaint was a case of word against word:

I never suffered from racism whilst in the QPS. But I certainly was the victim of sexism, misogyny, bullying and sexual harassment because I was female. I had four serious matters I reported swept under the carpet and treated like I was the perpetrator.

First complaint was a rape by a colleague, which I was told – word vs word, no witnesses, no physical evidence, no one would believe me and I'd be called a dog which would follow me for the rest of my career. I essentially was given a pat on the head and told to get over it. They at least moved me stations.⁴⁸

It is deeply concerning that, in addition to having endured the trauma of sexual assault or rape, there are women who have not reported, or not formally reported, such criminal conduct.

As with sexual harassment, it is difficult to assess with any confidence the prevalence of sexual assault and rape within the QPS because it is under-reported.

The Commission has not made any determinations of individual cases of sexual assault or rape, although it has seen instances where the QPS has itself substantiated complaints of sexual assaults. The Commission is satisfied that both types of offences have occurred within the organisation but is unable to determine when or how often. However, given the serious criminal nature of sexual assault and rape, even a single instance of such conduct by a male officer toward his colleague is intolerable, and worse when it is unreported and therefore uncharged.

The Commission is concerned that conduct which is sexist and misogynistic in nature is under-reported but, even allowing for that, still evident. The Commission considers that the sexist conduct which is known to the organisation, or that has come to light as part of this Inquiry, is likely to be only the tip of the iceberg.

The next section considers the reasons why there is under-reporting of these issues.

A CULTURE OF FEAR AND SILENCE STIFLING REPORTS

There is a strong culture of fear and silence in the QPS when it comes to making a complaint about the conduct of a fellow officer. This culture of fear and silence makes it impossible for the QPS to assess the extent of the problem of sexism and misogyny in the organisation.

As noted in Chapter 3, this culture was starkly highlighted by the large number of QPS members who insisted on anonymity or confidentiality when providing information to the Commission. It was also confirmed by the number of QPS members who requested confidentiality in respect of their interviews with Mr Mark Ainsworth, a retired senior QPS officer and an independent consultant engaged by the Commission.

There is a significant body of material before the Commission which demonstrates that this strong culture against speaking out has had a chilling effect on the reporting of sexual discrimination, harassment and assaults.

EXAMPLES OF CONDUCT NOT BEING REPORTED TO THE ORGANISATION

Evidence was provided to the Commission that it was not just victims who were reluctant to speak out about sexist and bullying conduct; witnesses were also often unwilling to speak up. By way of example, one officer told the Commission:

During my investigations I spoke with numerous officers who refused to provide me details of bullying because of the fear of repercussions. I was particularly surprised by the fear exhibited by some of the male officers who I would ordinarily classify as alpha males...⁴⁹

The Commission saw numerous examples of both victims and witnesses being too scared to speak up in material provided by the QPS.

In one case, the leader of a work unit, a Detective Senior Sergeant, engaged in sexual harassment and bullying of the members of his unit for two years before his conduct was investigated in 2022.⁵⁰ An internal investigation found that he had frequently and persistently harassed the women in his unit by making sexual comments and suggestions, speaking about female QPS members in and out of his unit in a sexually suggestive way and showing pornography to junior members of the unit. He had also bullied two men over the same period.

The Detective Senior Sergeant's conduct had a significant impact on unit members. One of the men left the unit, another took long service leave, and one of the women decided to leave the organisation altogether. Despite the misery of their circumstances, no-one made a complaint. The matter came to light only because of the 2021 Working for Queensland survey results which revealed a general level of unhappiness in the unit. Even when the investigation into the cause of the unhappiness was underway, no-one spoke out about the Detective Senior Sergeant's conduct until they were formally directed to do so.

In another case, negative workplace behaviours and bullying engaged in by a Senior Sergeant over a 13 year period only became known when one of the victims of his behaviour finally made a complaint.⁵¹ For nearly 13 years, the broader organisation was unaware of the ongoing negative workplace conduct exhibited by this Senior Sergeant because no-one was willing to speak out against the officer.

In another case, an internal investigation found that a Detective Senior Sergeant had sexually harassed or bullied 26 QPS members over a three-year period between 2016 and 2018.⁵² His behaviour was revealed when one woman made a complaint in 2019. The investigation determined that, throughout the period of his offending, the Detective Senior Sergeant's conduct was well known in the district, including, it seemed, by senior management. Not only did 25 of his victims not report the conduct, numerous witnesses who had observed it also did not make reports because they feared reprisal.

In another case, a Senior Constable had targeted junior female officers over a three-year period between 2017 and 2019.⁵³ The matter was not reported until one victim made a report in 2019.

The internal investigation found that the other female victims had not reported the matter for fear of retribution and being labelled a ‘dog’.

These case studies illustrate the significant impact that fear of retribution and being perceived as a ‘dog’ has on preventing not only victims, but also witnesses, from speaking up and reporting such conduct. They also demonstrate that that fear is in fact stifling the making of complaints.

THE FEAR THAT MAKING A REPORT WILL RESULT IN CAREER DAMAGE

The Commission heard that, in addition to the fear of retribution and being perceived as a ‘dog’, QPS members are also reluctant to make complaints due to a fear that doing so will damage their career.

A former QPS member explained that the fear that making a report will result in career damage can prevent women from ever complaining, across the length of their career, causing them to choose to leave or suffer in silence instead:

Since leaving the QPS, I have maintained a network of current and former female QPS officers who have also endured abhorrent treatment from senior ranking officers. A few of the women in my network who have left the QPS because of bullying and harassment are still traumatised by the behaviours which also cut short their careers in the QPS... Some of the current serving women in my network are still exposed to harmful behaviours, however, they are too fearful to speak up with the real possibility of being retaliated against and losing their jobs (in the same way that I did for having the courage to speak up).⁵⁴

That fear was echoed by other QPS members who made submissions to the Commission.

The material considered by the Commission demonstrates that this concern is a reasonable one, given the career damage that has been shown to have occurred to female victims who have spoken out.

One of the cases considered earlier serves to show that the fear that speaking out will result in career damage is not only real, but a reasonable one. The conduct of the Detective Senior Sergeant, which had spanned a period of more than a decade and affected many QPS members, only came to light when one of his victims, a female Senior Constable, made a complaint in 2019.

During the investigation, he remained in his role and was given the opportunity to relieve in various higher positions away from his station. Although the investigation substantiated the complaints against him, he returned to his station. Consequently, the female Senior Constable who had made the complaint against him felt she had no choice but to leave the station. The Detective Senior Sergeant has since been made an Officer in Charge of a larger station, while the female Senior Constable remains in a uniform, general duties role.

In respect of that unfairness, the female Senior Constable told the Commission:

I was definitely reluctant and scared to make the complaint. It's common knowledge amongst the police that if you make a complaint then you will be regarded as a dog and it will potentially ruin your career, however, it reached a point I felt I had no other choice...

If I had known the outcome of the investigation, I never would have made the complaint, the consequences to myself and my career were not worth the outcome.⁵⁵

Two other women who cooperated in that investigation also left the station and their detective specialist roles, and are now working in uniform, general duties roles.

In that case, the District Duty Officer who conducted the initial assessment investigation into the Detective Senior Sergeant's conduct sought help for the three women who paid the price for making the complaint or participating in the investigation. In 2020, he appealed to the Police Commissioner herself on two occasions, asking that something be done to support the women.⁵⁶

None of the three women were contacted by the Police Commissioner or her representatives or otherwise provided with meaningful support by the organisation. In relation to the lack of support provided by the organisation, one of the women said:

I can recall when Commissioner Carroll was inducted, she stated one of her priorities was to address bullying in the QPS. Knowing that my complaint was highlighted to the Commissioner I had hoped that there may finally be an outcome that was deserved. However, in response, I received nothing but silence. I am utterly disappointed about the inaction the QPS take on bullying in the QPS. The only outcome of this investigation was that I was punished whilst the subject member was rewarded. This does not pass the SELF test and does not align with the QPS's motto of "Our People Matter".⁵⁷

It was only after the Commission drew the Police Commissioner's attention to the organisation's failure to support the women that the three women were contacted in September 2022.⁵⁸ It took a Commission of Inquiry for these women to be offered any support from the QPS leadership.

In the Commission's view, this case demonstrates that it is reasonable for women who fear speaking out about sexist or bullying conduct to be fearful. This case, and others like it that the Commission has heard about from QPS members' submissions, shows that women who experience sexual harassment, bullying or even criminal conduct cannot be certain that, if they report the conduct, they will not suffer as a result.

In another case, a female Constable made a complaint of sexual harassment against a male Senior Constable. The Senior Constable was dealt with in 2018 by way of Local Management Resolution. Two years later, the female Constable resigned. In her resignation letter, she wrote:

I made a justified complaint about sexual harassment in the workplace. A complaint I had evidence of, in the form of months worth of text messages. I had the right to come to work and not be sexually harassed. After repeated attempts to shut the advances down, I asked for help. I was then victimised and bullied by another male colleague when all I had wanted was to come to work and be treated professionally. After being sexually harassed, I was then ignored, intimidated, ostracised, spoken badly about and punished for speaking up.

My workplace was never the same. I had various male colleagues treat me differently after I raised these issues, I had male colleagues ignore me and deliberately not include me in discussions or in social events like morning coffee. The level of distrust was soul destroying and it destroyed my career. I could not rectify it. I often wonder how these colleagues would react if their wives or daughters were unfairly victimised like this in a workplace on top of being sexually harassed.⁵⁹

These cases demonstrate that there is a reasonable basis for women to fear that they will receive little, if any, support if they complain about their experiences of sexism and misogyny in the QPS. Such outcomes do not need to be common to give rise to the fear that they could occur.

Instilling trust in the membership that complaints will be taken seriously, and not result in career damage or a lack of support, will take time and a significant effort on the part of the organisation to establish credibility. In the Commission's view, this is unlikely to be able to be achieved under the present complaints system. The existing system, and the Commission's recommendation for the establishment of a new one, is discussed in further detail in Part 5 of this Report.

THE PERCEPTION THAT NOTHING WILL CHANGE IF A COMPLAINT IS MADE

Some QPS members also told the Commission they believed there was little point in making a complaint about experiences of sexism and misogyny because reports are unlikely to be properly investigated and it is probable there would be no real consequences for the perpetrator.

Material obtained by the Commission from the QPS included instances where the organisation had taken little action in response to complaints. The evidence demonstrates that this perception of futility is also likely to stifle the making of complaints.

The Detective Senior Sergeant who had bullied or engaged in negative workplace behaviours toward 12 officers over a 13-year period had his matter dealt with by Local Management Resolution.⁶⁰ When one of the victims of his bullying appealed that outcome, the Ethical Standards Command reviewed the decision and remained satisfied it was appropriate.⁶¹

Local Management Resolution is intended, as the name suggests, to be a method of dealing locally with low-level or trivial errors without proceeding to a disciplinary hearing, which avoids the prospect of a discipline sanction being imposed. Accordingly, the use of Local Management Resolution, even for serious and protracted conduct such as that engaged in by the Detective Senior Sergeant, does not serve as a barrier to promotion. In this case, as seen above, this officer was in fact subsequently moved to a bigger station where he is now in charge of a larger workforce. It is easy to see why the women who made the complaint against him, or otherwise co-operated in the investigation, felt that their complaint, and co-operation, had been futile.

The Commission saw evidence of other instances of sexism and misogyny being dealt with by Local Management Resolution. As another example, the Senior Constable who persistently sexually harassed a Constable over a four-month period was also dealt with by Local Management Resolution.⁶²

The QPS told the Commission that in about half the cases where it is used, Local Management Resolution involves only a private conversation between the person who the complaint is made about and their supervisor, which is recorded in writing. In the remaining 53% of matters, officers are required to undergo online training, mentoring, supervision or temporary reassignment of duties and counselling. However, Local Management Resolution is not a formal disciplinary process, and does not result in formal sanctions. In this way, the use of Local Management Resolution stands at odds with the Police Commissioner's statement that:

I accept that there are some people in the organisation who do not act in the manner expected, and where we identify this, we do take action.⁶³

In the Commission's view, the Police Commissioner's statement failed to appreciate that, in many cases of harmful conduct by QPS members toward their colleagues, there is a distinct lack of action taken by the organisation. The practice of dealing with such matters by way of Local Management Resolution is unhelpful, and a deterrent to reporting such conduct in the first place.

The Commission also heard of cases that were reported but not investigated. One QPS member told the Commission that they were "*aware of sexual assaults reported within the service that have not been addressed or investigated appropriately*".⁶⁴

A QPS member who shared their experience of having made a report that was not acted on by the organisation explained:

From late 2016 to late 2017 I was the victim of sexual harassment by a colleague who was, and still is, a serving police officer. This harassment would take place whilst on-duty often within the confines of the police station. In [month redacted] 2017 I was sexually assaulted by this same police officer whilst at a police social function.

I disclosed in great detail these offences to my Acting Officer in Charge and a short time later to my immediate supervisor, who is a Sergeant of police, around [month redacted] 2019. Within a matter of a few days, I had a further conversation with my Acting Officer in Charge who confirmed to me that he had told his immediate supervisor, who is an Inspector.

To the best of my knowledge these offences were never recorded as a criminal offence or reported/recorded internally and therefore investigated. I have never been spoken to in relation to my disclosure of these offences and I have never received support or follow up in relation to these offences.

I strongly believe that the dysfunctional culture of QPS has been the basis to explain why these three supervisors have neglected to report and cause these offences to be investigated as they are required to do. The officer that committed these offences against me remained in his same position and I suspect was never even spoken to in relation to my allegations. I continued to be rostered to work with him.

I have witnessed other female officers report misconduct primarily around sexual harassment and also sexual assault by other police officers and have insight to the dysfunctional handling of these matters primarily by senior ranking, male police officers.⁶⁵

Another QPS member's experience, set out below, highlights the difficult choices faced by women whose reports are not acted on, who then must decide whether to remain in the organisation or leave, to their financial detriment:

Working for QPS my personality has changed, my health has declined to the point I cannot undertake daily tasks and now need home help. I have lost myself, my skills, my life that was to be and my income – I am now on DSP [disability support pension] and have used all my savings.

When I spoke to others to seek help with my situation, the officers closed ranks and swept it under the carpet. Other organisations advised me of my options but also deterred me by saying how hard it would be to action their advice, and I was too broken to know what to do. I cannot believe how rife bullying and sexism is and how victim blaming is the first thing everyone does (including other women). Even the HSO [Health and Safety Office] clinical psychologist said "it's their fault, they don't stand up for themselves" when I told her there were many people being damaged. I was shocked at this, as that is the very definition of being bullied. (Not all police officers are of the same ilk, but they do ignore what is happening.)

Others opened up to me about their experience with being bullied in QPS, other admin officers and female police officers, and they were all similar. They were not taken seriously, they were separated for a time but eventually would have to work with their persecutors again. We were all just being sensitive girls...

Questions that were asked (of all of us) were why don't you just leave? It's my job, my livelihood, my income – why should I have to leave because someone doesn't respect women? Why should the victim not only be suffering health issues but also change their career. Institutions where you are promoted based on rank have no idea what it is like to leave a job and find another – the application process, the fact that you're up against 100 to 200 other applicants. And if you leave your job, you have no income until you find another job. I was told this isn't the job for you. Why because I stood up to a bully who is now making life hard? I have psych evals stating it's not the work but the people who bullied me.⁶⁶

There is sufficient material before the Commission to establish that the culture of fear and silence in the organisation has a chilling effect on the reporting of sexist and misogynistic conduct, including serious criminal offences such as sexual assaults and rapes. The culture of fear is perpetuated by organisational failures, such as instances where victims were bullied for speaking out or suffered career damage and were not supported by the organisation, or where inadequate, or no, action was taken by the organisation in response to complaints about sexism or misogyny.

These organisational failures are failures of leadership. The QPS Integrity Framework requires that senior leaders "*must create a culture in which employees are prepared to report misconduct and are supported when they do*".⁶⁷ On the material considered by the Commission, it is apparent that the QPS leadership has not only failed to create such a culture, but is responsible, by virtue of structural disincentives and barriers, for a culture which discourages such reporting.

EFFORTS TOWARDS IMPROVEMENT

Despite the under-reporting, the Police Commissioner Katarina Carroll accepts that sexism and misogyny is a significant problem. At a hearing on 6 October 2022, she said it goes beyond being a problem involving some areas and some individuals. She said:

No, not some areas. I've said areas. I can – I could probably articulate – I just don't know how else you want me to explain it. It's prevalent. It is prevalent and of concern and persistent in particular teams and stations and districts and particular individuals.⁶⁸

The QPS has made a number of efforts to improve the problem of sexism and misogyny within the organisation. In April 2019, it created Project Juniper with the intention of eliminating gender inequality, sexual discrimination, harassment and predatory behaviour within the QPS.⁶⁹

The Commission considers that Project Juniper had some success in uncovering cases of protracted bullying and sexual harassment. However, QPS member submissions to the Commission indicated that it came to be seen as a 'laughing stock' by women within the organisation. These submissions were borne out by material received by the Commission from the QPS. A review conducted by the QPS in 2020 revealed that Juniper was seen as a "toothless tiger" and clients were "mostly unsatisfied" with its interventions, largely because the use of Local Management Resolution to deal with poor conduct that had been uncovered made it seem like "nothing changes".⁷⁰

Juniper was re-branded as two operational arms within the Communications, Culture and Engagement Division (Workplace Assessment and Support Team and Cultural Transformation Team).⁷¹ A recent review of that Division highlighted many governance, capability and capacity issues.⁷² The QPS has some significant work to do to ensure that the Division, and the two operational arms designed to address matters relevant to sexism and misogyny within the QPS, can operate as intended and to full capacity. Those efforts are encouraged.

The QPS is also undertaking or participating in a number of other initiatives. One of its Assistant Commissioners is the current President of the Australasian Council of Women and Police (ACWAP), a growing group of women and men who are working together to improve policing services provided to women, improve opportunities and outcomes for women within policing and participate in a global network of women in policing.⁷³ The QPS was the lead agency in setting up the "Leading Women Network" which has been recognised nationally.

Further, the QPS informed the Commission that the Senior Women's Collective, which previously operated as a women's support and advocacy body within the organisation, is being renewed.

In 2017, the QPS tri-hosted the International Women and Law Enforcement Conference in Cairns, along with ACWAP and the International Association of Women Police (IAWP). QPS members have been nominated for, and won, many

awards at ACWAP annual conferences. The QPS is also a supporter of the Australian Institute of Police Management (AIPM) executive leadership development programs. The QPS is a key supporter of the AIPM's Leadership for Wellness initiative which seeks to improve the positive mental health of police officers.⁷⁴

These initiatives are commendable. Network opportunities for women in the QPS are important and provide aspirational opportunities, however, in the Commission's view, the employment landscape for women in the organisation as a whole needs to be considerably improved.

Until the organisation takes meaningful and successful steps to address the problem, women in the QPS continue to be at risk of experiencing sexist and misogynistic behaviour, including, at times, sexual assaults. Moreover, as the next section identifies, another consequence of a failure to properly address sexism and misogyny is that the QPS is likely to be unable to improve its responses to domestic and family violence.

THE LINK BETWEEN SEXISM AND MISOGYNY AND POOR RESPONSES TO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Chapter 2 considered what victim-survivors and community organisations told the Commission about the various ways QPS responses towards women who are impacted by domestic and family violence at times fall short of community expectations.

Some inadequate responses to women who are affected by domestic and family violence may be explained by a lack of training. In those cases, it is to be hoped that better training for police officers about processes and procedures will improve QPS responses to domestic and family violence.

However, the Commission heard from victim-survivors and community organisations about other inadequate responses to women who are experiencing domestic and family violence which cannot be explained by a lack of training alone. In those cases, the inadequacy of the response is founded in underlying sexism and misogyny on the part of the responding police officer.

Information provided to the Commission in submissions by QPS members validated the accounts given by victim-survivors and community organisations.

Many QPS members told the Commission about sexist and misogynistic views directed to, or about, women impacted by domestic and family violence. One QPS member told the Commission that sexist and demeaning comments about women experiencing domestic and family violence were a regular occurrence in their experience:

Over a long term of service, I have personally witnessed on numerous occasions incredible disrespect towards female victims of violence and domestic violence.

I can vividly recall having obtained a victim statement of a female rape victim, when a senior male detective approached me, asked to have a read of the statement as he said 'It's not a good rape unless you get a half chubb [ie an erection] whilst reading it'.

In light of the traumatizing circumstances of this rape which occurred in a domestic violence setting, this really upset me but I was very well aware that speaking against this senior officer or saying anything about his comments would result in me being labeled as ‘not to be trusted’. I handed over the statement and he had a read. **Once he finished he said words to the effect of ‘it sounds like they had a bit of a struggle cuddle’.**

This example is a typical everyday occurrence in the Queensland Police Service.⁷⁵

Such behaviour was described by a number of QPS members. Another QPS member told the Commission:

In my experience, the language used by police officers to refer to complainants, victims, members of the public, respondents, and even their own colleagues reinforces misogynistic and disrespectful attitudes. Police officers would use derogatory names and make degrading comments and jokes about the clients. These included statements such as “she’s just a druggie slut”, “he’s a piece of shit”, “she doesn’t deserve to have these children”. The most common reference was “grub”. In responding to domestic violence, I’ve had police officers say, “she’s just a filthy grub trying to get back at him and this is a waste of our time”. Judgements about people are made on their appearance, history, socio-economic status, level of education, religious affiliation, sexual orientation and many more. These judgements (not assessments) subliminally influence the way police officers engage with people. Such perceptions of clients are ingrained in culture that new police recruits are indoctrinated into and subsequently adopt. ⁷⁶

Yet another QPS member gave unchallenged evidence at a public hearing that he had heard police officers from his station engage in banter that revealed negative attitudes towards women affected by domestic and family violence, including:

Things like, “I can see why he does it to her. If I was in his position I’d do that”; “I don’t know what I would do if I was in his position” [and] “Rape is just surprise sex”.⁷⁷

That QPS member gave evidence that it was common to hear officers using disrespectful and demeaning language about victim-survivors, as well as female colleagues, such as “*fucking bitch*”, “*fucking slut*” and “*mole*”.⁷⁸ He said that, in his experience, “*the misogyny [within the QPS] is just so wild, and that underpins our attitudes to female victim-survivors*”.⁷⁹

Throughout his evidence, this officer spoke of the various poor responses to domestic and family violence that he had observed from his colleagues, which appeared to be largely underpinned by negative attitudes towards women.

