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

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

STATEMENT OF CATHY PEREIRA

Name of Witness:	**Cathy Pereira**
Date of birth:	[redacted]
Current address:	[redacted]
Occupation:	**Principal Solicitor/Co-ordinator, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Services North Queensland Inc.**
Contact details (phone/email):	[redacted]
Statement taken by:	**Brooke Garland**

I, **Cathy Pereira**, make oath and state as follows:

1. I am the Principal Solicitor and Co-ordinator at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Services North Queensland (ATSIWLSNQ).

2. ATSIWLSNQ is a specialist First Nations women's legal service. ATSIWLSNQ's mission and objectives are centred on representation of and advocacy for First Nations women within the legal system, as well as broader community legal education and support. Clients primarily seek advice and representation in family, child protection and domestic violence matters.

3. ATSIWLSNQ is based in Townsville and operates in north Queensland. Clients are predominantly based in the Townsville region or on Palm Island, with outreach and some remote representation of clients in Ingham, Ayr, Charters Towers, Mount Isa and other regional, rural and remote sites as required.

[redacted]

Witness signature

~~Justice of the Peace/Commissioner for Declarations/~~Lawyer

4. On 8 July 2022, on behalf of ATSIWLSNQ, I forwarded a submission to the Commission of Inquiry. The evidence that I wish to give to the Commission is outlined in this submission.

A copy of the submission to the Commission from ATSIWLSNQ is attached as Annexure A.

***OATHS ACT* 1867 (DECLARATION)**

I Cathy Pereira 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* [redacted]

.....

Taken and declared before me at ...Townsville this ...15th day of ...July..2022.

Taken By .....

Justice of the Peace / Commissioner for Declarations / Lawyer

[redacted]

.....

Witness signature

.....

~~Justice of the Peace/Commissioner for Declarations/~~Lawyer

'Annexure A'

Submission to Commission of Inquiry to Examine QPS Responses to Domestic and Family Violence

Introduction

Background

Chapter 1.3 of the first report of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce ("the Taskforce") detailed some of the ways in which inadequate police responses to domestic and family violence not only fail to help victims and survivors, but can in fact compound the harm and trauma they suffer.[1] The report also devoted some space to the particular ways in which intersections of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, migrant status, Indigeneity, disability, rurality and other marginalisations both further increase domestic violence risk and make interactions with police more fraught for sufferers. The Taskforce noted that these communities have myriad reasons not to place their trust or confidence in police, both generally speaking and when it comes to domestic and family violence in particular. Many submissions to the Taskforce raised concerns about police responses to reports of stalking, coercive control, prolonged emotional or physical abuse, and other patterns of domestic and family violence, and the report was frank in its assessment of the negative culture within the Queensland Police Service that allows such responses to go unchallenged.

In the specific context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the Taskforce report identified multiple issues familiar to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ("First Nations") legal services offering support and advice to clients who are victims and survivors of domestic and family violence. These issues are compounded by the intersecting factors of regionality/rurality/remoteness, as well as poverty and disability, which are common amongst clients of Indigenous legal services.

ATSIWLSNQ

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Services NQ, Inc. ("ATSIWLSNQ") is a Townsville-based specialist First Nations women's legal service operating in North Queensland. Clients of the service are primarily seeking advice and representation in matters of family law, child protection and domestic violence. Clients of the service are predominantly based in the Townsville region or on Palm Island, with outreach and some remote representation of clients in Ingham, Ayr, Charters Towers, Mount Isa and other regional, rural and remote sites as required. The service's mission and objectives are centred on representation of and advocacy for First Nations women within the legal system, as well as broader community legal education and support.

Clients of the service who are experiencing domestic and family violence report a range of experiences with police that broadly correspond with those reported in submissions to the Taskforce. These include: being disbelieved or dismissed by police when making reports of domestic violence; being misidentified as aggressors when attempting to seek help from police, particularly where the domestic violence involves coercive control; police making cross-applications against women who are clearly the primary victim / survivor of domestic violence; and lack of cultural competence by police responding to domestic violence complaints. A lack of trust in police and a lack of relationship-building and community engagement on the part of the police both undermine any meaningful efforts at

[1] Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, Parliament of Queensland, *Hear Her Voice: Addressing Coercive Control and Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland* (Report No 1, 2021).

effective domestic violence responses. This is of particular significance in discreet communities such as Palm Island, which is inadequately resourced to respond effectively to domestic and family violence.

Issues raised in *Hear Her Voice* Report and the experiences of First Nations women

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are far more likely than non-Indigenous women to experience violence. They are far more likely to be hospitalised as victims of violence and to be victims of homicide, including intimate partner homicide.[2] Despite this, up to 90 per cent of violence against First Nations women goes unreported to police.[3]

This submission is based on our knowledge of the experiences of First Nations women in North Queensland so far as we are aware from the work of ATSIWLSNQ. In preparation for the submission, a number of community members and stakeholders in Townsville and on Palm Island were also consulted. These discussions and consultations provide qualitative data and local context that are relevant to the recommendations of the *Hear Her Voice* report, as well as helping to identify specific issues faced by First Nations women in relation to police responses to domestic violence in North Queensland. These women's stories comprise the bulk of the data relied upon in this submission.

The issues highlighted by local stakeholders as most urgently applicable in their experience can be broadly categorised as issues with police culture, police training and resource allocation, and issues with broader carceral approaches to justice that disproportionately target and disadvantage First Nations women.

QPS Responses to Domestic and Family Violence

Police Culture

The *Hear Her Voice* report identified a number of cultural issues within the Queensland Police Service affecting front line and follow-up responses to domestic and family violence. These included: an assessment of domestic violence as 'incident-based' physical violence without an appreciation for patterns of ongoing and non-physical violence; an unwillingness to assist victims who do not immediately leave their abusers or who return to their abusers; unintentional or intentional complicity with abusers, particularly where there is manipulation on the part of abusers; a belief that domestic violence is not 'real' police work; a highly interventionist approach to conflict resolution that is often inappropriate in domestic violence situations; and deeply ingrained institutional and personal biases against First Nations and other marginalised victims and perpetrators of domestic and family violence. Many of these concerns were echoed in the experiences of ATSIWLSNQ staff and consultations with community members and stakeholders.

