

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE RESPONSES TO DOMESTIC
AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950
Section 5(1)(d)

STATEMENT OF [REDACTED]

Name of Witness:	Witness A
Date of birth:	[REDACTED]
Current address:	[REDACTED]
Occupation:	Senior Constable, Queensland Police Service
Contact details (phone/email):	[REDACTED]
Statement taken by:	Ms Julie Aylward

I [REDACTED] make oath and state as follows:

1. I am a senior constable in the Queensland Police Service. I am based at [REDACTED] station. I am currently on long service leave, and expect to separate from the police service in approximately November 2022.
2. I was at the Police Academy from mid-2013. I graduated in mid 2014.
3. After graduation, I spent six months at [REDACTED] station, then I moved to [REDACTED] station where I have been based since 2015 until the present time. In that time, I have worked in both General Duties and in the Vulnerable Persons Unit at the station.
4. This statement sets out my knowledge and observations of police culture as it pertains to domestic violence in the Queensland Police Service.

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Witness signature

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Attitudes expressed at the police station

5. On a daily basis, I hear dayroom banter that minimises domestic and family violence and dehumanises survivors, e.g. "domestic violence is just foreplay", "she's too ugly to be raped", "she deserved it", etc. In my experience, the police officers who say these things do not see this behaviour as problematic and, when called out, claim that it is black humour and therefore acceptable because that is how police cope with trauma.
6. I recall an incident in approximately 2017 or 2018, in which a police officer stated "I'll kill her" in reference to his partner. When I reported it to a senior officer, who had acted as DVLO several times, nothing was done about it.
7. I have known several male officers who exhibit perpetrator behaviour i.e. referring to partners and ex-partners as crazy, detailing the control tactics that they use with them. It is unclear to me whether they know they are offenders and don't care or whether they completely lack insight into their behaviour. When allegations of domestic violence are made against these officers who are then placed on restricted duties, police will close ranks around the respondent and refuse to entertain the possibility that they may be a perpetrator. I have listened to discussions in my day room in which the majority of police present believe that victim-survivors will fabricate allegations against their partners to ruin their careers. Even when officers end up with orders against them and are forced to quit their jobs, there is still significant disbelief of the aggrieved's version.
8. Many police in my station use derogatory language when speaking about women. A middle manager at my station routinely referred to female clients, colleagues and his wife as "sluts" and "bitches" behind their backs. I never witnessed any of my colleagues call out this behaviour. While this language isn't directly related to domestic violence, it is an illustration of how deeply entrenched misogyny is in policing.
9. Entrenched cultures of racism and xenophobia in the QPS also inform the way in which we respond to domestic violence. Many officers at my station believe that Muslim and Aboriginal men are inherently violent and that, due to this, violence in these families should be expected and tolerated. I regularly hear officers make disparaging remarks about Muslim and Aboriginal people, e.g. "the ATSI's are out of control", and "what do we expect? He's a savage." And, on occasions, have heard police officers imitating accents.

Police practices

10. I have observed police officers turn away survivors from reporting at the front counter or begrudgingly speak to them but not furnish reports because "there wasn't a call for service so police won't be doing anything...you need to call us when it happens".

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11. I have been cold-shouldered by several colleagues over the years who became angry when I added additional information to DV reports instead of emailing them directly, because they didn't want to have to take action and a record on the system meant that they couldn't just ignore it.
12. I have also observed police officers deliberately not respond to a DV call for service when out on the road, and drive to a different location in the hope of not being directed to attend to such an incident.
13. I have also observed police officers deliberately not making enquiries that might reveal an incident, such as a disturbance, is a domestic and family violence matter to avoid the attendant paperwork.