In addition to these accounts of sexist and demeaning language used by police officers about women impacted by domestic and family violence, the Commission saw disturbing evidence of such language being directed at a woman affected by domestic and family violence. In June 2022, QPS body worn camera footage captured evidence of a QPS member calling a female victim-survivor a “*fucking dumb slut*”.⁸⁰

The language used by the police officer, and the aggression and contempt evident in his tone, is confronting. It is even more confronting to consider that the QPS member was sufficiently comfortable to behave that way on camera.

The Commission was informed that, upon receiving a complaint about the officer’s conduct, the QPS dealt with the matter by way of Local Management Resolution.⁸¹ As discussed in more detail in Part 5 of this Report, Local Management Resolution is a mechanism by which police officers can be dealt with for small errors and minor issues.⁸² The Commission considers that, in dealing with this matter by way of Local Management Resolution, the QPS failed to acknowledge the seriousness of the conduct and the harm it is likely to have caused the woman who was spoken to in such a terrible way.

A demonstration that the QPS takes poor responses to domestic and family violence seriously, particularly those that result from sexism and misogyny on the part of its officers, required a stronger response to this incident. In this case, by failing to respond appropriately, the QPS failed to send a message, to its own people and to the community, that it is committed to ensuring sexism and misogyny on the part of its officers does not result in poor treatment of women in the community.

In addition to sexist and misogynistic language, the Commission heard of other ways QPS members behave disrespectfully towards women affected by domestic and family violence.

A QPS member told the Commission of repeated sexist behaviour engaged in by her male colleagues, including senior male colleagues, when responding to domestic and family violence calls for service:

I have witnessed male officers who have received details for DV jobs, note the female Aggrieveds name and then search her on social media to see if she was attractive, if she was considered attractive they would make sexist remarks about her and then show everyone her pictures before responding to the job. When I told them that behavior was sexist and then asked did they not care that a female officer was witnessing what they were doing. I was told “no you’re one of the guys” and that I should take that as a compliment. This behaviour was witnessed and participated in by the Sergeant also and my comments dismissed. On occasion I was told I was just being jealous of the aggrieved’s good looks by speaking up about their behaviour. ⁸³

This account was supported by material obtained from the QPS which included records of similar conduct by QPS members. For example, in March 2021, a police officer commented on the appearance of a woman who was seeking to report a breach of a domestic and family violence order to him. He told her that she was “*too good-looking*” to have to be dealing with the breaches. In May 2021, he texted her suggesting they should “*hook up*”.⁸⁴

Another QPS member told the Commission of other ways QPS members act disrespectfully towards female victim-survivors:

Over the years I have watched many officers’ male and female treat Domestic Violence victims with disrespect, failing to hear their story and failing to act on their behalf. Some officers that I have worked with have been respondents themselves causing them to be further dismissive towards victims of Domestic Violence...

Overall, there is a big cultural issue in the QPS when dealing with victims of Domestic Violence. There is no training at this point in time that could bring it back as a whole to be more victim focussed. The cultural turn around will take years to rectify.⁸⁵

The Commission also obtained material from the QPS which included records of police officers who had failed to listen to women impacted by domestic and family violence, or otherwise treated such women with a lack of respect.

In one instance, in May 2021, a woman complained that the police officer who responded to her report of domestic and family violence did not listen to her and failed to record her account properly. The QPS member was not wearing his body worn camera at the time, and, as a result, the QPS did not substantiate that complaint. However, the QPS member was given Local Management Resolution in relation to his interaction with the male respondent in that matter. When he served the respondent with the Police Protection Notice, he asked the respondent why he would want to “*go there*” with the aggrieved, told the respondent he would look after him and said that the aggrieved was a “*psycho*”.⁸⁶

In another case, in December 2021, a QPS member agreed with a male person that the woman’s ex-partner was justified in assaulting her because of her behaviour and, speaking about the woman while she was being attended to by the Queensland Ambulance Service, said under his breath that she should “*shut the fuck up*”.⁸⁷

Each of these instances involve a woeful response by the QPS to a domestic and family violence related occurrence. In each case, the police officer treated the woman poorly. In each case, the underlying driver of the police officer’s conduct cannot be explained by a lack of training but, rather, is reflective of an underlying lack of respect for women.

Further, in each case, the QPS member involved was dealt with by Local Management Resolution. The Commission is concerned, not just by the poor responses, but by the way the matters were dealt with by the QPS. In the Commission’s view, dealing with each case by way of Local Management Resolution was an inappropriate response which failed to demonstrate that the organisation took any of the matters seriously. In dealing with the matters in this way, the organisation failed the women but also failed to demonstrate that it denounces such conduct by its members.

The Commission heard that inadequate and inappropriate use of Local Management Resolution to deal with sexism and misogyny directed towards women impacted by domestic and family violence, and even towards female QPS officers, is not a phenomenon which has only developed recently. In 2020, a Senior Constable was given Local Management Resolution for calling his female Officer in Charge a “*cunt*” and threatening to “*punch her in the cunt*”.⁸⁸

In the Commission’s view, the use of Local Management Resolution in those circumstances failed to send the appropriate message that the organisation both supported the Officer in Charge and denounced the misogynistic conduct of the Senior Constable.

Moreover, that Senior Constable had, three years earlier, failed to correctly and fully investigate a domestic and family violence related occurrence, leaving the female aggrieved without the protection of an order.⁸⁹ While viewed on its own, that conduct may appear to have simply been the result of a lack of training on the part of the officer, his subsequent misogynistic conduct in respect of his Officer in Charge tends to suggest an underlying negative attitude towards women contributed to his poor response.

The case raises a question about the extent to which poor responses to domestic and family violence can be attributed to a lack of training alone, even where the response does not, on its face, demonstrate obvious sexism or misogyny on the part of the police officer.

What is beyond question, however, is the fact that the QPS has a significant problem with sexism and misogyny. It is also clear that, in some cases, there is a link between sexism and misogyny and poor responses to domestic and family violence.

RECENT FAILURES OF LEADERSHIP TO CALL OUT SEXISM AND MISOGYNY

Given the clear evidence of the link between sexism and misogyny and poor responses to domestic and family violence, the QPS needs more than just better training for its officers. Sexism and misogyny cannot be addressed by training alone. Accepting that the QPS cannot be expected to eliminate the sexist and misogynistic views of all its officers, it nonetheless can, and must, ensure it creates a culture in which sexism and misogyny is not tolerated and cannot flourish. The safety of our community depends on the QPS doing so.

In a hierarchical organisation like the QPS, the creation of the organisation's culture starts at the top. The QPS recognises this in its Integrity Framework, which provides that:

- Strong senior leadership is central to maintaining the integrity of the organisation. The ethical tone of the organisation starts at the top.
- Senior leaders must lead by example, act with the utmost integrity and professionalism.
- Model and promote public sector and QPS values and standards and expect and encourage similar behaviour in others.
- Senior leaders must create a culture in which employees are prepared to report misconduct and are supported when they do.⁹⁰

It is readily apparent that addressing sexism and misogyny, and consequent improvements in QPS responses to domestic and family violence, requires strong leadership to create a culture where sexism and misogyny are not tolerated.

Conversely, when QPS leaders use sexist or misogynistic language they create conditions where sexism and misogyny are tolerated, and may even flourish, in the organisation. As the senior leaders set the ethical tone for the organisation, their words and actions will influence the words and actions of others in the organisation.

If the QPS wishes to improve its responses to domestic and family violence and create a culture of respect for women across the entire organisation, it must ensure that its leaders set the right ethical tone, act with the utmost integrity, always model respectful behaviour and publicly call out behaviour that is disrespectful to women.

Disappointingly for the organisation, senior leaders have recently failed to model appropriate behaviours. In March and April 2022, two senior leaders of the QPS made casually sexist comments at formal senior leadership conferences, with little to no action taken by the leadership to counter the effects of those comments. Unfortunately, the Police Commissioner failed to publicly denounce the behaviour of those senior leaders.

When the QPS fails to denounce sexism exhibited by its senior leaders, negative attitudes towards women may thrive, including among junior officers. In a hierarchical organisation such as the QPS, the words and actions of its leaders significantly influence the behaviour considered acceptable by those lower in the rank structure.

In light of the evidence of individual QPS members' negative attitudes towards women, these instances of casually expressed, sexist comments by QPS senior leaders are troubling indeed.

While negative attitudes towards women prevail within the organisation, poor responses to domestic and family violence will persist despite the organisation's efforts to improve its structural framework and the training it provides to its members.

THE IMPACT OF THE CONDUCT AND COMPLAINTS SYSTEM ON THE PROBLEM OF SEXISM AND MISOGYNY

The Commission considers that much of the problem of the persistence of sexism and misogyny within the QPS lies at the feet of the organisation's senior leaders who set the ethical tone for the organisation. In addition to the requirement that the senior leaders lead by example, there is also an obligation that they create a culture in which employees are prepared to report misconduct and are supported when they do.

The material considered in this chapter demonstrates that the senior leaders have not created a culture in which all QPS members are prepared to report misconduct and are supported when they do. In the Commission's view, the senior leadership has considerable work ahead of it if it is to create such a culture. The Commission strongly encourages the senior leadership to take steps to create that culture. Sexism and misogyny cannot be meaningfully addressed and reduced within the organisation until that happens, because if officers are not prepared to report misconduct, it cannot be stamped out.

The Commission considers that the current conduct and complaints system is not sufficiently independent or effective to give QPS members comfort that, if they make a complaint, it will be dealt with fairly, transparently and in a way that is likely to lead to positive change, either for the individual making the complaint or for the organisation more broadly. Accordingly, in Part 5 of the Report, the Commission recommends the establishment of a new, independent Police Integrity Unit to investigate complaints against police officers, including complaints in relation to sexism and misogyny. The establishment of such a body will go a considerable way to addressing the cultural issues of sexism and misogyny in the organisation.

In addition to that recommendation made in Part 5 of the Report, the Commission considers that two further measures will assist to improve the culture of sexism and misogyny in the organisation. The first is related to how QPS members who make a complaint about such conduct are supported through the process, and the other relates to the establishment of an Ethical Health Scorecard.

In the Commission's view, even when the Police Integrity Unit is established and complaints about sexism and misogyny are dealt with by an independent body, there would be merit in the establishment of a process by which members who make a complaint can be supported within the organisation while the complaint is investigated. It would be appropriate that a Peer Support Officer be assigned, with the consent of the person making the complaint, to support the person through the process. The Peer Support Officer should be of more senior rank than both the subject member and the concerned party and be willing and able to advocate on behalf of the person making the complaint if there are any concerns that the person making the complaint has not been appropriately supported by the organisation, or is suffering any career progression impediments, as a result of making the complaint. Ensuring that sufficient support is available should break down

some of the barriers that presently inhibit the making of complaints, and a recommendation to this effect is made at the end of this chapter.

There would also be benefit in a requirement that the organisation develop and implement an Ethical Health Scorecard to support the monitoring, prevention and remedial actions to reduce the culture of fear in the organisation.

Such an initiative was first recommended in the report by the Independent Expert Panel (2011), *Safe, Effective, Transparent, Strong: An independent review of the Queensland complaints, discipline and misconduct system*. That report made the recommendation in recognition of the need to build permanent and valid measures of ethical health as part of the organisation's conduct and complaints system.

In the Commission's view, the Ethical Health Scorecard would go some way to improving the ability of the organisation to monitor and improve the culture of fear. The organisation would assess the prevalence and strength of the culture of fear within the membership by various devised mechanisms. The Commission envisages that one such device would include regular confidential surveys to gauge the membership's level of fear of reporting. Assessments conducted pursuant to the scorecard should be reported to the senior leadership on a regular basis. In turn, those assessments would be used by the senior leaders to develop strategies to address and reduce the culture of fear and, in turn, encourage reporting of sexist and misogynistic conduct. A recommendation for the development of an Ethical Health Scorecard is made at the end of this chapter.

FINDINGS

- **Sexism and misogyny are a significant problem within the Queensland Police Service. It manifests in sexist language and behaviour, bullying, unfair and discriminatory behaviours toward women, sexual harassment, sexual assaults and rape. Such behaviours are a breach of human rights.**
- **Where it occurs, the effects of sexism and misogyny have the potential to, and often do infect the entire workplace.**
- **The Queensland Police Service has not always dealt with conduct which is sexist and misogynistic in an appropriate manner. Where it has failed to address such conduct properly, and thereby failed to send a message that such conduct will not be tolerated by the organisation, the Queensland Police Service has failed the women who suffered as a result of the conduct, failed to meet its human rights obligations to those women and failed its membership as a whole.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 24

Within six months, the Queensland Police Service engage an external expert to advise on the development and implementation of procedures designed to raise awareness of sexual harassment, including how to identify it and how to report it, and its adverse consequences for all Queensland Police Service members.

Recommendation 25

Within six months, the Queensland Police Service develop a scheme whereby any Queensland Police Service member who makes a complaint about conduct arising from sexism, misogyny or racism is allocated a Peer Support Officer with the concerned party's consent, and of a more senior rank than the concerned party and the subject member, to support the concerned party through the complaint process.

Recommendation 26

Within six months, the Queensland Police Service establish a validated Ethical Health Scorecard aligned with that originally recommended by the Report by the Independent Expert Panel (2011), *Safe, Effective, Transparent, Strong: An independent review of the Queensland complaints, discipline and misconduct system*, including at a minimum:

- prioritisation of valid measures for 'culture of fear' to support monitoring, prevention, and remedial efforts to reduce its influence within the organisation
- integration of the Scorecard into quarterly strategic reporting and analysis to the Executive Leadership, including interpretation of the implications for leadership action
- inclusion of the Scorecard and its utility into management and leadership programs in recognition of their role in reducing the culture of fear and building ethical health
- establishment of annual reporting of the Ethical Health Scorecard and the de-identified outcomes of disciplinary processes commenced within the reporting period, including those still under consideration and those resolved using Local Management Resolution
- engagement of an independent external evaluator to assess after 12 months:
 - the validity, utility and impact of the Scorecard
 - the Scorecard's implications, including capacity to reduce the culture of fear and build management's awareness of their role in building ethical health
 - the Scorecard's success in informing leadership action
 - the integration of the Scorecard into the broader organisational integrity framework.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

Improving and monitoring the ethical health of the service and raising awareness of issues around sexism, misogyny and sexual harassment will not only provide protection for the human rights of female members of the QPS but will also improve the way police respond to and interact with female victim-survivors in domestic and family violence matters. This will elevate the rights of equality before the law (s 15 HRA), protection (ss 17 and 26 HRA) and security (s 39 HRA) for both female officers and female victim-survivors.

Access to a Peer Support Officer for officers who make complaints arising out of sexism, misogyny or racism will elevate the human rights of those officers, including the rights of equality before the law (s 15 HRA), protection (ss 17 and 26 HRA) and security (s 39 HRA) and cultural rights (s 27 HRA and s 28 HRA).

8 Values, attitudes and biases

The Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce reported, in *Hear her voice: Report One* (2021), that it had heard from hundreds of victim-survivors about poor responses from QPS members. This Commission had regard to those experiences, and, in addition, heard from over 1,200 victim-survivors, through submissions and survey responses, about experiences that echoed those heard by the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce.

Women told the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce and this Commission about times they were not believed, were belittled, or otherwise not respected by police. On those occasions, it is easy to see how sexism and misogyny play a part in the police response to domestic and family violence.

In addition to the voices of victim-survivors, the Commission heard from police officers about cultural issues which influence the QPS response to domestic and family violence.

This chapter considers cultural issues arising from negative attitudes towards women and other sections of the community which affect how police respond to domestic and family violence.

The next chapter considers cultural issues caused by organisational and other stressors that contribute to negative police attitudes towards responding to domestic and family violence.

DISTRUST OF WOMEN GENERALLY

The Commission heard evidence of police officers who did not believe women's reports of domestic and family violence and, as a result, failed to take action to protect them. In one instance, a QPS member told the Commission that he believes that 90% of sexual assault complaints made by women are made up. He told the Commission:

I have a mother, two teenage daughters, a female partner, and four teenage stepdaughters. I also work with wonderful and talented women in my office. I am in no way anti-female.

...Notwithstanding legitimate complaints, routinely, I receive many complaints of sexual assault from women. 90% of these complaints are completely fabricated or the women have a misunderstanding of rape or sexual assault. The other 10% are investigated fully, and we as investigators do everything we can for the victim. This would be repeated by police across the entire

state. It isn't difficult to tell legitimate victims from those who have other motives.

Common complaints are but not limited to, too drunk to remember consenting, feel sore so something must have happened, don't know if raped or not but thinks something happened Woke with no clothes on, seeks empathy from others, has a partner and feels guilty, can't decide if she consented or has regrets after drinking so it must be rape. Other situations include retaliation for a breakup, consented but really didn't enjoy the interaction, mental illness including delusions and dementia. There are also complaints about doctors performing procedures such as the insertion of a catheter and felt something or going for child custody and the support worker said making a complaint of rape would help.

On most occasions, the fabricated complaints have no evidence whatsoever other than the woman's version. **For the 10% of genuine sexual assaults, there is evidence to corroborate the victim's version including an authentic and credible version of events with times, dates, places, witnesses, and physical evidence. We will do everything possible for these genuine victims.**⁹¹

These views do not reflect the views of the QPS as an organisation. When the Police Commissioner was asked about those views at a public hearing on 18 August 2022, she said:

I think that's completely inappropriate and I think he misunderstands.⁹²

However, the Commission heard evidence that some police officers tend to disbelieve women unless there is clear, corroborating evidence to confirm a woman's account. One QPS member who gave evidence to the Commission described how officers in his station are more likely to take action where there is corroborating evidence:

When there have been either quite substantial injuries or there's evidence that they can provide

in the form of , like, recordings of abusive and threatening phone calls or text messages, when there's that evidence that would be considered by police to be, like, incontrovertible in a sense, then action is more likely to be taken than when somebody is coming to the counter saying, 'These horrific things have happened to me, but I don't have anything to offer you other than what I say has happened'.⁹³

The number of submissions from QPS members about the prevalence of sexism and misogyny in the organisation suggests that these views are held by more than just some individuals at some stations and are likely to be considerably more extensive than that. The impact on police responses to domestic and family violence is stark. The Commission heard, from QPS members, of police officers trying to talk women out of making serious complaints of sexual assault and of domestic and family violence. One QPS member told the Commission:

I have witnessed a male detective try and discourage/talk a victim out of making a rape complaint. When I asked him about what he had said in the room to the victim, he replied the owning station of where the offence occurred would thank him for talking her out of it.

Another male officer made a complaint about me to my sergeant after a female aggrieved who I had previously helped with her DV breaches and who felt comfortable with me, came to the station to report another DV breach. I was away so she reported it to the male officer on the station counter. The Aggrieved contacted me the following day by email and expressed she felt uncomfortable with the male officer and how he handled her report. I spoke to the station DVLO about the incidents and the Aggrieved then sent me some evidence which I uploaded to the QPS computer system under the report. I was then told by my Sergeant about the officers complaint and that I was no longer allowed to talk to or correspond with the Aggrieved as the male officer was the reporting officer and I couldn't assist her anymore. I then had to email the Aggrieved and advise her I could no longer correspond with her over her DV matters. I

felt like my hands were tied, even though she was comfortable with me and I was willing to help her I was being told by my Sergeant to cut contact with her because a male officer had an issue with me talking to her about her DV incidents. It saddened me to think this woman was reaching out for help from me and I was being told to not help her due to QPS reporting policy/procedures.

This type of behavior seems to be set as the norm over the years with that baseline creeping higher and higher. These attitudes and behaviors are appalling and the public should be made aware of the toxicity that lives and breeds inside the QPS and how anyone who speaks out will be shunned or bullied. They say in the service reputation is everything and once it's tarnished it's like that for your career regardless of any good work you do.⁹⁴

Another QPS member told the Commission of their direct knowledge of complaints not being taken by police officers, despite the serious nature of them:

During my career I eventually obtained experience in the CIB (Criminal Investigation Branch) which investigates more serious complaints. During this time a woman came in to make a rape complaint. I was taught how to convince the woman to leave without making an official complaint. This wasn't done in hushed circumstances; I was openly taught how and why to convince a victim to leave without making an official complaint (that would require investigation). I accepted this at the time being young and inexperienced. It was also a number of years ago and I didn't have as much understanding of the issues facing women in society. I was told to convince the woman that the process in court would be too emotionally difficult, and they would question her integrity, the process would be lengthy often not resulting in a conviction, there wouldn't be enough evidence and it would be a case of her word against his. The goal was to stop the complaint at the start as this insured one less crime that wouldn't be recorded as unsolved - but at the very core of this is a sexism against the rights of a woman. Often if the

complaint was not taken on that day, it delayed the gathering of evidence which is time vital. **This is not a one office issue, it's a state-wide unwritten policy. A normal policy I have heard other colleagues talk about that work around the state. Upon reflection I fear there are numerous women out there that did not receive a just process, weren't supported by the government body trusted to protect and uphold the law and many victims were further traumatised because of this.**⁹⁵

OTHER ATTITUDES THAT CAUSE POLICE TO BE DISMISSIVE OF WOMEN

In addition to instances where women are not believed, some police have a dismissive attitude towards women when it comes to domestic and family violence. The Commission heard how important it is for police to not minimise or dismiss a victim-survivors' report of domestic and family violence, and to respond in an empathic way. Ms Rosemary O'Malley, CEO of Gold Coast Domestic Violence Prevention Centre, explained:

Women who live in domestic violence relationships are hypervigilant about whether they are being believed and are scanning non-verbal facial expressions (including micro-expression), tone, sighs, or numerous other signs that will indicate to them that they are not being believed and that it is not safe to pursue making a complaint or asking for a police protection notice.

