

A Submission from Men's Rights Agency to the Commission of Inquiry into
Queensland Police Service

(QPS) Responses to Domestic and Family Violence

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Men's Rights Agency, established 27 years ago, provides assistance and services for men and their families

who are disadvantaged by bias, discrimination, misandry, false allegations and feminist jurisprudence.

Unfortunately, most discussion in the evaluation of domestic and family violence is around automatically

suggesting that the man/father is the abuser. Little attention is paid to the abuse committed by mothers,

boyfriends, step-fathers, other siblings, and especially step-siblings with the increasing numbers of blended

families.

I attach this press release to highlight the problems relating to domestic family violence, emotional abuse and

coercive control.



URGENT CALL FOR REVIEW OF SERVICES AFTER ABS REVEALS MEN AND WOMEN EQUALLY LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE EMOTIONAL ABUSE

One in Three Campaign

“Wednesday’s [new ABS report](#) revealed that, in the 12 months prior to the 2016 Personal Safety Survey, women and men were [just as likely](#) to report experiencing emotional abuse by a partner – otherwise known as coercive control,” says Greg Andresen, Senior Researcher with the One in Three Campaign, Australia’s national campaign to raise awareness of the existence and needs of male victims of family violence.

“One in Three is calling on the State and Federal Governments to conduct an urgent review into their domestic and family violence policies and funding so that the 380,000 men who experience emotional abuse each year can access the range of support services that are currently available to the 450,000 women in similar situations.”

Currently many services available to victims of family violence are denied to men on the basis of their sex, e.g. support groups, shelters/refuges, advocacy and support, safety planning and assessment, court support, legal aid and safe rooms. And many services that do purport to help male victims are trained to assume that men claiming to be victims of family violence are usually actually the perpetrator.

“We hope the Federal Government heeds the recommendations of the bipartisan report of the [Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence](#), that the next National Plan be inclusive of the diversity of victim-survivors including women, children in their own right, men, older Australians, LGBTQI people, and people living with a disability. Furthermore that the Australian Government commission research into the prevalence and impact of family

violence against men, and the Department of Social Services review the adequacy of advice and referral services for men as victim-survivors,” Mr Andresen said.

The new ABS report is backed by data from the Australian Institute of Family Studies’ [Experiences of Separated Parents Study](#) which found that fathers were statistically significantly more likely than mothers to report having often felt controlled or coerced after experiencing physical violence or emotional abuse since separation. When it came to severity, fathers were also more likely than mothers to report experiencing the highest level of fear, control and coercion that they felt arising from the focus parent’s behaviour since separation.

The report of the NSW Parliament’s recent inquiry into [coercive control in domestic relationships](#) tells the story of Craig, a male victim of coercive control:

Craig was hospitalised for two months for viral encephalitis. He had to re-learn how to walk, talk, eat, use cutlery and shower, and had to use a wheelchair. Craig’s wife refused to let him use a shower chair, telling him that ‘real men don’t sit in the shower’. He had to sit on the shower floor to wash himself. While he was on the floor, she would tell him: ‘Why don’t you do everyone a favour and kill yourself?’ She sharpened knives in the kitchen, threatening to stab him if he didn’t go back to work.

Craig’s wife slapped and punched him, and told him his family wanted nothing to do with him. When he called the NSW Domestic Violence hotline, he was unable to get any support because he was male. The only service offered to him was an anger management course.

When Craig left his wife, he was homeless, and forced to live in his car. Years later, he is now on a disability pension, and has remarried. However, his ex-wife’s emotional abuse has continued, including by repeatedly calling their children when they stay with Craig, and pressuring them to come home.

“It is our hope that men like Craig won’t be turned away from support services or presumed to be a perpetrator in the future, simply because they are male,” said Mr Andresen.

Media contacts:

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The One in Three Campaign is Australia’s national campaign to raise awareness of the existence and needs of male victims of family violence.

