



MEETING COMMUNIQUÉ

Friday, 19 February 2016

On Friday, 19 February 2016, the Domestic and Family Violence Implementation Council (Council) held its second meeting.

The meeting focussed on actions being undertaken within the school education sector to shift the cultures and attitudes that perpetuate domestic and family violence in the Queensland community.

The Honourable Shannon Fentiman MP, Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, attended the meeting. Minister Fentiman advised Council that domestic and family violence reform was a high priority for the Queensland Government, and reinforced the importance of working in partnership with the community to achieve real change.

Domestic and Family Violence Strategy 2016-2026 and First Action Plan

Minister Fentiman presented the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016-2026 and accompanying First Action Plan to the Council Chair. Council noted that the development of a Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy was the first recommendation of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report and that the Strategy lays the foundations for the Government's program of domestic and family violence reform in Queensland.

Implementation of *Not Now, Not Ever* report recommendations

Council considered reports on implementation progress provided by the Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Chief Magistrate.

Minister Fentiman informed Council of some of the key actions being undertaken by government to implement the *Not Now, Not Ever* report, including collaborations with local communities, improvements to service responses and legislative reforms. Council also noted the work being undertaken by the Queensland Police Service to enhance awareness, responses and processes for responding to domestic and family violence.

The Chief Magistrate advised of implementation activities within the Magistrates Court including the development of the Domestic and Family Violence Bench Book, progress of

the trial of the specialist domestic violence court at Southport, and the delivery of training for Magistrates.

Education sector round table

In the second part of the meeting, Council was joined by a panel of representatives from the Queensland school education sector to discuss the role of schools in effecting change to culture and attitudes relating to domestic and family violence.

Council noted the *Not Now, Not Ever* report had made a number of recommendations (in particular, recommendations 24 to 29) about introduction of educational programs in schools which emphasise the importance of respectful relationships and gender equality.

The education sector panel comprised representatives of the Department of Education and Training, Independent Schools Queensland, the Queensland Catholic Education Commission, P&Cs Queensland, the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (Love Bites program), the Queensland Teachers' Union, the Queensland Secondary Principals' Association and the Queensland Association of State School Principals.

Council received updates on action being taken by the Department of Education and Training, Independent Schools Queensland and the Queensland Catholic Education Commission to implement new respectful relationship education programs in schools, in response to recommendations of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report.

Council learned about the curriculum resources developed by the Department of Education and Training to support delivery of these programs as part of the curriculum in state schools. Council noted that strong collaboration is occurring between the state and non-state school sectors, with state school curriculum resources shared with Independent Schools Queensland and the Queensland Catholic Education Commission.

The programs being delivered in both state and non-state schools are tailored to the needs of the individual school community and generally take a whole-school, age-appropriate approach aimed at developing students' understanding of healthy relationships within a positive context.

The panel discussed the ways in which delivery of these programs within Queensland schools could be of benefit to parents as well as students. Council also noted that professional support is available through various programs, including the Love Bites program, to support the handling of any disclosures of domestic and family violence incidents.

The round table discussion highlighted the important role schools play within their communities and the opportunities that exist to promote positive values, attitudes and behaviours to both the student population and the broader community through the school system.