When this happens two things commonly ensue: her (and her children's risk) will remain unaddressed and may escalate; she loses faith in the system and decides this is not where safety lies for her.⁹⁶

Professor Silke Meyer, who has researched QPS responses to domestic and family violence over many years, told the Commission:

One thing that has stood out to me in particular over the years of conducting research on victim-survivor's help-seeking is that some police allegedly turn DFV callouts into a 'laughing matter'. Victim-survivors across projects have described officers who are joking with each when arriving at or departing from a household affected by DFV. Others have described officers walking out of the residence, joking with the primary aggressor and referring to him as 'mate' when seeking the alleged perpetrator's version of events.

While officers may not consider the impact of such behaviour at the time, or may try to engage an alleged perpetrator in an investigation through the choice of certain language (i.e. mate), joking about an aggrieved's experiences and/ or engaging an alleged perpetrator in 'banter' is insensitive, inappropriate and can be highly retraumatising and stigmatising for victim-survivors. Similarly, joking or laughing about other matters when attending a DFV callout is highly insensitive and can be traumatising to the victim-survivor – even if unrelated to the specific victim-survivor or attended 'incident'.⁹⁷

Dr Heather Nancarrow, Monash University, further explained that focus groups and interviews conducted with police and service providers in 2020 revealed that sexism contributed to police holding women to a higher standard than men.⁹⁸ This manifested in responses by police which were empathic toward men who were upset about a relationship breakdown while being intolerant of "*women behaving badly*".⁹⁹ A QPS member also told Mr Ainsworth that, in her experience, attractive women receive more favourable treatment from police.¹⁰⁰

In their review of police referrals received by them, one domestic violence service further noted that there was a pattern of concerning language used in relation to victim-survivors which they did not see in referrals for perpetrators. This was attributed by the organisation to broader cultural issues within the QPS that viewed victim-survivors through their own expectations of how they should behave and included referring women for assistance because they "*won't stop complaining*", "*just need to learn about DFV*", "*doesn't know whether to stay or leave*" or were "*old school*" about relationship values.¹⁰¹

The Commission heard that the incidence of police dismissing women who report domestic and family violence is heightened when a woman does not fit the 'ideal victim' stereotype. An 'ideal victim' is commonly understood to be a person who welcomes police help, who is passive or submissive, and who wants to leave a relationship. It does not recognise the lived experience of many victim-survivors, and the impact of trauma. It also presents a false narrative that some victim-survivors are more deserving of safety and protection than others and can negatively impact the actions police take in response to a report of domestic and family violence. One QPS member told the Commission:

I have observed many occasions where officers have either failed to protect a victim or have reluctantly applied for orders whilst still disparaging the aggrieved because they have concluded they are an "alcoholic", a "grub", "504" (mentally ill). For example, I remember prosecuting a DV Hearing where I was speaking to the officer in earshot of the aggrieved. He told me he didn't really want to apply for the order because the aggrieved was a "drunk" and that he didn't care if we were successful in the hearing.

There had been significant allegations of violence made by this aggrieved woman against her husband. I counselled the officer in his dismissive attitude toward the aggrieved and encouraged him to take allegations seriously even if a victim doesn't come across as the "perfect victim".¹⁰²

Dr Heather Nancarrow also explained to the Commission that stereotypical assumptions about women contribute to the incidence of women being misidentified as perpetrators. In her expert report she said:

Female victims/survivors of violence are often assumed to be submissive and powerless, although some women resist controlling abuse with physical and verbal aggression. Women who use resistive violence are also likely to use weapons to overcome a physical disadvantage and, consequently, cause injury.¹⁰³

Professor Heather Douglas from the University of Melbourne told the Commission:

The issues around identifying the perpetrator is – that can be difficult too, I appreciate, but I do think that we need to deal with the stereotypes about what we expect victims to look like and avoid privileging the person that speaks apparently the most rationally and clearly in the circumstances. There are lots of reasons why people who are fearful will be incoherent and seem potentially highly distressed and irrational.¹⁰⁴

There is clear evidence that police officers may be dismissive towards and do not always effectively support women who do not fit the 'ideal victim' stereotype. This can leave victims and their children unprotected, embolden a perpetrator and, on occasion, result in police misidentifying the victim as the respondent. This issue is discussed in more detail in Part 4 of this Report. The QPS needs to take additional steps to ensure that police officers do not fail to take action on this basis, and a recommendation to this effect is made at the end of the chapter.

The tendency of police to be dismissive of victim-survivors who make a report of domestic and family violence appeared to be particularly prevalent when they present at police stations to seek assistance. There are also issues with victim-survivors being required to disclose their experiences of abuse at the front counter, sometimes in front of other people. One victim-survivor told the Commission of how she was treated by police when she presented to a police station to make a report of domestic and family violence after being assaulted:

There was one incident where there had been a significant assault in the morning and I had gone to the police. It was before I had taken out a domestic violence order. I had gone to the police saying that I wanted to put it on record but not do anything. I didn't really understand the system at the time. The police officer listened to what I had to say and then said she wasn't prepared to just leave it as a statement; she wanted to go and speak to the perpetrator. I expressed that I was concerned about the risks of doing that, but it went ahead anyway. I was advised by her to leave my house and take my child, because we had separated but hadn't actually; we were still cohabiting.

So I did that, and she went and spoke to the perpetrator. He denied everything and she came back to me and said it wasn't valid and that I just needed to focus on being a good mother to my child. But in her response it actually validated his behaviour and made him feel that he was able to keep behaving in that way without any recourse. That was a significantly bad incident.

...I wasn't turned away [but] sometimes it was questioned whether it was domestic and family violence. I was often made to feel really embarrassed because I would be standing at the front counter, not taken to a private room, and need to tell my story in front of whoever happened to be there at the time, and sometimes those reception areas could be quite crowded, whether it was with police staff or just members of the general public. It often felt like it wasn't being taken very seriously, and I felt like I was the one that was being made to justify my actions to report it rather than looking at the source of the issue which was the person that was perpetrating the violence.¹⁰⁵

Dismissive conduct by police toward women affected by domestic and family violence was also referred to by one QPS member in this way:

I have worked in stations that have told me that I am too nice to aggrieved persons and that now they are attending the station to report more matters.

There was one instance where the station DVLO had received a call from a refuge about an aggrieved wanting to attend the station to report a Domestic Violence Breach. When she got off the phone, she said that she didn't know why the aggrieved wanted to travel three (3) hours to the station and that I was not to take her statement. She told me to make her drive the three (3) hours back to supply her statement the next week.

When the aggrieved arrived, I spoke to her about the breach and she informed me that the reason she wanted to attend a station further away was so that the respondent could not link her to a location. The sheer disregard from the DVLO for the aggrieved persons safety deeply shocked me.

There have been too many occasions to count where Police have tried to turn victims away from the front counter of Police Stations. I have seen aggrieved persons crying at front counters for help, and officers trying to talk them out of going further by explaining the overwhelming court process...

I have witnessed multiple aggrieved persons attend the front counters of Police Stations with young children, not having anywhere to take them. When entering the Police station there is no safe place to take them with their child so that the child can be cared for whilst the details of events is talked about without the child being involved in such conversations...

I have also witnessed Police Officers that have committed Domestic Violence and the OIC's covering those matters up. One of these incidents was when a serving Police Officer had threatened to kill himself to his partner another serving Police officer. When she informed her OIC he dismissed her claims. She told him to get her phone downloaded to gain the details of the text messages however he told her that would not be necessary and refused to go any further with the complaint, leaving the victim feeling helpless and unsupported.¹⁰⁶

Many victim-survivors told the Commission they were turned away from front counters or asked to give details of their complaint at a front counter in circumstances where they were concerned about others hearing their conversation. Examples of that behaviour are also discussed in Part 1 of this Report.

In its report *Bail, Street Checks and Front Counter Reporting (2021)*, the QPS Ethical Standards Command confirmed that

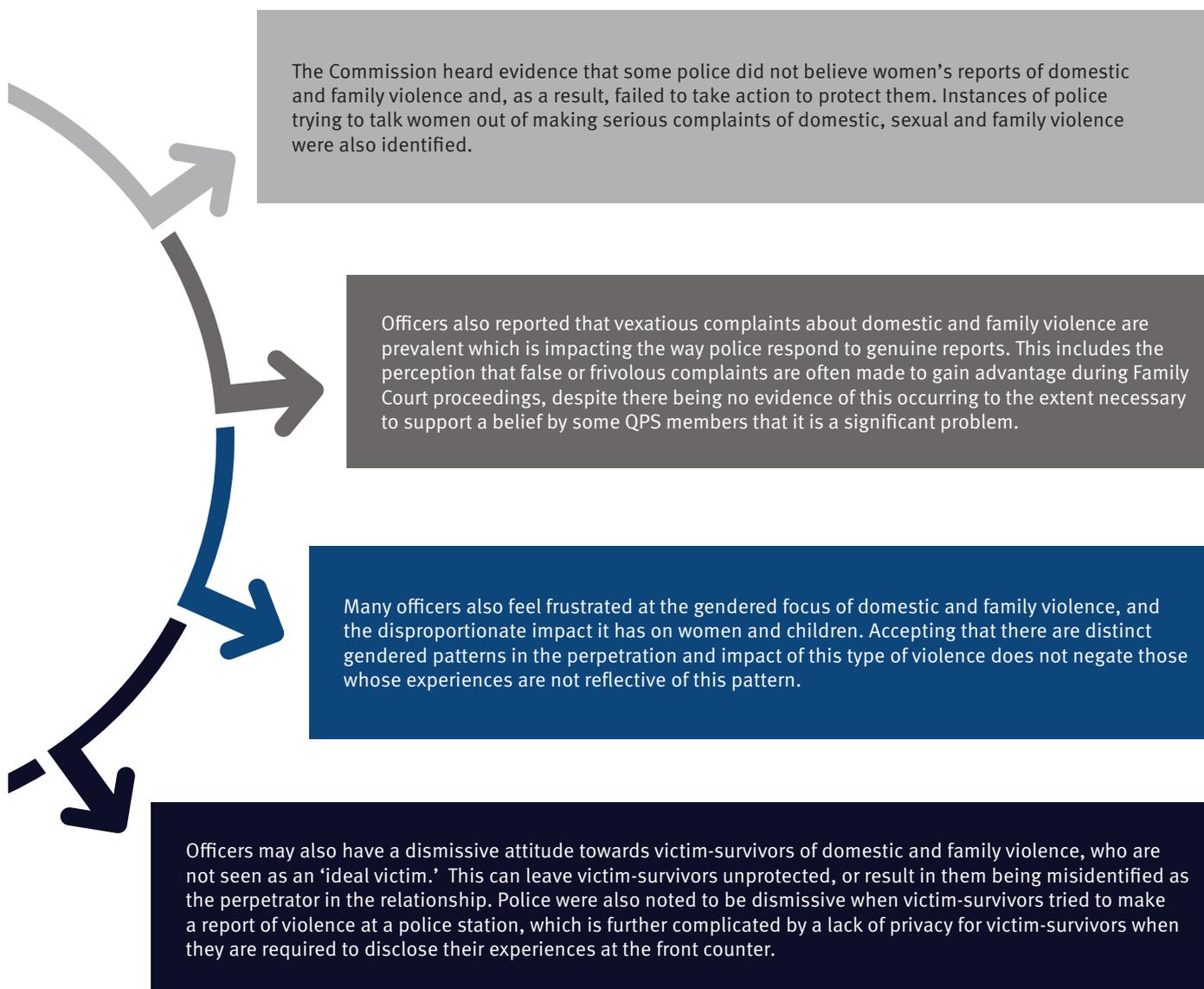


Figure 23: Summary of issues related to values, attitudes and biases reported by police when responding to domestic and family violence.

victim-survivors were turned away from front counters and at times matters were recorded as a street check instead of a DV-occurrence.

In the Commission's view, it is critical that when a victim-survivor attends the front counter at a police station that they are immediately given privacy to explain their situation. This is consistent with the Charter of Victims' Rights which mandates that a victim "*will be treated with courtesy, compassion, respect and dignity, taking into account the victim's needs*".¹⁰⁷ The Commission is aware of the significant differences in the types of facilities available in police stations across the state¹⁰⁸ but this should not prevent police from being able to provide a victim-survivor with a private space to make a report of domestic and family violence.

The obligation to provide an opportunity for a victim-survivor to disclose their experiences of abuse in private does not require special facilities. Where a dedicated private interview room is not available, it may be as simple as closing the door to a tea-room or an office being vacated to allow a door to be closed.

Some facilities at police stations may be better than others across the state. Regardless of this, it is paramount that police treat a victim-survivor with respect and ensure they have a private space to report violence.

A victim-survivor should never be asked detailed questions or be required to give a statement at the front counter, nor should they be made to wait in the foyer of a police station.

The Commission considers that a victim-survivor should always be taken to a private space once it is clear that they are making a complaint of domestic and family violence, and a recommendation is made in relation to this issue at the end of this chapter.

BELIEF IN THE PREVALENCE OF VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

Some police officers believe that vexatious complaints about domestic and family violence are prevalent and, particularly for those officers, there is a sense that their role is misused by people who make domestic and family violence complaints to them.

Mr Mark Ainsworth, a retired Detective Superintendent, was engaged by the Commission to undertake interviews of current and former QPS members about matters including cultural issues impacting its response to domestic and family violence.

Many QPS members reported to Mr Ainsworth that they considered domestic and family violence reports are sometimes made vexatiously, with the result that such vexatious complaints then impact the way police officers respond to genuine matters.¹⁰⁹ Mr Ainsworth said, about the police officers who raised this concern, that:

The terminology of DFV – domestic and family violence of convenience was used, and I can probably put it down to four areas that police were referring to, and it's seeing some officers perceive that some matters were reported by aggrieved people in order for family law court matters for custody of children, for property settlement, for

the payment of DV assist payments, and also to try and expedite the process of getting government housing. So they were the four main issues raised by police towards a negative culture of aggrieved people.¹¹⁰

Mr Ainsworth reported that "*lots*" of officers spoke about vexatious complaints being a "*significant problem*".¹¹¹ One officer explained that the issue of vexatious complaints made some officers very negative towards domestic and family violence matters.¹¹²

Mr Ainsworth found that most interviewees believed that the culture of police officers towards domestic and family violence is worsening over time.¹¹³ In part, this was because of the convoluted paperwork and lack of resourcing associated with attending domestic and family violence matters, but it was also attributed to a perception that people make domestic and family violence reports for convenience.¹¹⁴

The information provided to Mr Ainsworth was consistent with other information provided by QPS members to the Commission. One QPS member said that the perception that false or frivolous domestic and family violence complaints are often made to gain advantage in Family Court proceedings is heightened in male police officers who have experienced separation or divorce. That QPS member said:

I have further observed that male police officers can be adversely influenced by their own personal experiences in their relationships. If a male officer is separated or divorced, I find he is much more likely to treat a female victim's version of events as suspicious or unreliable. They frequently complain that women are making up allegations to obtain an advantage with the Family Court. Although I understand this can occur from time to time, the research shows it is incredibly uncommon, whereas this attitude is enforced by these officers upon most women they encounter.¹¹⁵

Professor Silke Meyer told the Commission that she observed this cultural issue in a Queensland study of police officers she conducted in 2018. Professor Meyer told the Commission:

In 2018, I interviewed police officers and prosecutors about the role of procedural justice in responding to DFV. In this context, myself and two research assistants observed over 300 DVO proceedings and spent around 26 days at two different Qld court locations. This included observations of magistrate, police and court user interactions in the court room as well as the recruitment of court users in the court waiting areas for participation in subsequent survey and interview data collection.

During this time, I observed a number of police attitudes informally. These attitudes were not communicated in the context of a formal research interview but during informal conversations with different officers attending court who were aware of my role as a researcher and engaged in conversations about the research. **Observed attitudes and statements included that: ‘courts hand out DVOs like lollipops’; ‘women misuse DVO proceedings as an alternative to Family Law Orders’ to limit the other parent’s contact with mutual children post separation; and a perception that female victims take out a DVO but then reconcile until the relationship no longer suits them and then use the DVO against the respondent and breach him for initiating or maintaining contact.**¹¹⁶

A QPS member gave evidence at a hearing of his observations of police officers’ beliefs in the prevalence of vexatious complaints. He said:

Yes. That’s like a very – again, that’s another frequent day room discussion where this myth gets brought up about – especially in relation to police applications but also in relation to the private applications that come through for service, “She’s just trying to screw him over in Family Court. Like, there’s no evidence other than - there’s no evidence other than what she is saying. They’re going through a separation, which we know is when a lot of domestic violence occurs, but they’re going through a separation and she’s just trying to screw him over,” and that’s a very frequent conversation...¹¹⁷

That QPS member linked the experiences of some police officers who have separated or divorced with the prevailing view that women will often lie to gain an advantage in the Family Courts. He said:

I’ve known several male officers who when talking about their partners or their ex-partners, when things begin to go badly in their relationships they’ll set up – or they’ll paint an image of their partner or ex-partner that is of basically like a deranged crazy person and they’ll say, “She’s got really serious mental health issues. Like, everything’s happening because she’s crazy”. They’ll talk about the ways in which they can utilise their knowledge of the law to influence family law outcomes or the aggrieved’s willingness to proceed down that pathway through fear that they have more knowledge than she does about how to navigate the legal process with respect to Family Court and even like domestic violence applications.And just like red flags for coercive control are really evidence in the way they talk about their day-to-day relationships.¹¹⁸

Another QPS member told the Commission:

I have worked under an OIC that had been listed in a Domestic Violence Order, and who had breached that order. The OIC was called to investigate inappropriate behaviour by QPS members towards an aggrieved, and has failed to do so. Instead, he spoke to her about his own issues explaining how his ex-wife had taken him to court and done him over. He dismissed the victim’s claims and made her feel unheard further causing aggravation to her injury.¹¹⁹

The Commission notes that, while parties to Family Court proceedings may make vexatious complaints from time to time, it has not seen any evidence that it occurs so often as to support a belief on the part of some QPS members that it is a significant problem. In fact, the likely explanation for allegations of domestic and family violence being raised upon a separation may, in some cases, simply be that the victim-survivor did not feel safe to raise the issue while living with the perpetrator. Actual or pending separation is also a known period of heightened danger where a perpetrator represents a significant risk of harm to a victim-survivor and their children, and violence often escalates during this time.¹²⁰ Negotiations around shared parenting arrangements are also a point of increased risk, particularly where a perpetrator may use discussions about child custody or access to perpetrate further abuse against their former intimate partner further increasing the likelihood of a victim-survivor seeking assistance from police.

It is clear that the QPS needs to incorporate content into its domestic and family violence training, and training generally, to dispel the myth that women frequently make up complaints of sexual assault and domestic and family violence. A recommendation to that effect is made at the end of this chapter.

BELIEF THAT DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IS NOT A GENDERED ISSUE

Mr Ainsworth reported to the Commission that many police officers are frustrated that the focus of domestic and family violence is on women and children. He reported to the Commission that:

Many officers including female officers said they are frustrated with the DFV focus on women and children at the expense of males and same sex couples. They stated women are not always the aggrieved and the gender of the person should not be a consideration when dealing with DFV. Each case has to be treated on its merit. Police are now seeing more males reporting DFV. People believe males, females and same sex couples are now finding their voice re DFV reporting. People feel they are being listened to and not judged. Whilst it is accepted more females are aggrieved in DFV, there are also males and same sex couples who

deserve the same recognition as an aggrieved person. Several senior officers were concerned that this rhetoric influences the judgment of first response officers who attend DFV and automatically assume the aggrieved is the female. This can impact on their investigation initially.¹²¹

These views were repeated in a number of submissions received directly by the Commission. A QPS member who gave evidence to the Commission said he had also experienced the perception among police officers that domestic and family violence is not a gendered issue:

In my experience, the majority of officers at my station completely reject the structural feminist perspective. They genuinely do not believe that DV is a gendered issue and cite underreporting by men as the primary reason that there isn't a 50/50 split by gender.¹²²

Frontline police officers gave evidence at the Commission's hearings that also demonstrated that it is a common view amongst officers that domestic and family violence is not a gendered issue, despite the QPS as an organisation accepting that it is a gendered issue.¹²³

There is no doubt that domestic and family violence is a gendered issue which disproportionately affects women.¹²⁴ It is a core principle within the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012*, which acknowledges that while domestic and family violence can happen to anyone, it is most often perpetrated by men against women with whom they are, or were, in an intimate partner relationship, and their children.¹²⁵ While anybody may experience acts of violence within an intimate partner, family or informal care relationship, when applying a definition which is founded on an imbalance of power within the relationship, domestic and family violence (in all its forms) is most often experienced by women and most often perpetrated by men. Men are also more likely to use violence to gain or retain control within a relationship, while women are more likely to use violence to resist control and protect themselves or their children.¹²⁶

Dr Heather Nancarrow, explained the gendered nature of domestic and family violence, particularly when it involves coercive control, in this way:

Coercive controlling – one of the things I do want to say is that when we talk about the gendered dynamics of domestic violence, again it's what this Act is trying to get at, coercive control is highly, highly gendered. Women engage in abusive language and fights and so on, but the research internationally consistently shows that coercive controlling abuse is almost exclusively perpetrated by men against women.¹²⁷

Dr Nancarrow explained that “*due to social norms; social and economic power structures, and male and female relationship role stereotypes, men typically hold more power to exploit in the abuse of others' creating unique barriers to safety for their victim*”.¹²⁸

While this gendered understanding of domestic and family violence has been confirmed in research and broadly accepted in international, national and local public policy, it is still misunderstood and dismissed by some.

