



MEETING COMMUNIQUÉ

Tuesday, 22 November 2016
Brisbane

On Tuesday, 22 November 2016, the Domestic and Family Violence Implementation Council (Council) held its ninth meeting. The meeting focused on domestic and family violence issues affecting **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders**, and **overall implementation progress** after Council's first year of operation.

The **Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships** updated Council on its work to implement recommendations of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report, including:

- introducing a **Family Responsibilities Commission trigger** when domestic violence orders are made in respect to members of welfare communities (**recommendations 93 and 94**)
- working with the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services to develop a place-based, culturally appropriate **integrated response** models (**recommendation 9**)
- working with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to develop a **local authority model** for discrete Indigenous communities (**recommendation 92**).

It was noted that the imprimatur of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report has contributed to a **shared commitment and improved level of collaboration** across departments.

The **Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council** advised Indigenous health organisations are increasingly engaged with domestic and family violence issues. It was noted that relationships of trust **Indigenous health workers** develop with clients are conducive to addressing these issues but that sensitivity is always needed.

Community Elders from the **Logan and Ipswich** communities spoke about work in their communities to bring attention to issues of family violence and other related social issues. They conveyed perceptions that **domestic violence protection orders and police responses are not adequate** to protect victims, and that community members are **reluctant to engage with mainstream services**.

Link Up Queensland highlighted the **impact of trauma** on Indigenous people, and Link Up's work to **connect victims with services** they need. The difficulty of achieving successful **interagency collaboration** was noted, despite goodwill and efforts to achieve this.

Gallang Place raised the **under-resourcing of Indigenous organisations** as the key issue in providing appropriate family violence services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Council was advised that **Indigenous organisations were best-placed to provide culturally competent services** and deal with issues of trauma, but that these organisations are not receiving the level of funding required. This is seen as resulting in **pressure on Elders to assist with developing cultural capability** of mainstream services.

The **Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service** spoke of the importance and its commitment to **employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members**. It was noted that **early investment** is needed to build capacity and training of Indigenous people to fill these roles.

The **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service** outlined experiences in addressing the high incidences of domestic and family violence in the Woodridge community. The key issue identified was the need for a clear **overarching policy framework on prevention and early intervention** to coordinate the many individual initiatives providing valuable support within the community.

Following the round table discussion, Council received an overview of work of its **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group**. The group has engaged in discussions with departmental representatives about implementation of recommendations on **integrated response pilots (recommendations 9 and 74)**, strengthening community justice groups through a **local authority model (recommendation 92)** and development of the **engagement and communication strategy (recommendation 18)**. The group has provided advice on issues arising from these discussions to Council following each of its meetings.

Council was then joined by representatives of the **Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC)**, **Public Service Commission (PSC)** and the **Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR)** at The University of Queensland.

The Director-General of DPC led a presentation to Council about progress of the Government's domestic and family violence reform program, emphasising the **Premier's and Government's strong commitment** to the reforms. The **Second Action Plan of the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy** has recently been released and lists key highlights and future actions required to implement *Not Now, Not Ever* report recommendations. Queensland's role in **advancing national cooperation** and **contributing to public awareness** of the issue was also discussed.

The ISSR advised Council about development of the **evaluation framework** for the domestic and family violence reform program. The PSC outlined initiatives to enhance **workplace support** for people affected by domestic and family violence through preventing violence, supporting affected workers and creating a safe, inclusive workforce. It was noted that legislative amendments currently before Parliament would, if passed, make Queensland the first state to **legislate for domestic and family violence leave**.

Council concluded the meeting with a discussion of its past activities and future priorities and development of its **12 month report** which would cover its first year of operation.