Recognising Patterns of Violence

Domestic and family violence rarely occurs in isolation; rather, a pattern of violent behaviour, both physical and non-physical, more often emerges over time. It is implicit in the provisions of the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (Qld) ("the Act"), that what is sought to be protected legislatively is more than an isolated act of violence. Hence, the main object of the Act is not only to prevent or reduce domestic violence and children's exposure to domestic violence, but also to:

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[2] ANROWS, 'Fast Facts – Indigenous Family Violence' (Media Release, 14 May 2014).

[3] Standing Committee on Social Police and Legal Affairs, Parliament of Australia, *Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence* (Report, March 2021) [5.39].

> *...maximise the safety, protection and wellbeing of those who fear or experience domestic violence and minimise disruption to their lives;*[4]

Implicit in the object of the Act, therefore is the purpose of recognising and distinguishing acts that cause fear and cause disruption to people's lives. This distinguishes acts that may be defensive or reactive in nature and which do not cause fear or disrupt people's lives from acts of domestic violence which may be part of a pattern of violence and whether singular or multiple acts, do cause fear and disruption.

The need to distinguish patterns of domestic violence as opposed to prosecuting singular incidents which do not cause fear in a person or disrupt their lives is reinforced by the Act's requirement that in order to make a Protection Order, the court must be satisfied not only that there has been an act of domestic violence but that:

> *The protection order is necessary or desirable to protect the aggrieved from domestic violence*[5]

While the Act also has as its main purpose, holding perpetrators of domestic violence accountable for their actions[6], the significance of sections 3 and 37 of the Act is that it is clear that the intention of the legislation is not merely to prosecute acts of violence, but to protect people from the fear and disruption that is integral and characteristic of the dynamics of domestic violence. This is very often the distinction between singular acts of violence such as reactive or defensive violence, and patterns of domestic violence including coercive control.

Police who are not trained to recognise patterns of domestic violence will fail to protect victims of domestic violence and in responding to call-outs are likely to treat isolated incidents of violence as being of equal significance to patterns of ongoing domestic violence and coercive control. They are also more likely to fail to recognise patterns of domestic violence and coercive control, particularly where the domestic violence is non-physical, as they are focused on finding tangible evidence of a violent act, enacting an arrest and bringing the call-out to what they perceive as a successful conclusion. Important clues to who is the person in need of protection may be missed. Signs of complex post-traumatic stress disorder that may cause victims to resort to retaliatory or reactive violence are likely to be dismissed, leading police to misidentify victims as offenders at first instance.

These inappropriate police responses to victims of domestic violence can serve to further traumatise or re-traumatise victims, as well as undermining trust and confidence in police and courts. Victims are less likely to want to engage with police to facilitate investigation and prosecution of perpetrators if the initial response to a police call-out is mischaracterisation of a traumatised and reactive victim of long-term coercive control as a perpetrator of domestic violence.

Case Study 1

Nancy,[7] a First Nations woman, whose non-Indigenous partner, was a serial perpetrator of domestic violence and coercive control, called police after her partner had committed terrifying physical violence against her and she feared for her own safety and that of her children. The partner had previously assaulted her, breaking her bones and had a history of violence against multiple other partners of his as well as an assault on a woman who he was not in a relationship with. Nancy was afraid of her partner, but was also afraid of the consequences for herself and her children if she left

[4] S.3 *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (Qld)
[5] S.37(1)(c) *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (Qld)
[6] S.3 (c) *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (Qld)
[7] Not her real name

him. Nancy and her partner did not live together. On one occasion Nancy's partner was at her house for a social occasion. Another family member of Nancy's was present. Nancy and her partner had a few drinks together, when her partner suddenly became aggressive. He choked her to the point of unconsciousness and also assaulted her extremely aggressively multiple times, pushing her to the ground using a manoeuvre that crushed her physically, causing bruising and pain. The abuse occurred in the presence of at least one witness. Nancy escaped from her partner's hold and attempted to defend herself by grabbing a kitchen knife for self-defence, believing that this would deter her partner from further assaults while she called police. She did not threaten her partner with the knife or use it in any way. When police arrived they spoke with Nancy's partner first and then arrested Nancy without obtaining her version or speaking to witnesses to gather evidence of what occurred.

Nancy was taken into custody at the watch house and police applied for a Protection Order against her, naming her partner as the "aggrieved" based on the information that her partner had provided to police. Although police could have checked QPrime or other police records as to the criminal and domestic violence history of Nancy's partner, this does not appear to have occurred. Had this been done, it should have, at a minimum, raised doubts or suspicions of the partner's version of events.

Although the police eventually withdrew their application for a Protection Order against Nancy and Nancy succeeded in obtaining a Protection Order against her then partner, by private application, with the assistance of ATSIWLSNQ, the experience of being disbelieved, dismissed, arrested, detained in police custody and subjected to a lengthy court process by police was both traumatising and dehumanising for Nancy.

Failures in the police response in this case included either failing to check police records in relation to Nancy's partner before accepting the perpetrator's story as the correct version of the facts or failing to consider that the partner may have been the perpetrator; failing to interview the witness; ignoring the fact that Nancy was bleeding and bruised and clearly traumatised and she had been the person who had initiated the call to the police. Had police checks been undertaken prior to the arrest of the victim, police would have seen that the perpetrator, who was posing as the "aggrieved" had a documented history of violence against women, including criminal charges for assault against another woman proximate in time to his assault on Nancy. Police who attended the incident not only failed to conduct some quite rudimentary enquiries before taking action, they did not believe the victim, they preferenced the non-indigenous male version over the First Nation woman's account, suggestive of conscious or unconscious racial bias. Their actions indicated poor training in multiple respects, and among others the principles for administering the Act, inter alia that:

> *people who fear or experience domestic violence, including children, should be treated with respect and disruption to their lives should be minimised;*[8]

In addition, while it is not conceded that Nancy committed domestic violence, police may have misperceived the situation and in that instance, they failed to apply the principle that:

> *in circumstances in which there are conflicting allegations of domestic violence or indications that both persons in a relationship are committing acts of violence, including for their self-protection, the person who is most in need of protection should be identified;*[9]

[8] S.4(2)(a) *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (Qld)
[9] S.4(2)(e) *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (Qld)

If any consideration was given to the fact that Nancy was in a distraught state, police made no attempt to assess the situation and determine who was the primary perpetrator. They treated the fact that the victim was holding a knife as the determining factor.

