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New Team to Tackle Domestic Violence in Far North Queensland

A new Domestic Violence High Risk Team for the Cairns Region will save lives through earlier intervention and ensure high-risk perpetrators are tracked. (Queensland Government Media release 11.07.2017)

Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence Shannon Fentiman said the High Risk Team would include key people like Police, health professionals and Child Safety staff along with representatives from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and Housing and Public Works to help the women and children at highest risk of domestic and family violence as part of a \$2.2 million investment over three years.

"This is about wrapping services around victims of domestic and family violence to make sure they have the support they need to get their lives back on track.

"It is also about ensuring perpetrators are held to account and the risk they pose is monitored."

"One agency on their own is not always able, or best positioned, to provide the breadth of actions necessary to reduce risk and inform safety plans."

"The Not Not Not Ever report notes most Domestic and Family Violence deaths are preventable and the way to prevent these deaths is to set up these sorts of high risk teams."

"In most cases there are repeated opportunities to intervene and these teams working together will ensure those opportunities are less likely to be missed."

"An integrated response enables everyone with a role in keeping victims safe and holding a perpetrator to account to collaborate and work together."

The Cairns region was chosen as the location for a High Risk Team after the number of Domestic Violence Orders at Cairns Magistrate Court rose 14% in the last year.

"We have brought Domestic and Family Violence out of the shadows and now more people are reporting, which is an important step to keeping women and children safe," Ms Fentiman said.

The \$2.2 million High Risk Team will employ nine staff across the agencies involved.

The announcement for the Cairns Region follows the establishment of High Risk Teams in Mount Isa, Logan/Beenleigh and Cherbourg.

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New Team to Tackle Domestic Violence in Far North Queensland cont.

Member for Barron River Craig Crawford welcomed the injection of resources for the region.

"Helping women who are escaping violent relationships takes a co-ordinated effort across Government and non-government agencies, and this High Risk Team will mean better and more responsive services," Mr Crawford said.

Ms Fentiman said \$650,000 had been allocated this financial year for the establishment of the High Risk Team in Cairns/Mossman.

Local service providers and government agencies will be brought together to collaborate on the integrated service model that works best for Cairns and the surrounding region, so everyone brings their best information and resources to the table – to tackle domestic and family violence in the region.

"This extra funding is a crucial element in the Government's ongoing commitment to ending domestic and family violence," she said.

"We want women to know that there is support available to them if they leave violent and abusive relationships.

"When women make this brave decision to leave, we must make sure we have the right support and services there to help."

The High Risk Teams are part of the government's response to the *Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland* report.

For more information on the Queensland Government's actions to tackle domestic and family violence go to www.communities.qld.gov.au/gateway/end-domestic-and-family-violence



CRDVS Senior Practitioner, Child & Youth Counsellor - Cairns

Hi I'm Randall.

I started working at CRDVS as the Senior Practitioner and Child and Youth Counsellor at the beginning of August this year. Most weekends I'll be out on my motorbike enjoying the country side and twisty mountain roads or perhaps sitting on the beach or in a café watching the world flow by.

I have most recently come from The Northern Territory working as a remote aboriginal child trauma counsellor. I have been working in human services as a counsellor, support worker, case manager and service manager for 17 years with adults, youth and children, working in major cities and remote aboriginal communities. My time has been spent helping them deal with life circumstances including; alcohol and drugs; grief and bereavement; trauma; social exclusion; isolation; domestic violence; mental health and wellbeing among other circumstances.

As Child and Youth Counsellor I have to say that I REALLY love what I do. The children and young people that come to us have such amazing resilience and hope and in many cases an awareness beyond their age. When they come in, and are told that they are in charge and I am there to do whatever they want sometimes they are sceptical, because they rarely, if ever had that before. Since I have been here I have had the pleasure of learning together how to make candles; painting; finger painting; making masks; playing in the sand pit; being covered up to my elbows in clay; drawing up booby trap ideas (just in case for protection of course); all while listening to a great selection of music (many of which I hadn't really heard before) and of course singing along. That's not even counting the drawings and chats that we have

or the days I leave covered in glitter.