There is no doubt that police officers must approach all investigations, including those relating to domestic and family violence, with an open mind. Accepting that there are distinct gendered patterns in the perpetration and impact of this type of violence does not negate those whose experiences are not reflected within this pattern.

The Australian Brotherhood of Fathers submitted to the Commission that male victim-survivors are discriminated against by police. They provided examples where requests for support by men who were victims of domestic and family violence had been denied by police.¹²⁹ This included examples of apparent failures by police to investigate reports of domestic and family violence or child welfare concerns, respond in a timely manner, provide access to appropriate support services, and to charge (female) perpetrators of domestic and family violence for apparent breaches.¹³⁰ Submissions were also received from individual men who recounted their negative experiences with the police when reporting, or attempting to report, domestic and family violence.

The Australian Brotherhood of Fathers provided the results of a survey of 1,000 fathers who had accessed a call service operated by that organisation. The survey found that 70% of callers who contacted police as victims of domestic and family violence reported being turned away.¹³¹ This included being told that “*it's a family court matter*”, to “*man up*” or “*toughen up*”, that “*women don't commit domestic violence*”, being “*blamed for the abuse*”, or the officer noting the complaint then asking the man to leave the station (with no further action taken).¹³²

Similarly, the One in Three Campaign told the Commission of the barriers faced by male victim-survivors of domestic and family violence. They reported inadequate police recognition of men as victim-survivors which could discourage men from reporting or feeling that they would be believed,¹³³ and provided examples where men had reported abuse to police and were told it was a Family Court matter,¹³⁴ and where men were not believed or were disregarded by police with no action being taken.¹³⁵

Many of these examples share remarkable consistency with others provided to the Commission about victim-survivors' experiences more broadly as discussed within Chapter 2 of this Report. Acknowledging that domestic and family violence is gendered does not mean that the men who experience this type of violence have been or should be discounted.

As submitted to the Commission by Ending Violence Against Women Qld:

Policing domestic, family and sexual violence requires an accurate and evidence-based understanding of gender-based violence. These crimes disproportionately impact women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children, LGBTQ+ people, CALD communities and most commonly women with disability. There are also unique considerations for male victims.¹³⁶

However, police responses to domestic and family violence may remain inadequate or inappropriate unless officers understand the gendered nature of domestic and family violence. The Commission heard many stories of women misidentified by police as the perpetrator because police accepted at face value the account of a softly spoken and apparently calm perpetrator over the account of a hysterical and distressed woman.¹³⁷

Perpetrators commonly seek to conceal or minimise their use of violence within a relationship and attempt to manipulate the perceptions and actions of others around them.¹³⁸ Accordingly, when police respond to domestic and family violence, they should anticipate that a perpetrator will excuse, deny or blame others for their use of violence.

In her report to the Commission, Dr Nancarrow suggested that systems abuse strategies used by perpetrators in their interactions with police include:

- pre-emptively contacting police to report they have been assaulted by the primary victim, particularly where that victim may have used resistive force to protect themselves or others
- engaging with police calmly upon their attendance, which can contribute to a perception that the victim-survivor is ‘aggressive’ or ‘out of control’ as they may be distressed
- inviting police to empathise with them by using gender stereotypes, such as the ‘emotional’ or ‘hysterical’ woman or seeking to minimise, justify or mutualise their behaviour (such as attributing the issue to ‘relationship problems’).¹³⁹

As highlighted by Associate Professor Molly Dragiewicz, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Griffith University, recidivist perpetrators of domestic and family violence also often see themselves as the real victims, particularly where police responses trivialise an episode of violence.¹⁴⁰

The risk is that without a proper investigation, police may not look beyond injuries to one party to enquire as to the person who is the most in need of protection. One QPS member said that they had seen this occur:

A tick-and-flick attitude has resulted in officers incorrectly nominating the victim as a respondent. This occurs frequently and I would estimate in a DV Callover of about 60 matters, there would be 1-3 police applications that I would later have withdrawn because the person most in need of protection was nominated. If one party has

injuries, on many occasions they say, “that person had the injuries, so they are the most in need of protection”, without investigating whether those injuries were caused by self-defence. Many occasions they also fail to scrutinise the history of the parties, which is available on all police computers.¹⁴¹

It appears that the QPS has not, to date, been successful at conveying both the gendered nature of domestic and family violence, and the importance of approaching their responses to, and investigations of, domestic and family violence with that in mind.

As discussed in Part 2 of this Report, the Commission reviewed the draft Domestic and Family Violence Manual under development by the Domestic, Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Command in July 2022. The Manual did not identify the gendered nature of domestic and family violence or explain to officers how they should approach their investigations in light of this, while also keeping an open mind. The Commission considers that the QPS membership needs further training on this issue and makes a recommendation to that effect at the end of this chapter.

QPS MEMBERS AS DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS

QPS members who are also victim-survivors of domestic and family violence told the Commission about their experiences of poor responses by their colleagues. These accounts provide further insight into the cultural issues that influence QPS responses to domestic and family violence. One QPS member told the Commission:

I believe that Officers in the QPS have very limited skills or ability to be able to investigate any type of domestic abuse that is not physical – we have never been trained. This whole process has caused me much pain and suffering and I regret telling the QPS my domestic violence story. I feel sorry for any aggrieved person who tells the QPS their verbal, psychological and financial domestic abuse story – to be told sorry you can’t prove anything so we can’t help you. I want to believe that if an aggrieved person gave the QPS the same evidence as I provided them with – that they would help them. And the only reason the QPS did not help me was to protect my ex-husband because he is male and part of the boy’s club that still exists in the QPS...

I am disappointed about how I have been treated by the QPS. And I am very fearful of retribution if I challenge them any further but feel that I cannot let this go and want to help other victims of domestic abuse who are Officers of the QPS.¹⁴²

This submission, and others like it, demonstrate it is not only women in the community, but female QPS members, who experience poor responses to domestic and family violence.

In addition to the distress of not being believed or receiving a poor response to their complaint, female QPS members in that situation must also consider if speaking up about their experience will lead to career disadvantage and bullying. This additional complexity makes the experiences of female QPS members who report domestic and family violence precarious indeed. One QPS member's submission highlighted the difficulties that QPS victim-survivors can experience in those circumstances. She said:

About 5 years into my service I met and formed a relationship with another officer. It all started well, as they do, but it turned into what I now know is textbook coercive control with some elements of violence. This man was a very popular officer, lots of mates, lots of attention from women and very much one of the boys. He eventually left the service "medically unfit" after he claimed bullying and other issues and refused to accept a diagnosis of schizophrenia which I would suggest was from previous covert work.

In the time we were going out he would read my work emails (i didn't give him passwords), print them and give them to me with accusations about what they really meant, accuse me of sleeping with many men, if i got changed after work and went out that was a sign i was playing up, he would accuse me of doing things to deliberately annoy him, that i was a pointless useless person, that his overwhelming attraction to strippers was my fault, the fact that he slept with other police women was my fault, he would have people follow me as he always knew where i was and who i was with and would turn up at my house unexpectedly to "catch me out". I was interviewed by two of his friends for complaints he made that I was "stalking" him after he broke up which I could easily disprove. I said in both the interviews that they were friends of his so how was this fair but it was laughed at. Entirely "coincidentally" he built a house near mine in an area which he has no ties to which I hope has now been sold as had tenants for ages and has a business office in my town.

Towards the end he had me almost convinced that i should kill myself and i was lucky as a supportive female boss and a fantastic male PSO heard what i was saying and literally rescued me. **There was no way I was making a DV complaint against him as all his QPS mates would just laugh when I was upset and say it was my fault and the other women he was sleeping with believed him when he said that we weren't together. All his QPS friends said I was the crazy one obviously as he was such a good guy who wouldn't act like I said. I totally changed the way I looked, dressed and acted so I didn't make him angry so he wouldn't go tell all his friends how apparently crazy I was. There was more than one occasion I was genuinely worried he would hurt or try to kill me but I also knew that telling the QPS would do nothing, which is really sad.**¹⁴³

This and other experiences shared by female QPS members about domestic and family violence perpetrated against them by their police partners demonstrate that the QPS has failed to create a culture in which all female QPS members who report domestic and family violence are respected and protected.

This problematic organisational culture towards their own members who experience domestic and family violence was confirmed in QPS documents, including many case files that demonstrated female members who experienced domestic and family violence at the hands of police members were not properly supported, and their perpetrators not adequately held to account.

Submissions provided to the Commission and supported by information obtained from the QPS revealed that non-police partners of police perpetrators of domestic and family violence often also experience poor police responses to their situation.

What follows is a summary of some of the information the Commission received in relation to police perpetrators of domestic and family violence.

MISOGYNY IN FOCUS – POLICE PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

“The skills, training and network of policing agencies, which enable them to complete their work, make them highly dangerous OI DV [Officer-involved domestic violence] perpetrators.”¹⁴⁴

Increased risks are created by a police perpetrator’s:

- knowledge of legal and judicial systems
- access to information networks such as QPRIME
- access to firearms and other weapons
- personal and working relationships with other QPS members.

The Commission heard from victim-survivors of police perpetrated domestic and family violence who had experienced these risks. Officers told the Commission:

“I was interviewed by officers working in the same district as him and was told that I could not expect confidentiality in the matter e.g. rest of the officers in the district may be aware of my complaints. That’s scary when you are already terrified of one officer”.¹⁴⁵

“The perpetrator would often drop home during shift with their gun. Just to show that they were in control of me and that they would know if I was going out or making friends. This was an extremely difficult time to try and maintain a career, whilst being pregnant and trying to survive the extreme stress from the DV. I did not recognize it as abuse until late in the pregnancy, as I was always given ‘heartfelt’ excuses from the abuser relating to ‘work stress’ ... they promised to change. But the change was always short lived and gradually escalated back to DV”.¹⁴⁶

“He made sure that I knew what sort of technology he has at his fingertips and he could see a birds eye view of my property at any given time via satellite”.¹⁴⁷

The number of allegations of ‘member involved domestic violence’¹⁴⁸ made to QPS has more than doubled over the past ten years,¹⁴⁹ but only 8% of allegations of member involved domestic and family violence proceeded through disciplinary proceedings.¹⁵⁰

“Prior to the police attending the perpetrator begged me not to say anything because he could lose his job and if he did, he wouldn’t be able to support the family. I acquiesced and when the three officers who attended, including a Sergeant due to a member of the police service being involved, I refused to answer any of their questions and told the officers it was because it would affect the perpetrators career... throughout my marriage the perpetrator let me know that I would have no recourse through the Queensland Police Service for his behaviour... he would tell me he ‘had the entire blue army behind him’.”¹⁵¹

The Commission also identified examples of member involved domestic violence in the complaint files it reviewed:

In 2020, a woman complained to police about her partner, Officer Silver, engaging in coercive controlling behaviours including accusing her of infidelity. The initial QPS investigation found it was not ‘necessary and desirable’ to obtain a Police Protection Notice on her behalf. She successfully made a private application instead. Officer Silver was charged with breaching the order and was stood down from public facing work. When he was convicted of the breach, his duties were further restricted. He was then charged with criminal offences relating to domestic and family violence and was refused bail. He was suspended with pay. He was charged with further criminal offences. Bail was again refused and the QPS suspended him without pay. He resigned and is now in jail.¹⁵²

In late 2018, police attended a domestic and family violence related call for service at Officer Green’s home after an incident culminated in Officer Green and his wife scrambling over Officer Green’s firearm. Officer Green met police on the road and provided a version of events before they could speak to Mrs Green. Police issued a Police Protection Notice naming Officer Green as the aggrieved, and Mrs Green as the respondent. Within months, Mrs Green made a private application for a Protection Order and was granted a Temporary Protection Order the same day, naming her as the aggrieved and Officer Green as the respondent. Officer Green later pled guilty to charges of breaching the Temporary Protection Order, as well as to charges of computer hacking relating to his attempts to use QPS systems to locate Mrs Green after she fled to a women’s refuge. QPS transferred him to work as an education and training officer.¹⁵³

In late 2021, Officer Umber’s former partner made allegations of domestic and family violence which included strangulation and sexual assault. Police took out a Police Protection Notice, an investigation took place, and a Temporary Protection Order was made naming Officer Umber as a respondent. In early 2022, Officer Umber was convicted of breaching that order. In mid-2022, Officer Umber was charged with offences relating to the original acts of domestic and family violence and was suspended with pay. Seventeen complaints had previously been made about Officer Umber over the course of 20 years, all of which had been found to be ‘unsubstantiated.’ Eight of these related to allegations that Officer Umber used excessive force, and one related to an allegation of sexual misconduct.¹⁵⁴

In late 2021, Officer Brown’s girlfriend, Donna, complained to police that she had been the victim of sexual abuse, assault, and coercive control at the hands of Officer Brown. Officer Brown had sent Donna a multitude of inappropriate text messages, some of which used emojis to depict punching her and to imply she would end up in a wheelchair. QPS issued a Police Protection Notice naming Officer Brown as a respondent, and a Temporary Protection Order was made. As a result of the Temporary Protection Order, the QPS stood Officer Brown down and issued him with a Professional Development Strategy Document restricting his duties.¹⁵⁵

In 2019, Officer Puce was named as a respondent to a Temporary Protection Order. His substantive position was a general duties Senior Constable. However, while the final Protection Order was in place, Officer Puce took up various relieving positions as a Training Officer, Sergeant and Watchhouse Shift Supervisor. In these roles, he would have had the ability to influence decisions about whether or not to grant bail in domestic and family violence matters.¹⁵⁶

Officer Scarlett was named as a respondent to a Protection Order while he was a police officer in another Australian state in the mid-1990s. He then moved to Queensland and joined the QPS while that order remained in effect. In the late 2000s, he was named as a respondent in a Temporary and final Protection Order. Two months later, he was assigned to watchhouse duties. Since then, he has been charged on two separate occasions in relation to drink driving, and, less than five years ago, was named as a respondent in a third Protection Order. During the period of the third Protection Order, he relieved on three occasions as a Shift Supervisor/Sergeant, which would have enabled him to have influence over decisions about whether or not to grant bail in domestic and family violence matters.¹⁵⁷

Professor Silke Meyer told the Commission that:

Officer involved DFV has been identified as a substantial issue of concern, including in Queensland, and requires a separate investigative branch to increase victim-survivor's confidence in reporting their experiences to a specialist unit rather than their abusers' immediate colleagues.¹⁵⁸

Police officers who commit domestic and family violence are particularly dangerous as they have access to weapons and information and knowledge of the law and legal processes that most members of the community do not. The Commission noted that on occasions, police perpetrators have improperly accessed QPS databases to gain information about their case or about people involved in the case.¹⁵⁹

It is self-evident that QPS members who perpetrate domestic and family violence in their personal lives are likely to also compromise QPS responses to domestic and family violence. They may respond poorly to members of the community who report domestic and family violence and they may exhibit attitudes and behaviours that affect the way those around them respond to domestic and family violence.

Further, submissions referred to earlier in this chapter suggest that police officers who experience a marriage breakdown often have a different and less tolerant attitude to female victim-survivors.

Currently, operational police officers who are respondents to Protection Orders are removed from their regular duties while they are subject to an order. In part, that is because officers who are subject to a Protection Order cannot, under the terms of an order, have access to weapons. At the expiry of an order, they can return to normal duties.

In the Commission's view, there would be merit in requiring police officers who are respondents to a Protection Order to complete a mandatory domestic and family violence informed assessment prior to their return to duties. Such an assessment would aim to determine whether the police officer holds any negative attitudes towards women or domestic and family violence that would be likely to impact on their ability to respond well to domestic and

family violence. If the assessment flagged any concerning attitudes, the officer should participate in counselling to challenge those attitudes and to ensure the QPS can be confident about the officer's integrity and ability to respond appropriately to domestic and family violence when they return to duty. A recommendation that such an assessment and counselling take place in these circumstances is made at the end of this chapter.

Officers should have access to appropriate counselling even where a final Protection Order is not made, or where an order is made by consent without admissions. This may assist in ensuring the experience does not affect the member's ability to respond to domestic and family violence.

The costs of this assessment and any counselling considered to be appropriate should be borne by the organisation. Further, the assessment and counselling should take place without undue delay, so the officer can return to normal duties as soon as possible, if that is appropriate in light of the outcomes of the assessment and counselling.

In the Commission's view, the organisation ought to be able to take some additional action against officers who are respondents to a Protection Order who are then alleged to have breached the order by committing further acts of domestic and family violence. In such cases, the Commission considers that the implications of having such an officer in the workplace at all, even if not on regular duties, are serious. The risk to the organisation that the officer will infect the workplace with attitudes that are negative towards women or domestic and family violence is increased, and the organisation ought to be able to take steps to remove the officer altogether, at least until such time as the charges have been resolved.

The Commission will therefore make a recommendation for a change in legislation which would require the suspension of a member, with full pay, if they are charged with breaching a Protection Order.

When advised of the recommendation, the QPS only sought to clarify whether the suspension would be with or without pay.¹⁶⁰ The Queensland Police Union of Employees was unresponsive to this recommendation, noting "*it should always be subject to discretion to enable the Commissioner to inquire into the alleged breach (as required) and make an assessment of the allegation.*"¹⁶¹

To address this concern, the recommendation will provide for circumstances in which the suspension is not mandatory.

FINDINGS

- Negative attitudes towards women are prevalent within the Queensland Police Service and impact the ability of the Queensland Police Service to consistently respond well to domestic and family violence.
- There are pervasive views and beliefs about domestic and family violence among Queensland Police Service members which are not based on research or evidence. There is a need for further training to challenge those views and beliefs.
- The process of reporting domestic and family violence at the front counter of police stations is inconsistent across the state and victim-survivors can be treated poorly during that process. Queensland Police Service members do not always consider the privacy needs of a victim-survivor attending at police stations.
- When police officers perpetrate domestic and family violence, they are particularly dangerous as they have access to information and weapons which other perpetrators may not.
- When police officers are accused of domestic and family violence, it is possible those officers may respond to domestic and family violence calls for service differently and at times with scepticism.

Recommendation 27

Within 12 months, the Queensland Police Service ensure that all documents, policies and procedures relating to domestic and family violence prominently and clearly acknowledge that domestic and family violence is a gendered issue which is grounded in structural issues and power imbalance.

Recommendation 28

Within 12 months, the Queensland Police Service improve its training in relation to domestic and family violence by ensuring all relevant programs contain clear messaging that:

- dispels myths that women frequently make up allegations of sexual assaults and domestic and family violence
- dispels myths that domestic and family violence is not a gendered issue
- dispels myths that an ideal victim exists
- explains the dynamics of power and control in relationships characterised by domestic and family violence
- reinforces the need to investigate domestic and family violence as a pattern of behaviour over time
- reinforces the need to consider the individual personal characteristics of the people in the relationship under investigation and account for those particular characteristics in investigations.

Recommendation 29

Within six months, the Queensland Police Service improve the processes for reporting domestic and family violence at police stations by:

- requiring all stations to designate a private, safe and secure area for all persons presenting for domestic and family violence matters
- amending the Operational Procedures Manual to mandate that designated areas are used for all enquiries, discussions, reports and interviews with persons presenting for domestic and family violence matters
- requiring a professionally designed A3 notice advertising the availability of that private area produced by the Domestic, Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Command, be prominently displayed at the front of all police stations.

Recommendation 30

Within 12 months, the Queensland Police Service develop and implement a requirement that members who are respondents to a Domestic Violence Order complete a mandatory domestic and family violence informed assessment and, if considered desirable by the assessor, counselling, prior to their return to normal duties.

Recommendation 31

Within 12 months, the Queensland Government amend section 6.1 of the *Police Service Administration Act 1990* to require the Police Commissioner to suspend, on full pay, a member who is charged with breaching a Protection Order at least until the matter is resolved, unless the member is able to prove, on the balance of probabilities, that exceptional circumstances exist such that the suspension should not occur.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

Developing and strengthening training to ensure that police adopt a nuanced trauma-informed and victim-centric approach to domestic and family violence will improve the way that victim-survivors are treated by police and promote the personal rights that are engaged when domestic and family violence is adequately responded to and prevented. Providing victim-survivors with a private, safe and secure place at police stations to make complaints or discuss domestic and family violence elevates their human rights

Those rights include recognition and equality before the law (s 15 HRA), right to life (s 16 HRA) liberty and security (s 29 HRA), protection for victims and families (ss 17 and 26 HRA) right to privacy and reputation (s 25 HRA) and cultural rights (ss 27 and 28 HRA).

Recommendations 30 and 31 may limit the human rights of an officer who is a respondent to a Protection Order, or who breaches a Protection Order. The requirement to participate in counselling and potential suspension pending resolution of a breach of an order may limit their recognition and equality before the law (s 15 HRA).

Restricting human rights can be justified where it is reasonable to protect the rights of others. In balancing the matters set out in s 13 HRA, the limitation is reasonable and justified because it promotes the rights of victims and potential future victims in domestic and family violence matters by ensuring that police officers who investigate domestic and family violence do so without prejudice.

In justifying the restriction of their human rights, the Commission recognises that police play a very significant role in responding to, disrupting, and preventing domestic and family violence, and protecting victim-survivors. Where police officers who are tasked to investigate domestic and family violence also perpetrate domestic and family violence, it is possible they will respond to calls for service differently. The QPS has an obligation to victim-survivors to ensure that police officers who are involved in investigating domestic and family violence matters will do so fairly and without prejudice.

