

Summary prepared by the Commission of Inquiry into QPS responses to domestic and family violence  
Primary source material provided by the QPS in response to NTP 2.047, Items 1-2

## **Case study 2**

The 2021 Working for Queensland survey identified very poor results for the [REDACTED] Unit. The Work Assessment and Support Team engaged with members of the [REDACTED] Unit to identify the issues in the workplace. The members were reluctant to speak about their concerns, because the concerns related to the unit's leader, a Detective Senior Sergeant, and they were worried about repercussions if they spoke out. In 2022, the matter was then investigated by the Forensic Service Group. Thirteen members of the unit were directed to participate in interviews.

The investigation determined that the Detective Senior Sergeant had engaged in workplace sexual harassment and bullying over a two year period which had a significantly negative impact on the workplace culture. The matter was referred to a Decision Maker for consideration. The hearing has not yet occurred.

### **Sexual harassment and sexualized conversations**

The sexual harassment the Detective Senior Sergeant engaged in involved repeated sexualised comments in the presence of female members of the Unit which included discussions about his penis, and which were continuous, frequent and persisted over the two year period. The conduct included:

- Inviting female members to come into his office and sit at his desk which was rounded at the end, saying "Come and have a seat on my knob";
- He wanted a particular female Detective Sergeant to work at the Unit because he had a sexual interest in her. He introduced her to staff, and later made comments about her genitalia to junior members who did not know her, on more than one occasion, saying 'trust me, I know';
- Showing a pornographic video to junior members and making sexualised comments to them;
- Downloading an image of a woman in active wear from a female member's private social media account, sharing it with others and adding sexual comments; and
- Repeated sexualised comments to others about his own sexual relationships.

One male officer described the Detective Senior Sergeant as a 'creepy old man' who made repeated comments about his 'dick'. He said that his behaviour was outrageous, and he only made the sexualised comments if there were female members present. Another male witness said that every conversation the Detective Senior Sergeant had with female members would gravitate back to something sexual.

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A male officer said he was taking long service leave because he was sick of the sexualised comments that the Detective Senior Sergeant made. The Detective Senior Sergeant told staff that he had attended a briefing with the Police Commissioner and he had trouble concentrating because she kept looking at him with 'come-fuck-me eyes'. He also repeatedly told people about a sexual encounter he had (apparently) had with a named high-profile politician when they were at school.

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

### **Bullying behaviour**

The Detective Senior Sergeant was found to have bullied two members of the unit. In relation to one officer, the Detective Senior Sergeant made negative comments about him to others over a continuous period. When that officer would seek advice from the Detective Senior Sergeant as his superior, the Detective Senior Sergeant would tell him to "just fuck off and figure it out yourself". The Detective Senior Sergeant would ignore him and not engage, while telling other members the officer could not be trusted. He would make the officer get out of the way when he walked down the hallway. The bullying caused anxiety and stress to the officer, and ultimately caused him to move workplaces.

In relation to the second officer, the Detective Senior Sergeant made negative comments about him to others on a continual basis over a period of years. One senior officer described it as a campaign of character destruction and white anting where the Detective Senior Sergeant sought to undermine and destroy the reputation of the second officer to junior staff and anyone else who would listen. The Detective Senior Sergeant made it clear he was trying to get rid of the second officer but had never commenced any management action against him.

The Detective Senior Sergeant was variously described as highly unprofessional, unable to manage, a make-believe boss, the most incompetent manager in one officer's lengthy career, having a massively overinflated sense of his own importance but had no idea what he was doing. One officer told investigators that the Detective Senior Sergeant's actions caused a negative culture in the workplace. Another said that he lies so much that no one believes anything he says, and that he was so disparaging about other people that you lose your sense of trust in him.

The only officer interviewed who supported the Detective Senior Sergeant was his immediate superior and friend, who had been sworn in with him. That officer accepted that his relationship with the Detective Senior Sergeant had potentially prevented staff from approaching him about the issues uncovered during the investigation.