Case Study 2

Police issued a Police Protection Notice and applied for a domestic violence protection order against Patricia[10] as a result of a police call out. Patricia and her partner were separated and living under the one roof, where Patricia was the primary carer for the children and had always maintained primary responsibility for household duties. Patricia's partner was employed, held the house in his name, although they had been living there on a long-term basis together and was considerably bigger and stronger in stature than Patricia. Patricia had a serious physical illness at the time of the incident. Police were called after a minor altercation between Patricia and her partner, which was mainly a verbal argument. Patricia was distressed and overwhelmed by her circumstances. Towards the end of the argument Patricia swore and knocked over an item which she had herself bought and which was of no value. It was done due to frustration in circumstances where Patricia felt frustrated by what was occurring. On another occasion in the past a similar incident had occurred, but again there was no intention to cause fear or to intimidate and nothing of value was damaged. Patricia's partner called police. He admitted to the police attending the incident that he was not in fear, but he just wanted to bring the argument to an end.

When police attended the later incident, Patricia became confused and upset, damaging another small household item. Police immediately arrested her for domestic violence and after enquiring whose name the house was in, they escorted her off the shared property, citing property damage as the reason for the breach.

This is another case in which the main principles and purpose of the Act were essentially ignored. Patricia's conduct was not intended to and nor did it cause fear in her former partner. There was no indication that Patricia's partner needed a domestic violence order for his protection. He admitted this in detail to police attending the incident and based on the detailed discussion between police and the partner, which was recorded, it is clear that police did not turn their minds to the purpose of the Act or the principles under which it is to be administered. It was neither necessary nor desirable in this case for the partner to be protected from Patricia. At the time of the incident she was undergoing medical treatment. There was in fact a history of domestic violence between the Patricia and her partner but Patricia was not the perpetrator; rather, the partner had historically weaponised the police and domestic violence resources against Patricia, which is one of the indicia of coercive control.

The police response to Patricia's situation did nothing to protect Patricia against coercive control. It in fact served to enable future acts of coercive control and emotional abuse that the partner was perpetrating against Patricia. The police interactions were also highly traumatising for Patricia. Patricia chose to consent to a Protection Order due to her medical condition and to avoid undergoing more traumatic interactions with the police and courts during what was already a highly difficult time for her. Her solicitors were able to negotiate more reasonable conditions in relation to the domestic violence order.

[10] Not her real name

Victim-Blaming and Victim Worthiness Narratives

Multiple submissions to the Taskforce raised the issue of victim worthiness narratives within the police, ie, that police dismiss or feel disinclined to assist victims who are not leaving or have returned to violent partners.

Perhaps from a single incident-based perspective, it makes sense to question reconciliation between a victim of domestic violence – particularly physical violence – and a perpetrator. The reality of such situations, however, is often far more complex. Victims of domestic violence often have multiple reasons for staying with or reconciling with their partners: they may fear retaliation, rely on their partners for financial support or shelter, fear for the safety of dependent children, lack the social supports to leave, or simply love their partners and hope that change is possible.[11] In regional, rural and remote communities particularly, the infrastructure that might enable victims to leave abusive partners may be lacking or non-existent, and in small, more contained communities social pressures and stigma may exert an influence on decisions to remain within a relationship or to leave.

Where infrastructure is poorly developed within a community, women with children face additional difficulties in attempting to raise children single handedly. For First Nations women, cognisant of the trauma of family separation and the impact of inter-generational trauma, there is often a strong family ethic and a fear that they do not want their children to grow up without a father or struggling in a single-parent household. Hence, domestic violence is not necessarily a reason to end a relationship with a partner. The mantra that is heard time and again is to the effect that "I don't want the relationship to end. I just want to stop the violence."

Such issues are often poorly understood by police, who see domestic violence through the lense of criminal procedure and repeated police call-outs.

Case Study: Palm Island

A senior healthcare professional on Palm Island made the observation that social pressures within the community often drive women victims of domestic violence to reconcile with their partners. This is partly because of a genuine desire to see one's partner reform and change after a violent altercation, partly due to family pressures and and partly because of the stigma associated with being partnerless within the community, especially amongst younger women.

Police who are called to intervene in domestic violence situations may choose to apply for Protection Orders with conditions that are contrary to the wishes, the needs and the family structure of the victims. Women dissatisfied with inappropriate conditions which present an obstacle to their family life and co-parenting, often seek to vary the conditions in order to maintain contact with their partners, with whom they often also share parenting responsibilities and residence.

Palm Island is a small remote community with an estimated population of between 1500 and 2500. Transport off the island is expensive. The community is tight-knit and highly interrelated, and bonds of kinship and social relationships are important and valued. Social life and community events almost inevitably brings parties to a Protection Order into contact with each other, making it difficult to avoid breaching an order with "no contact" conditions, even if acting in good faith. In such circumstances, community values and the limited infrastructure including housing, a police response to domestic violence that focuses on arrests, criminalisation, court processes and incarceration is not a response that takes into account the sociocultural dynamics on the island. Furthermore, when victims inevitably

[11] That there are myriad reasons why victims of domestic and family violence stay with their partners should not be news to QPS or to anyone else. See, eg, World Health Organisation, 'Understanding and Addressing Violence Against Women' (Factsheet, 2012) 3.

attempt to reconcile with or maintain contact with their abusive partners, it is imperative that police responses do not dismiss or trivialise victims as a result.

Trivialising Domestic Violence Policing

The Taskforce received multiple submissions to the effect that police consider the work of responding to domestic violence call-outs less legitimate police work than other kinds of police work (such as stopping active crimes in progress and arresting offenders).[12] The Taskforce also received submissions to the effect that the administrative work involved in processing and prosecuting domestic violence incidents is unpopular with police to the extent that officers will discourage victims from reporting so as to ease the burden of police work.[13] This pervasive attitude within QPS affects police responses to domestic violence victims seeking police assistance. It is difficult to believe that officers who consider responding to domestic violence call-outs a waste of time and who discourage victims from reporting because they are unwilling to assume the administrative responsibility of processing a domestic violence incident will afford victims of domestic and family violence the compassion, respect and care they deserve and require.

