

**Evaluation of an Embedded Specialist Domestic
Violence Worker: A Partnership Between
Queensland Police Service and Domestic Violence
Action Centre**



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QUT Centre for Justice is a think tank for social justice that aims to empower and enable citizens, consumers and communities through solutions-oriented research. Our vision is to democratise justice by improving opportunities for health and well-being and enhancing the inclusiveness of work and education while widening access to justice.

We acknowledge the Turrbal and Yugara, as the First Nations owners of the lands where QUT now stands. We pay respect to their Elders, lores, customs and creation spirits. We recognise that these lands have always been places of teaching, research and learning. We acknowledge the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people play within the QUT community.

Executive Summary

Responding to domestic and family violence (DFV) requires multi-agency integrated response and police acknowledge it is not something they can address alone (Mundy and Seuffert 2021; Reuland et al. 2006), yet it is task taking a considerable portion of police time. National and international evidence shows integrating specialist DFV workers into police stations to support victims and provide connection to services while working alongside police can improve the quality of police response, and potentially save lives.

The purpose of this collaborative project between Domestic Violence Action Centre (DVAC), Queensland Police Service (QPS) and Centre for Justice, Queensland University of Technology (QUT) was to conduct an evaluation of an innovative pilot to improve the policing of DFV, through the co-location of a Domestic Violence Specialist (DVS) worker at Queensland Police station, Toowoomba. This report will assess how this co-location model between DVAC and the QPS host station meets DVAC co-location objectives, and recommendations 76 and 78 from the *Not Now, Not Ever* report (Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland 2015: 226, 233). The Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce (2021: 585) recommendations also noted the importance of evaluating new responses to DFV, such as these.

Overview of co-location position at Toowoomba Police Station

The DVAC QPS co-location project was initially a short-term pilot beginning 18 January 2021 with a planned end date of 30 September 2021, now extended until the end of June 2022. From January to September 2021, the DVS worker was located at the station two days a week, now four days a week. The worker supports clients seeking police assistance with DFV matters, providing them with information about processes and options, support referral and connection, safety planning and upgrades, and emotional support including when making police statements. She also supports with police with DFV clients across the above listed aspects. Police had a choice whether to approach the worker for assistance with a DFV case; engagement was not a management directive.

The co-location at the station has been fully funded by DVAC, specifically from non-ongoing COVID-19 Enhancement Funds from the then Department of Child Safety Youth and Women, now Department of Justice and Attorney General (DJAG). These COVID-19 Enhancement Funds were from the Federal government, but distributed through the State government.

The role also involves participation in a pre-existing High Risk Panel that meets monthly and has participants from police and corrections. Prior to the placement of the embedded worker, the panel had another DVAC worker as DVAC's representative. Services nominate individuals (the persons using violence) who meet high risk eligibility criteria and information is shared between the three services under DFV Information Sharing Guidelines (Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services 2017). The Panel then conducts safety planning for the partner or ex-partner. This Panel is different to DJAG-funded High Risk Teams throughout Queensland.

Aims

The aim of the DVS worker is to:

1. Be a link or connection point for client referrals between DVAC and QPS in both directions (DVAC to QPS and QPS to DVAC).
2. Provide assistance to clients presenting at Toowoomba police station reception counter for DFV matters as needed and as capacity allows. This would include assistance for client's general questions around DFV and supporting women to begin their statements relating to DFV/sexual violence.
3. Provide specific case consultation with QPS officers where needed and where there is capacity. This would include advice when officers are attending DFV matters, follow-up support for women specifically following call outs, education and support to officers around working with women in traumatic circumstances.
4. Undertake risk management for high risk cases and an integrated approach in relation to this including consultation with QPS, courts, corrections and other relevant services.

Objectives

DVAC has identified the following objectives for the role:

1. To improve the experience of engagement with QPS for women and individuals who experience domestic violence.
2. To strengthen the integrated response between the host station and DVAC workers when responding to incidents of domestic and family violence by:
 - i) Providing real time advice to QPS officers when engaging with aggrieved persons on call outs;
 - ii) Increasing QPS officers' understanding of referral pathways and referral options for aggrieved persons.

This report assesses how the co-location meets these aims and objectives. In addition, this report will also assess how this co-located model meets recommendations 76 and 78 from the *Not Now, Not Ever* report (Special Taskforce 2015). These recommendations are:

Recommendation 76: The Taskforce recommends that the Queensland Government establishes a model for inter-agency response to high risk cases which works within, or complements integrated responses and which is progressively established throughout the state (Special Taskforce 2015: 226).