As Senior Practitioner my first thought is always with the people that come to us, as they are the whole reason we do what we do. The resilience and determination from them inspires us as a service and individual workers to keep going. I am passionate about strengths based work with people. I believe that they are the experts in their lives. Our job is to sit with them and help them be able to do the things they need, and to be a witness to their resilience and hopes as they move through an experience and circumstances no person would wish to or should have to confront.

I look forward to continuing being a part of the work of CRDVS, supporting, responding to, encouraging and accompanying people, both big and little, on their journey.

I can be contacted at the Cairns CRDVS office ph 4033 6100

CRDVS SERVICE SITES



CRDVS Tablelands update

Our Tablelands service has continued to expand and grow. Working hard at building relationships and networks across the Tablelands has helped us to feel like a well-established service in the community and we have had steady and consistent referrals from a wide range of Tablelands services. The last few months has seen us involved in various community events such as the Mareeba Family Fun day and Mareeba Rotary Field Days. We loved being a part of the family fun day and showing all the children how to make a feelings jar – along with lots of conversations about emotions and how to manage them. It was a lot of fun and it certainly seemed to be a popular activity as we were surrounded by a crowd of kids and adults drawn to the irresistible allure of glitter!

We've been working closely with other agencies to better support our clients, and continue to provide outreach services to Kuranda and Mareeba for adult counselling. It's been a pleasure working closely with the teams at Kuranda Neighbourhood Centre and Mareeba Lifeline and staff at both of these organisations have gone out of their way to make our service feel welcome.

We're really starting to feel part of the community here and it's helped to be living on the Tablelands, getting out and about and exploring what the region has to offer. We are looking forward to continuing to grow the service over the coming year.

Mel & Kathryn, DV Worker and Child & Youth Counsellor CRDVS Tablelands

CRDVS Tableland South - Picking up pace

Where to start? Since the opening of the Tablelands South service, which is located in the Ravenshoe Community Centre (RCC) there have been a great many things happening in our little mountain top town.

The previous newsletter spoke about reaching out to the community and other organisations in order to get word out that our service was active and available. This has been an ongoing effort, with the service being very well received by both workers and community members alike. Strong partnerships have been forged with numerous local services, including Indigenous health care practice, Mamu, and the Tableland Community Justice Group to name a few. It is a credit to these other services that they recognise and refer vulnerable clients in need of support to our specialist domestic violence service.

As our service is co-located within the RCC, we are accessible to the majority of the local residents, but also offer more remote outreach to Mt Garnet and Millaa Millaa. All of the Tablelands South locations provide adult counselling, crisis support, assistance with Domestic Violence Protection Orders and information and referral to other services if needed. Our client base is steadily growing, meaning those in need of support are reaching out and accessing a service long overdue in this part of the Tablelands.

The Tablelands South service has also been involved with local community projects in the last few months. During Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month in May, the message 'Ravenshoe Says NO to Domestic Violence' was actively promoted. A Recognise and Respond Community Forum was held at the Town Hall, an information stall in the Main Street was set up and a community survey was conducted by RCC to gather information on community views around Domestic and Family Violence. Information gathered from the survey will be analysed and used to develop further community awareness. Sandi, our Programs Manager, was an integral part in the creation of these events.

As the Ravenshoe service continues its engagement with community and other service organisations, the positive outcomes will only continue to grow and prosper. In the short time this service has been operating, it has been immensely satisfying to be able to provide assistance and support to survivors and their families experiencing Domestic and Family Violence.