Other cultural issues affecting the way police investigate domestic and family violence

14. 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. Usually the same officers don't believe that the patriarchy exists and believe that aggrieveds make vexatious claims to bolster their family law court cases.
15. Some officers refuse to act when evidence supports an application on the balance of probabilities, because they believe that innocent men and "good fathers" will be prevented from seeing their children. They are more likely to take out an application when it can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt that DV has occurred.
16. Unless survivors conform to the "ideal" victim typology, they do not receive compassionate service and are more likely to be blamed for the offender's actions.
17. Aggrieveds with criminal and/or drug history are seen as unworthy and undeserving of assistance. Aggrieveds that report DV whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol are less likely to be believed, or if reports are made their versions are deemed completely unreliable due to intoxication. Officers will also deliberately delay taking action on matters due to perceived intoxication.
18. Officers met by an upset victim-survivor and calm respondent at an incident will decide that the victim-survivor has mental health issues and that her version is less reliable than the respondent's.
19. Reciprocal violence is not always acknowledged as such. Many officers blindly support the party with the most severe injuries and fail to explore the circumstances from which

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they arose. Defensive injuries are not always considered as such: "Yeah, but she scratched him and she didn't have injuries."

20. Officers often take a single incident at face value without considering it within the context of years of violence. This will often result in misidentification of the perpetrator.
21. DV incidents involving threats of suicide with a coercive control element are swept under the carpet and deliberately treated solely as mental health jobs, usually resulting in an Emergency Examination Authority and/ or mental health referral for the respondent. Informants of attempt/ threaten suicide jobs are rarely contacted and asked what their relationship is to the person making the threats.
22. When officers find it difficult to differentiate between the aggrieved and respondent in an incident they will sometimes look at the QPRIME (police database) history and select the respondent as the person who doesn't have a previous DV report against them. This will often sway the supervisor's decision as to whether an order should be taken out or not.
23. Officers will omit key parts of the aggrieved's version in DV other actions (reports where it is acknowledged that DV has occurred that are entered in QPRIME) so that they can get away with taking no action. They will write the report facts of the charge style (i.e. the story the police want to tell) rather than with the two versions from the parties which often paint an entirely different picture.
24. Officers will deliberately not explore gaps and inconsistencies in versions provided by parties because they don't want DV disclosed to them and don't want to take action.
25. I've heard officers tell respondents over the phone that if they participate in an interview and deny that the offence occurred that they won't be charged.
26. In the case of DV bail objections, officers have arranged for the respondent to be charged on a Monday-Thursday to reduce the time they will spend in the watch house before being bailed by the Magistrate.

A lack of review of cultural issues impacting the way the QPS responds to domestic and family violence

27. In late 2021, the QPS Commissioner sent an email to all police stating that she did not believe that there were cultural issues affecting the way that police investigate domestic violence. This served to shut down any critical reflection we could have engaged in about how we are contributing to lethality risk and deaths. It was a closing of ranks instigated by the most powerful member of our organisation. The day that I received that email was the day that I knew without a shadow of a doubt that I did not have a future in policing. I



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hope that the Commissioner is encouraged to apologise for this email and to the victim-survivors of domestic violence that she let down with this sentiment.

28. In my view, our failures in domestic violence responses are not caused by "a few bad apples in the barrel", it is caused by the water in the barrel itself. It saddens me that the QPS is so resistant to taking a good hard look at itself that an inquiry is required for these issues to be brought to light and acknowledged.

OATHS ACT 1867 (DECLARATION)

I [REDACTED] do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

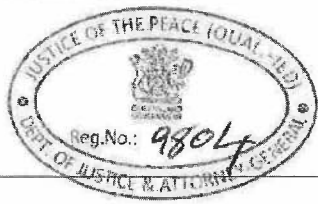
- (1) This written statement by me is true to the best of my knowledge and belief: and
- (2) I make this statement knowing that if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating in it anything I know to be false.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the *Oaths Act 1867*.

[REDACTED] Signature

Taken and declared before me at [REDACTED] s 23rd day of JULY 2022.

Taken By [REDACTED]
Justice of the Peace / Commissioner for Declarations / Lawyer
Michael Joseph McShea JP (Qual)



Witness signature

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