Recommendation 78: The Taskforce recommends that the Queensland Government introduces enabling legislation to allow information sharing between agencies (government and non-government) within integrated responses, with appropriate safeguards. This would include legislative protection for the sharing of information without consent, if a risk assessment indicates it is for the purpose of protecting the safety of the victim and their immediate family (Special Taskforce 2015: 233).

Methodology

The evaluation used data provided by DVAC including task notes and reflections recorded by the DVS worker, and surveys of clients ($n=18$) and police ($n=19$) after their use of the specialist worker's services ($n=19$). The evaluation team conducted interviews of police located at the station ($n=6$) and interviews of DVAC workers ($n=4$). The research was approved by QUT University Research Human Ethics Committee and the QPS Research Committee. Participants were deidentified throughout the collection, analysis and reporting of results.

Limitations

Key methodological limitations are sample sizes, but triangulation of data across multiple sources enhances reliability. The study design and scope feature a few limitations. The evaluation did not include the opinions of other service providers in the area. This reflects the limited capacity of NGOs to participate in research. Case studies of clients would have identified client level outcomes, but this requires high level ethics clearance. If there were more embedded workers employed in these specialist roles at QPS then a future evaluation may be able to obtain systemic data of this sort. Instrument design meant the Indigenous status of clients, a group which has higher rates of DFV and lower engagement with police, was not collected. Future data collection could be better

designed to capture Indigenous status along with including survey and interview questions of police and workers to determine any improvement in engagement with Indigenous clients.

Findings

In addition to meeting these aims and objectives (Table 1), the co-location introduced benefits from the client, DVAC and police perspective. These included emotional support, information sharing, communication, efficiency, education, access to networks, and improved police legitimacy. Police were incredibly supportive of the position and stated it would be ‘a step backwards’ if discontinued. This approach works toward a key aim from the QPS *Domestic & Family Violence Strategy 2021-2023*: building a victim-centric, trauma informed capability to respond to DFV.

Table 1 Summary of evaluation findings

Aim	Finding
1. Connection point for client referrals between DVAC and QPS in both directions.	Met
2. Assistance to clients presenting at Toowoomba police station for DFV matters.	Met
3. Case consultation with QPS officers.	Met
4. Risk management for high risk cases and an integrated approach in relation to this.	Met
Objective	
1. To improve the experience of engagement with QPS for women and individuals who experience domestic violence	Achieved
2. To strengthen the integrated response between the host station and DVAC workers when responding to incidents of domestic and family violence by:	Achieved
2.1 Providing real time advice to QPS officers when engaging with aggrieved persons on call outs.	Achieved within the limitations of the role
2.2 Increasing QPS officers’ understanding of referral pathways and referral options for aggrieved persons.	Achieved
3. Recommendation 76 from <i>Not Now, Not Ever</i> report: Integrated response to DFV.	Achieved within the limitations of the role
4. Recommendation 78 from <i>Not Now, Not Ever</i> report: Information sharing.	Achieved

Real time case consults allowed instant information exchange and swift service connection translating to support for the victim, but also for police officers. These in-context conversations with general duties officers on a day-to-day basis have the potential to influence police practice more than abstract workshops or online trainings. Police also learnt about the importance of emotional support and referral options. Data shows how they then applied knowledge of referral options, with referrals to DVAC from police on track to increase by 47% from 2020/2021 rates. These changes in police practice potentially translate to further improved experiences for victims, and improve police legitimacy. Changes in police practice combined with knowledge of the worker's presence at the station can translate to increased reporting, and is evident in increased reporting of breaches, amounting to less chance of cases escalating thus preventing further harm. Benefits to DVAC and the police translate to benefits to the client, client safety and harm reduction.

Challenges included lack of engagement with the DVS worker by police at the start of the placement, showing the important of proper introduction, which the worker swiftly identified and addressed by running introduction presentations. Close relationships with one or two key officers aided here, and these officers' positive view and visible use of the worker meant others then made use of her assistance. For the DVS worker, supervision from someone with experience in working with police was also important for appropriate support. Police told us in the interviews that they initially had concerns about police station cultural norms, such as dark humour and swearing, but this turned out to be little issue.

The worker's role in the High Risk Panel and existing role in court support two days a week supplemented the integrative opportunities of the embedded placement, strengthening connection and communication with police, clients and other stakeholders. There is scope for closer examination of this Panel's outcomes.