This promotes the human rights of victim-survivors including their right to recognition and equality (s 15 HRA), right to life (s 16 HRA), right to liberty and security (s 29 HRA), protection of individual and families (s 17 and 26 HRA) and cultural rights (s 27 and 28 HRA).

9 Accounting for diversity

It is not only negative attitudes to women that contribute to poor QPS responses to domestic and family violence. As identified in Chapter 2 there are often shortfalls in QPS responses to domestic and family violence when one or both of the parties identify as LGBTIQ+, have a culturally or linguistically diverse background, are young or elderly, have a cognitive, intellectual, or physical disability, are experiencing mental health issues or have other complex needs.

This chapter outlines what the Commission heard about QPS failures to account for diversity when responding to domestic and family violence, and makes recommendations to improve policing responses. First Nations peoples and communities are considered in Part 4 of the Report.

This chapter also discusses the structural barriers that some people or groups may encounter when seeking assistance from police for domestic and family violence.

Submissions received by the Commission have plainly highlighted the importance of recognising how a person's identity and experiences may intersect to elevate their risk of domestic and family violence, compound existing harms and impact the way they engage with, or seek support from, services including the police.

While this chapter adopts a focussed approach to the issues raised by different priority groups, the Commission acknowledges the need to better recognise and respond to the impacts of multiple and intersecting layers of structural inequality such as sexism, racism, ageism and ableism, discriminatory and oppressive attitudes, substance use, mental health issues, homelessness and poverty.

As submitted by the Australian Association of Social Workers:

...different aspects of a person's identity can expose victim-survivors to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalization. In the context of FDV [Family and domestic violence] police officers need to identify how the multiplicity of identities...can be associated with different sources of oppression and discrimination, and how those intersections can lead to increased risk, severity and frequency of experiencing different forms of violence.¹⁶²

The Commission notes that the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce made recommendations for increased inclusion and diversity training for police officers. The recommendations made in this chapter are intended to supplement these recommendations.

PEOPLE WHO IDENTIFY AS LGBTIQ+

Victim-survivors who identify as LGBTIQ+ may find their experience of domestic and family violence compounded by structural violence, stigma and difficult relationships within their family of origin. They are more likely to experience other complex and intersecting factors which elevate their risk and create barriers to help-seeking. There are also some unique differences in their experiences of domestic and family violence including a risk the perpetrator:

- uses their gender, sexuality or health status against them
- makes threats to 'out' them to family, friends, or work colleagues
- controls access to their medication or health care (such as for gender transition related care).¹⁶³

The Commission heard evidence that police responses sometimes fall short of community expectations where one or more of the parties is a member of the LGBTIQ+ community.

Mr Ben Bjarnesen, QPS member and Managing Director of the LGBTQ Domestic Violence Awareness Foundation, told the Commission that members of the LGBTIQ+ community experience domestic and family violence at higher rates than the community average¹⁶⁴ and are less likely to report to police.¹⁶⁵ Ms Ellie Hansson, a lawyer with the LGBTI Legal Service, explained that even when they do make a report to police, members of this community can experience poor responses, which include not having reports taken seriously or a lack of sensitivity by police.¹⁶⁶

The Commission was told of instances where police misunderstood domestic and family violence between same-sex couples as 'a lover's spat' in circumstances where they would have been more likely to take it seriously if it had occurred in a heterosexual relationship and instances where police improperly used deadnames or pronouns when dealing with gender diverse people.¹⁶⁷

Sometimes the inadequacy of the police response appears to be a result of a lack of understanding of the dynamics of domestic and family violence, particularly coercive control, in non-heteronormative relationships.¹⁶⁸ In other cases, such as when a personal search was accompanied by invasive and inappropriate questions, the poor policing response might reflect an underlying lack of respect by police which may cause the person to feel unnecessarily uncomfortable.¹⁶⁹

The Commission notes that the QPS has recently committed to making a formal apology to the LGBTIQ+ community for its historic enforcement of discriminatory laws.

The apology, which is expected to be made in 2023, will acknowledge that past QPS actions in “enforcing the laws of the time that criminalised the expression of their sexuality” caused “hurt and pain”.¹⁷⁰

Mr Bjarnesen gave evidence that many people from the LGBTIQ+ community are reluctant to make a report to police because they fear they will be treated differently due to their sexuality.¹⁷¹ Given the historical relationship between the police and the LGBTIQ+ community, this is, of course, entirely understandable. The Commission hopes that the planned apology by the QPS next year goes some way to providing people from the LGBTIQ+ community with greater confidence to report domestic and family violence.

In the meantime, there are other steps the QPS can take to improve its responses to domestic and family violence in the LGBTIQ+ community.

Mr Bjarnesen gave evidence that there is presently an inadequate amount of training for QPS members in relation to domestic and family violence in LGBTIQ+ relationships, while also noting that a lack of training is a wider issue across the domestic and family violence service sector. He said that the need for further training is:

...not just a QPS thing. I think that's support services as well. There's a really a huge lack of training in all things LGBTIQ+ across all police and all services which we really need to improve.¹⁷²

The Commission agrees that further training would be beneficial and makes a recommendation to that effect at the end of this chapter.

Mr Bjarnesen believes QPS responses could be improved by transitioning the current roles of LGBTIQ+ liaison officers and program district co-ordinators to full-time positions filled by people with lived experience or, at least, officers who have received training on LGBTIQ+ issues generally, as well as the nature of the historical relationship between police and the LGBTIQ+ community.¹⁷³ The Commission agrees and makes a recommendation to that effect at the end of the chapter.

Mr Bjarnesen gave evidence that, although police have access to online information about domestic and family violence support services, that information does not include services specifically for the LGBTIQ+ community.¹⁷⁴ The Commission considers that it would be useful for police officers to have access to such a list and makes a recommendation to facilitate that at the end of this chapter.

OLDER PEOPLE

There has been a significant increase in the number of older people reporting domestic and family violence in Queensland, often at the hands of adult family members or their partners, with the rate of older victims making complaints increasing by over 200% since 2012.¹⁷⁵

This does not necessarily mean more older Australians are experiencing violence. Increased rates are also associated with an ageing population, the broader definition of domestic and family violence within the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012*, as well as increased awareness and community reporting.

Older people who are socially isolated or who have poorer mental or physical health, including those with a disability, are also more likely to experience abuse¹⁷⁶ and may be less able to access support for domestic and family violence.

There are several reasons for this including:

- a lack of awareness that the abuse they are experiencing constitutes domestic and family violence, particularly where it involves their adult children
- concerns about police intervention against a family member who could also be their carer
- socially isolating and controlling behaviours by the perpetrator, which is exacerbated where an older person has physical or cognitive disabilities that make it difficult to report domestic and family violence to police.

Controlling behaviour and the emotional abuse that characterises coercive control are common features of elder abuse and share the same pattern that is present in intimate partner violence.¹⁷⁷ Ms Cybele Koning, CEO of Caxton Legal Centre, told the Commission that:

...Many of our clients are victims of years of coercive control by their adult children, often without any issues of physical violence and often concurrent with issues of financial or economic abuse. For a number of our older clients, many years of coercive control eventually culminate in an act of physical violence committed by a young, physically fit adult, against an older, physically frail person.

In addition to coercive control by adult children against their parents, our service assists older women who have been decades-long victims of coercive control within the context of intimate partner violence.¹⁷⁸

Aged Disability Advocacy Australia told the Commission that community attitudes toward older people mean that these types of controlling behaviours by an intimate partner or family member toward older persons may be dismissed or tolerated as ‘genuine care’.¹⁷⁹

The Commission also heard that when older people report controlling behaviours of adult family members or their partners to police, the abuse is sometimes dismissed as being a family matter in circumstances where it constitutes acts of domestic and family violence. Ms Koning provided the Commission with several serious examples of poor police responses experienced by elderly clients of the Caxton Legal Centre. They included:

CASE STUDY: JOHN’S EXPERIENCE

John, aged in his 70s, rang police when his son had become enraged and kicked in John’s bedroom door. Fearing for his life, John rang police. When police arrived, they spoke first and at length to John’s son and daughter-in-law. When they eventually spoke to John, they asked him what he wanted to do without explaining to him what his options for action were. John, who had several serious health problems, ended up being taken by police to sleep on the couch of a relative. Police offered no further assistance.¹⁸⁰

CASE STUDY: GRETTEL’S EXPERIENCE

Caxton Legal Centre wrote a Notice to Leave for Gretel, a frail client in her eighties who reluctantly decided she could no longer cope with her abusive adult son, despite Gretel’s instincts to support him after his failed marriage and unemployment. Local police advised they couldn’t flag Gretel on their system as no offence had been committed and they wouldn’t necessarily become involved in a trespass matter should he over-stay his deadline to leave, despite the adult son having no legal right to remain in the premises.¹⁸¹

CASE STUDY: ELIZA’S EXPERIENCE

In another case, Eliza, an elderly client rang Triple Zero and then Police Link asking for a Protection Order. She was told the verbal and emotional abuse and the theft of her food and belongings by her adult child and his partner did not amount to domestic violence and that she should write them a notice to leave and ensure they received it. Eliza did this in great fear of their reaction to the notice to leave. Fortunately, when she needed to ring police a few weeks later, a different officer immediately identified the issue as domestic and family violence and offered to assist.¹⁸²

Ms Koning explained that the inconsistency of police responses makes it difficult for older people to know whether they can rely on police for protection against intergenerational abuse.¹⁸³

Despite the prevalence of inconsistent police responses to the issue of elder abuse, and despite offers of assistance by Caxton Legal Centre to help with the development of training for the QPS, the QPS has not taken up the offer. Ms Koning explained:

...best practice would have that training co-developed and co-delivered, and that’s an invitation that we have put out to police since the last time that we did anything in terms of co-delivery of training, which was in 2016, and we have sent lots of training material to them as optional training packages that we could provide to them. We’ve sent them an eight minute video that explains elder abuse which they could use in training online, because they wanted something online. But what we’re lacking is any engagement about how we can actually assist to co-develop those materials and co-deliver it.¹⁸⁴

Aged Disability Advocacy Australia also told the Commission that there are a number of resources which may assist police to better respond to older people experiencing domestic and family violence, including resources that address the impact of unconscious biases through the introduction of a positive obligation on police to challenge negative or discriminatory attitudes.¹⁸⁵

The Commission considers that the evidence of inconsistent police responses to older people seeking protection in the context of domestic and family violence strongly suggests better training is required, and a recommendation to this effect is made at the end of this chapter.

Ms Koning also explained that the Operational Procedures Manual does not provide sufficient guidance to assist police to understand how to remove adult children from an older person’s home.¹⁸⁶

In light of the evidence of the inconsistent levels of protection offered by police to older persons, and the additional barriers they may face in accessing support, relevant provisions of the Operational Procedures Manual should be clarified to make it easier for police to understand their duties and responsibilities when it comes to the removal of an adult child from the home of an older person affected by family violence. A recommendation to this effect is made at the end of this chapter.

YOUNG PEOPLE

While it remains a relatively small cohort overall, young people are coming to the attention of police for domestic and family violence at a rapidly increasing rate. Between 2012 and 2021 the rate of people aged 18 years and under who were listed as offenders in domestic and family violence related occurrences more than tripled in Queensland. In real terms that is an increase from 152 to 483 people per 100,000 persons. The rate of victims of domestic and family violence who were under 18 years increased from 205 to 330 per 100,000 persons during the same period.¹⁸⁷

Like other cohorts, this growth is not necessarily reflective of an increased use of violence but may be associated with changes in the approach taken by police and other agencies, as well as increased community awareness and improved reporting.

There are additional complexities faced by police when responding to young people experiencing or using domestic and family violence. The young people involved may also have a background of highly complex needs and vulnerabilities, with a history of exposure to domestic and family violence within their families.¹⁸⁸ The Commission heard from Brisbane Youth Service that their staff have observed poor responses by police towards young people, women, and particularly those with complex needs.¹⁸⁹

The Queensland Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (QNADA) submitted that young people's experiences of domestic and family violence can be complex and multilayered and may include:

- being a child in need of protection because of their exposure to parental domestic and family violence
- using or experiencing domestic and family violence within an intimate partner relationship
- experiences of child exploitation and sexual abuse which may, at times, be conceptualised as a 'consensual' intimate partner relationship by service providers and police.¹⁹⁰

This latter issue was also considered by the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board in its 2020-21 Annual Report regarding two cases where the victims' experiences of abuse, including sexual violence, commenced when they were approximately 14 years of age.¹⁹¹ The Board noted that while police had undertaken investigations with respect to child sexual offences in both cases at the time no further action was taken by officers as the victims did not want to provide a report to police.¹⁹² Both victims were exposed to ongoing violence into adulthood.

In addition to domestic and family violence between young people in intimate partner relationships, police are often called to incidents of violence by young people towards their parents.

Some police fail to recognise these acts of abuse as domestic and family violence, instead treating it as a 'parenting issue' which minimises the experience of the parent victim, colludes with the young person using violence and creates barriers for the victim-survivor seeking help in the future.¹⁹³ Micah Projects provided the following example of this:

CASE STUDY: LIZ'S EXPERIENCE

Liz was experiencing violence from her 13-year-old son, including physical abuse, strangulation, emotional abuse, and coercive control.

During an episode of abuse, Liz contacted QPS for assistance in de-escalating her son as part of her safety plan. Upon arrival the two officers stated that this wasn't an issue for the QPS and the situation was a "parenting issue." Police said this to Liz in front of her son.¹⁹⁴

Assistant Commissioner Brian Codd gave evidence at a hearing that he was aware that police often recorded occurrences of children using violence against their parents or grandparents as a "family disturbance" occurrence because they misinterpreted the definition of a relevant relationship under the *Domestic Violence and Family Protection Act 2012*. He told the Commission that he had instructed officers that this type of abuse should be recognised as domestic and family violence and should, at a minimum, be recorded as 'DV-other'.¹⁹⁵ It is anticipated that this will assist in police identifying the behaviour in a more appropriate manner.

The Commission heard that there is an increasing number of Protection Order applications being made in respect of young people by police.¹⁹⁶

In Mount Isa, police officers reported that they had sought orders for children as young as 11 and 12 years old.¹⁹⁷ In these circumstances, it is important that police officers receive specific training about the need to carefully explain the conditions of applications and orders, in language which can be understood by the young person. The Commission makes a recommendation to that effect at the end of this chapter.

Brisbane Youth Service told the Commission of the complex issues that young women who access their services experience where they also have co-occurring mental health issues or may be engaging in problematic substance use. These issues, coupled with accommodation instability, place them in a vulnerable position in relation to domestic and family violence. Brisbane Youth Service submitted:

Young people have expressed a lack of understanding and negative attitude from QPS towards young women experiencing DFV's Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) use, mental health issues and past criminal history. When QPS intervene in a DFV setting, the young women's AOD use, mental health issues and/or criminal history appear to be

at the forefront of the response and can be used against the young women, as though they are not credible, or less trustworthy in explaining the DFV. Young women regularly report feeling stigmatised by the police.

Young women have also described a lack of response to sexual violence by QPS. Young women report that one of the first things they are asked when QPS respond to sexual violence within DFV is whether they have used AOD recently. Young women report that they feel their experiences of sexual violence are not taken seriously. Young women presenting to BYS have often had a history of sexual abuse. They are also often couch surfing in tenuous and dangerous circumstances where they have had to rely on sexual transactions to secure their accommodation and/or may have fled a DFV situation. This creates a highly vulnerable cohort of young women who may be stigmatised by QPS in the event that they seek QPS support. Again, QPS staff can fail to take into account the developmental or crisis-related trauma experienced by many young women when approaching such complex situations.¹⁹⁸

QNADA also raised concerns about how police respond to young people experiencing domestic and family violence who also use illicit drugs, particularly where the young person has a prior history of abuse and trauma or previous negative interactions with police or other statutory services.¹⁹⁹ This can act as a significant barrier to the young person making a report to police and, as a result, can increase their risk of future harm. QNADA highlighted the importance of police responding in a way that accords with community expectations and engenders trust, irrespective of the reason for the interaction.²⁰⁰

The Commission considers further training for police would be beneficial to assist them to recognise and respond to young people who have complex needs, and to assist them to recognise domestic and family violence between young people and their parents. A recommendation to this effect is made at the end of this chapter.

PEOPLE FROM CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds may experience additional barriers when seeking help from police for domestic and family violence. These may include community or family pressures to remain in a relationship, language barriers, fear of government officials based on their experiences of such services in their country of origin or lack of knowledge of the available support.²⁰¹ They may also hold religious or cultural beliefs about gender roles, particularly within marriage, or encounter a range of other cultural, financial and social factors that heighten the challenges they face when engaging with the justice system.²⁰²

Micah Projects, a community-based, not-for-profit organisation which provides support to people who experience domestic and family violence, including people from CALD backgrounds, told the Commission:

Our experience is that people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) are under-represented and their needs are not responded to effectively (Seagrave, Wickes., & Keel, 2021). This may be a consequence of language and cultural barriers that limit their ability to seek help. In addition, CALD victim/survivors have also disclosed to our service on multiple occasions that interpreters were not available to them on the day of their DV matter being heard in court. This places the victim/survivor at further risk as they are unable to disclose and express their concerns to their legal representation and they endure further discrimination.²⁰³

The Commission heard about the misidentification of CALD women as respondents, which was attributed to a lack of understanding by police of the impact of high levels of stress and prolonged trauma on women from CALD backgrounds who experience ongoing and escalating abuse, as well as the use of children as interpreters.²⁰⁴ The Commission heard that it is not uncommon for police to fail to use interpreters when speaking with or interviewing members of the CALD community, especially victim-survivors, about their experiences of domestic and family violence.

Concerningly, this included instances where police relied on family members of a person who is experiencing domestic and family violence to give an account of what happened, rather than engaging an interpreter. Ms Toni Bell, the Director of Family Law and Civil Justice Services at Legal Aid Queensland, told the Commission she was aware of incidents when police had used children to interpret for their parents.²⁰⁵ Such situations place the person affected by the violence and the family member in a difficult position and compromises the quality of information obtained by the police.

In more extreme instances, the Commission heard of police officers using the perpetrator to translate for the person experiencing violence.²⁰⁶ A recommendation is made earlier in this Report for further training with respect to the use of interpreters.

The following example is based on the facts of a 2021 decision from the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal:

CASE STUDY: TINA'S EXPERIENCE

Tina, who spoke Mandarin, called police claiming her husband had attacked her with a knife. She spoke very limited English. When police arrived, they asked Tina if she spoke English, and she said she did, but not very well. Rather than seek an interpreter for Tina, who was injured, police instead spoke only to her husband, who said Tina had attacked him.

Based on what her husband told police, and despite the obvious wound to her hand, Tina was misidentified as the respondent. Tina's version was never obtained by police.²⁰⁷

Additionally, the Commission heard that, at times, police seem to lack awareness of CALD victim-survivors' anxiety about speaking up due to their fear of being deported, and cultural differences which contribute to a reluctance to speak openly about family violence.²⁰⁸ While the Australian Government has sought to increase awareness of protections available for people on temporary visas who are experiencing domestic and family violence so they may remain in Australia,²⁰⁹ a fear of deportation can inhibit disclosures and help-seeking by victim-survivors from a CALD background and can be used by the perpetrator as a form of control. A victim-survivor may also have concerns about the impact of making a report to police on a perpetrator's asylum-seeking status.²¹⁰

As a result of recommendations from the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence (2015) the QPS introduced a number of changes to improve its responses to people from a CALD background who experience domestic and family violence.²¹¹ The QPS submitted that the current policy outlined in Operational Procedures Manual 6.3.2 requires that, if a police officer wishes to speak to or communicate with a person, they are to establish whether the person has a cultural need that may require the presence of an interpreter.

Accepting that this is the policy, evidence received by the Commission that police feel under pressure to get to the next job, combined with evidence taken in hearings from officers about the use of interpreters and the experience of organisations who help CALD victim-survivors, it is evident that interpreters are often unlikely to be engaged where police attend a callout and victim-survivors are experiencing communication or language barriers.²¹²

This is further confirmed in a joint submission by Dr Shane Warren, School of Public Health and Social Work, Queensland University of Technology, and the Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS) who told the Commission that:

It is our observation that the QPS have a general lack of willingness and skills to engage interpreters when dealing with /assisting CALD women. Even when the women or the support

worker has requested an interpreter, police still do their own assessment first and going by client's ability to hold basic conversational English they are assessed as not needing or requiring an interpreter. There have been situations where a victim of DFSV [domestic, family and sexual violence] was not able to express their experience of DFSV due to no interpreting services provided to her even though the need of a professional interpreter was requested by the victim. There is also a lack of understanding of the need for professional and gender-based interpreters and this has left many victims/survivors of DFSV feeling disempowered resulting in them losing trust in the police.²¹³

One obvious consequence of the lack of awareness of the impact that a language barrier may have for people from a CALD background is that police may not progress investigations when they should. Another is that the victim-survivor is misidentified as the perpetrator of violence. The Commission considers that increased training would be beneficial to assist police officers to understand the barriers that might be experienced by people from CALD backgrounds that prevent them making reports of domestic and family violence and makes a recommendation to this effect at the end of the chapter.

PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

While individual experiences vary, the Commission heard that people with a cognitive, intellectual or physical disability face extra barriers to reporting domestic and family violence to police, and additional challenges to being believed when they do make a report, especially where they are reliant on their abuser for care.²¹⁴

This is particularly problematic given that research shows that violence against women with a disability may be more serious, occur over a longer period and be experienced differently.²¹⁵ A range of factors which may increase vulnerability or reduce a victim-survivors' capacity to seek help through the justice system include:

- the type of disability or impairment the person may have
- the level of dependence the victim-survivor may have on the perpetrator and
- broader community attitudes to people with a disability or impairment.²¹⁶

Violence against people with a disability may also take different forms including withholding access to health care (such as medication or aids) or limiting the victim-survivors' access to service providers, as well as threats related to mothering or care-giving roles.²¹⁷ It may also include forced medical treatment, forced isolation or restraint and/or reproductive control.²¹⁸

Submissions received by the Commission about people with a disability and their interactions with police around domestic and family violence identified that police may fail to make reasonable adjustments to support people with a disability to make a report, or may not believe them when they report violence.²¹⁹

Aged Disability Advocacy Centre provided the following example:

CASE STUDY: ZOE'S EXPERIENCE

Zoe is from a culturally and linguistically diverse background but has lived in Australia for most of her life. She has a traumatic brain injury, nerve damage and experiences frequent migraines. While she had been separated from her partner for some time, there was a history of domestic and family violence in the relationship, including emotional abuse and frequent threats of violence.

Zoe attended a police station to seek assistance after her former partner returned and attempted to take custody of their child. Notwithstanding the inherent difficulties of negotiating post-separation child custody arrangements, police at the station were noted as being “*dismissive*” and “*unprepared to facilitate an initial conversation*” until an advocate became involved.

While the advocate participated in an interview by telephone, it was reported that the “*officer's language and response [was] intimidating, dismissive and demeaning.*”²²⁰ The perpetrator subsequently sought advice from police and gained access to the child as there were no Family Court orders in place, before returning the child to her mother's care as she was experiencing significant distress.

As reported by Aged Disability Advocacy Australia, on this occasion police “*did not appropriately consider [Zoe's] concerns about exposing the child to the risk of further violence by her ex-partner and did not take reasonable steps to investigate the risk, even after she recounted previous examples of abuse and described her fear for her own and her daughter's safety.*”²²¹

Ending Violence Against Women Queensland told the Commission that existing processes within the QPS are “*inaccessible, inconsistently applied and disadvantage people experiencing intersectionality of disadvantage, such as disability and language barriers.*”²²²

The WWILD Sexual Violence Prevention Association Inc (WWILD) supports young people and adults with intellectual disabilities who have experienced violence, including domestic and family violence. WWILD told the Commission that it also has “*serious concerns about the responses given to women with intellectual disability who have experienced domestic and family violence, and sexual assault.*”²²³

WWILD provides ongoing interview skills training to QPS detectives. WWILD told the Commission that:

QPS staff at these training sessions have given feedback that identifying women with intellectual disabilities can sometimes be difficult and they often are not aware of the signs to look for or what questions to ask. Many of our clients have highlighted barriers they face in disclosing their disability to police, as well as suggestions for police about how to identify intellectual disability.²²⁴

WWILD highlighted the difficulties police face in identifying when a person has an intellectual disability and the resultant risk that police may not always recognise when a victim-survivor needs additional supports. According to WWILD:

Police identification of intellectual disability may be challenging due to impacts of an intellectual disability that present similarly to aspects of mental health issues, alcohol and drug misuse, trauma responses and other developmental or learning delays. However, we would like to further urge recognition that many women with intellectual disabilities face high rates of dual diagnoses and as such are often impacted by more than one presenting condition or issue at one time. This can lead to a woman's intellectual disability being missed, and in turn to police not knowing when to offer additional support or adjust their approaches.²²⁵

Ms Jacelyn Parsons, a victims of crime case manager with WWILD, gave evidence to the Commission that, in her experience, police officers only sometimes use video recorded statements (s 93A statements) to take a report from people with an intellectual disability, and should be encouraged to use this technique more often as it is often a substantially easier way for a person with an intellectual disability to provide their information to police.²²⁶

Additionally, Ms Parsons observed that police do not always use support persons when interviewing people with intellectual impairments. She said:

Most of my clients are engaged with WWILD because they feel like they would like additional support around the police system. I can only speak from my experience, but I feel like there's a really big miscommunication or I guess - sorry, I guess different information given by different police to the client saying that either they're allowed a support person or not allowed a support person. So it can make the process really, really difficult and really confusing because you're getting different information from different people.²²⁷

Ms Parsons relayed one of WWILD's client's experiences to the Commission:

CASE STUDY: ANNA'S EXPERIENCE

Anna went to a police station. She was highly distressed and when she arrived police made her sit in a waiting room. By the time Anna was interviewed, she felt heightened and frazzled. Police told her that they did not understand her, and then that the matter was not going to proceed.

Anna felt like she will not go to back to the police if something happened to her in the future. Police previously asked her whether she needed to go to a psych unit, because she was having trouble explaining what had happened to her.²²⁸

The Commission has already recommended that the QPS improve training in relation to the use of video recorded statements (s 93A statements). In conjunction with that recommendation, the Operational Procedures Manual should be revised to assist police to understand when it is appropriate to video record the statement of people with a cognitive or intellectual disability.

In the Commission's view, police should receive improved training to help them identify a person who has a cognitive or intellectual disability and the circumstances in which it would be appropriate to offer to seek assistance from a support person or advocate. Recommendations to that effect are made at the end of this chapter.

PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES OR MULTIPLE COMPLEX NEEDS

Over the past decade, the QPS has undertaken a considerable amount of work to improve its responses to people experiencing a mental illness. This work has largely been informed by coronial findings and reviews that have identified the challenges police face when responding to a person experiencing a mental health crisis.²²⁹ Similar to domestic and family violence, mental health related calls for service also represent a significant proportion of police time.

It is important that police understand the intersections between a person's mental health issues, and their experiences of domestic and family violence, as police may respond to:

- mental health related calls for service where domestic and family violence is an underlying issue, such as when a perpetrator is expressing suicidal ideation or intent as an act of coercive control
- domestic and family violence related calls for service involving one or both persons who may have a mental health issue
- domestic and family violence related calls for service where the perpetrator may misrepresent the victim-survivor as having a mental health problem to discredit their report of violence.

People with a mental illness who experience domestic and family violence may be reluctant to tell police as they fear being disbelieved or that their experiences of violence will be rationalised, resulting in victim-blaming and revictimisation.²³⁰ The perpetrator may also use their mental illness against them, including to control access to children within the relationship or to discount the victim-survivor's report of violence. Indeed, for women experiencing domestic and family violence, *"mental ill health can be a compounding factor, a barrier, an outcome and a tool used by perpetrators"*.²³¹

The Commission heard from a number of victim-survivors who disclosed that when they tried to report their experiences of violence to police, they were either not listened to or not believed because of their mental illness, or that police took other action with respect to their mental health issue and did not respond to their report of domestic and family violence.

The Commission heard of many instances where police made referrals to support services for victim-survivors which included (among other things) references to victim-survivors being *"hostile," "hysterical," "unreliable,"* and *"frequently mentally unwell."*²³² They also report that these words are *"seldom, if ever"* used about people perpetrating violence, even when they are relevant to risk assessment and response.²³³

For women who experience domestic and family violence, their mental health issues may also intersect with complex trauma and disability, restricting their access to justice as this system has not been designed to respond to trauma.²³⁴ Brisbane Youth Service (BYS) told the Commission:

Within the context of DFV investigations, BYS staff have observed a difference in QPS investigations of DFV for young women with complex needs. These include young women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, First Nations young women, young women with complex mental health, young women who use Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD), and young women with criminal histories. BYS staff have observed that for young people experiencing different intersecting needs, when QPS attend DFV incidents, responses to other complexities take priority over DFV. Implicit and/or explicit QPS attitudes towards young people's complex needs have profound impacts on the capacity and capability of QPS to respond to and investigate DFV involving young people.²³⁵

Some organisations, including Brisbane Youth Service, reported that police responses in such circumstances are often poor.²³⁶ This may result in unfair outcomes for the victim-survivor, such as police supporting the perpetrator or inappropriately categorising the incident as requiring a mental health response instead of a domestic and family violence response.²³⁷

The Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board has repeatedly raised concerns about the way police and other services respond to victim-survivors with multiple complex needs or past histories of trauma, highlighting that they are more likely to experience stigma and discrimination when making a report of domestic and family violence.²³⁸

Ending Violence Against Women Queensland also told the Commission that:

...police bias is not understood and influences police responses to people such as people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, sex workers, people with language barriers and disability. Psychosocial disability and trauma related distress is reported to be misrepresented frequently. This also leads to the hystericisation of female victims. Likewise, biases and outdated stereotypes undermine efforts to end violence, discourage victim/survivor reporting and embolden people to continue to perpetrate violence and abuse. This unintentionally creates a systems environment that further perpetuates gender-based violence and disempowers victims who are largely women and children.²³⁹

Perpetrators exercise their control in multiple and varied ways, often tailored to their victim and what will cause the most impact. This diversity of impact can be further compounded by victim-survivors' experiences of other forms of oppression or privilege such as gender, age, race, disability, mental health, sexual orientation, language, employment and education. These interfaces will inform how victim-survivors respond to their experiences of violence and how they may respond to police. Capacity to recognise the diversity in the lived experience of victims, and how this shapes the impact of violence is a valuable tool for police to assess domestic and family violence risk and determine appropriate interventions.

Given the difficulties police officers face in accounting for complex mental health and multiple complex needs, the Commission considers police officers should undertake additional training to assist them to respond appropriately in such circumstances, and makes a recommendation to this effect at the end of the chapter.

FINDINGS

- **Police do not always understand the additional barriers faced by people from diverse backgrounds or experiences when they report domestic and family violence, or when police investigate domestic and family violence. This lack of understanding affects police responses to people from the LGBTIQ+ community, young people, older people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with an intellectual, cognitive or physical disability and people with mental health issues or multiple complex needs. Further training would assist to break down these barriers.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 32

Within 12 months, the Queensland Police Service improve its training in relation to domestic and family violence by ensuring all relevant programs explain:

- the history of the relationship between police and the LGBTIQ+ community, and the way in which the nature of that relationship impacts on reluctance in the LGBTIQ+ community to report domestic and family violence to police
- the behaviours which amount to elder abuse, and the steps that should be taken to protect older people when they report harm from a family member
- how to recognise young people with complex needs and how to:
 - account for those needs in dealing with young people in the context of domestic and family violence
 - recognise domestic and family violence between young people and their parents and the importance of explaining that behaviour to the young person and offering referrals to the family
 - explain the conditions of applications and orders to young people in a language they can easily understand
- how to recognise or inquire about the barriers that may impact a person from a culturally and linguistically diverse background reporting domestic and family violence, and how to account for those barriers in order to appropriately progress a response or investigation

- how to recognise or inquire about whether a person has a cognitive or intellectual disability, and how to:
 - assess whether it would be appropriate to take a statement from a person with a cognitive or intellectual disability by way of a statement pursuant to section 93A of the *Evidence Act 1977*
 - determine whether it would be appropriate to provide a support person for any interactions with the person
- how to approach assessing whether a person with a cognitive, intellectual or physical disability is in need of protection and which factors to consider when the person who is using violence may also be the carer of the victim-survivor
- how to recognise the presence of multiple, intersecting complex needs, including for people with a mental illness, and the steps that should be taken when responding to, or investigating, reports of domestic and family violence in those circumstances.

Recommendation 33

Within three months, the Queensland Police Service review the list of support services that are accessible by police to provide to people impacted by domestic and family violence to include, at a minimum, services which can provide support to:

- people who identify as LGBTIQ+
- men
- older people
- young people
- people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background
- people with a cognitive or intellectual impairment or disability
- people with additional complex needs.

Recommendation 34

Within 12 months, the Queensland Police Service establish permanent, full-time LGBTIQ+ Liaison Officer positions in each district whose role involves being able to provide specialist advice to police officers about their interactions with people from the LGBTIQ+ community.

Recommendation 35

Within six months, the Queensland Police Service update the Operational Procedures Manual to assist police officers to easily understand their powers and responsibilities when called to assist with the removal of an adult child from an older person's home.

Recommendation 36

Within six months, the Queensland Police Service update the Operational Procedures Manual to assist police officers to easily understand when it is appropriate to take a statement from an adult with a cognitive or intellectual impairment or disability pursuant to section 93A of the *Evidence Act 1977*.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

Lack of understanding about the additional barriers faced by people from diverse backgrounds and experiences sometimes leads to poor police responses. Developing and strengthening inclusion and diversity training to assist police to understand the needs of victim-survivors from diverse backgrounds and experiences will improve the way police respond to those victim-survivors and promote their personal rights. Those rights include recognition and equality before the law (s 15 HRA), right to life (s 16 HRA) liberty and security (s 29 HRA), protection for victims and families (ss 17 and 26 HRA) and cultural rights (ss 27 and 28 HRA).

10 Burnout and fatigue

The Commission heard evidence from victim-survivors and community organisations about poor responses to domestic and family violence, ranging from women being turned away from police stations when they have tried to make a report, to attendances by police officers who appeared disinterested, disbelieving or disinclined to investigate. The previous chapters considered how sexism and misogyny, other negative attitudes towards women and other cultural issues within the QPS contribute to these poor responses.

However, it is not just negative attitudes towards women which cause or contribute to inconsistent and, at times, inadequate responses to domestic and family violence. Negative attitudes towards responding to domestic and family violence itself, irrespective of any attitudes or beliefs about the people involved, can also be a driver of poor responses.

There can be various causes of these negative attitudes. Some police officers believe that members of the public do not understand or appreciate the work police do in responding to domestic and family violence. They may resent attending domestic and family violence calls for service when they believe it is such a thankless task.

Other police officers feel a sense of futility about their response to domestic and family violence because they believe that their actions do not make a difference.

Still other police officers are sensitive to criticism of their efforts, both from within the organisation and from the media, and at times operate from a place of fear as a result.

A large number of police officers report a sense of fatigue and burnout in relation to domestic and family violence matters, either because of these attitudes and beliefs, the sheer workload, or a combination of both. The result is a cultural aversion within the QPS to domestic and family violence matters, leading to a reluctance by QPS members to respond to domestic and family violence related calls for service or attend to requests for help at station front counters.

The QPS leadership has known for some time that there are areas of cultural aversion in relation to domestic and family violence within the organisation. At an Executive Leadership Team (ELT) meeting in May 2021, two senior members of the Domestic and Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Command identified ‘cultural aversion’ as one of the issues affecting QPS responses to domestic and family violence. The following is an excerpt of the presentation given to the ELT about problems regarding QPS responses to domestic and family violence:²⁴⁰



Figure 24: DFV Deep Dive PowerPoint presentation to the Executive Leadership Team 12 May 2021

Addressing the cultural aversion to responding to domestic and violence matters is likely to lead to better responses by the QPS. However, the QPS must understand the causes of this cultural aversion before it can implement a remedy. This chapter examines those primary causes and considers ways to address them.

AN UNRELENTING AND THANKLESS TASK

The Commission heard that most police officers feel a great sense of pressure to respond effectively to domestic and family violence to keep the community safe. Despite this pressure, some officers believe that the community does not understand or appreciate the work they do in responding to domestic and family violence.

In 2018, the QPS engaged the Nous Group to conduct the QPS DFV-Q 2018 survey of its members' views about what was working well and where opportunities existed to improve responses to domestic and family violence.²⁴¹ The Commission had regard to the results of that survey and engaged the Nous Group to conduct a similar survey in July 2022. In total, 2,733 QPS members (approximately 15.7% of the QPS workforce) completed the QPS DFV-Q 2022 survey.²⁴²

Survey results revealed that nine in ten QPS members believe that pressures are increasing on police officers who respond to domestic and family violence.²⁴³ Among general duties officers, who are most likely to be frontline responders to domestic and family violence, 97% considered this to be the case.

In addition to the survey results, the Commission heard from many QPS members who agreed that the pressure on police officers is great and ever-increasing. One former QPS member said:

There are also pressures to do the job perfectly with domestic violence in relation to interpreting who is most at risk, often in the face of a very complex family makeup and competing issues related to child custody and property disputes. While balancing those complex issues you have time pressures from the Police Communications Centre ('PCC'), DTACC [District Tasking and Co-ordination Centre] and your supervisors to attend other matters. There are very high expectations, and they can be frustrating when your assessment of what is important now is overridden by organisational goals motivated by statistics gathering.²⁴⁴

Many police reported that responding to domestic and family violence is simply unrelenting and causes fatigue and burnout. The QPS DFV-Q 2022 survey revealed that one in two QPS members felt burned out by the volume of domestic and family violence related calls for service they were required to attend. Only 7.4% of the respondents indicated they did not feel that way.²⁴⁵ General duties officers felt an even greater sense of burnout. Three out of four felt burnt out from the amount of domestic and family violence matters they respond to.²⁴⁶ One survey respondent said:

After almost 14 years in the QPS in GD's, 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.²⁴⁷

Another said the issue of burnout in relation to domestic and family violence matters is likely to cause detriment to the organisation if it is not addressed:

I am a General Duties officer in an extremely busy and populated District, and it feels as though at least 75% of [calls for service] I respond to are Domestic Violence related. I know I myself feel burnt out and overworked responding to these jobs and I know my colleagues feel the same. If we don't do something to lower these calls for service for DV, the service is going to be at a detriment either through loss of staff through resignation, or through a lack of care.²⁴⁸

Another QPS member urged meaningful change to reduce domestic and family violence fatigue amongst officers:

Reshuffling staff, firing staff and reducing the number of staff on the front line has done nothing more than exhaust those officers left in general duties and the majority of jobs they attend is... DV. It's no wonder their tolerance is limited. There is no rest for them and extra trainings in DV is not the solution, it's just another tick in the box so management can say 'we did something'.²⁴⁹

There is little doubt that many officers attribute fatigue and burnout to structural issues, such as insufficient resources for frontline responses to domestic and family violence matters and complicated policies and procedures associated with responding to domestic and family violence.²⁵⁰ These issues are discussed in Part 2 of the Report.

Evidence available to the Commission also demonstrated that many QPS members feel that the complexity of domestic and family violence matters is contributing to their sense of burnout.²⁵¹ As discussed elsewhere in this Report, this can be improved by greater training and better resourcing. However, there are clearly other causes, such as the thankless nature of the task, which contribute to this sense of burnout. One survey respondent said:

The public perception appears to be we aren't doing enough, and the process continually becomes more scrutinised and front line officers are the ones continually feeling the full force of the pressures.²⁵²

Another survey respondent said:

Police officers are doing everything we can, however receive no praise only all of the blame when something goes wrong.²⁵³

More than half of the QPS DFV-Q 2022 survey respondents thought that the community does not understand and appreciate the work police do in responding to domestic and family violence. By contrast, only 17.6% of respondents thought the community does understand and appreciate their efforts.²⁵⁴

The sense of being under-appreciated is greater among general duties officers. Among general duties officers, 68.6% felt that the community does not understand and appreciate what they do in responding to domestic and family violence and only 13.2% thought the community did.²⁵⁵ Some police keenly feel the lack of support and appreciation from the community. One QPS DFV-Q 2022 survey respondent said:

Its difficult to answer what's going well, because the constant narrative, from media, the community and supervisors, is about what is not being done well. I still believe that most Police turn up to DV jobs to do their best, but quite clearly are not meeting the expectations of the aforementioned parties.²⁵⁶

One quarter of the QPS DFV-Q 2022 survey respondents indicated that they had received favourable comments from the community for their responses to domestic and family violence. By contrast, 30.2% disagreed with the statement that they had received favourable comments from the community for such work, and a further 23.3% were unsure.²⁵⁷ One respondent said:

Police can't and never will solve domestic violence related issues in the current context. However, they are seen in the community as being the main source for its resolution and as such are criticised when things go wrong. If you want to give me the power to arrest and charge people who I deem to be perpetrators of domestic violence then I will fill our jails, but that's not the expectation of the community and quite rightly they expect a balance. If the community wants there to be a balance then they must accept that occasionally things will happen that can't be prevented/predicted.²⁵⁸

In addition to the QPS DFV-Q 2022 survey, the Commission engaged retired Detective Superintendent Mark Ainsworth to conduct interviews with QPS officers to explore the nature and extent of any cultural issues which impact on QPS responses to domestic and family violence.

Mr Ainsworth interviewed 53 police officers, and found that police are sensitive to media criticism of police failures in relation to domestic and family violence homicides. One officer reported to Mr Ainsworth that:

[Police] feel like they're under siege from the community and the media in doing their job in attending DV matters.²⁵⁹

Many QPS members told the Commission that this is an issue for police officers. One QPS member said:

Due to the high-profile nature of many DFV homicides and the criticisms levelled at operational police, a culture of 'covering your ass' and risk adverse decision making has evolved. This has led to officers taking out 'cross-orders', charging victims with offences stemming from retaliative violence and missing key indicators of lethality. Instead of being able to justify their reasons for taking (or not taking) steps and purposefully assess incidents, officers apply the 'cover your ass' 'just in case' approach or rely upon direction from more senior staff members. This approach is problematic as it makes identifying high-risk matters and parties more difficult and leads to the inconsistent approach observed across the state. If the QPS continues to train themselves with respect to DFV, I fear little improvement will be made in the way in which it is approached and cultural is changed.²⁶⁰

Professor Silke Meyer told the Commission that the QPS needs to do more to recognise and value the work of responding to domestic and family violence. She explained:

Through my extensive engagement with QPS officers over the past 10 years across different research projects, I have made connections with different officers who have identified cultural attitudes within the organisation that hinder DFV informed police responses, contribute to inaction, victim-blaming attitudes and misidentification of the person most in need of protection. While this information may be considered anecdotal evidence, it suggests that there are a number of police officers within QPS that are committed to providing high quality, trauma-informed responses to victims and alleged perpetrators of DFV and would like to see their organisation do better.

