

# Government Response to the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board 2020-21 Annual Report

The Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board (Board) was established in 2016 as part of the Queensland Government's implementation of recommendations from the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence Final Report - '*Not Now, Not Ever*' *Putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland* (2015) (Not Now, Not Ever Report).

The Board is established under the *Coroners Act 2003* to review domestic and family violence (DFV) deaths to identify common systemic failures, gaps or issues; and make recommendations to improve systems, practices and procedures to prevent future DFV deaths. The 2020-21 Annual Report is the Board's fifth report and was provided to Government on 1 November 2021.

The report contains **six recommendations** which are accepted or accepted in principle by Government. The recommendations aim to enhance existing reform activities across Queensland and address identified systemic gaps, as well as shape planning and implementation processes to further enhance reform. They note that integration is critical across different services and systems that respond to DFV, such as police, courts, child protection, alcohol and other drugs, mental health and suicide prevention as well as DFV-specific services themselves.

Since the implementation of the Not Now, Not Ever Report recommendations, the Queensland Government has remained steadfast in its commitment to ongoing reform of DFV responses. In March 2021, the Queensland Government announced the establishment of the independent Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce (the Taskforce) to conduct a wide-ranging review into the experiences of women across Queensland's criminal justice system.

The Board's report recognised that significant and ongoing reforms to DFV responses underway will help define the future approach to be taken in Queensland in responding to DFV. With this in mind, the Board noted that its recommendations needed to complement the then-forthcoming first report of the Taskforce; as well other reform agendas relevant to the child protection, health and criminal justice systems.

The Taskforce provided its first report, *Hear her voice – Report 1 – Addressing coercive control and domestic and family violence in Queensland* in December 2021. The Queensland Government responded to the report on 10 May 2022, with announcement of a \$363 million package to support implementation of the Government's response. Many of the Board's recommendations have direct links to the Taskforce's first report, and as intended by the Board, the Queensland Government is committed to implementing these recommendations in tandem with its response to the work of the Taskforce.

The Queensland Government is committed to exploring and providing appropriate, tailored responses to address DFV, and protecting the lives of women and children.

This includes exploring options to better integrate support across the system provided to children and adults bereaved by DFV homicide or suicide, ensuring better, long-term outcomes for victims and their families.

It also includes exploring the development of an approach to triage and case management of DFV matters in consultation with the Chief Judge and Chief Magistrate.



The Queensland Government is also committed to developing a DFV peak body for all specialist services in Queensland to further support the integration of services and increase workforce development of the DFV sector. As part of the response to Recommendation 17 of the Taskforce's first report, the Queensland Government will resource the peak body to provide guidance to the sector, support reform activities and advocate to government on key issues for the sector.

The Queensland Government acknowledges the work of the Board which continues to provide significant and important analysis to support the Queensland Government to implement the systemic changes required to protect the lives of women, men and children impacted by DFV into the future.

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Recommendations	Lead Agency	Response
<p><b>Recommendation 1</b></p> <p>That the Queensland Government explore opportunities to improve service collaboration and the coordination of support provided to families, particularly children, bereaved by a domestic and family violence death. This should consider existing approaches to postvention support for those bereaved by suicide or homicide.</p>	<p>Department of Justice and Attorney-General</p> <p>Supporting agency: Queensland Health</p> <p>Supporting agency: Queensland Police Service</p> <p>Supporting agency: Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs</p>	<p><b>Accept</b></p> <p>The Queensland Government will address this recommendation by undertaking targeted consultation with government agencies and funded services who support victims of homicide and domestic and family violence, including child victims, in order to identify opportunities for increased collaboration and/or integrated, culturally inclusive and appropriate service delivery for families, with a particular focus on postvention support for children bereaved by homicide or suicide. This may include engagement with persons with lived experience to guide and shape enhancements to the process.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p> <p>That the Queensland Government implement the recommended policy and practice reform proposed by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) in its report "<i>Accurately identifying the person most in need of protection in domestic and family violence law</i>".</p> <p>This should include creating guidance for police and courts on identifying the person most in need of protection that is informed by international models and approaches in other jurisdictions.</p> <p>Taking into account recent case law, this should also extend to the consideration of potential legislative amendments to strengthen existing provisions designed to ensure the identification of the person most in need of protection in proceedings under the <i>Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012</i>.</p>	<p>Department of Justice and Attorney-General</p> <p>Supporting agency: Queensland Police Service</p>	<p><b>Accept</b></p> <p>This recommendation is aligned with Recommendation 56 of the Taskforce's first report. In response to that recommendation, the Queensland Government is progressing legislative amendments to the <i>Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012</i> to ensure applications and cross applications for a domestic violence order are considered together, and that courts should only make one domestic violence order which favours the person most in need of protection in the relationship, unless exceptional circumstances apply.</p> <p>This recommendation is also aligned with Recommendations 67 and 68 of the Taskforce's</p>

