



# Driving change to support Queensland Government employees affected by domestic and family violence

# Foreword



**Annastacia Palaszczuk MP**  
Premier and Minister for the Arts

*Our workplaces play a big role in eliminating domestic and family violence.*



**Shannon Fentiman MP**

Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

Domestic and family violence has no place in our homes, communities or workplaces.

Earlier this year, the Queensland Government released the *Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2026* to drive change across the Queensland community.

We recognise domestic and family violence is a workplace issue. It can affect the safety, wellbeing, productivity and performance of all employees—victims, carers and colleagues.

Everyone has the right to feel safe and supported in the workplace.

As Queensland's largest employer, we know we can make a significant difference to how domestic and family violence is addressed within the workplace, and in turn influence social change within the broader community.

We are proud of the work we are doing within the Queensland Government to deliver a comprehensive response to prevent domestic and family violence, support affected employees, and promote a safe, respectful workplace culture.

Through positive action in our workplaces, we can help reduce the prevalence of domestic and family violence.

As part of our response to the *Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland* taskforce report, we developed a workplace package to strengthen support for affected employees, and all government departments have a workforce support policy in place.

This document highlights the progress we have made since the release of the workplace package.

We also led the recent national conversation on organisational best practice and innovation at the Council of Australian Governments' National Summit on Reducing Violence Against Women and their Children.

We are serious about fostering more respectful, collaborative workplaces and we will continue to champion real cultural change.

The Queensland Government is leading by example.

We are working with business, government and non-government organisations to encourage Queensland workplaces to better support affected employees.

Driving meaningful change requires more than a determination to act—it is about inspiring others to stand with us. That is why together, Queensland workplaces are saying *Not Now, Not Ever*.

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*Domestic violence is an important issue for the workplace...If a significant shift in attitudes is to occur in the community, each and every workplace must take this insidious issue seriously and take action.*

**Not Now, Not Ever** taskforce report on domestic and family violence  
2015

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# Domestic and family violence is a workplace issue



**1 in 6**

Australian **women** has experienced **physical abuse** from a current or former partner<sup>6</sup>



**Two-thirds**

of Australian **women** experiencing domestic and family violence are **employed**<sup>2</sup>



**Costs**

employers across Australia at least **\$175 million** annually<sup>4</sup>



**1 in 4**

Australian **women** has experienced **emotional abuse** in an intimate relationship<sup>6</sup>



**1 in 19**

Australian **men** has experienced **physical abuse** at the hands of a current or former partner<sup>6</sup>



**1 in 5**

Australian **women** say the violence **continues at work**<sup>1</sup>



**1 in 7**

Australian **men** has experienced **emotional abuse** in an intimate relationship<sup>6</sup>



**9 in 10**

**incidents** are **not reported**<sup>7</sup>



**Costs**

the Queensland economy between **\$2.7 billion** and **\$3.2 billion** annually<sup>5</sup>



between **25–50%**

of Australian **women** subjected to domestic and family violence report having **lost a job**, at least in part due to the violence<sup>3</sup>

# Our workplace response

The Queensland Government is delivering a comprehensive workplace response to prevent domestic and family violence, support affected employees, and promote a safe, respectful workplace culture.



## Measuring our progress

- Increased number of White Ribbon Australia workplace accredited government agencies
- Increased manager and employee confidence in responding appropriately to domestic and family violence
- Increased manager and employee awareness of domestic and family violence workforce support policy
- Increased support provided by employee assistance providers to employees and managers

# How we are making a difference

Delivering on the *Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2026* and *First Action Plan 2015–2016*<sup>1</sup>:

- released inclusion and diversity and gender equity strategies
- released *Constructive Workplace Cultures* framework
- implemented a domestic and family violence workplace package
- all departments have implemented a workforce support policy
- all departmental leadership teams have signed a pledge committing to ending domestic and family violence
- all departments have access to online training
- all departmental managers have access to support and referral resources
- included domestic and family violence workplace related questions in the sectorwide *Working for Queensland* survey:
  - 76% of managers and 67% of employees are confident they can respond appropriately
  - 79% of managers and 63% of employees are aware of policy
- increased support provided by employee assistance providers to employees and managers
- released *Queensland workplace guide*
- increased workplace partnerships.



**28,000+**

visits to the  
Queensland Government  
domestic and family  
violence website since  
25 November 2015



**more than 50%**  
of departments  
participating in the  
**White Ribbon Australia**  
Workplace Accreditation program

## What you can do as a workplace

Demonstrate visible leadership by implementing a workplace program that includes:

- model policy template
- leadership pledge
- support and referral resources (including online domestic and family violence training) for HR practitioners, managers and employees
- communication toolkit
- workplace partner opportunities

More information: [qld.gov.au/gov/domestic-and-family-violence](http://qld.gov.au/gov/domestic-and-family-violence)

<sup>1</sup> Public Service Commission-related *Not Now, Not Ever* taskforce report recommendations 31, 37, 38, 39, 45, 46, 47 and 48.

