

# **QDVSN MEETING ISSUES PAPER**

## **FOR DISTRIBUTION TO OTHER NETWORKS**

### **KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM QDVSN MEETING ON 18<sup>TH</sup> & 19<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2007 - IPSWICH**

In the spirit of enhancing information sharing and collaboration between our networks, Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network (QDVSN) decided to distribute to other related and like networks and services, relevant issues arising from the QDVSN meetings. In addition, QDVSN recognizes that our networks are frequently responding to and discussing the same issues, and the strength that lies in coordinating and sharing information.

After each QDVSN meeting, the QDVSN Secretary can forward to your network/service the key relevant issues arising from the QDVSN meeting. If you do not feel it is useful for your network/service to receive this information, please do not hesitate to let us know. In addition, if your network/service would like to similarly disseminate information relating to your network/service, we would certainly welcome this.

#### **Service Agreements/Enhancing existing services**

There was a long discussion about the service agreements and the poor statistical requirements. QDVSN have still not heard back from Jess Wilson in regard to the draft of the new reporting measures etc. This was raised with VPT at the meeting and Lisa updated that the output specs have not gone anywhere as Jess has taken a secondment. Soon as new person starts VPT will run through the work Jess has done so far and contact QDVSN to check this info for the new person. It was agreed that this issue should be raised with the new Minister.

- *Action: Amanda to write to Minister requesting meeting to discuss these concerns and to pull together a short briefing paper, and get the meeting in Townsville.*

#### **QDVSN events**

Donna had suggested we should have QDVSN events as a standing item so that we could look at doing various things throughout the year as a statewide event. It was suggested that we might look at bringing Ellen Pence to Australia to undertake workshops. This would give staff opportunity to attend at much cheaper costs. It would send a strong message about QDVSN too. Donna had previously put some information together about the event so that it could be taken to our boards for support.

Donna updated the group that she has heard from about half of QDVSN and we need to work on how we would progress this as a group. Need a floating fund to bring Ellen Pence over and including meeting time for planning. There will be a feminist conference in September 2008 so we need to think about when we would get her over and also whether this would fit in with the idea of a forum from Brian Sullivan.

**Telephone link with Women's Legal Aid** – Fionna Fairbrother, Raquel Aldunate and Justin Stevenson, Coordinator of victims of crime compensation (VCC) unit, Brisbane.

Justin talked about criminal compensation and how LA helps. VCC available in general circumstance that offence committed here in QLD, has to proceed in court on indictment (district or supreme court). Big problem for DV because most do not go through higher courts. If DV resolved in magistrates court cannot claim for VCC. Attempted murder and wounding goes to higher courts but assault occasioning bodily harm might not go to those courts. To get VCC, solicitor has to prepare affidavits from victim and specialists about how they have been affected. Application heard by judge in court and decides how much to award. In Qld offender is involved in the process and the offender gets to see the material

and can contest the application for compensation. Perpetrator pays compensation or if no money, paid by state as *ex-gratia* payment. VCC has made submission to government to have Qld scheme changed quite dramatically.

QDVSN decided to write to the Minister about this as well – Kerry Shine, Justice Dept. Focused on terrible affect of person at receiving end having the offender involved in the process and DV matters often being heard in magistrates courts. Justin recommended that we look at NSW Act as it includes DV specifically. Also, suggest Qld has no minimum threshold for compensation.

How LA VCC helps – has specialized unit which gives free legal advice by phone as well as LA offices throughout the state. Will provide info sessions and provide advice by phone on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week. Different application form for VCC, no means test but do charge capped legal fees (\$4,000) at end of the matter which come out of the payout.

Donna asked if they had any recommendations about how we should progress WLA out in the regions. Fiona stated that LA looks at all of the data about where there is a need and are currently doing this. Donna suggesting that availability of WLA a couple of days a week in regional areas might be good, not developed a proposal yet. Raquel suggested that QDVSN could do a brief to the board at LA requesting something like this – write to Marg and Jenny Hardy who is the CEO expressing the needs in the regions. This would fit for them as they consider their new strategic plan. Our submission needs to be done by November this year and we need to be specific about what we want to see in the locations.

Annabelle expressed that she was impressed with LA's commitment to the MAP and the strategies they have put in place.

Follow up discussion about certificates for FLC – Fiona mentioned that legal aid able to provide these certificates. Also had some emails complaining about external Family Dispute Resolution Services and that the process has not been useful for women. WLA suggest that we should encourage individual women to use the feedback process that all FDRS's have to say why the process wasn't useful for them eg didn't ask about fear and impacts of DV, or better organised if asked those questions etc. So, all FDRS's must have feedback processed and AG will be looking at these. WLA recommend that services encourage women to go to 'reputable' FDRS.

Fionna informed QDVSN that they were still working on pathways and protocols internally for accessing LA. One option is that when DV service, IWSS or refuges contact LA for FLC matter we deal with a particular referral person. All agreed this was a good idea.

## **DVCAN**

Pam Godsell attended the meeting and explained that they had approached DoC for funding for another DVCAN conference and were turned down because they had spent money on disaster relief due to the cyclone. DoC suggested DVCAN try private enterprise and were given some contacts including mining companies. DVCAN was pretty unimpressed with this response. Wondered about approaching Treasury over this issue and wondered what QDVSN thought about this. WLS members thought it was worth a shot too.

Discussed this issue and equine flu and whether this will disadvantage services even further. It is likely that there will be more 'disasters' due to climate change etc. It was felt that there should be separate contingency funds for natural disasters not coming out of Communities funding. Felt it was a good idea to lobby Treasury. Could there be funding from Dept of Justice for this too? Could SNGO money

assist DVCAN? However, it's not just about the DVCAN conference but the broader needs for DV and core services becoming depending on business funders.