Anecdotally, clients of the service have been repeatedly frustrated in their efforts to seek police assistance in stopping domestic violence perpetrated against them. Clients who present to police repeatedly, often with documentary evidence of patterns of abuse spanning extended periods of time, find that police are unwilling to intervene to stop violence if that violence is not physical in nature and actively in progress at the time of police intervention. This is once again demonstrative of a simplistic, incident-based approach to domestic and family violence that overlooks patterns of coercive control and ongoing abuse.

Case Study 3

Wanda[14] is a First Nations woman who experienced coercive control, stalking, assault and financial abuse, among other forms of domestic violence against herself and her children, during her relationship with her non-indigenous partner, Hamish[15]. During separation and divorce proceedings, Hamish continued to demonstrate abusive behaviour through phone calls, text messages, triangulation, stalking and withholding of the children. Concerns were also raised about potential child sexual abuse based on the children's behaviour and comments after returning from time spent with their father. Wanda repeatedly raised these concerns with police, including officers in the Child Protection Unit in Townsville, as the abuse escalated.

Hamish was able to build relationships and rapport with police officers at various stations in Townsville. It may have been through these avenues that Hamish obtained information about Wanda, which he used to more effectively stalk, intimidate and threaten Wanda.

Wanda's attempts to raise issues in relation to the safety of the children and herself were trivialised and dismissed by police. Although she was successful in obtaining a Temporary Protection Order against Hamish through a private application with the assistance of ATSIWLSNQ, this only caused Hamish to escalate his threats and stalking behaviours. An Application to Vary that would have included additional restrictions on methods of contact was unsuccessful. Hamish commenced court proceedings and gained access to Wanda and the children under the guise of court-ordered contact

[12] Taskforce (n 1) 182.
[13] Taskforce (n 1) 164.
[14] Not her real name
[15] Not his real name

with the children that enabled him to continue his regime of emotional abuse and coercive control of Wanda and the children long after the cessation of Wanda's relationship with Hamish.

Inappropriate Police Intervention

The unfortunate converse of a police culture that treats domestic violence as undeserving of police time and attention (as opposed to 'real' – often gruesomely violent – crimes) is that in cases where active physical violence is in progress or being threatened when police attend a scene, there is a tendency for police to react by arresting a perpetrator even when this is not the most appropriate method of de-escalating or resolving a situation. In the domestic violence context in particular, police intervention may be against the wishes of the victim and may not resolve or stop the domestic violence, or it may even exacerbate or escalate the domestic violence.[16]

As mentioned above, there are many reasons why victims of domestic violence may not immediately wish to end relationships with perpetrators. Some of these are reasons of personal safety, some of pragmatism, and still others of sentiment; all are valid. Victims of domestic violence who seek help from police are often not necessarily looking for an end to the relationship, but for an end to the violence.[17] Arrests or court orders may not be the most effective way of achieving the desired outcome for the victim; in fact, they may not be a way of achieving the desired outcome at all. Police responses to domestic and family violence should centre the victim's safety and stated wishes over a desire to serve a rigid ideal of procedural correctness in the form of making an arrest or applying for an order, particularly where such a course of action would not be in the victim's best interests. Such an approach is consistent with the principle that in the course of administering the Act:

> *to the extent that it is appropriate and practicable, the views and wishes of people who fear or experience domestic violence should be sought before a decision affecting them is made under this Act*[18]

Case Study 4

Mary[19] approached ATSIWLSNQ for advice because police had applied for a Protection Order against her partner, Anthony[20], with whom she had two young children. Mary and Anthony were in a long-term relationship. They lived together and co-parented their children. Mary described Anthony as "an involved and positive parental figure". Police arrested Anthony in relation to domestic violence and obtained an order which included a "no contact" condition and a condition that Anthony could not reside with her. Mary applied to vary the Protection Order on the basis that she wished to continue her relationship with Anthony and to be able to live together with all of the benefits to their children of normal co-parenting. The police resisted the application, asserting that the order did not prevent Mary and Anthony from co-parenting.

The impact of the domestic violence protection order was to render Mary and the children functionally homeless, as the house where they had resided was leased in Anthony's name and housing was extremely difficult to access. The protection order prevented Mary and Anthony from living in the house together and neither of them had anywhere else to go apart from Mary's family. The functional

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[16] Taskforce (n 1) 183-4. See also Emily Maple and Mark Kebbell, 'Responding to Domestic and Family Violence: a Qualitative Study on the Changing Perceptions of Frontline Police Officers' (2020) 27(12-13) *Violence Against Women* 2377, 2379.

[17] Heather Douglas, 'Policing Domestic and Family Violence' (2019) 8(2) *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* 31, 33.

[18] S.4(2)(b) *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 (Qld)*

[19] Not her real name

[20] Not his real name

and healthy parenting relationship Mary and Anthony had previously enjoyed was disrupted by the Protection Order. Mary worked full-time and struggled with tasks such as school drop-offs and pick-ups, with which Anthony had previously assisted her.

One identified barrier to QPS supporting the Application to Vary was that Anthony did not engage with a domestic violence education program, a service that he was unable to access while he served a term of imprisonment. Anthony engaged with an education program upon his release, though finding a program that was culturally appropriate took some time. During this time, Mary continued to struggle with insecure housing and lack of parenting support.

Systemic Racism Within QPS

The Taskforce heard submissions from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members who were reluctant to involve police in domestic violence matters for fear that this racism would manifest itself in a variety of negative responses towards victims. These included: misidentifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims as perpetrators due to perceived aggression or threat; discriminatory treatment towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and perpetrators; past and continuing police brutality towards members of the community; and concerns that police call-outs would result in child safety interventions and removals of children.[21] It is unsurprising in light of these concerns that communities with both generational and experiential memories of police discrimination and violence do not see police as a force for effecting positive change.