Overall QPS officers interviewed were impressed with the general benefits of having a well-integrated complementary response to law enforcement to support victims/survivors. By working together, they have a better chance to break the cycle of violence than working alone and the victims/survivors of DFV receive a better quality service that is more comforting and empathetic.

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Acronyms

AIC	Australian Institute of Criminology
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
CS	Client Survey
DDM	<i>Delegacia da Mulher</i> (Police stations for women)
DFV	Domestic and Family Violence
DFVPA	<i>Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 (Qld)</i>
DFV&VPU	Domestic, Family Violence & Vulnerable Persons Units
DF-PAF	Domestic Violence Protective Assessment Framework
DJAG	Department of Justice and Attorney General
DVAC	Domestic Violence Action Centre
DVS	Domestic Violence Specialist
HRT	High Risk Teams
MDC	Multidisciplinary Centres
MPF	Mobile Police Facility
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSW	New South Wales
OIC	Officer In Charge
OPM	Operational Procedures Manual
PBA	Province of Buenos Aires
PI	Police Interviewee
PS	Police Survey
Qld	Queensland
QPS	Queensland Police Service
WA	Western Australia
WJC	Women's Justice Centre

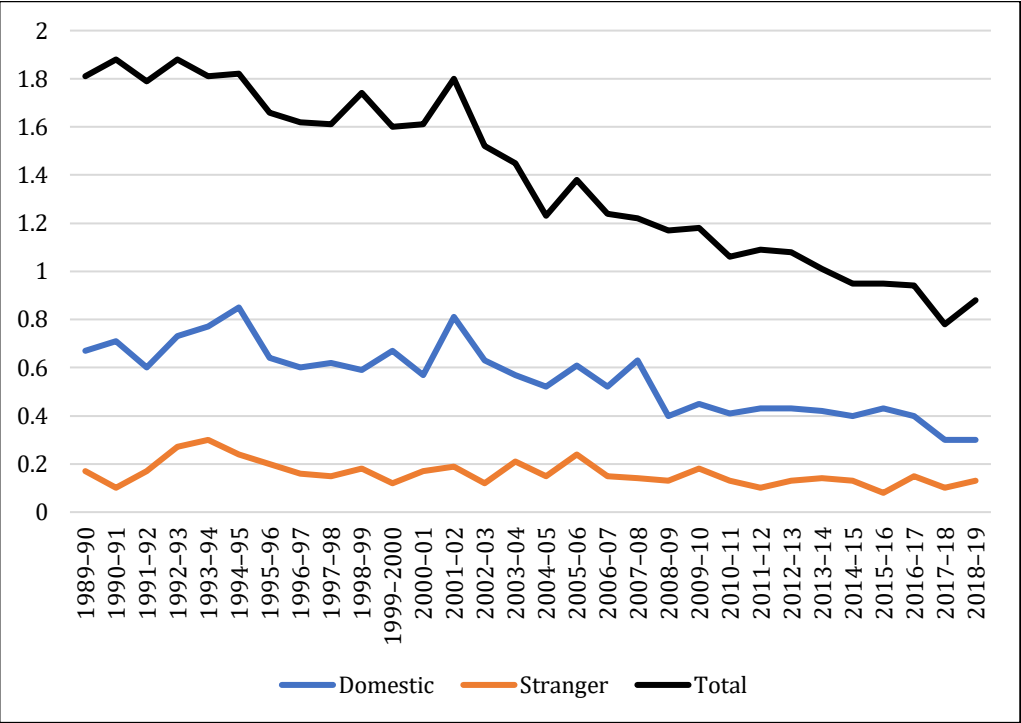
Terminology

Throughout this report, terminology for referring to people who have experienced DFV regularly varies. DVAC workers may use the term 'client', police may use the term 'aggrieved person'/'aggrieved'. 'Aggrieved' is used in legislation and police procedures, thus common among police. We use the term 'victim' or 'victim/survivor'. As such, all these terms are used at different times throughout the report. 'Respondent' is sometimes used in this report for people who have caused harm using DFV, 'offender' and 'perpetrator' is also used.

Background and Context

In Australia today, domestic violence is a ‘national emergency’, an on-going crisis with no remedy in sight (Nancarrow 2019). Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) confirms a steep increase in female victims of domestic violence over the last five years. Domestic homicides of women (a proxy measure for femicide) account for a third of all homicides in Australia (Bricknell 2020: 3), and although total homicide rates have been declining for three decades, rates of *domestic homicide* only began to decline in 2009 (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Homicide rate per 100,000 people by type, Australia, 1989-90 to 2018-19



Note: 2018-19 excludes Australian Capital Territory.