To support this, organisational change is required, including leadership around improving attitudes towards violence against women. **In this context I see two issues. Leadership is required to promote DFV-informed attitudes, DFV as core policing business given the proportion of police work it makes up and support uptake of regular professional development among all police staff – regardless of rank and regardless of sworn or unsworn status. Further, leadership is required to support DFV as a ‘desirable’ area of policing.** In my experience working with DVLOs and DFV Coordinators over the years, these roles do not appear to lend themselves to career progression. They are less likely to be seen as a pathway to promotion and are thus filled by officers who are passionate about improving the lives of those affected by DFV rather than officers seeking career progression. As a result, those most committed to DFV reforms and improved police responses to DFV are less likely to progress into leadership positions that can promote and support organisational change.²⁶¹

This sense that responding to domestic and family violence is a thankless task, often misunderstood and under-appreciated by the community, was frequently linked by police officers to a sense of futility about their work.

A SENSE OF FUTILITY AND APATHY

The Commission heard that many police officers feel a sense of futility when it comes to responding to domestic and family violence. The QPS DFV-Q 2022 survey results demonstrate that 36.6% of QPS members who participated do not consider that their work responding to domestic and family violence makes a difference. By contrast, only 26.3% of QPS members thought their actions made a difference in reducing domestic and family violence.

Constables and Senior Constables were the least likely to consider their actions made a difference (49.6% and 48.1% respectively disagreed that their actions made a difference). Members’ perceptions of whether their actions made a difference were more positive as their rank increased.²⁶² Only one in four general duties officers considered their actions made a difference, while 70.7% of those in specialist domestic and family violence roles thought their actions did.²⁶³

A sense of futility appears to lead to indifference on the part of some police officers. Mr Ainsworth’s interviews revealed that some police are apathetic in their attitude to domestic and family violence. One interviewee told Mr Ainsworth that *“many within the QPS give DV a red hot crack, and others just don’t care.”*²⁶⁴

One police officer told Mr Ainsworth that, in her view, domestic and family violence fatigue causes officers to lose empathy towards victims.²⁶⁵ Many officers expressed the view that domestic and family violence is not, or should not be, the responsibility of police.²⁶⁶ A Senior Sergeant articulated this attitude as *“police didn’t join the service to be social workers.”*²⁶⁷

A common theme reported to Mr Ainsworth was that repeat calls for service involving the same parties contributed to police negativity about responding to domestic and family violence.²⁶⁸ Many police officers, it would seem, feel a sense of frustration toward victim-survivors who they believe are not taking steps to break the cycle of domestic and family violence themselves.²⁶⁹ One QPS member expressed the issue in this way:

The culture is that Police hate investigating DV incidents. They feel it is a massive waste of time spending hours doing an application only for the aggrieved to return to the respondent in a few days and asking for the application to be withdrawn.²⁷⁰

The Commission considers that the QPS has a key role in addressing the frustration of police officers who mistakenly believe that their efforts are not making a difference in addressing domestic and family violence. Nuanced training for police about the power and control tactics that perpetrators of violence use and the multiple barriers to separation faced by victim-survivors, including financial, structural, and social pressures, may help alleviate this sense of frustration. It is also important that police understand that every time they attend a call for service, they help to de-escalate the immediate risk of harm for a victim-survivor and their children, and have an opportunity to help someone move closer to separating. Their attendance can prevent or reduce serious harm and injury. At times it saves lives.

Recommendations made in Part 2 that seek to improve the support specialist resources provided to frontline police, including enhanced interagency partnerships, may also assist.

Another issue reported to Mr Ainsworth was a sense of disillusionment caused by victim-survivors’ reactions to police attendance. One Senior Sergeant told Mr Ainsworth that many First Year Constables are surprised to find that a person affected by violence may be unwilling to speak to police, or officers find themselves otherwise surprised

and disappointed by their behaviour.²⁷¹ Victim-survivors decisions about when, how and why they disclose their experiences of violence are influenced by whether they feel safe to disclose, the circumstances of police attendance, the dynamics of the relationship, previous negative interactions with police or other services or prior trauma.

They may also feel that the disclosure will not make a difference or that it may escalate their experiences of abuse.

Other police told Mr Ainsworth that many police officers think that intervention beyond keeping the peace is a waste of time because police are not trained marriage counsellors.²⁷²

In some cases, apathy in relation to domestic and family violence appears to be tied to a belief that responding to domestic and family violence is not real police work. One QPS member said:

Traditionally policing as a career has often attracted applicants (particularly young males) wanting to ‘fight crime’, ‘lock up baddies’ and serve the community. Upon realising 40% of the workload relates to DFV, they fast become jaded and subscribe to the mentality of more senior staff members about DFV. Particularly that DFV is time consuming, burdensome and not real police work (rather often suggested to be social work or civil issues between parties). I myself have heard this rhetoric on numerous occasions.²⁷³

The QPS DFV-Q 2022 survey findings and Mr Ainsworth’s investigations highlight the importance of the QPS taking action to improve their members’ sense of purpose and utility in responding to domestic and family violence. The QPS could do this by finding ways to remind its members that they play a vital and much-appreciated role in responding to domestic and family violence in the community.

FEAR OF GETTING IT WRONG

Many police officers expressed the view that there is a pervasive fear of making a mistake in relation to responding to domestic and family violence. Perhaps somewhat counter-intuitively, police officers report that this results in a culture of “*covering your arse*” in relation to domestic and family violence, rather than taking the time to properly consider and investigate the matter before acting.

Only 29% of respondents to the QPS DFV-Q 2022 survey said that they received recognition or praise when their supervisor thought they had managed a domestic and family violence matter well. By contrast, 25.2% of respondents disagreed with that statement, and a further 26.1% were neutral.²⁷⁴

One QPS DFV-Q 2022 survey respondent said:

It is uncommon to get any praise for ‘doing your job’ from superiors re dv, or any for that matter, simply adding to the burnout of doing DV every day.²⁷⁵

In a similar way, many QPS members do not believe that mistakes in domestic and family violence matters are treated as learning opportunities. In fact, only 25% of respondents considered that mistakes are treated as learning opportunities, while 39.4% disagreed with that statement.²⁷⁶

Among general duties officers, the responses were even more stark. Only 26.2% agreed that mistakes are treated as learning opportunities, while 48.4% disagreed.²⁷⁷ As discussed in Part 2 of this Report officers also expressed concerns about the level of oversight and compliance monitoring by specialist domestic and family violence officers or units within the QPS, particularly where these officers or units are not available after hours to provide operational advice and support.

This does not have to be the case. For example, Acting Inspector Brett Jackson, an officer with considerable experience as a detective, gave evidence that when he was the Officer in Charge of Logan Central Police Station, he regularly reviewed the body-worn camera footage of his officers at domestic and family violence incidences.²⁷⁸ He said that he was able to “*use my experience to be able to watch the footage and provide opportunities for them to be able to improve and to do better,*”²⁷⁹ and that the officers generally appreciated the feedback and later returned with future examples to review with him.²⁸⁰

One QPS DFV-Q 2022 survey respondent described the consequences for incorrect domestic and family responses in this way:

Frontline police are petrified of being disciplined due to not being able to predict the future. Frontline police are “covering themselves” in the event something unforeseen happens in the future. Police are making applications for DV Orders or adding extra conditions when the circumstances don’t justify that action. Police still take that action because they are scared of being disciplined.²⁸¹

Another survey respondent said:

Using threats of “cover your arse” and “what if” diminishes confidence in staff and creates an atmosphere of fear and preparedness of staff to act hastily and incorrectly.²⁸²

Another said:

Senior leaders are very 'outcome' based. If there is a good outcome, nobody cares how you got there. If there is a bad outcome, your decisions made will be scrutinised to the highest level irrespective of whether you did a good job and operated within police/legislation. When dealing with domestic violence, pressure from senior members has given general duties police a mentality of 'how best do we cover our arse' and not what's in the best interest of the parties involved.²⁸³

About 45% of survey respondents said their colleagues did not, or they were unsure whether their colleagues did, take the time to analyse the underlying issues of a domestic and family violence matter so as to form a holistic view of the case.²⁸⁴

It seems that simple words of recognition of a job well done in respect of domestic and family violence would go a long way to assisting with the current cultural aversion to domestic and family violence. One survey respondent said:

More praise when officers do good work at DV incidents as it seems good work goes un-noticed but mistakes are heavily criticised.²⁸⁵

Mr Ainsworth's investigations revealed a similar concern among police officers. He said that a culture of "covering your backside" when attending domestic and family violence matters has been brought about by a number of matters, including the scrutiny of domestic and family violence responses by the QPS as well as by the media.²⁸⁶

Mr Ainsworth said that this approach of just "covering your backside" resulted in some police officers only taking the necessary action to cover themselves from recrimination, rather than undertaking proper investigations.²⁸⁷ He said some attend domestic and family violence matters looking for ways to write the matter off, rather than investigate it.²⁸⁸ Mr Ainsworth said that one Senior Constable reported to him that, in his experience, "many frontline officers do not investigate to the necessary level to obtain a full picture of the relationships from the incident".²⁸⁹ A Detective Senior Constable also reported that "some officers shut their eyes as much as they can because if they don't see the evidence, they don't have to deal with it".²⁹⁰

Mr Ainsworth's investigations suggested that it is the Officers in Charge, shift supervisors and District Duty Officers who have the most influence when it comes to cultural attitudes to responding to domestic and family violence.²⁹¹ Given that, and the clear wishes of police officers to receive positive feedback for a job well done, the Commission recommends that the QPS investigate ways to ensure that supervisors recognise or praise officers who respond well to matters involving domestic and family violence.

The evidence that police fear 'getting it wrong' when responding to domestic and family violence strongly suggests that the organisation ought to do more to ensure that, at supervisor level, there is greater emphasis placed on constructive feedback and recognition of good work by officers. A recommendation to this effect is made at the end of the chapter.

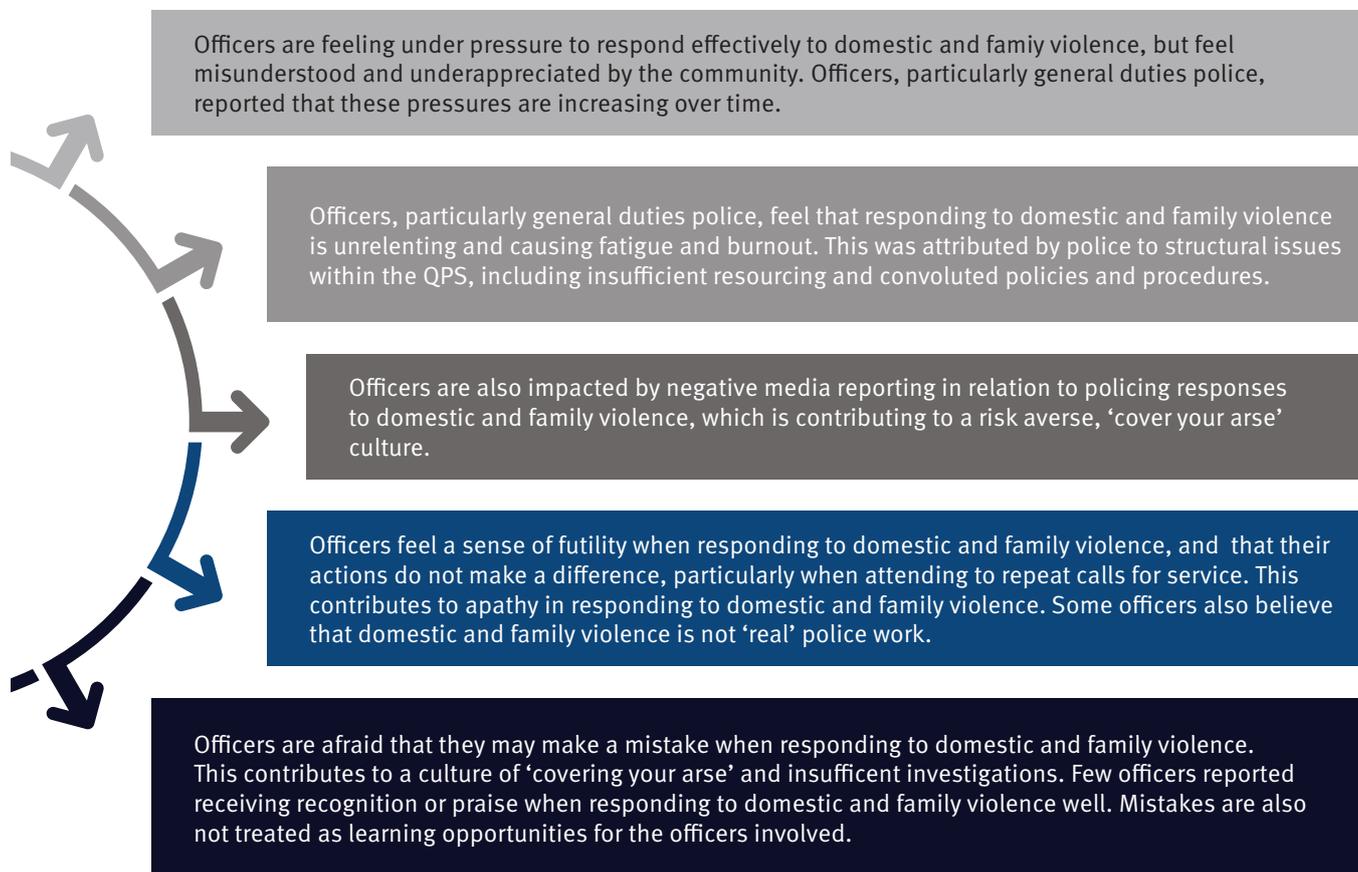


Figure 25: Summary of issues related to burnout and fatigue reported by police when responding to domestic and family violence.

ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSES TO BURNOUT AND FATIGUE

Dr Jacqueline Drew is an expert in the organisational psychology of policing and is currently working with Professor Janet Ransley from Griffith University and the QPS on a three-year study of the mental health of the QPS membership. The aim of this study is to develop a practical early warning system to provide QPS leaders with evidence-based red flags to identify work units at high risk for workplace health and performance problems.²⁹²

Dr Drew told the Commission that a 2018 study of the QPS revealed that between 60% and 65% of police experience some form of burnout.²⁹³ In Dr Drew's opinion, the current rate of burnout is likely to be at least that high, and potentially higher.²⁹⁴ Although the traumatic events that police are required to respond to contribute to burnout and fatigue, research has shown that the policing agency itself and the operational stressors in the organisation have a greater impact on burnout.²⁹⁵

Professor Andrea Phelps, Deputy Director of Phoenix Australia, the Centre for Post-Traumatic Mental Health, gave evidence to the Commission which confirmed that police officers who respond to domestic and family violence are at high risk of developing compassion fatigue and burnout.²⁹⁶ She said that organisational factors that contribute to burnout, in addition to individual risk factors, include morale, team spirit and leadership.²⁹⁷

Dr Drew explained that red tape, overly burdensome administrative tasks, constant policy changes and the impact of scrutiny all have an impact on burnout.²⁹⁸ In addition, burnout and cynicism can be compounded when an organisation, having undertaken surveys about a workforce's level of burnout, is perceived by its membership to have failed to make improvements. The views that QPS members communicated to the Commission suggest that the level of burnout in the membership is partly related to a perception that, despite attempts to tell the leadership that more resources are needed, not enough has been done.

Dr Drew also reported that, in many cases, police officers who appear unsympathetic, disengaged and not victim-focused may in fact be suffering from burnout.²⁹⁹ This tends to suggest that improvements in the organisation's ability to address burnout in its membership is likely to result in the community more consistently feeling that they have been assisted by empathic, engaged and victim-focused officers. Professor Phelps also confirmed that addressing organisational and operational risks are the most promising opportunities for the prevention of burnout.³⁰⁰

These issues are not new to the QPS. *The Greenfield Review* (2019) identified that it had received significant and prevalent feedback about the level of fatigue across the organisation, as well as feedback that QPS members' mental health was not adequately monitored and supported. In the Commission's view, the QPS should establish a joint committee to address burnout and fatigue and make a recommendation to that effect at the end of this chapter.³⁰¹

The Commission has seen data which demonstrates that much of the organisation is fatigued and tired. For example, the average number of sick days per police officer in the Communications centres, where police are responsible for taking and distributing calls for service including reports of domestic and family violence, is higher than 36 per year,

suggesting an exhausted workforce.³⁰²

Mr Ian Leavers, President of the Queensland Police Union of Employees, told the Commission that "*the psychological welfare of [QPS members] is a real issue*"³⁰³ and that "*they are damaged through the course of their duties.*"³⁰⁴ Mr Leavers was of the view that injury management within the QPS was not robust enough and that the impact of seeing domestic and family violence drains police and can affect "*how [they] respond to calls for service into the future.*"³⁰⁵ The QPUE recommended that the QPS develop a scheme to allow police officers who are commonly exposed to traumatic events to be periodically placed in less stressful environments to have a break. The Commission considers there would be merit to such a scheme and makes a recommendation to this effect at the end of the chapter.³⁰⁶

Further, a jurisdictional comparison of injury management caseloads in the *Greenfield Review* demonstrated that Queensland has significantly less injury case managers, as a percentage of the total workforce, than other jurisdictions, and that the average case load per case manager is significantly higher.³⁰⁷

In 2020 the QPS engaged Aspect Group to analyse injury management claims by members and to provide insights and recommendations to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for members.³⁰⁸ The final report noted that claims were trending upwards, with an increase in complex psychological ill health and injury cases. These increased claims have led to a bottleneck in the QPS injury management system.³⁰⁹ The review made several recommendations, including the introduction of a hybrid model of support with a centralised specialist team taking responsibility for more complex cases, and local teams in Wellbeing Hubs managing simple cases.³¹⁰

The QPS also engaged P2E to carry out an organisational review of its Safety, Wellbeing and Central Panels Division (SW&CP Division). P2E finalised its report in September 2022, and found that issues identified in the earlier Aspect Group review persisted and that the QPS had not implemented the hybrid injury management model recommended by Aspect Group. The P2E report concluded that the injury management team was still carrying an excessive and unsustainable workload.³¹¹ P2E recommended a whole of enterprise transformation program for the organisation, with an initial focus on the SW&CP Division. The recommendation included a hybrid model of injury management similar to that proposed by the Aspect Group with the addition of virtual teams and an extension to the wider range of services provided by the Safety and Wellbeing Division.³¹²

Dr Drew said that adequate resourcing would assist in reducing officer burnout, as well as addressing officers' attitudes towards domestic and family violence.³¹³ Recognition of the value of responding to domestic and family violence would also improve fatigue and burnout.

In Dr Drew's view, the recognition necessary for such improvement is two-fold. First, recognition from the organisation for good work would help alleviate burnout. Second, the organisation needs to manage the relationship between the community and the organisation in relation to domestic and family violence so that officers do not feel devalued by the community.³¹⁴ A simple celebration or public callout when a community member comments on an officer's good work would help dispel this feeling.

In light of this, it would appear that, in addition to increasing resources for officers who respond to domestic

and family violence, it would be beneficial for the organisation to ensure that supervisors, such as Senior Sergeants and Officers in Charge, demonstrate the capacity to effectively respond to domestic and family violence and the leadership skills to encourage junior officers in their efforts to respond to domestic and family violence. A recommendation to this effect is made at the end of this chapter.

The QPS told the Commission that between 2017 and 2019 the QPS held Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Awards, with two of the five award categories being for Domestic and Family Violence Coordinators and Domestic and Family Violence Liaison Officers. The QPS advised that it intends to recommence these awards.

In the Commission's view, there would be merit in expanding any award scheme to recognise excellence in front line policing responses to domestic and family violence, and a recommendation to that effect is included at the end of this chapter.

The QPS must remind its membership that the Queensland community values their efforts and contributions to counteract members' experience of burnout as a result of negative media coverage. Indeed, national data reveals that Queensland enjoys levels of community support for police above the national average (82.4 % for Queensland versus a national average of 80.7%). Those community members who have had contact with police over the previous 12 months also report satisfaction levels with police above the national average (82.5% versus 81.9%).³¹⁵

It is a difficult balance to strike, however, acknowledging that there are problems that must be addressed within the QPS should not detract from the message that the community has a significant appreciation for QPS members across the state.

FINDINGS

- **Queensland Police Service members are experiencing burnout and fatigue in relation to domestic and family violence. Many members are reluctant to respond to domestic and family violence because of that burnout and fatigue. The Queensland Police Service does not offer sufficient support to combat this issue.**
- **Good policing of domestic and family violence is not rewarded or valued sufficiently within the Queensland Police Service.**
- **There is much the Queensland Police Service can do to mitigate its officers' burnout and fatigue in relation to domestic and family violence. Strategies to encourage police officers in their efforts are likely to improve Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 37

Within 12 months, the Queensland Police Service establish a joint committee to address burnout and build the organisation's psychological health and wellbeing based on evidence. This joint committee should comprise, at a minimum:

- Queensland Police Service (Chair)
- Queensland Police Union of Employees
- Queensland Police Commissioned Officers Union
- Queensland Public Service Commission
- External experts/academics
- Nominated representatives from the Queensland Police Service.

The committee is to be tasked with assessing and building on research about levels of burnout and psychological stress within the Queensland Police Service; designing and driving relevant strategies to address burnout and psychological stress; supporting periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of those strategies and recommending action to the Executive Leadership Team.

Recommendation 38

Within 12 months, the Queensland Police Service develop a scheme to allow frontline officers and those commonly exposed to traumatic subject matter to be able to choose to be periodically placed in less stressful environments for a period of time sufficient to allow them a proper break from the work they were doing. Such placement should not include a Domestic and Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Unit.

Recommendation 39

Within six months, the Queensland Police Service incorporate the following as a criterion for promotions to operational and frontline Senior Sergeant positions including Officer in Charge vacancies: *'a demonstrated capacity to deliver and lead effective domestic and family violence responses'*.

