

CONSULTATION REPORT

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ON RAISING AWARENESS OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE AND THE SUPPORTS AND SERVICES AVAILABLE
ROCKHAMPTON LEAGUES CLUB, THURSDAY 21 JUNE 2018

BACKGROUND

PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

The purpose of the consultation was to gather evidence to support the Council's role in providing the Minister for Multicultural Affairs with advice on the needs, aspirations and contributions of people from diverse backgrounds and how Government-funded services and programs can be responsive to the needs of people from diverse backgrounds. The consultation was also to support discussion with the Domestic and Family Violence Implementation Council on how to raise community awareness of domestic and family violence (DFV) and the supports available for both victims and perpetrators.

Thirty participants attended including representatives from DFV services, multicultural support services, Local and State Governments, and local communities.

STRUCTURE

The consultation was opened with a presentation by Ms Faiza El-Higzi, Member of the Domestic and Family Violence Implementation Council (DFVIC), who discussed the definition of domestic and family violence under legislation, Queensland's domestic and family violence reform program, the work of the DFVIC and issues associated with domestic and family violence and culturally diverse communities. Consultation participants were divided across six tables in small groups. Within these groups, participants had approximately an hour for discussion around a number of consultation questions (Appendix 1).

Members of the Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council facilitated each table discussion, while some members, along with staff from the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs, recorded participants' responses.

KEY RESPONSES

While many of the issues raised are experienced by individuals and communities across Queensland and from all backgrounds, the discussion was focused on the needs and concerns of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the local region, Rockhampton and surrounding communities.

"A lady came to Australia and didn't understand the household gadgets. Her husband yelled and was verbally abusive."

Participant

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The key themes arising from the community consultation were:

- Different understandings of what domestic and family violence is.
- Barriers to accessing services and/or reporting DFV.
- There are a number of programs that are working well in the region but there is still more that can be done.

THE DETAIL

AWARENESS OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE AMONGST CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

One participant commented that their community was not aware of the forms of DFV other than physical violence. People therefore did not get involved if it was not physical violence. Other participants shared that some people will state they know about DFV but don't think that is what they are experiencing. It was also raised that some young people think that DFV is okay in a relationship, while some of the older generation see DFV as a private matter and not to be discussed.

The role and awareness of community leaders was also discussed. Some participants stated that community leaders were more likely to be aware than the community as a whole.

Participants provided some examples that they were aware of including women and children not being let out of the house without the man's permission or to certain places only. Women not being allowed to go to church was also mentioned.

It was generally agreed that there is a lack of awareness about controlling behaviour being a form of DFV.

It was also discussed that men can experience DFV as well but don't usually report it, because of the expectations placed on them as men and the stigma attached to not meeting these expectations.

In some cultures, male roles are very traditional and may be different from those experienced in other communities where women are able to work and have their own money. Along

WHAT'S WORKING WELL?

Participants identified a number of programs and approaches that were working well in the region.

The coordinated high risk team, led by Relationships Australia and other NOGs in the region, provides wrap around services and a quick and immediate support to women experiencing domestic and family violence.

Welcoming Intercultural Neighbours (WIN) in Gladstone runs a men's campaign inviting men to be a voice in multicultural communities speaking out against domestic and family violence. WIN have also developed videos in different languages and are linking with community leaders to get the message out.

The Baha'i community in Rockhampton are trialling the Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program for 12-15 year olds. The program works with individuals, encouraging them to look at the world differently.

LOVE BiTES program is a school-based domestic and family violence and sexual assault prevention program aimed at 14-16 year olds.

<http://growingrespect.org.au/love-bites/about/what-is-love-bites/>



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with the stress associated with settling into a new community, culture and country, this can impact on family relationships.

One participant raised that there is an opinion amongst some men that Domestic Violence Orders are no big deal as there are no consequences unless they breach the order.

There was also some discussion regarding intercultural marriages (e.g. marrying an Australian man) and that the differences between a husband and wife's cultural backgrounds can generate misunderstanding.

BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SERVICES AND/OR REPORTING DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

It was noted that there is under-reporting of DFV by women from culturally diverse backgrounds and women were not presenting at refuges or attending the DFV court.

Much of the discussion focused on the barriers for women accessing services, as well as reporting DFV to Police. Many of the barriers raised affect women from all backgrounds, such as financial dependency on their partner. Additional barriers for women from culturally diverse backgrounds compound the difficulty in accessing services. These additional barriers are:

- Stigma and shame – In many cultures DFV is not a topic openly discussed. There is shame associated with accessing domestic violence services and seeking help. There is also stigma associated with 'not being a good wife'.
- Fear of going to the Police due to experiences before arriving in Australia.
- Social isolation – Having limited English can make it difficult for women to make connections and access services. Some women may be used to turning to extended family for support or help with resolving conflicts within the family, but with extended family overseas this is not an option.
- Living in small communities, either cultural or regional, as everyone knows each other. An example was provided of a husband telling others in the community to avoid his wife and she became ostracised.