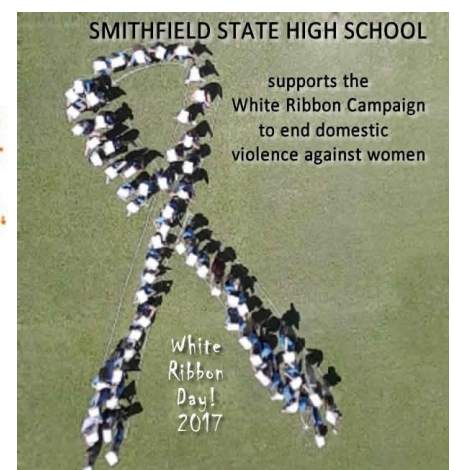
If you would like further information on the Tablelands South service, please contact 1300 909 250.

Nadia, DV Worker, CRDVS Tablelands South

What's On?

25 November commemorates the **International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women** and marks the beginning of the global campaign '16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence'. This annual campaign raises awareness about the prevalence and impacts of gender-based violence, and pushes for effective actions to end all forms of violence against women and girls around the world.

White Ribbon Day also falls on the 25th November. The purpose of the White Ribbon Campaign is to engage men to make women's safety a man's issue too.



Victim Assist

Victims of domestic violence can experience considerable financial stress through loss of income due to injuries and medical costs. Counselling may be inaccessible due to financial constraints. Victims Assist is a service that can alleviate some of the pressures through financial support for specific costs, as well as supporting victims through court processes i.e. assisting with victim impact statements and attending court with victims.

Who Is Victim Assist?

Victim Assist is a unit of Queensland's Department of Justice and Attorney-General who:

- assist victims to connect with services to support them through their justice journey and their recovery
- provide a range of financial assistance to victims of an act of violence that happens in Queensland
- assist government and non-government agencies and officers to comply with the Charter of Victims' Rights www.qld.gov.au/law/crime-and-police/victims-and-witnesses-of-crime/agency-training-funding-and-research/rights-of-victims
- lead and coordinate the victim services sector within Queensland.

Help for victims of violent crime

Help is available for primary victims of an act of violence. An act of violence is a violent crime that is perpetrated by one person against another. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- attempted murder
- all forms of physical assault
- sexual offences
- child abuse
- **all forms of domestic and family violence**
- elder abuse
- burglary with violence and robbery
- stalking, kidnapping and deprivation of liberty.

Help for others impacted by violent crime

Help and financial assistance is also available for:

- parent secondary victims - parents of children and young people who have been victims of a violent crime
- witnesses - people who see or hear a violent crime taking place

- related victims - close family members or dependants of a person who has died as a result of an act of violence such as a homicide or dangerous driving causing death.

As leaders of the victim service sector in Queensland, Victim Assist is also able to help existing, new and emerging government and non-government victim services, to:

- understand the Charter and how victims' rights are applied
- design, develop or review strategies to support and respond to the needs of victims
- provide information and training to develop awareness of victims' needs and rights and services available to support them.

Types of help available

Victim Assist's Information and Referral Service can answer questions. They can also help victims:

- complete the financial assistance application form
- connect you with a free victim support service
- understand how to write a Victim Impact Statement for the court
- arrange a referral to a court support worker.

Financial assistance

For eligible primary victims, parent secondary victims, witnesses and related victims, help may also include financial assistance. This may include help with:

- expenses incurred for medical or counselling treatment required because of the act of violence
- travel expenses to attend medical or counselling appointments
- security upgrades to your home to help you feel safe, or relocation costs if it is not safe for you to stay where you are
- income lost because you have been unable to work due to injuries suffered as a result of the act of violence
- up to \$500 for legal expenses incurred in applying for financial assistance
- funeral expenses.

Primary victims, hurt in an act of violence, may also be eligible for a recognition payment called *special assistance*.

Related victims, close family members, or dependants of a person that has died as a result of an act of violence may be eligible for a recognition payment called *distress* as well as a dependency payment.

More information about financial assistance, including the application form and medical certificate, is available online - www.qld.gov.au/victims.

Contact Victim Assist Phone - [1300 546 587](tel:1300546587) (business hours).