Recommendation 40

Within six months, the Queensland Police Service establish and/or expand an excellence in policing service delivery award scheme to acknowledge distinction in police responses to domestic and family violence.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The role of police in the investigation of domestic and family violence is an important and difficult one. It takes a toll on officers who are regularly exposed to trauma. This is compounded by a lack of resourcing and support, making it difficult for them to perform their job effectively and causes burnout and fatigue. The QPS has an obligation to ensure that the mental health of their officers is protected.

Ensuring that the organisation's psychological health and wellbeing is addressed will promote the rights of officers, including recognition and equality before the law (s 15 HRA) and right to life (s 16 HRA).

Additionally, recognising officers' capacity to deliver and lead effective domestic and family violence responses will help promote the rights of victim-survivors by ensuring that police are more engaged in responding to domestic and family violence.

Those rights include recognition and equality before the law (s 15 HRA), right to life (s 16 HRA) liberty and security (s 29 HRA), protection for victims and families (ss 17 and 26 HRA) and cultural rights (ss 27 and 28 HRA).

ENDNOTES – PART 3

- 1 Transcript of proceedings, Commissioner Katarina Carroll, 18 August 2022, Brisbane [p 2070: line 43 – p 2071: line 1].
- 2 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 380, 28 August 2022.
- 3 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 380, 28 August 2022.
- 4 Anonymous, Commission of Inquiry Submission 414, 30 August 2022.
- 5 Statement produced by the Queensland Police Service in response to NTP 2.077, Item 1, 12 October 2022 [p 1].
- 6 Statement produced by the Queensland Police Service in response to NTP 2.077, Item 1, 12 October 2022 [p 1: para 2].
- 7 Statement produced by the Queensland Police Service in response to NTP 2.077, Item 1, 12 October 2022 [p 1: para 3] (emphasis added).
- 8 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 307, 18 August 2022.
- 9 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 380, 29 August 2022 (emphasis added).
- 10 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.061, Item 2, requested 16 September 2022.
- 11 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.061, Item 2, requested 16 September 2022.
- 12 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.061, Item 5, requested 16 September 2022.
- 13 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 424, 31 August 2022 (emphasis added).
- 14 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.061, Item 24, requested 16 September 2022.
- 15 Anonymous, Commission of Inquiry Submission 480, 2 September 2022 (emphasis added).
- 16 Transcript of proceedings, Commissioner Katarina Carroll, 18 August 2022, Brisbane [p 2017: lines 25-34].
- 17 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 437, 1 September 2022.
- 18 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.060, Item 13, requested 15 September 2022.
- 19 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 578, 5 September 2022 (emphasis added).
- 20 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 541, 5 September 2022 (emphasis added).
- 21 Transcript of proceedings, Commissioner Katarina Carroll, 18 August 2022, Brisbane [p 2006: lines 11-13].
- 22 Anonymous, Commission of Inquiry Submission 14, 30 August 2022 (emphasis added).
- 23 Working for Queensland Survey – Queensland Police Service, conducted by the Public Service Commission, 2021.
- 24 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 328, 22 August 2022 (emphasis added).
- 25 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.047, Items 1 and 2, requested 24 August 2022.
- 26 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.061, Item 6, requested 16 September 2022.
- 27 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.061, Item 3, requested 16 September 2022.
- 28 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.061, Item 8, requested 16 September 2022.
- 29 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.061, Item 10, requested 16 September 2022.
- 30 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.061, Item 13, requested 16 September 2022.
- 31 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.061, Item 4, requested 16 September 2022.
- 32 Transcript of proceedings, Commissioner Katarina Carroll, 5 October 2022, Brisbane [p 2109: lines 42-44].
- 33 Working for Queensland Survey – Queensland Police Service, conducted by the Public Service Commission, 2021.
- 34 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 642, 16 September 2022 (emphasis added).
- 35 Confidential, Submission of Inquiry Submission 383, 29 August 2022 (emphasis added).
- 36 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 704, 5 October 2022.
- 37 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 722, 7 October 2022.
- 38 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 387, 29 August 2022.
- 39 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.057, Item 8, requested 9 September 2022.
- 40 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.057, Item 8, requested 9 September 2022.
- 41 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.057, Item 8, requested 9 September 2022.
- 42 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.057, Item 8, requested 9 September 2022.
- 43 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.050, Item 4a, requested 31 August 2022.
- 44 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.050, Item 4a, requested 31 August 2022.
- 45 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.050, Item 4a, requested 31 August 2022.
- 46 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 245, 22 July 2022; Exhibit 39 (B12), Senior Women’s Collective Lived Experiences, Tender Bundle W, tendered 5 October 2022. This document is subject to an Order for Non-Publication made on 5 October 2022 – see Exhibit G.
- 47 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 776, 26 October 2022.
- 48 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 735, 9 October 2022 (emphasis added).
- 49 Exhibit 39 (B18), Assessment investigator’s requests for contact with complainants following investigations in case study 3, Tender Bundle W, tendered 5 October 2022 (emphasis added).
- 50 Exhibit 39 (B3), Case study 2 – summary prepared by the Commission of Inquiry, Tender Bundle W, tendered 5 October 2022. Primary source material provided the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.047, Items 1–2, requested 24 August 2022.
- 51 Exhibit 39 (B7), Case study 3 – summary prepared by the Commission of Inquiry, Tender Bundle W, tendered 5 October 2022. Primary source material provided the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.059, Item 24, requested 12 September 2022.
- 52 Exhibit 39 (B31), Case study 8 – summary prepared by the Commission of Inquiry, Tender Bundle W, tendered 5 October 2022. Primary source material provided the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.057, Items 8, requested 9 September 2022.
- 53 Exhibit 39 (B32), Case study 9 – summary prepared by the Commission of Inquiry, Tender Bundle W, tendered 5 October 2022. Primary source material provided the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.050, Item 4a, requested 31 August 2022.
- 54 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 464, 2 September 2022 (emphasis added).
- 55 Exhibit 39 (B19), Summary of interviews with affected female officers involved in Case study 3 and email from assessment investigator, Tender Bundle W, tendered 5 October 2022 [p 1] (emphasis added).
- 56 Exhibit 39 (B18) Assessment investigator’s requests for contact with complainants following investigation in case study 3, Tender Bundle W, tendered 5 October 2022.
- 57 Exhibit 39 (B7), Case study 3 – summary prepared by the Commission of Inquiry, Tender Bundle W, tendered 5 October 2022 (emphasis added).
- 58 Transcript of proceedings, Commissioner Katarina Carroll, 5 October 2022, Brisbane [p 2130: line 39 – p 2131: line 28].
- 59 Exhibit 39 (B20), Case study 4 – summary prepared by the Commission of Inquiry, Tender Bundle W, tendered 5 October 2022. Primary source material provided the QPS in response to NTP 2.065, Item 2, requested 21 September 2022 (emphasis added).
- 60 Exhibit 39 (B7), Case study 3 – summary prepared by the Commission of Inquiry, Tender Bundle W, tendered 5 October 2022 (emphasis added).
- 61 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 707, 5 October 2022.
- 62 Exhibit 39 (B20), Case study 4 – summary prepared by the Commission of Inquiry, Tender Bundle W, tendered 5 October 2022. Primary source material provided the QPS in response to NTP 2.065, Item 2, requested 21 September 2022.
- 63 Exhibit 37.2, Statement of Commissioner Katarina Carroll, Tender Bundle U, tendered 18 August 2022.
- 64 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 520, 5 September 2022.
- 65 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 398, 29 August 2022 (emphasis added).

66 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 513, 5 September 2022.

67 Exhibit 39 (B21), Queensland Police Service Integrity Framework, December 2020, Tender Bundle W, tendered 5 October 2022.

68 Transcript of proceedings, Commissioner Katarina Carroll, 6 October 2022, Brisbane [p 2228: lines 4–8] (emphasis added).

69 Commissioner's Briefing Note, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.043, Item 6, requested 22 August 2022 [p 1].

70 Juniper Review 2020, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.043, Item 2, requested 22 August 2022 [p 17].

71 Commissioner's Briefing Note, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.043, Item 6, requested 22 August 2022 [p 2].

72 Commissioner's Briefing Note, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.043, Item 6, requested 22 August 2022.

73 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 530, 5 September 2022.

74 Australian Institute of Police Management, Commission of Inquiry Submission 509, 5 September 2022.

75 Anonymous, Commission of Inquiry Submission 477, 2 September 2022 (emphasis added).

76 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 699, 5 October 2022 (emphasis added).

77 Transcript of proceedings, Witness A, 13 July 2022, Brisbane [p 277: lines 10–13]. This evidence is subject to an Order for Non-Publication made on 11 July 2022 – see Exhibit A.

78 Transcript of proceedings, Witness A, 13 July 2022, Brisbane [p 281: lines 7–22]. This evidence is subject to an Order for Non-Publication made on 11 July 2022 – see Exhibit A.

79 Transcript of proceedings, Witness A, 13 July 2022, Brisbane [p 291: lines 17–19]. This evidence is subject to an Order for Non-Publication made on 11 July 2022 – see Exhibit A.

80 QPS Body Worn Camera Footage, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.051, Item 26, requested 2 September 2022.

81 Transcript of proceedings, Commissioner Katarina Carroll, 5 October 2022, Brisbane [p 2195: lines 32–35].

82 Transcript of proceedings, Commissioner Katarina Carroll, 5 October 2022, Brisbane [p 2108: line 44 – p 2109: line 6].

83 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 377, 27 August 2022 (emphasis added).

84 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.061, Item 27, requested 16 September 2022.

85 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 378, 27 August 2022.

86 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.061, Item 26, requested 16 September 2022.

87 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.061, Item 28, requested 16 September 2022.

88 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.059, Item 27, requested 9 September 2022.

89 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.059, Item 27, requested 9 September 2022.

90 Exhibit 39 (B21), Queensland Police Service Integrity Framework, December 2020, Tender Bundle W, tendered 5 October 2022 [p 6].

91 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 60, 17 June 2022 (emphasis added).

92 Transcript of proceedings, Commissioner Katarina Carroll, 18 August 2022, Brisbane [p 2021: lines 26–27].

93 Transcript of proceedings, Witness A, 13 July 2022, Brisbane [p 283: lines 16–24]. This evidence is subject to an Order for Non-Publication made on 11 July 2022 – see Exhibit A.

94 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 377, 27 August 2022 (emphasis added).

95 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 429, 1 September 2022 (emphasis added).

96 Exhibit 27.7, Statement of Rosie O'Malley, Tender Bundle Q, tendered 5 August 2022 [p 7].

97 Exhibit 18.2, Professor Silke Meyer, *Expert Report – Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence* (17 July 2022), Tender Bundle L, tendered 28 July 2022 [pp 6–7] (emphasis added).

98 Exhibit 19.2, Adjunct Professor Heather Nancarrow, *Report – Independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence* (Expert Report, 20 July 2022), Tender Bundle M, tendered 29 July 2022 [p 7].

99 Exhibit 19.2, Adjunct Professor Heather Nancarrow, *Report – Independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence* (Expert Report, 20 July 2022), Tender Bundle M, tendered 29 July 2022 [p 7].

100 Transcript of proceedings, Mark Ainsworth, 27 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1075: line 12 – p 1076: line 5]; Exhibit 17.1, Mark Ainsworth, *Report into interviews conducted with police officers and civilian officers in relation to the Independent Commission of Inquiry not the Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence* (21 July 2022), Annexure R (Summary of interviews conducted on 7 July 2022), Tender Bundle K, tendered 27 July 2022 [p 18]. This document is subject to an Order for Non-Publication made on 27 July 2022 – see Exhibit C.

101 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 153, 25 June 2022.

102 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 380, 29 August 2022 (emphasis added).

103 Exhibit 19.2, Adjunct Professor Heather Nancarrow, *Report – Independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence* (Expert Report, 20 July 2022), Tender Bundle M, tendered 29 July 2022 [p 6].

104 Transcript of proceedings, Professor Heather Douglas, 28 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1163: line 20–30].

105 Transcript of proceedings, Joanna Mason, 26 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1062: lines 5–43] (emphasis added).

106 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 328, 22 August 2022 (emphasis added).

107 Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 (Qld) Sch 1AA.

108 Transcript of proceedings, Assistant Commissioner Brian Codd, 11 July 2022, Brisbane [p 54: lines 6–9].

109 Exhibit 17.1, Mark Ainsworth, *Report into interviews conducted with police officers and civilian officers in relation to the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence* (21 July 2022), Annexure P (Summary of interviews conducted on 5 July 2022), Tender Bundle K, tendered 27 July 2022 [p 7: para 22]. This document is subject to an Order for Non-Publication made on 27 July 2022 – see Exhibit C.

110 Transcript of Proceedings, Mark Ainsworth, 27 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1075: lines 37–46] (emphasis added).

111 Transcript of Proceedings, Mark Ainsworth, 27 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1075: lines 37–46].

112 Transcript of Proceedings, Mark Ainsworth, 27 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1085: lines 23–26].

113 Transcript of Proceedings, Mark Ainsworth, 27 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1080: lines 43–47].

114 Transcript of Proceedings, Mark Ainsworth, 27 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1081: lines 8–32].

115 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 380, 29 August 2022 (emphasis added).

116 Exhibit 18.2, Professor Silke Meyer, *Expert Report – Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence* (17 July 2022), Tender Bundle L, tendered 28 July 2022 [p 3] (emphasis added).

117 Transcript of proceedings, Witness A, 13 July 2022, Brisbane [p 287: lines 34–45] (emphasis added). This evidence is subject to an Order for Non-Publication made on 11 July 2022 – see Exhibit A.

118 Transcript of proceedings, Witness A, 13 July 2022, Brisbane [p 278: line 33 – p 279: line 1] (emphasis added). This evidence is subject to an Order for Non-Publication made on 11 July 2022 – see Exhibit A.

119 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 327, 22 August 2022 (emphasis added).

120 Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board, *2020-21 Annual Report* (2021).

121 Exhibit 17.1, Mark Ainsworth, *Report into interviews conducted with police officers and civilian officers in relation to the Independent Commission of Inquiry not the Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence* (21 July 2022), Tender Bundle K, tendered 27 July 2022 [p 18] (emphasis added). This document is subject to an Order for Non-Publication made on 27 July 2022 – see Exhibit C.

122 Exhibit 6.1, Statement of Witness A, Tender Bundle C, tendered 13 July 2022 [p 3: para 14]. This evidence is subject to an Order for Non-Publication made on 11 July 2022 – see Exhibit A.

123 Transcript of proceedings, Assistant Commissioner Brian Codd, 11 July 2022, Brisbane [p 46: line 24 – p 47: line 20].

124 Transcript of proceedings, Professor Heather Douglas, 28 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1167: lines 23–28].

125 *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (Qld).

126 *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (Qld) Preamble; Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board, *2019-20 Annual Report* (2020) [p 48].

127 Transcript of proceedings, Adjunct Professor Heather Nancarrow, 29 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1242: lines 25–32].

128 Exhibit 19.2, Adjunct Professor Heather Nancarrow, *Report – Independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence* (20 July 2022), Tender Bundle M, tendered 29 July 2022 [p 2].

- 129 Australian Brotherhood of Fathers, Commission of Inquiry Submission 160, 27 June 2022.
- 130 Australian Brotherhood of Fathers, Commission of Inquiry Submission 160, 27 June 2022.
- 131 Australian Brotherhood of Fathers, Commission of Inquiry Submission 160, 27 June 2022.
- 132 Australian Brotherhood of Fathers, Commission of Inquiry Submission 160, 27 June 2022.
- 133 One in Three Campaign, Commission of Inquiry Submission 113, 24 June 2022 [pp 9–10].
- 134 One in Three Campaign, Commission of Inquiry Submission 113, 24 June 2022 [pp 12–14].
- 135 One in Three Campaign, Commission of Inquiry Submission 113, 24 June 2022 [pp 14].
- 136 Ending Violence Against Women Queensland, Commission of Inquiry Submission 186, 6 July 2022.
- 137 For example, Brisbane Youth Service, Commission of Inquiry Submission 93, 23 June 2022, Micah Projects, Commission of Inquiry Submission 198, 8 July 2022; Associate Professor Marlene Longbottom, Commission of Inquiry Submission 184, 6 July 2022.
- 138 Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board, *2020-21 Annual Report* (2021) [p 59].
- 139 Exhibit 19.2, Adjunct Professor Heather Nancarrow, *Report – Independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence* (Expert Report, 20 July 2022), Tender Bundle M, tendered 29 July 2022.
- 140 Associate Professor Molly Dragiewicz, Commission of Inquiry Submission 200, 8 July 2022 [p 6].
- 141 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 380, 29 August 2022 (emphasis added).
- 142 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 428, 1 September 2022 (emphasis added).
- 143 Anonymous, Commission of Inquiry Submission 414, 30 August 2022 (emphasis added).
- 144 Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre, Commission of Inquiry Submission 122, 24 June 2022.
- 145 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 59, 17 June 2022.
- 146 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 538, 5 September 2022.
- 147 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 505, 4 September 2022.
- 148 The term used by the QPS to describe domestic and family violence perpetrated by either a sworn officer, contractor or a civilian staff member of the QPS.
- 149 Queensland Government Statistician's Office analysis of QPS member involved allegations data, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.002, Item 3, requested on 16 June 2022.
- 150 Exhibit 34.1, Statement of Assistant Commissioner Cheryl Scanlon, Annexure A, Tender Bundle R, tendered 5 August 2022.
- 151 Confidential, Commission of Inquiry Submission 98, 23 June 2022.
- 152 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.017, requested 28 June 2022.
- 153 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.012, requested 20 June 2022.
- 154 Disciplinary file, provided by the Queensland Police Service in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 2.027, requested 15 July 2022.
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- 161 Queensland Police Union of Employees, Submissions in response to the draft report of the Commission of Inquiry – Part 3, 26 October 2022 [p 3].
- 162 Australian Association of Social Workers, Commission of Inquiry Submission 119, 24 June 2022 [p 3].
- 163 'Domestic and Family Violence', ACON (Web Page) <<https://www.acon.org.au/what-we-are-here-for/domestic-family-violence/#domestic-family-violence>>.
- 164 Transcript of proceedings, Ben Bjarnesen, 25 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1005: lines 9–16].
- 165 Transcript of proceedings, Ben Bjarnesen, 25 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1005: lines 18–23].
- 166 Transcript of proceedings, Ellie Hanson, 25 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1017: lines 10 – p 105: line 11].
- 167 Transcript of proceedings, Ellie Hanson, 25 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1017: line 35 – p 10185: line 26].
- 168 Transcript of proceedings, Ellie Hanson, 25 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1019: lines 33–42].
- 169 Transcript of proceedings, Ellie Hanson, 25 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1019: lines 1–31].
- 170 Alexandra Utting, 'Queensland Police Service to make historic apology to LGBTQ+ community', ABC Gold Coast (online, 23 September 2022) <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-09-23/queensland-police-apology-lgbtq-community/101467062>>.
- 171 Transcript of proceedings, Ben Bjarnesen, 25 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1010: lines 29–42].
- 172 Transcript of proceedings, Ben Bjarnesen, 25 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1008: lines 42–45] (emphasis added).
- 173 Transcript of proceedings, Ben Bjarnesen, 25 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1007: lines 24–45].
- 174 Transcript of proceedings, Ben Bjarnesen, 25 July 2022, Brisbane [p 1011: lines 47 – p 1012: 9].
- 175 When comparing 2012 with 2021, the rate of domestic and family violence victims aged 65-79 grew 209.4% (from 201 to 621 per 100,000 persons) and the rate of victim 80+ years grew 214.7% (from 80 to 251 per 100,000 persons). Statistical data obtained for the period 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2021, provided by the Department of Justice and Attorney General in response to the Commission Requirement, NTP 1.002, requested 9 June 2022.
- 176 Lixia Qu et al, *National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study: Final Report* (Research Report, December 2021).
- 177 Caxton Legal Centre, Commission of Inquiry Submission 136, 24 June 2022 [p 16: para 57].
- 178 Caxton Legal Centre, Commission of Inquiry Submission 136, 24 June 2022 [p 16: paras 57–58].
- 179 Aged Disability Advocacy Australia, Commission of Inquiry Submission 125, 24 June 2022.
- 180 Caxton Legal Centre, Commission of Inquiry Submission 136, 24 June 2022 [p 18].
- 181 Caxton Legal Centre, Commission of Inquiry Submission 136, 24 June 2022 [p 16: para 61].
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- 183 Caxton Legal Centre, Commission of Inquiry Submission 136, 24 June 2022 [p 17: para 63].
- 184 Transcript of proceedings, Cybele Koning, 25 July 2022, Brisbane [p 991: lines 21 – 31].
- 185 Aged Disability Advocacy Australia, Commission of Inquiry Submission 125, 24 June 2022.
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- 187 Queensland Government Statistician's Office, DFV incidents dealt with by police (Report commissioned by the Commission of Inquiry, 4 August 2022)
- 188 Brisbane Youth Service, Commission of Inquiry Submission 93, 23 June 2022 [p 1].
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- 190 Queensland Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies, Commission of Inquiry Submission 143, 24 June 2022 [p 4].
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- 195 Transcript of proceedings, Assistant Commissioner Brian Codd, 4 August 2022, Brisbane [p 1540: line 36 – p 1542: line 13]
- 196 Transcript of proceedings, Sergeant David Longhurst, 9 August 2022, Mount Isa [p 1907: line 37 – p 1909: line 13].

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199 Queensland Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies, Commission of Inquiry Submission 143, 24 June 2022.

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202 Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration, National Domestic and Family Violence Bench Book, *People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds* (June 2022) [s 4.4-9].

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