

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

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

STATEMENT OF NIKITA SELLIN

Name of Witness:	Nikita Sellin
Date of birth:	[REDACTED]
Current address:	[REDACTED]
Occupation:	CEO, Junkuri Laka Wellesley Islands Aboriginal Law, Justice and Governance Association Inc
Contact details (phone/email):	[REDACTED]
Statement taken by:	Samantha Giunta

I, Nikita Sellin, make oath and state as follows:

1. I am a Gimuy Walbarra Yindinji/Gungarri/Bidjara/Wakaman/Koa woman.
2. I am the CEO of Junkuri Laka Wellesley Islands Aboriginal Law, Justice and Governance Association Inc (Junkuri Laka) and a lawyer with Atherton Tablelands Law.
3. I live and work on Mornington Island and I am a respected member of the community.
4. Junkuri Laka has been running since 2012 and provides support /activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men involved in domestic and family violence and substance abuse including a weekly yarning circle; support for aggrieved persons through the Community Justice Group; we provide support to victims and offenders in court; facilitate the Community Justice Group; provide a youth justice service, cultural programs, a mediation service and general community support where we are needed.
5. Junkuri Laka has 4 staff and 9 board members, all of whom identify as First Nations.



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Lawyer

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OF JUSTICE & ATTORNEY-GEN.

6. Junkuri Laka has a stable relationship with police, particularly the current OIC and receives DFV referrals for men and women (around 10 per week) through Redbourne. The police are willing to work with the organisation to try to maximise safety for victims of violence.

(a) An example of this is in 2022 when police became aware of a young woman being hunted down by a perpetrator who had been seen holding an axe. The police brought her to the organisation because we had brokerage to fly her off the island until he could be found and arrested to guarantee her safety.

#### Police and domestic and family violence

7. There is a monthly DV meeting chaired by QPS on the island involving the schools, the local council, the Community Justice Group, Junkuri Laka, Save the Children, Mission Australia, QPS and the health service. They meet to discuss current trends in violence, any issues arising through the month, upcoming events and share information about high-risk families to attempt to coordinate any support that it required. These are very helpful and well attended meetings. It is one of the only opportunities for service providers to get together and work together.
8. There is a high level of domestic and family violence on the island, and a high number of PPN and domestic violence orders. There is not an overwhelming number of cross orders, although when this is the case, it is usually because of a high level of physical violence by both parties.
9. One primary issue we see is police misidentifying who is most fearful or most in need of protection, who can turn up to the scene and end up charging the person who called for assistance.
10. Due to the high number of orders, there is correspondingly a high number of contraventions. This leads to significant issues with parole, and due to their circumstances, people are far less likely to be allowed bail when they are charged with an offence. It can be complicated to find them an appropriate or safe bail address, or an address where they can have no contact with the victim, and the couples circumstances are often not taken into account when police are addressing DFV.
- (a) An example of this is the high number of non-contact orders placed on couples who still want to be together or who need to have contact for parenting reasons.

11. The role of local services on the island is critical in supporting police, however we have faced significant challenges in hiring and retaining staff due to qualifications, remoteness and high levels of burnout in the community. It is important, however, that support services are provided locally and in person. 'Call in' services are not culturally appropriate and they are not utilised by the community.
12. A significant challenge when policing in Mornington Island is that often young and inexperienced officers are sent who have little experience in working with vulnerable people, let alone First Nations people, they have little to no understanding of the cultural background of the island and the people and although they are given cultural training at the Arts centre sometimes, this is not consistent and could be more regular and ongoing.
13. Mornington Island still has very strong cultural traditional LORE customs, and this plays a role in how police interact with the community.
14. Another issue is that there is limited police presence on the island and the station is not 24 hours. They finish at midnight or earlier and there is limited support for people needing a response between midnight and 6am.
15. There is little understanding of the meaning DFV orders on the island due to limited engagement with the process (e.g. not turning up to court), limited education and police not understanding how to effectively communicate the conditions in a way that the respondents and aggrieved understand.
16. Non contact orders are very common, and overused, particularly on a small island and even when parties don't want this to occur. This again, leads to high numbers of breaches.

#### **The role of alcohol in Mornington Island**

17. Since alcohol became legal there has been a significant drop in the levels of severe domestic and family violence. This could be due to a decrease in the prevalence of home made alcohol, or homebrew.
18. There is a high level of violence on the island, however, and the use of weapons is quite common, so where an incident does involve both alcohol and violence, police have no choice but to intervene to try to de-escalate the violence and prevent it from continuing to escalate.

OATHS ACT 1867 (DECLARATION)

I, Nikita Sellin 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]

Signature

Taken and declared before me at Gurugram this 26 day of August 2022.

Taken B

Justice of the Peace / Commissioner for Declarations / Lawyer

[Redacted Signature]

Justice