Source: (Australian Institute of Criminology 2019)

Data from QPS shows that between 1 July 2020-31 March 2021, officers responded to 113,779 DFV occurrences, 6% higher than the 107,000 cases reported across the 2020 calendar year (Eaton 2021). Toowoomba police station is among one of the top 11 regions to initiate Domestic Violence Orders (DVO) applications in the state (Table 2). Despite a slight decline in orders across Queensland (Table 2), there was also an increase in breaches of DVOs with a 16.7% increase from 2019 (n=30,705) to 2020 (n=35,838) (Cartwright 2021). The pattern of breach increase can also be seen

across five years, with an 85% increase between 2015 ($n=19,299$) and 2020 ($n=35,838$) (Cartwright 2021). Court data also shows an increase in charges regarding order contraventions (breaches) (Table 3; Queensland Courts 2021).

Table 2 DVO applications Queensland Magistrate Courts, 2016-2021

Application Year	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Total	32,097	30,403	30,303	28,313	28,797
Initiating Station					
Southport	3,349	2,945	2,967	2,603	2,577
Brisbane	1,938	1,865	1,949	1,825	1,897
Ipswich	1,977	1,734	1,674	1,641	1,535
Townsville	1,779	1,833	1,685	1,558	1,497
Cairns	1,319	1,243	1,220	1,121	1,249
Caboolture	1,141	1,037	1,080	998	984
Maroochydore	1,060	1,041	1,014	1,014	930
Rockhampton	1,000	954	960	814	933
Pine Rivers	857	864	1,010	918	928
Toowoomba	903	869	772	741	711
Beenleigh	2,510	2,385	2,567	2,367	2,708

Source: Queensland Courts 2021

Note: This table does not list all initiating stations, so the total numbers exceeds combined total of the listed columns.

Table 3 Contraventions of DVO charges lodged (Magistrates Courts with the most lodgements)

Lodgement year	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
State Total	20,741	19,996	21,095	24,142	30,538
Court Location					
Townsville	3,074	2,304	2,153	2,395	4,032
Beenleigh	1,369	1,312	1,432	1,829	2,912
Southport	1,843	1,584	1,576	1,687	1,983
Brisbane	1,276	1,357	1,456	1,765	2,211
Ipswich	1,177	1,114	1,441	1,388	1,355
Cairns	1,114	956	1,037	1,265	1,446
Rockhampton	833	907	918	1,408	1,337
Maroochydore	474	704	665	726	1,465

Caboolture	685	674	683	904	880
Toowoomba	578	668	621	596	735
Mackay	526	497	496	695	1,011
Redcliffe	522	540	483	578	722
Mount Isa	495	438	485	526	710
Gladstone	379	588	445	549	587
Bundaberg	373	409	519	494	576
Cleveland	367	329	776	420	430
Pine Rivers	370	356	473	494	627
Richlands	363	371	323	447	749
Hervey Bay	274	310	287	293	371
Gympie	394	317	219	219	254

Source: Queensland Courts 2021

Victims/survivors of DFV remain deeply reluctant to report to police, with only 2 out of 10 (18%) women reporting to police (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2019: 19). For Indigenous women the proportion is much lower, with only 1 in 10 reporting domestic violence to the police (AIHW 2019: 19). This lack of reporting is not surprising. In Queensland, there is extensive evidence of inadequate policing responses to domestic family violence including: ambivalence and lack of empathy toward the victims/survivors of DFV (Douglas and Fitzgerald 2018; Douglas 2019); failure to provide women with adequate information (Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland 2015: 230); victim blaming (Douglas 2019); reluctance to believe or take complaints seriously (Douglas 2018, 2019; Special Taskforce: 251) ‘siding with the perpetrator’; and regarding victim’s complaints as ‘too trivial and a waste of police resources’ (Special Taskforce 2015: 251). There have been fatal failures by Queensland Police Service (ABC News 2021; Gleeson 2020b; Pierce 2022; Riga 2021), including systemic misidentification of victims as perpetrators, many of them Indigenous women (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board 2017; Douglas and Fitzgerald 2018; Nancarrow 2019). Almost half (12 out of 27) of the deaths of female victims across the 2016-2017 period had been misidentified by police as perpetrators (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board 2017). Given the overwhelming reluctance of women to seek help from traditional police, in addition to the dissatisfaction with the help they receive, it is timely to re-imagine policing DFV. Systemic change to policing in Queensland is required to improve police responses to victims/survivors of DFV.