The 'Good Guy' mask

The desire for power and control is fundamental to domestic violence and perpetrators use many different types of behaviours, not only physical violence, to intimidate and undermine the capacity of their partners. Perpetrators are often very careful about choosing when and where to use abuse so their behaviours remain hidden 'behind closed doors'.

Domestic violence can occur in all types of intimate personal relationships, but by far the most common type is men's violence towards current or former female partners.

However in public, perpetrators can typically present as charming, likeable and caring people so you wouldn't suspect that they'd be anything but kind and reasonable to their loved ones too. Consequently, it is not uncommon for victims/survivors to feel isolated and hesitant to speak out; "Everyone thinks he is such a nice guy, who will believe me?"

Children also see the private and public sides of perpetrator behaviour as expressed below in this painting by a child witness of domestic violence.



Perpetrators' abilities to deceive and manipulate other people's perceptions is one of the many reasons why relationship or couples counselling is not recommended where domestic violence exists. Others reasons include:

- Unequal power dynamics in the relationship
- Safety concerns due to risk of retaliation if victim discloses the abuse
- The victim is NOT responsible for the abuse
- Only the perpetrator has the ability to stop the violence

Lengthy individually targeted behaviour change programs are indicated for perpetrators of domestic violence to change their attitudes of wanting power and control and their core beliefs of entitlement.

So whilst popular culture and commentary often stereotype perpetrators as 'monsters', they are commonly the ordinary 'good guy' next door - your friend, your co-worker, your relative.

Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service

Services We Provide:

Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service provides free and confidential services for family members experiencing domestic violence.

There are many issues that you can discuss with our staff, such as:

- Information about your rights and the rights of your children;
- Steps that may help you to protect yourself from further domestic violence;
- Information and assistance in making an application for a Domestic Violence Protection Order;
- Court support;
- Counselling for you or your children to overcome the effects of domestic violence.

Our staff can also refer you to other support services for financial assistance, crisis accommodation, relationship counselling, legal advice on matters such as family law, parenting education and many other issues.

Professional interpreters can be requested.



Two members of our team are Child Counsellors, who can provide face to face counselling for children and young people aged 4 to 17 years who are affected by domestic violence.

We can also provide information about programs for perpetrators of domestic violence.

Our service regularly conducts and participates in workshops, seminars, conferences, lectures and training sessions in Cairns and surrounding areas. If you are not sure that we can help with your needs, then please telephone us on (07) 4033 6100 and ask.

Opening hours

Phone - Monday to Friday 9am-5pm

Face to face - Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 9am-5pm & Wed 12pm-5pm

In a crisis no appointment is necessary.

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TABLELANDS

15 Beatrice St. Atherton

TABLELANDS SOUTH

5, Bolton St. Ravenshoe

PHONE 1300 909 250

Useful Contacts

Telephone Contact Numbers

**If you're in immediate danger
call the POLICE**

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If you want to access safe accommodation (refuge for women and children who are in danger), or you need help and support dealing with a violent relationship you can call **dvconnect** womensline, the Qld 24hr domestic and family violence telephone service on:

1800 811 811

Dvconnect Mensline

1800 600 636

Stopping Family Violence

A service for men who are looking for tools to help them behave in non-aggressive ways 1300 364 277

Policelink (general enquiries)

131 444

Lifeline Telephone Counselling

13 11 14

www.dvcairns.org

Would you like to subscribe to receive forthcoming issues of the CRDVS newsletter, or be removed from our emailing list?

Have you an interesting article about domestic or family violence you'd like to contribute to the next issue of this newsletter?

Please let us know by contacting Gill
Ph: (07) 4033 6100

Email: commed@dvcairns.org

Websites

www.communities.qld.gov.au/communityservices

www.dvrcv.org.au

www.noviolence.com.au

www.burstingthebubble.com

www.dvconnect.org

www.1800respect.org.au

www.anrows.org.au

www.smartsafe.org.au

www.respectme.org.au

www.ourwatch.org.au

www.ntv.org.au

www.whiteribbon.org.au

www.thehideout.org.uk

www.areyouok.org.nz

Look out for the
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