One participant spoke of a woman who had to wait three months for support. She felt powerless and ended up returning to her husband.



"A lady was running through the bush with her husband firing a gun at her. We went to the Police (small community). The Police said the man is a dingo shooter and if he wanted to hit her he would have."

Participant

WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE

Several participants spoke about New Zealand as a model that provides a one stop shop approach to provide support to people experiencing DFV.



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Given the stigma associated with accessing services, there is a need to look at other safe spaces that could be used to provide access to information and support, for example Neighbourhood Centres and community hubs, along with schools, as they are places where communities come together. There was some discussion that Neighbourhood Centres worked well in other locations but there was no centre in Rockhampton due to a lack of funding. Co-tenancy of different services was also suggested as a way to avoid the stigma of going to a DFV service.

Participants also discussed ways to build the capacity of organisations to work with people from culturally diverse backgrounds and develop a community of practice. Organisations should consider what the cultural factors are that they need to be aware of in safety planning (e.g. does the person need to be relocated because it's a small community), and what do workers need to be aware of that may make the situation worse.

Some suggestions for improving the cultural capability of organisations include:

- Employing community liaison officers or bicultural workers to liaise with communities. However, it was noted that this may not be appropriate for smaller communities where everyone knows each other.
- Cultural awareness/capability training for workers.
- Developing resources for working with people from culturally diverse backgrounds, including:
 - language and cultural practices
 - people in authority within local cultural communities (community leaders)
 - consideration of different working modes (e.g. attending community events, relocation for women's safety in small communities)
 - other vulnerabilities, such as LGBTI, refugee and so on.

This resource should be developed with a DFV, regional and cultural capability lens.

Participants also discussed building the capacity of community leaders so that they are familiar with the services available and can become a referral pathway. Training and support would need to be provided so that they know how to respond if someone talks about DFV; are able to identify DFV; and have the resources to support the community.

A few tables discussed the By-Stander campaigns and the need to focus on equality – everyone has equal rights in Australia – but in a way that is not 'othering' or stigmatising. Some participants referred to the R U OK campaign, which is simple and effective.

Some participants discussed that faith and community leaders, GPs and teachers are all trusted sources of information for people. It was suggested that these sources be engaged about what is appropriate and when, how they fit into the DFV response, and the legal system. It was also noted that community leaders are often volunteers and to be careful not to cause burn out. There are existing forums locally that could be used to engage with community leaders, such as the Cultural Diversity Alliance in Rockhampton. Community events are another opportunity to promote and spread information.



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Participants noted that most current information about DFV is in English. This is a problem for people who can't speak English well or at all. Information should be targeted towards cultural and language groups, whether it's translated resources or in language videos. These resources should raise awareness of DFV in terms of power and control to address the different understanding of DFV across cultures.

It was also raised that in many cases women may not leave a relationship for fear of being ostracised from the community. Some support for families to work through their issues was raised as being needed to help stop the DFV without breaking the family apart.

Other ideas to address the problem at its cause included:

- More programs around perpetrators to change attitudes towards respecting women.
- Mentors such as coaches, teachers and other male role models.
- Behaviour change programs focusing on children, such as how to speak to women at work and home.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

TOPIC	QUESTIONS
<p>1. What more can communities (including you as leaders and members of your respective communities) do to raise awareness of domestic and family violence?</p>	<p>a) What does domestic and family violence mean to you?</p> <p>b) What are the forms of domestic and family violence?</p> <p>c) How can attitudes towards women, and domestic and family violence be changed?</p> <p>d) What is the context (drivers) of domestic and family violence that you have been made aware of?</p> <p>e) Are there any examples of initiatives or approaches that have worked well?</p> <p>f) What other steps can be taken to raise awareness and promote services?</p> <p>Conversation prompt: examples of what communities could do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a community event during Domestic Violence Prevention Month – May, to raise awareness amongst your community of the issue and services available. • Community grants are available – up to \$5,000 to assist community organisations to hold events, projects or activities during the month. • Attend a local event – check out the event calendar on the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month calendar. • Encourage community and religious leaders to undertake training and education about domestic and family violence. (E.g. Empowerment Program for Domestic Violence – organised by Kuraby Mosque, Centre for Islamic Thought and Education, University of South Australia, Islamic Women’s Association of Australia and Relationships Australia Queensland). <p>g) How can women be provided with assistance to learn more about their rights?</p> <p>h) What information and in what forms do communities need to provide information, support or assistance?</p>
<p>2. What more can be done to overcome the barriers for women to reporting violence and accessing services and assistance?</p>	<p>a) Are there any examples of initiatives or approaches that have worked well?</p> <p>b) How else can communities support women to report domestic and family violence?</p> <p>c) How can communities support women and their children to access services?</p> <p>d) What support do men need?</p>