Policing domestic and family violence

Police play a significant part in the frontline response to DFV; police contact is often a victim's first encounter with the criminal justice system, and the larger system of support and services (Special Taskforce 2015: 215). Responding to DFV involves a large proportion of on duty policing time, 40-70% (Garcia 2021; New South Wales (NSW) Committee 2021; The Police Association of Victoria 2015). Attending a single incident averages 2.5-3 hours (Queensland Government Statistician's Office 2021), increasing to 3.5-4 hours including paperwork (The Police Association of Victoria 2015). DFV police procedure and legal reforms have expanded requirements increasing the time spent on each call out resulting in considerable triaging due to chronic understaffing (Queensland Government Statistician's Office 2021; The Police Association of Victoria 2015). Responding to DFV requires police to undertake a joint social work and police role, involving victim support, conflict mediation, and conducting investigation (Maple and Kebbell 2020). Limiting focus on criminal justice outcomes can sideline the autonomy and safety of women (Seuffert and Mundy 2020). However, police work focusses on a criminal justice response, and many do not have the skills or knowledge to provide the support required in addition to their policing requirements and workload.

Indigenous women's experiences are important to consider when discussing the policing of DFV in Australia. They are five times more likely to experience DFV, 32 times more likely to be hospitalised from DFV and twice as likely to be killed as the result of domestic homicide compared to non-Indigenous women (AIHW 2019: 10). In addition, they are less likely to report DFV to police and are more likely to be misidentified as perpetrators by police (Douglas and Fitzgerald, 2018; Nancarrow, 2019). Relations between Indigenous Australians and police are shaped by the early days of settler colonisation where policing played a key role in the control and genocide of Indigenous people (Asquith and Bartkowiak-Théron 2021; Owen 2016). The colonial context has remained a paradigm of policing with the defining features of structural racism remaining, and continued harm and over-policing present (Porter and Cunneen 2021). It is not surprising then, that police are not embraced by Indigenous people and are seen as symbols of white authority and oppression (Dwyer et al. 2021; Whellum, Nettelbeck and Reilly 2020). Indigenous Australians may consider state sponsored order and justice as illegitimate and inappropriate (Dwyer et al. 2021; Gregoire and Porter 2021; Nancarrow 2019), and may not desire to engage with state responses that could further harm. The fact that policing in discrete Indigenous communities in Australia dominantly involves outsiders who do not stay long and are 'not trained nor prepared for policing in these distinct contexts' (Dwyer

et al. 2021: 210)¹ also shapes this context. In addition, most police are not Indigenous (averaging 2%) (Australian Federal Police (AFP) 2020a; Victoria Police 2020; Western Australian (WA) Police Force 2020).

[Policing and responding to domestic and family violence in rural and regional Australia](#)

The site of the co-location model under examination in this evaluation is an area classified as ‘Inner Regional’ by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018).² Policing and the lack of adequate DFV services to rural, regional and remote (RRR) areas in Australia has been identified as a concern in Australia (Carrington and Scott 2008; Hogg and Carrington 2006; Owen and Carrington 2015; Wendt 2016, 2017). In RRR spaces, DFV is more prevalent than in urban areas (Campo and Tayton 2015; DeKeseredy and Rennison 2020). Compared with women living in major cities (15%), a higher proportion of women living outside major cities reported experiencing partner violence (23%) (AIHW 2019). Hospitalisation for domestic violence in remote and very remote Australia is 24 times more likely than for people in major cities (AIHW 2019). These patterns are more likely where access to services is lowest and poverty is highest (Cunneen 2007); namely, RRR spaces. Firearm ownership is also more prevalent meaning DFV in these areas is also more likely to involve a firearm (Mancik et al. 2020).