Much has been made to promote the idea that coercive control should be included in domestic family violence. However, after observing and speaking to many men, their mothers, new partners, other family members and colleagues for many years that coercive control is a compilation of verbally aggressive, manipulative behaviour ideally suited to the abilities of women.

They may not be able to hit as hard, but their verbal agility makes up for that.

Men, victimisation and coercive control (Monash University)

Can men be victims of coercive control? Making sense of men's experiences of coercive control

In their study Walker et al (2020) explored behaviours that men considered 'boundary crossing' (for example impeding their right to safety, privacy, self-esteem). In their sample 55.4 per cent of men talked of a pattern of abusive behaviours which for them constituted boundary crossing. These behaviours included physical, sexual, and controlling abuses which for some also included undermining their relationship with their children alongside filing false accusations against them. Over ninety per cent of the men in this work report having told a friend or family member about their experiences and those who did so were met with very mixed responses. The impact of kinds of behaviours documented by Walker et al (2019) on men has been expressed by Bates (2020) as spending their lives 'walking on eggshells', by Westmarland et al (2021) as 'living a life by permission', with Bates and Carthy (2020) drawing particular attention to the impact that such abuse has on older men with one of their respondents stating, 'she had me believing I had Alzheimer's'. In sum Graham-Kevan et al. (2021) suggest that the impact of

these kinds of behaviours (all of which fit under the rubric of coercive control) resulted in 8 out of 10 men in their sample

displaying symptoms not unlike post-traumatic distress.

Ian Leavers, the President of the Police Union certainly has some concerns. He states in their submission that:

The QPU does have some concerns with the use of State based domestic and family violence orders in some instances where it would appear the first occasion on which an application for such order is made, is upon proceedings being commenced for family matters in the Federal jurisdiction. There seems to be a perception that having a State based domestic and family violence order will benefit a party to federal litigation. The QPU is aware of a number of occasions where this practice has occurred, against its own members.

It is the QPU's position that family protection orders should be the preferred manner of dealing with family and domestic violence where concurrent proceedings are on foot in the Federal or Family Courts. The QPU holds this belief, because it would mean only one court would be dealing with the whole of a matter, thus reducing the need to concurrent proceedings in the State and Territory courts. Secondly, such an approach would ensure State and Territory based schemes for protecting victims of family and domestic violence cannot be abused by parties seeking an advantage in their federal litigation.

[Ian Leavers, General President & CEO, QPUE, PO Box 13008, George Street Brisbane Qld 4003](#)

Police Minister Mark Ryan told the ABC on 22 August 2022 that he counted the safety of women

and children as one of the areas of "major reform", but no mention of men, needing protection from

domestic family violence.

As the Government persists in only considering the needs of women and children they should

realise the time has come to recognise that men are also victims of family abuse.

Family Domestic Violence actions are flooded with false allegations. In a survey about the Magellan

process in the Family Court of Australia conducted by Daryl Higgins (2007) a Judge said:

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*"I have a sense that **in the overwhelming majority of cases, abuse is not confirmed. And probably in not many cases is there found to be an unacceptable risk.** I don't have the stats, so it's probably silly of me to quote stats, but I'm talking of probably upwards of 70 or 80% where the relationship with the father is restored. Which, in itself, is a worry if that is true. Why are so few being confirmed? Is it mum—usually—using it as a weapon to get dad out of the kid's life? Is it mum misidentifying the signals and then not accepting professional advice as to what it might really mean? Is it that there has been abuse, but the proof is inadequate for there to be the findings?"*

Judge

(40 Cooperation and Coordination: An evaluation of the Family Court of Australia's Magellan case-management model, Dr Daryl J. Higgins, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2007)

Perhaps the police officers of the Queensland Police Service are more aware of the situations they confront and

despite having been indoctrinated to ignore a man complaining as a victim and to only listen to the woman's

complaints, they are reluctant to take action but are forced to by the weight of pressure put on them to find

only men are perpetrators.

It has gone beyond time for recognition men and their children need assistance as well recognising that not all complaints made by women

can be substantiated by the evidence.

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