- *Action: Pam will find out who to contact at Treasury. DVCAN will ask for interview with Treasury and QDVSN would like to be a part of this delegation.*

#### **Telephone link with VPT – Natalie Siegel & Lisa Sarago**

Legislation Evaluation – feedback by 16<sup>th</sup> November 2007. Received valuable feedback from Heather (CDFVR) and IWSS and this is being incorporated into the report. Want to push the report up the line as soon as possible. VPT would like to argue for the report to be publicly available. Natalie thinks they might reserve the report to go into the review of the whole of the DV legislation which is due in 2008. Craig Hodges, Manager of the Legislation Unit, Strategic Evaluation and Review Branch is leading the 2008 review (Craig.Hodges@communities.qld.gov.au). This may mean that any of the recommendations made currently might not be implemented until 2010 after the whole review comes out.

Child Counselling service review – not progressed up the line for sign off due to restructure of personnel. Will guide future funding and what government can do to enhance the needs of the sector.

Women's service review update – with department restructure made decision that all service reviews that department does will go to Strategic Policy directorate. Nat has fortnightly meetings with the directorate. Dr Terrence O'Brien, Manager, Strategic Evaluation Team (Terrence.O'brien@communities.qld.gov.au) and Robyn Lucienne, Policy Worker ([Robyn.Lucienne@communities.qld.gov.au](mailto:Robyn.Lucienne@communities.qld.gov.au)) are doing this work.

CALD & MAP – three new resources have gone up the line for approval to be released. These will be able to be used in services and will be officially launched soon.. VPT got advice from important distribution channels for those three communities. VPT will put on a forum for one or two workers from every service in Qld in Brisbane, facilitated by IWSS to educate them how to deal with CALD issues and training in DV regulations in the migration act. Also looking at developing DV screening tool for DIAC settlement workers to use. Written to Commonwealth government about this, including a forum run by IWSS to train them in how to use this tool. Commonwealth government seem keen on this.

Annabelle asked about the progress of the research into CALD communities. This is progressing including a PhD student doing research around Muslim men's attitude to DV.

QDVSN asked if there was a strategic plan for the VPT. There is, but it is not a public document. It contains business planning continuing direction they are currently doing eg. working on healthy relationship education, P&C dynamics, and improving government and NGO response to DV, enhancing responses to CALD and NESB communities and marginalized access. Heavy burden on VPT to provide advice.

MAC forum – QDVSN mentioned that at this forum the previous Minister had talked about Youth initiatives. VPT informed us that it is still on agenda for department. This DV Month will focus on youth and healthy relationships but focusing on pre-perpetrator/pre-victim stage, advertising will be focused on that. Also finalized Healthy Relationships DVD for KickStart Coaches on FV for kids in the FNQ aboriginal communities. Will be a resource that DV services could use too.

Whole of Government Response (WGR) to DV – Strategic Policy Directorate are doing this. It seems to be a moveable feast as there are a lot of restructures going on. Working on policy paper that they are

trying to get all departments to agree on, which contains five key points about DV. Once delivered to Cabinet in July next year it would come to team to begin implementing. Safety and Accountability Audit will be done by VPT, hoping to get Ellen Pence's safety audit run by the person who did it in WA. At moment department does not have the money to engage her. Also need to negotiate a lot of MOUs before the audit can take place.

Natalie is leaving the department for a year on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2007. She will be doing some work in the Pilbara, WA, implementing a service for aboriginal children.

### **Management Issues (Standing item)**

Ann mentioned a recruitment organisation called Employment Office which RA and a mental health community organisation in Toowoomba has had really good response from using them. Does not cost much more than putting an ad in the Courier Mail or local paper. Richard specializes in recruiting for community organisations. You write a few questions for people to answer and their response comes to you via email and you can decide if you want them to submit a full application. [www.employmentoffice.com](http://www.employmentoffice.com)

Chris has used Procure before and they advertise nationally and potential employees have been vetted and have their references checked. Paid a fee of \$1,800. Amanda mentioned that they have recently used Big Splash to revamp the look of their advertisements as well as Amanda changing the wording they use in adverts to make it about how the staff love working in the service. Big Splash does not charge up front, it gets commission from the newspapers they place ads in. [www.bigsplashworldwide.com](http://www.bigsplashworldwide.com)

There was a discussion about the progress of SNGO standards in services and the self-assessment letter with funding allocated. QCOSS is starting to do workshops around this. Townsville services are holding a meeting to see if they can negotiate a joint project to work on the SNGO standards together.

### **Subpoena issues**

Amanda mentioned their new policy on subpoenas and was willing to share it. Also mentioned NSW resource, *Counsellors and Subpoenas: a practical guide for counsellors served with subpoenas*, written by WLS NSW (available on the internet) that was very helpful when doing this policy. There was a discussion about children's workbooks and how these do not form part of the organisation's case notes and so would not be sent with any other subpoenaed papers.

### **Brian Sullivan's Forum idea**

There was a discussion about the forum and everyone thought it was a good idea and had synergy with the Peaks work going on too and our previous attempts at Statewide gatherings.

- *Action: Amanda to write to Brian Sullivan stating QDVSN's support for this forum.*

### **Election of new QDVSN Convenor**

Ann Alcock is leaving Toowoomba service on 9<sup>th</sup> November. Heather Nancarrow volunteered to take on the Convenor role. All were most grateful and happy with this and accepted with thanks.

### **Network for Child Counsellors**

Pauline's worker is progressing this meeting of child counsellors. QDVSN members to ensure Kim has the name of their child workers.