In many rural areas, access to services is minimal, and women in particular are discouraged from seeking help outside of informal networks (Wendt 2017). This is especially the case for Indigenous women who rely most on their own family networks and avoid reporting to the police for reasons discussed above (Langton et al. 2020). The dense networks of RRR towns act as a disincentive for many women to report DFV for several reasons. First, shame, stigma and embarrassment discourage reporting to outsiders the ‘taboo’ subject of DFV. Second, the sanctity of the privacy of intimate and family relations, alongside old boy networks, produce a cloak of silence while also accentuating RRR women’s social and economic dependency on men (Owen and Carrington 2015). Community relationships can influence requests for assistance (Huey and Ricciardelli 2017), as police may be friends or relatives of offenders and this can accentuate their hesitance to question or charge (Fenwick 2012; Jobes 2003). Here, an additional barrier in reporting to police may be fewer female police in RRR communities (Asquith and Rodgers 2021). Lastly, small town gossip networks act as

¹ Dwyer et al. (2021) state ‘Discrete Indigenous communities are defined as areas “that are bounded geographical locations inhabited predominantly by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with housing or infrastructure owned or managed on a community basis” (p. 221).

² ABS remoteness classification is structured in the following order: Major Cities of Australia, Inner Regional Australia, Outer Regional Australia, Remote Australia, Very Remote Australia.

a form of social control that often deters help seeking behaviour of women experiencing DFV (Owen and Carrington 2015). Women may travel to major cities to access support services to maintain anonymity (Farhall et al. 2020). Distance also impacts the capacity and willingness for victims to seek police assistance, and with no neighbours to hear violence and no quick and easy escape routes, cases may go unnoticed until serious harm or homicide occurs (Asquith and Rodgers 2021). In this context, the lack of trust in the independence of the police is an ongoing issue in regional, rural and remote and locations in Queensland, and indeed Australia, including the site of the subject of this evaluation.

Policing domestic and family violence in Queensland

Legislative context

For the Queensland Police Service, there are a range of laws, policies and practices relevant to the policing of DFV. In Queensland, police have legislated functions prescribed within section 2.3 of the *Police Service Administration Act* (1990). These functions underpin the Queensland Police Service (QPS) objectives of stopping crime, making the community safer and strengthening relationships, and include:

- preservation of peace and good order
- protection of the community and the prevention of crime
- detection of offenders and bringing of offenders to justice.

Policies and procedures for the police investigation of DFV are outlined in the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* (Qld), the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act (DFVPA) 2012* (Qld) and the QPS Operational Procedures Manual (OPM) (2021a), chapter 9. The QPS is also subject to the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld). The *DFVPA* and the *Criminal Code Act 1899* (Qld) contain the substantive offences for which perpetrators of DFV may be prosecuted. The *DFVPA* provides a dual civil and criminal justice framework to respond to DFV and is governed by the principle of identifying the person in most need of protection. The civil standard of proof is on the balance of probabilities.³ The criminal standard of proof is beyond reasonable doubt.

³ This means it is more probable than not that what the person says happened is true (Legal Services Commission of South Australia 2021).

In this context, police are responsible for assessing and evaluating all reported DFV. Paramount to this is the safety, protection and wellbeing of people who fear or experience DFV. Police should aim to minimise the disruptions to victim's lives and prevent or reduce further DFV. Police must also aim to prevent or reduce the exposure of children to DFV and ensure perpetrators are held accountable for their actions (QPS 2021a: 3).

Section 100 of the *DFVPA* (2012) states 'if a Police Officer reasonably suspects that domestic violence has been committed: the police officer must investigate or cause to be investigated the complaint'. The officer may do any of the following:

- apply to a court for a protection order or for a variation of a domestic violence order
- issue a police protection notice
- take the respondent into custody
- apply to a magistrate for a temporary protection order.

After the investigation, a police officer may decide not to take any action but must make a written record of their reasons for not taking any action (QPS 2021a: 9).

Support of Indigenous people experiencing domestic and family violence

Given the high rates of DFV and underreporting for Indigenous women, any QPS strategy aimed at supporting Indigenous people experiencing DFV is important to consider. In this context, responses are often place-based and linked to the broader responses for Indigenous community engagement.

In accordance with section 2.4 of the *Police Service Administration Act* (1990), 'In performance of the functions of the police service, members of the Service are to act in partnership with the community at large to the extent compatible with efficient and proper performance of those functions'. In line with this, the First Nations and Multicultural Affairs Unit (FNMAU) sits in the Communications, Culture and Engagement Division of the Queensland Police Service (QPS 2022b). The FNMAU aims to promote and maintain positive and effective relationships, through engagement with Queensland's diverse communities.

There are QPS Cross Cultural Liaison Officers (CCLOs) who work to improve relations with Indigenous and multicultural communities (QPS 2022a). CCLOs can identify and report potential

problems and difficulties before they escalate. They can also engage with and encourage communities to contact police with issues and concerns.