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		<p>first report. In response to those recommendations, the Queensland Government will consult with Heads of Jurisdiction to consider updating and developing guidance in domestic and family violence bench books on how to identify the person most in need of protection.</p> <p>The Queensland Police Service has addressed this recommendation through the development and implementation of an online dedicated training product on coercive control which was rolled out in 2021-22. The training focuses heavily on providing guidance to Queensland Police Service members regarding the accurate identification of the person most in need of protection in situations where there are mutual allegations of violence. The training product is a mandatory requirement for completion by all Queensland Police Service members.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3</b></p> <p>That the Queensland Government explore the development of an approach to triage and case management for domestic and family violence cases before the Magistrates and District Courts to identify those that are complex, high risk or that involve cross applications for protection orders. This should seek to ensure that all relevant evidence is available to inform judicial decision-making, beyond the information gathered by police at scene at a point of crisis.</p> <p>This approach should focus on identifying all relevant information and enable the gathering of additional information where gaps are identified to support judicial decision-making. It should also take into account what is known about systems abuse, and the inherent</p>	<p>Department of Justice and Attorney-General</p> <p>Supporting agency: Queensland Police Service</p>	<p><b>Accept</b></p> <p>The Queensland Government supports exploring the development of an approach to triage and case management in consultation with the Chief Judge and Chief Magistrate, which will take into account the need to ensure judicial officers are provided with all relevant information and evidence to inform decision making.</p> <p>This recommendation aligns with Recommendations 21 and 49 of the Taskforce's first report and will be considered as part of the response to those recommendations.</p>

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<p>disadvantage that many victims of domestic and family violence face in their interactions with the justice system as well as existing models operating in other jurisdictions or courts.</p>		<p>Implementation of the intent of this recommendation will also be supported by legislative changes in response to other Taskforce recommendations that relate to the Court's access to criminal history information.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4</b></p> <p>That the Queensland Government trial and evaluate the use of the <i>Domestic and Family Violence Capability Assessment Tool for Alcohol and Other Drug Settings</i> in alcohol and other drug treatment and harm reduction services in multiple trial sites across Queensland.</p> <p>This should include both government and non-government organisations with input from the peak body for alcohol and other drug services and domestic and family violence services within the trial sites.</p>	<p>Queensland Health</p> <p>Supporting agency: Department of Justice and Attorney-General</p>	<p><b>Accept in principle</b></p> <p>This recommendation is aligned with Recommendation 19 of the Taskforce's first report. To address this recommendation and Recommendation 19 of the Taskforce's first report, Queensland Health will, depending on resource availability, collaborate with alcohol and other drug, mental health and domestic and family violence peak bodies to improve service responses to support the safety and wellbeing of victims and their children.</p> <p>This will include building the capability of mental health alcohol and other drugs services across Queensland Health and the non-government sector to recognise and respond to domestic and family violence.</p> <p>The <i>Domestic and Family Violence Capability Assessment Tool for Alcohol and Other Drug Settings</i> will be considered as one potential data source for the establishment of a baseline and monitoring strategies which examine the capability of mental health alcohol and other drugs services across Queensland Health and the</p>

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		non-government sector to recognise and respond to domestic and family violence.
<p><b>Recommendation 5</b></p> <p>That the Queensland Government commit to designing a model for a peak body for domestic and family violence services to further the objective of increased integration and workforce development, undertake broader sector advocacy, and support the successful implementation of government policies and reforms.</p>	<p>Department of Justice and Attorney-General</p>	<p><b>Accept</b></p> <p>The Queensland Government commits to designing a domestic and family violence (DFV) peak body for all specialist DFV services including shelters and perpetrator intervention services in Queensland.</p> <p>This recommendation is aligned with Recommendation 17 of Taskforce's first report. As part of the response to that recommendation, the Queensland Government will establish and resource the peak body to support the integration of and access to trauma-informed, culturally appropriate services, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services that focus on culture as a preventative and healing factor.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6</b></p> <p>That the Queensland Government explore trauma informed options to improve the accessibility, availability and acceptability of longer-term supports for victims and their children beyond the point of crisis to support them to rebuild their lives. There should also be consideration of the longer-term support needs of perpetrators of domestic and family violence to embed ongoing behavioural change and improve protective outcomes for victims and their children.</p>	<p>Department of Justice and Attorney-General</p> <p>Supporting agency: Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs</p> <p>Supporting agency: Queensland Corrective Services</p>	<p><b>Accept</b></p> <p>The Queensland Government provides funding to non-government specialist domestic, family and sexual violence services to provide trauma-informed crisis and longer-term support to victims and their children. Opportunities to improve the accessibility and availability of these services will continue to be considered as part of ongoing reviews of investment and are dependent on available resources.</p>

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		<p>This recommendation aligns with Recommendation 9 of the previous Board report and will be partially addressed through implementation of a state-wide perpetrator strategy which will consider early intervention, immediate and longer-term support needs of perpetrators. This recommendation also aligns with Recommendations 25, 26, 27 and 28 of the Taskforce's first report, which relate to the development of strengthened support for perpetrators. This recommendation will be considered as part of the implementation of the Government response to those recommendations from the Taskforce's first report.</p> <p>This recommendation aligns with Recommendation 74 of the Taskforce's first report. In response to that recommendation, the Queensland Government supports the establishment of a new court-based domestic violence perpetrator diversion scheme.</p> <p>This recommendation aligns with Recommendation 80 of the Taskforce's first report, which relates to establishing a new post-conviction civil supervision and rehabilitation order for serious domestic and family violence offenders. This recommendation will be considered as part of the implementation of the Government response to Recommendation 80 of the Taskforce's first report.</p>

**End**