Despite comprising only 3 per cent of the Australian population, Indigenous Australians make up 27 per cent of the adult prison population.[22] The Taskforce noted that people from diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, '[...] face barriers based on personal police officer bias or police culture, [but also] barriers accessing suitably trained and educated officers to interview them.'[23]

Racism, both individual and institutionalised, is an insidious and persistent element of police culture with roots in the colonialist origins of state police forces.[24] In *Wotton v State of Queensland*,[25] Mortimer J said of the police who conducted the investigation into the death of Mulrunji Doomadgee in police custody on Palm Island that they 'were not, and did not see themselves, as accountable to the Aboriginal members of that community.'[26] Additionally, studies of police generally and QPS personnel specifically, have found that officers who are concerned that they may be seen as racist are in turn more likely to respond to high-pressure situations with coercive tactics,[27] further undermining community trust and confidence and creating a positive feedback loop of mistrust and ill will.

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[21] Taskforce (n1) 176.

[22] Australian Law Reform Commission, *Pathways to Justice – Inquiry into the Incarceration Rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* (Report 133, 09 January 2018).

[23] Taskforce (n1) 178.

[24] There is no question that police forces in many, if not all, colonial states started as slave patrols or similar tools for the exercise of imperial violence against Indigenous and enslaved people. See, eg, Taimi Castle, '"Cops and the Klan": Police Disavowal of Risk and Minimization of Threat from the Far-Right' (2021) 29 *Critical Criminology* 215. For a brief discussion of the role of police as perpetrators of colonial violence against Indigenous Australians specifically, see Chelsea Bond et al, *Not a One-Way Street: Understanding the Over-Representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on Charges of Assaults Against Public Officers* (Report to Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council, July 2020) 11.

[25] [2016] FCA 1457 ('*Wotton*').

[26] *Wotton* [1032].

[27] Molly McCarthy, Rick Trinkner and Phillip Atiba Goff, 'The Threat of Appearing Racist: Stereotype Threat and Support for Coercion Among Australian Police Officers' (2021) 48(6) *Criminal Justice and Behaviour* 776.

These attitudes undoubtedly lead to poorer outcomes for First Nations Australians who come into contact with the criminal justice system. At every step of the process, from first contact with police to trial and sentencing to incarceration, First Nations Australians are subjected to the traumatic patterns of colonial violence that have marked their interactions with the State since first European contact.[28] The effects of such trauma on the immediate and long-term physical and mental health of First Nations women victims of domestic and family violence are severe and sometimes irreversible.

For Nancy and Patricia in case studies 1 and 3, police intervention further compounded the severe and lasting trauma inflicted by their violent partners. In both cases, police listened to the male perpetrator's narrative over that of a First Nations woman who was a victim, misidentified as an aggressor, a First Nations woman acting in self-defence and subjected a victim of domestic violence to a lengthy court process. In Patricia's case, this experience was so overwhelming and traumatising that she chose to consent to orders made against her rather than continue to contest the matter in court, a course of action with lasting social and legal repercussions for her.

Case Study 5

Margaret came for assistance as a respondent in a Protection Order application filed by QPS. Police attended her home, where Margaret's former partner and his mother had violently attacked her and verbally abused her with racial slurs and other epithets. Margaret was reluctant to speak with police due to a belief that they would not act to protect her from domestic violence. This may have been due to past experience. At the time of this encounter, Margaret had been named as the aggrieved in a previous protection order against her partner, which clearly had not stopped him from committing domestic violence against her.

Police affidavits recounting the incident express a marked frustration with Margaret's refusal to submit to an interview. Perhaps this is why Margaret expressed a hyperbolic desire to hit her former partner. There was no indication that she intended to do so and the comment was not made as a threat to her former partner. Police were quick to apply for cross orders against both parties "off the cuff" comment by Margaret to police as justifying a cross-order, although the facts clearly suggest that the former partner was not in need of protection. Margaret was then subjected to the financial, physical, mental and emotional cost of the court process and ultimately consented without admissions to a 12-month order against her. Margaret did not fit the profile of a 'good' victim; she was agitated, upset and unwilling to cooperate with law enforcement, possibly due to her own negative past experiences. In their affidavit evidence, QPS personnel admitted that Margaret was the person most in need of protection, an assessment they made upon their first interaction with her.[29] Despite this, officers made the decision to apply for orders against Margaret that were of equal length and seriousness as the orders they sought against her ex-partner, the party who not only committed an act of violence on that occasion, but had a history of committing domestic violence against Margaret in the past.

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[28] Miriam Bevis et al, ANROWS, *Kungas' Trauma Experiences and Effects on Behaviour in Central Australia* (Report, February 2020) 39-42.

[29] 'Person most in need of protection' is a term used in Queensland legislation and in other jurisdictions around the world to centre primary victims of domestic violence, particularly in situations where retaliatory or reactive violence may have occurred. Misidentification of the person most in need of protection is a common way in which police further victimise domestic violence victims or compound victim trauma. See Heather Nancarrow et al, ANROWS, *Accurately Identifying the "Person Most in Need of Protection" in Domestic and Family Violence Law* (Report, November 2020).

Police Training and Resource Allocation

In addition to broader issues with police culture, the *Hear Her Voice* report identified multiple specific gaps in police training and resource allocation leading to poorer outcomes for victims of domestic violence. These included a lack of training in how to recognise coercive control and other subtle patterns of ongoing abuse and a dearth of specialist domestic and family violence response units, including co-responder services. In the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims of domestic and family violence, clients and ATSIWLSNQ stakeholders also raised concerns about a lack of police cultural competence training, not just in issues of cultural sensitivity, but also in the nuances of cultural relationships and community dynamics.

Gaps in Cultural Competence

Cultural Competence Training

In discussions with ATSWLSNQ, community leaders expressed concerns with a lack of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led cultural competence training delivered to QPS personnel, particularly those serving First Nations communities, such as Palm Island. One community member who had previously delivered such training to police cadets ceased to do so after QPS informed her that they had developed their own in-house training. She expressed her concerns that such training would not be independently-led, community-focused or have its content vetted or quality-controlled by third parties.

A stakeholder involved in community work on Palm Island raised concerns that police on the island have little to no community knowledge. With the exception of one sergeant who lives on the island, police working on the island are based on the mainland and commute to the island for work. Most officers on Palm Island are very junior – within their first one to three years of service – and have little to no cultural competence training in the sensitivities and nuances of service in rural and remote First Nations communities. Information obtained by ATSIWLSNQ, suggests that Officers assigned to Palm Island stay for short terms of service on average of around two years, meaning that they leave before they have a chance to build meaningful rapport or trust with the community.