The aim of the CCLO position is to increase involvement with Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in addressing police-related issues which includes domestic and family violence. This is achieved through:

- coordinating and supporting the operations of Police Liaison Officers
- providing guidance to state police officers around issues impacting Indigenous and CALD communities
- identifying special projects relevant to Indigenous and CALD communities
- improving communication and understanding between police and the respective communities
- identifying issues affecting the relationship between QPS and respective communities
- developing appropriate ways of addressing these issues; and
- contributing to QPS policy.

Work performed by CCLOs remains at the discretion and direction of the respective Assistant Commissioner or District Officer. Often, Indigenous CCLOs cover a wide area in regional postings.

The *QPS Domestic & Family Violence Strategy 2021-2023* aims to promote a victim-centric, trauma informed capability to respond to DFV which includes increasing the understanding of intersectional characteristics and vulnerabilities for diverse groups including Indigenous people (QPS 2021b: 14). In addition, QPS currently has a DFV Advisory Group to ensure the overall QPS strategy and practice remains contemporary and collaborative. The Advisory Group is made up of internal stakeholders and external entities and sector leaders, including representatives from Indigenous communities (QPS 2021d: 13). Functions include advising the Commissioner of Police on strategic domestic and family violence issues and recommending appropriate action, and collaboratively discussing ideas regarding policy and operational experiences with a view of driving possible reforms across the DFV system (QPS 2021d: 13). QPS is also informed by the Queensland Government's DFV Prevention Council. The Council's terms of reference include expert advice and insights on the needs and experiences of those community members who face either a higher risk

of being subjected to this violence or face greater challenges in accessing support services, including Indigenous people (QPS 2021b: 7).

Connections to local Indigenous supports among district Domestic, Family Violence & Vulnerable Persons Units and Domestic and Family Violence Liaison Officers (roles and programs discussed below) are place-based and dependent on local relationships.

Procedural guidance and tools

One key tool police use to meet their obligations when intervening in DFV incidents is the QPS Domestic Violence Protective Assessment Framework (DV-PAF). The DV-PAF is a decision-making framework designed to assist QPS officers in assessing the protective needs of a victim. The tool was introduced in 2013 to assist frontline officers in assessing the needs of the person/s most in need of protection (Bentley 2021: 23). The DV-PAF uses a Structured Professional Judgement approach to risk assessment. This means police are provided guidance on the type of risk that may be present whilst allowing officers to use their own professional judgement and discretion in determining an appropriate course of action. Section 9.4.2 of the OPM (2021a: 7) stipulates officers are required to conduct a DV-PAF at all incidents or reports of domestic violence. They must utilise information gathered on risk factors in conjunction with their investigative skills, knowledge, and experience to make an informed investigative decision.

In 2019, the DV-PAF was evaluated. Positively, the evaluation found:

- the DV-PAF was not onerous
- police officers showed a good understanding of risk items
- the DV-PAF may improve the quality of investigations of DFV by potentially encouraging police officers to think about and investigate factors listed on the DV-PAF.

However, the evaluation found the DV-PAF did not accurately predict recidivism (QPS 2021d: 8). QPS (2021d) has initiated a DFV predictive modelling working group to explore options for a more holistic actuarial process for identifying and responding to harm caused by DFV and child abuse. Their aim is to: 'solidify the Child Protection Offender Registry crime harm index into a single collaborative DFV and child abuse actuarial tool, with the aim of developing an operational and practical automated risk assessment based on machine learning methodologies' (QPS 2021d: 8).

Organisational responses

In March 2021, the Domestic, Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Command was established in the QPS. The Command builds on the long-standing State Domestic, Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Unit established in 2015. The Command provides specialist advice, enhanced operational support and governance at a state and national level. This aims to enhance frontline policing strategies to issues impacting vulnerable people and formulate referral pathways for vulnerable people encountering police at times of crisis or intervention (QPS 2021c).

QPS has also established eight District Domestic, Family Violence & Vulnerable Persons Units (District DFV&VPU) located in South Brisbane, North Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast, Logan, Maryborough, Townsville, and Cairns. These units operate business hours and actively engage with victims and perpetrators of DFV at a police district level using case management strategies to ensure appropriate responses, referrals and strategies are in place to disrupt harmful behaviour. Cases either flagged as high risk or achieving a high risk score on the DF-PAF come to the attention of the unit via the QPS data entry system where officers enter all jobs and actions. Members of these units also monitor all DFV incidents in their district to ensure appropriate strategies. General duties officers may contact the District DFV&VPU for them to follow up on a referral or case they have dealt with.

