



MEETING COMMUNIQUÉ

Wednesday, 12 July 2017
Brisbane

On Wednesday, **12 July 2017**, the Domestic and Family Violence Implementation Council (the Council) held its twelfth meeting, in Brisbane. The meeting focused on the **impact of domestic and family violence on people with disability**, and action being taken to address the issue.

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 first section of the meeting.

The Director-General of the **Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS)** presented an overview of the issues and their context, noting research findings which indicate that **people with disability are highly vulnerable to domestic and family violence**.

DCCSDS has **commissioned a review** to address the impact of domestic and family violence on people with disability, in response to **recommendation 10** of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report, and has included commitments to improve services to people with disability impacted by violence in relevant policy frameworks. Future action is focusing on **cross-sectoral approaches** to improving domestic and family violence, sexual assault, disability and justice sector responses.

The **Public Advocate for Queensland** provided an overview of the current legislative environment protecting people with disability from domestic and family violence, noting opportunities for improvements in **awareness for victims** on how to access support and services, and evidentiary challenges in prosecuting cases.

Queensland Police Service representatives discussed improvements made to police policies and practices in relation to vulnerable persons, including people with disability, including **emphasis on collaboration and training** of police officers to enable them to provide appropriate responses.

WWILD advised of its role in supporting people with intellectual and learning disability, including providing **outreach services** and assisting clients to connect with the community. WWILD has developed an **easy-read resource** for people with an

intellectual disability which aims to build awareness of what constitutes violence and how to victims can respond.

Queenslanders with Disability Network noted key issues to be addressed include **identification** of instances of violence and abuse, **training** in handling disclosures, and **physical access** to emergency accommodation. In addition, the rollout of the **National Disability Insurance Scheme** will need to be carefully managed to ensure the interface between disability support and other services functions effectively.

DVConnect provided an overview of the **numbers of clients with disability** seeking support, noting that numbers may be under-reported as the service relies on self-identification. The **ouster provisions** recommended by the *Not Now, Not Ever* report had proven effective, given the availability of space in emergency accommodation remains a challenge for people with physical disability.

The **Brisbane Domestic Violence Service** also **identified availability of appropriate emergency accommodation** as an issue, and noted that ouster provisions and safety upgrades are employed where possible. **Financial abuse** of people with disability was also raised as a key issue, as well as a need to identify patterns of behaviour of **perpetrators** targeting women with disability.

DCCSDS will consider feedback from stakeholders and the Council from the meeting in implementing actions to improve domestic and family violence responses for people with disability, and **report back to the Council**.

The Council discussed its **work program** for 2017, including the outcomes of the visit by Council members to the **Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Court at Southport** on 28 June 2017. Members noted that the **collaborative approach**, availability of **service support, structural improvements** and **local policing strategies** had been crucial to the success of the trial. In this respect, the Council also noted the findings of the **evaluation report** of the specialist court trial, which would inform the roll-out of specialist courts in Beenleigh and Townsville, including circuits to Palm Island and Mount Isa.

The Council considered the **quarterly progress report** on implementation of *Not Now, Not Ever* report recommendations as at 31 May 2017, which reported the completion of **67 recommendations**. This included the completion of the **Domestic and Family Violence Screening during Antenatal Care report (recommendation 54)** and the **Evaluation Framework for the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy (recommendations 5 and 17)**. The Council received an update on delivery of the **engagement and communication strategy**, including development of the **media guide (recommendation 70)** and the recently launched youth campaign '**Stop the Hurting – End Domestic Violence**' and associated music competition.

The Council received an update from the meeting of the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group** held on 7 June 2017, and noted a range of past and future events and activities involving Council members' participation. These included the **ANROWS Symposium** on the challenges of collaboration between child protection and domestic violence services on 23 June, the '**You're the Voice**' choral event on 29 July, and a domestic and family violence forum at the **PA Hospital Health Symposium** on 4 August 2017.