Cultural competence training has been proven to change officer attitudes,[30] or at least to guard against negative changes. A randomised controlled trial of the Voices for Values programme delivered to QPS recruits found that the training protected recruits against a decline in attitudes towards diversity over the course of recruit training.[31] It is not unreasonable to suggest that similar programmes designed to prepare trainees for the realities of policing in specific First Nations communities might have similar protective effects.

In *Wotton*, Mortimer J was particularly scathing in her condemnation of Palm Island police officers' ignorance of the community's complex historical and ongoing trauma.[32] As discussed above, it is

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[30] Although this does not by itself necessarily lead to corresponding long-term changes in officer behaviour. See Joel Miller et al, 'Can Police Training Reduce Ethnic/Racial Disparities in Stop and Search? Evidence from a Multisite UK Trial' (2020) 19 *Criminology and Public Policy* 1259, 1277.

[31] Deborah Platz, Elise Sargeant, Heather Strang, 'Effects of Recruit Training on Police Attitudes Towards Diversity: a Randomised Controlled Trial of a Values Education Programme' (2017) 1 *Cambridge Journal of Evidence Based Policing* 263.

[32] 'My overwhelming impression of the (current or former) QPS members who gave evidence in this proceeding was that they knew little or nothing about the history of Palm Island. Most freely admitted this. They also paid no real attention to the particular history and characteristics of Palm Island and its people [...] Yet it is clear in the contemporaneous video evidence that the palpable sense of powerlessness and injustice felt by people attending the community meetings is connected with the history of Palm Island, and the histories of their own families.' *Wotton v State of Queensland* [2016] FCA 1457, [58] (Mortimer J).

impossible to separate the present-day interactions between First Nations Australians and police from the historical realities of colonial violence perpetrated against First Nations people since first European contact. This is especially true in communities that have been particularly targeted by forced removals of children and other government or institutional interventions. In such communities, it is vital that police are thoroughly aware of the context in which they are operating. Without an understanding of the intergenerational trauma affecting First Nations communities, police run the risk of retraumatising victims during their interactions.

Understanding Cultural Relationships and Community Dynamics

Community members and stakeholders expressed concern to ATSIWLSNQ that police attending domestic violence calls to the homes of First Nations people in Townsville and on Palm Island have not been trained to understand the nuances of cultural relationships, including kinship relationships. This lack of knowledge means that when confronted with family dynamics outside of a traditional Western model, police may simply disengage or choose not to investigate further due to a lack of understanding or an unwillingness to become involved with what they see as a complicated situation.

The *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (Qld) allows for definitions of 'family relationship' and 'relative' that can accommodate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts of kinship and community.[33] This means that First Nations victims of domestic and family violence perpetrated by kinship relations are protected by the Act should they wish to apply for orders against their abusers. In practice, however, police may poorly understand the nature of such relationships and refuse to intervene, or intervene inappropriately, as a result.

Case Study 6

A community worker on Palm Island related the story of an elderly client who was being financially abused by a male relative. This relative claimed that his kinship relationship with the client gave him the right to control access to her finances and other assets, which he then misused to fund his own lifestyle whilst neglecting the client's basic needs. The client, who was ill and quite frail, attempted to involve police to extricate her abusive relative from her life and finances, but as he claimed that the kinship relationship gave him a cultural right to financial control, police were unwilling to intervene. In fact, it was more culturally proper for the women of the client's family and broader kinship group to have control over finances and other material assets, but police did not remain engaged with the client and she was unable to explain this to them.

There are several ways in which such cultural misunderstandings could be avoided or resolved. Education about traditional owner and kinship groups present within an officer's district could be integrated into training or induction as a matter of course. Institutional knowledge could be embedded into police precincts in the form of Police Liaison Officers or other First Nations co-responders. First Nations police officers could be recruited and trained in greater numbers. Incentives could be offered to such officers to stay and serve within First Nations communities. These and other recommendations will be discussed in more detail below, but suffice it to say that the officers who responded to this client's calls for help need not have been so ill-equipped to offer appropriate assistance.

Lack of Specialist DFV Response within Queensland Police

QPS reported to the Taskforce that the percentage of their workload related to domestic and family violence was around 40 per cent of all police time in 2021.[34] A resource expenditure this significant

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[33] *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (Qld) s 19(4).

[34] Taskforce (n 1), 162.

suggests either a great deal of demand for police domestic violence response, a dearth of supply, or both. It could also be suggestive of a lack of efficient response, ie, that police are spending a great deal of time responding to domestic violence call-outs, but not using that time particularly well.

ATSIWLSNQ recommended in its own previous submissions to the Taskforce that specialist domestic and family violence response units be established as part of an improved QPS response. Such units have already been established in parts of Queensland to varying degrees of success; indeed, one such unit already exists in Townsville, though this 'Vulnerable Persons Unit' is not devoted solely to domestic and family violence and officers of the Unit are not first responders.

There is a growing body of research to suggest that specialised DFV response units within the police have benefits beyond just improving police efficiency. For example, where domestic and family violence co-responder services are co-located in police stations, one of the greatest reported positive benefits is an improvement in officer attitudes and police culture.[35] These benefits, however, tend to exist where specialised units are staffed not only by police but by other staff such as social workers, mental healthcare professionals and crisis support workers. The Vulnerable Persons Unit model currently in place in Townsville does not include co-location of non-police professionals within the unit, though referrals to other agencies and services are a part of the operational model.

Police working in specialised DFV units are not immune from the issues with police attitudes and culture that are endemic to the rest of the police service. QPS staff assigned to specialised response units report many of the same attitudes to sufferers of non-physical violence, long-term abuse and coercive control as their less experienced counterparts.[36] Therefore, it is clear that the creation of these specialised units is not a panacea.

Deficiencies within Current Specialist DFV Response

ATSIWLSNQ spoke with staff from the Domestic and Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Unit within the QPS in Townsville. This unit exists to provide expertise and support for frontline officers responding to domestic and family violence calls in the Townsville metro area, as well as referrals to support services, interagency liaison and information sharing and support for perpetrators re-entering the community. They do not provide frontline or first response for victims of domestic violence.