# How we are driving real change



## Providing comprehensive support for all affected employees

*'My employer changed my email, phone and internet profiles, gave me time off for appointments, gave me support from security, and arranged for me to work from another location with adjusted start and finish times. I felt supported by my manager and my situation was handled privately.'*

**Queensland Government employee**

## Transforming our workplace culture

*'It troubles me that so many of our people may be affected. We are working with partners to deliver positive cultural change. We all have the right to work in respectful and safe workplaces that foster understanding and support for all employees.'*

**Robert Setter,  
Commission Chief Executive  
(Acting), Public Service  
Commission**



## Inspiring other leaders to drive change

*'As Queensland Male Champions of Change and Inclusion Champions of Change, we are driving real cultural change in government, business and non-government sectors, focusing on flexible work arrangements, unconscious bias, gender equity, workforce participation, and domestic and family violence.'*

*Directors-General have pledged with leadership teams to eliminate violence in our community.'*

**Dave Stewart, Director-General,  
Department of the Premier and  
Cabinet**

## Supporting everyone to 'recognise respond and refer'

*'As a part of our coordinated approach, staff are developing their skills and knowledge to support affected colleagues. The Recognise Respond Refer eLearning program, jointly developed by the Queensland Government and Australia's CEO Challenge, provides foundational skills, and outlines resources available for managers and staff within the organisation or through outside providers. Staff seem more confident to support colleagues or seek assistance. We're seeing increased early use of our employee assistance provider and other supportive strategies. This reduces risks to all staff and is getting more positive outcomes for everyone.'*

**Diana Seekers, Manager, Organisational  
Development, Department of Communities,  
Child Safety and Disability Services**



### **Influencing wider community attitudes through staff engagement**

*‘Through our workplace partnership with Mary and Martha’s women’s refuge, I’m more aware of what domestic and family violence is and how it affects people from all backgrounds. I feel we’re making a difference directly—for example, through raising funds for essential goods to help women and kids at the refuge.’*

**Bernadette Hogan, Manager, Office of the Executive Director, North Region (Cairns), Department of Natural Resources and Mines**



### **Acknowledging real costs in not supporting our employees**

*‘Domestic and family violence impacts our economy and workplaces. It has long-term personal impacts on employees’ financial independence. Workplaces can support employees to be financially secure by maintaining employment. Paid leave provides a temporary safety net option. If people aren’t supported, direct productivity losses will cost employers through absenteeism, stress, performance issues, hiring and retraining costs, and permanent loss of labour capacity.’*

**Simon Blackwood, Deputy-Director General, Office of Industrial Relations, Queensland Treasury**

### **Adapting systems to ensure confidentiality**

*‘We have revised human resource delegations, and worked with our payroll team, to ensure employee applications for support can be approved as quickly as possible while ensuring employee confidentiality is protected.’*

**Libby Gregoric, Acting Deputy Director-General, Corporate Services, Queensland Health**

### **Measuring cultural change with external workplace partners**

*‘As a supporter of White Ribbon, I’m proud that we’re the first Queensland Government agency to become a White Ribbon Accredited Workplace. Being accredited gives us confidence that we have good policies, processes, training and communications in place. It’s a powerful way to show we’re committed to supporting our own workforce, but also driving change on a very serious social issue, particularly for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.’*

**Ron Weatherall, Deputy Director-General, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships**

## **Where to from here?**

- Support Queensland Government departments to lead by example by supporting affected employees, including victims, bystanders and perpetrators.
- Promote domestic and family violence workplace package to business and non-government organisations.
- Deliver on the *Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2026* and future action plans.
- Drive national collaboration and strengthen workplace partnerships (including White Ribbon Australia workplace accredited departments) and capability on domestic and family violence workplace issues.

# Workplace partners

The Queensland Government is working with business, government and non-government organisations to promote comprehensive workplace responses to domestic and family violence prevention, workforce support and culture change.

*'Workplace partnerships support delivery of targeted and effective policies and programs—these are making a real difference to employees' lives.'*

**Dianne Jeans, Chair,  
Australia's CEO Challenge**  
ceochallengeaustralia.org



**AUSTRALIA'S  
CHALLENGE CEO**  
workplace partners against domestic violence

*'Workplaces play a critical role in domestic and family violence prevention—better support will reduce the number of people coming to our support services at crisis point.'*

**Dianne Mangan, CEO, DV Connect**  
dvconnect.org



**Davidson Trahaire Corpsych**

*'As employee assistance providers, we're supporting affected staff, plus their families and managers, through 24/7 confidential counselling and advice. Service usage has increased with more awareness of domestic and family violence issues.'*

**Karen Matthews and Cathy Donovan,  
Account Managers,  
DTC and Optum**



**White Ribbon**  
Australia's campaign to  
stop violence against women

*'More Queensland agencies are becoming White Ribbon accredited workplaces—this is the catalyst for real change to address gender inequality and build a culture of respect at work and home.'*

**Libby Davies, CEO, White  
Ribbon Australia**  
whiteribbon.org.au

## References

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  - Queensland Government, 2015, Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2026
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## More information

**W:** [qld.gov.au/gov/domestic-and-family-violence](http://qld.gov.au/gov/domestic-and-family-violence)

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