The VPU has four full-time staff, led by a Sergeant, and currently has six part-time staff on a three-month rotation from the pool of general duties officers. These staff are all police officers and not crisis workers, social workers or mental health professionals. The unit is based entirely in Townsville, with no staff on Palm Island. Frontline and first responders can contact the VPU for advice, support and referrals when responding to domestic and family violence incidents. The VPU can also follow up with victims to provide referrals to support services; however, they do not attend call-outs unless invited by first responders. Because of this, many domestic violence victims are unaware that the VPU exists.

Most of the VPU's functions seem to centre on interagency partnerships and supporting frontline police. VPU staff monitor high-risk domestic violence perpetrators and visit the Townsville

[35] Trish Mundy and Nan Seuffert, 'Integrated Domestic Violence Services: a Case Study in Police/NGO Co-Location' (2021) 46(1) *Alternative Law Journal* 27, 29-30.

[36] Emily Maple and Mark Kebbell, 'Responding to Domestic and Family Violence: a Qualitative Study on the Changing Perceptions of Frontline Police Officers' (2020) 27(12-13) *Violence Against Women* 2377. Many of the police officers interviewed, eg, did not consider verbal abuse as 'genuine' as physical violence and were dismissive of victims who called them complaining of 'raised voices' or other non-physical disturbances. The officers interviewed in the study were all QPS employees recruited into the study through the DFV Command.

Correctional Centre to speak to perpetrators who are about to re-enter the community about their obligations under existing Protection Orders. They meet weekly with other members of the Domestic Violence Integrated Response Group, which is an interagency initiative that also exists on Palm Island to address particularly extreme domestic and family violence cases.

While there is no doubt that there is a benefit to having a full-time unit to provide advice and support to frontline police officers, the fact that the VPU provides no first response of its own represents a significant gap in domestic and family violence response in Townsville and other local North Queensland regions including Palm Island. If the VPU were more involved in first response, then the increased contact with victims would facilitate easier referrals to support networks and other agencies and services.

Another significant gap is the lack of co-responder presence. All VPU staff are police officers, though the unit does also attend mental health call-outs in conjunction with healthcare professionals. Studies have shown that some of the benefits of specialised DFV units arise from co-responder models rather than units comprising only police, even specially-trained police. Importantly, specially-trained DFV police officers are still susceptible to the biases that inform and undermine the QPS and broader police response to domestic and family violence, such as a lack of understanding of coercive control, dismissal of non-physical violence, and so on. Presence of embedded non-police professionals such as crisis support workers can help address and mitigate these concerns.[37]

The Carceral Response to Domestic and Family Violence

A carceral response to domestic and family violence is one that prioritises arrest and imprisonment of perpetrators over immediate or long-term support for the needs and wishes of victims.[38] Mandatory arrest policies, creation of new criminal offences, funding of police units rather than social workers and conflict resolution providers, mandatory minimum prison sentencing laws, increased police surveillance of offenders and potential offenders, mandatory Protection Order or Police Protection Notice applications and criminal charges for breaches of orders are all examples of carceral responses to domestic and family violence.

Incarcerated women are overwhelmingly past victims of trauma themselves.[39] After incarceration, women then experience further victimisation at the hands of the prison system: from corrections facility staff, from other prisoners, and more broadly at the hands of the State. The experience of

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[37] Mundy and Seuffert (n 23).

[38] The term 'carceral state' can be traced back to Michel Foucault's writing about the 'carceral archipelago' (his term for the penal institution at Mettray, France) and then to American writings about criminology and criminal justice. It refers to the increasingly militant state response to crime, focusing on heightened surveillance, harsher prison sentences and other severe punishments, militarisation of police and focus on criminalisation over rehabilitation. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, tr Alan Sheridan (Pantheon Books, 1977); Nils Christie, *Crime Control as Industry: Towards Gulags, Western Style?* (Routledge, 1993).

[39] This is true in Australia and abroad. See, eg, ANROWS, *Research Synthesis: Women's Imprisonment and Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence* (Research Paper, March 2020); Catherine Fuentes, 'Nobody's Child: The Role of Trauma and Interpersonal Violence in Women's Pathways to Incarceration and Resultant Service Needs' (2013) 28(1) *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 85.

violence and infliction of trauma during incarceration has been shown to increase recidivism in offenders of all kinds,[40] perpetuating cycles of crime and violence.[41]

It is therefore recommended that domestic violence responses be more diverse and include a wider range of options, including, for example, dispute resolution (where appropriate), better consideration of a response tailored to the needs, wishes and protection of the person who has experienced family violence.

Recommendations

QPS Responsibilities under the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld)

The Queensland Police Service is explicitly named as a public entity under s 9 of the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld) and is thus bound by that legislation. Its officers must act to uphold the human rights of members of the public when interacting in the scope of their operations on behalf of the Queensland government. Some of the relevant human rights listed in the Act that might apply specifically to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence interacting with police include recognition and equality before the law (s 15); protection from cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment (s 17); freedom of expression (s 21), assembly (s 22) and partaking in public life (s 23); the right to privacy (s 25); protection of families and children (s 26); cultural rights, both general (s 27) and specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (s 28); the right to liberty (s 29) or to humane treatment when deprived of liberty (s 29); and the rights to a fair hearing (s 31), due process (s 32) and not to be repeatedly tried or punished (s 34).

Enforcement of Human Rights Obligations

While members of the public have explicit human rights obligations under legislation which is binding on QPS as a public entity, little exists in the way of meaningful enforcement of these rights. Complainants whose human rights have been encroached upon by QPS in the course of their interactions during the experience of domestic and family violence can complain to the Queensland Human Rights Commission, but this does not guarantee anything in the way of meaningful restitution. Conversely, a victim of domestic and family violence who feels that they have been mistreated under the *Human Rights Act* does not necessarily have a stronger complaint to advance before the Crime and Corruption Commission than they might have otherwise. In this way, while the Act does explicitly lay out some of the rights that victims and perpetrators should enjoy when interacting with police, it does not do much to protect those rights. This is a common criticism of the *Human Rights Act* and similar State and Territory legislation around Australia.[42]

QPS' human rights obligations must be backed by real enforcement capabilities, whether the source is legislative through reform of the *Human Rights Act* or structural through accountability to the Crime and Corruption Commission or another oversight body. The capacity for human rights abuses is always high within the law enforcement context, but especially so when dealing with victims of domestic and

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[40] These effects can be witnessed starting in childhood. Consider the 'school-to-prison pipeline': children who are punished harshly for inconsequential first-time offences at school are pushed into interactions with the criminal justice system at a young age and consequently become serious or violent offenders where they might otherwise never have committed any crimes at all. Truly chilling examples of this phenomenon abound in Christopher Mallett, *The School-to-Prison Pipeline: a Comprehensive Assessment* (Springer, 2015) ch 3.

[41] See, eg, Tonya Glantz, Jill Harrison and Adam Cable, 'Trauma and Recidivism: Informing Assessment and Treatment Options for Incarcerated Men' (2017) 43(1) *International Review of Modern Sociology* 95.

[42] Louis Schetzer, 'Queensland's *Human Rights Act:* Perhaps Not Such a Great Step Forward?' (2020) 45(1) *Alternative Law Journal* 12.

family violence, who are often particularly vulnerable due to factors such as extreme poverty or other societal disadvantage.

Other Recommendations specific to the experience of First Nations women in NQ

QPS Culture

As outlined, issues that pervade police culture and affect police responses to domestic and family violence, include:

a) Racism;
b) a poor understanding of the difference between incident-based violence and a pattern of coercive control, which is at the core of the ethos of protecting victims and preventing DFV;
c) misperceptions of who is a "victim" or "ideal victim" or "deserving of assistance";
d) procedural requirements (e.g. paperwork; time constraints) that tend to detract from a more thorough investigation into what is occurring when attending a domestic violence call out;
e) perceptions that domestic and family violence is not "real" police work, which may be related to a perception that the role of the police is to apprehend criminal offending and to prosecute offenders; and
f) lack of conflict resolution skills.

Recommendations:

1. That the Qld Police Service partner with Community Justice Groups, First Nations elders or other representatives of the First Nations people on whose land they are conducting their business, to deliver to police cadets, and police officers, as part of the officers' ongoing professional development, training in cultural competence and cultural safety, and that such training:
   1.1 Be conducted at least twice annually for qualified police officers;
   1.2 Include an understanding of the importance of partnering or consulting with competent local First Nations women and men in relation to domestic violence matters including decisions in relation to making a domestic violence application (where practicable) information in relation to the nature of the domestic / family violence in a particular matter (if appropriate), appropriate conditions to include in a domestic violence application;
   1.3 Monitoring and assessing bias including unconscious bias.[43]

2. That the Qld Police Service partner with Domestic Violence Resource Centres, Women's Shelters including First Nations Women's Shelters, Women's Legal Centres including First Nations' Women's Legal Services, Seniors' groups including Seniors Legal and Advocacy Services, Youth Groups and other community groups involved in assisting victims and or perpetrators of domestic and family violence, to deliver training on domestic violence at every stage of training for police cadets and as part of police officers' ongoing professional development, such training to include:
   2.1 An in-depth understanding of domestic violence, the dynamics of domestic violence and the purpose of obtaining domestic violence orders;
   2.2 In-depth training on coercive control, including its role in perpetuating domestic violence and how to recognise signs of coercive control;

[43] Recommendation 34. See Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, Parliament of Queensland, *Hear Her Voice: Addressing Coercive Control and Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland* (Report No 1, 2021) 567-8.

2.3 The dynamics of domestic violence / coercive control and how primary aggressors cover their tracks, use image management, befriend police or use the police or other statutory bodies such as health or mental health providers as instruments to coerce and control the victim;

2.4 Identifying the primary victim / survivor of domestic / family violence, including an understanding of the range of behaviours that victims / survivors may present with in response to domestic and family violence (including for example, survival or defensive strategies and minor or protective retaliation that police may encounter when attending a domestic violence call-out). Such identification should include training to distinguish whether minor or defensive retaliation amounts to "domestic violence" requiring that a domestic violence protection order is "necessary or desirable" for the protection of a person.[44]

3. Noting that police often have difficulty distinguishing between a pattern of domestic violence or coercive control and incident-based violence, it is recommended that:

3.1 As part of their training and ongoing professional development, police have in-depth training in how to recognise coercive control and patterns of domestic violence as distinct from incident-based violence. (For example, taking from the case studies, causing minor property damage on 2 or 3 different occasions, particularly when there are years between the incidents occurring, does not necessarily provide evidence of a "pattern of domestic violence" or indicate a need for protection, where the other party has not been injured and does not fear the person causing property damage).[45]

3.2 The Qld Police Service develop tools for use by frontline police officers, Vulnerable Persons Units within the QPS and High Risk Teams, as well as any specialist Domestic and Family Violence responder units, to assist in accurately identifying and assessing coercive control.[46]

4. Noting that procedural issues may be an inhibiting factor for police attending domestic violence matters, it is recommended that:

4.1 Highly skilled first responder police units be established and that, having regard to the fact that 40% of police work is domestic violence, that specialist DFV first responders be attached to every police station, to provide first response as well as guidance to other police DFV first responders;[47] and

4.2 paperwork and evidence gathering be reviewed with a view to streamlining processes such as taking statements from parties involved in a domestic / family violence matter; making early identification of witnesses; taking witness statements at the time of the incident or contemporaneous with it.

5. That the Qld Police Service deliver training on conflict resolution for police cadets and as part of police officers' ongoing professional development and that specialises in conflict resolution be available to be called on to attend domestic / family violence police call outs, bearing in mind

[44] Recommendations 33 and 34. See Taskforce (n 1) 563, 567-8.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Recommendations 34 and 35. See especially Taskforce (n 1) 570.
[47] Recommendation 32. See Taskforce (n 1) 560-1.

that excellent conflict resolution skills may be critical to the survival of a person at a domestic / family violence incident.

6. That the Qld Government consider developing specialist domestic and family violence Hubs which comprise a range of services including specialist trained DFV police officers, medical, social work and dispute resolution practitioners and that such Hubs be trialled in areas of high need as a priority.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Services NQ

(ATSIWLSNQ)