The District DFV&VPUs located in the South Brisbane, North Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Logan Districts have embedded DFV support workers, who are mostly limited to business hours, working alongside police. In addition, six police officers work from a central hub to provide specialist on-call domestic and family violence advice to frontline police responding to incidents (Smee 2021). These are District Domestic and Family Violence Coordinators (DFVCs) within the Brisbane Police Communications Centre. On-call advice includes proactive and reactive support to frontline officers via email, telephone, and police information systems, and general support when dealing with complex DFV issues frontline officers face on a daily basis. Officers in this centre might also flag cases for the attention of District DFV&VPUs.

There are also District DFVCs are located within each of the 15 QPS Districts. DFVCs are responsible for developing and coordinating locally based policing strategies and responses to DFV within their districts, in collaboration with officers in the district. In 2018, the QPS number of DFVCs went from

30 to 54 (Ryan and Farmer 2018). The Officer in Charge (OIC) of a police station is the Domestic and Family Violence Liaison Officer for the station. The OIC may delegate (and usually does) the responsibility of Domestic and Family Violence Liaison Officer to another officer within the station (QPS 2021a: 53). As of April 2021, there are 60 officers employed as these specialist DFV coordinators or officers throughout Queensland (Smee 2021).

High-Risk Teams have been established in Queensland in response to recommendation 76 from the *Not Now, Not Ever* report (Special Taskforce 2015: 31). They are in the following areas: Cherbourg, Mount Isa, Logan-Beenleigh, Cairns District, Ipswich District, Brisbane Region, Mackay, and Moreton District. The High-Risk Teams are led by the Department of Justice and Attorney General (DJAG 2021). Membership of the High-Risk Teams include government and non-government agencies such as police, courts, corrections, health, housing, child safety, and domestic violence support services. They collaborate to provide integrated, culturally appropriate safety responses to victims and their children who are at high risk of serious harm or lethality. As of April 2021, there are 20 officers attached to high risk teams (Smee 2021). One critique raised of the teams is that non-government organisations ‘do the heavy lifting,’ organisations which are severely constrained due to a lack of funding (Smee 2021).

An independent evaluation of Queensland’s trial of integrated responses to domestic violence (incorporating High Risk Teams), was completed in 2019. Evaluators highlighted improvements including better information sharing (allowing for more informed decision making by agencies), enhanced accountability around service delivery across agencies, and more ‘eyes’ on perpetrators (Department of Youth, Child Safety and Women 2019). High Risk Teams were securing faster and more targeted help for victims at imminent risk of lethality or serious harm. Challenges were also identified in areas including differing approach to risk assessment, governance and role clarity, and the need for culturally appropriate services (Department of Youth, Child Safety and Women 2019: 3).

Whilst there was significant focus on improving victim safety, more focus was needed to strengthen perpetrator accountability (Department of Youth, Child Safety and Women 2019: 3). It was suggested the model could be further strengthened by: role and service delivery clarification; improved information sharing; support of current effective processes; and embedding a culture of

continuous improvement and best practice in integrated responses to domestic and family violence (Department of Youth, Child Safety and Women 2019: 3).

While there are a range of higher level supports for DFV response, frontline officers handle the bulk of cases and cases in the first instance. This creates a skills and knowledge gap in response. For example, high risk cases are not the majority and not all high risk cases get recognised as such, and not all vulnerable people and DFV cases come to the attention of the specialised units. Therefore, it is critical to address the frontline response where officers first encounter DFV victims. Here, QPS is trialling a range of options. QPS (2021d: 10) have partnered with the University of Queensland (UQ) to conduct a randomised controlled trial for a gendered service delivery model. This Mobile Police Facility (MPF) provides a visible facility offering the services of a traditional 'shopfront' police beat, with the ability to move in accordance with demand requirements. MPFs are currently deployed to target locations assessed as having high demand for police services, to provide a high visibility presence in that community (QPS 2021d). Part of the trial will assess the impact and benefits of providing a gendered police service delivery model in the context of DFV, including assessing whether there is an increased reporting rate with female only officers.

QPS currently operates a co-responder model located in the South Brisbane District. Both police and a DFV service provider attend the scene of a DFV incident or near to it after the initial police response has been completed and safety has been assured. Co-responder models have been trialled and evaluated widely in the United States (US) (Corcoran et al. 2001; Lane et al. 2004; Reuland et al. 2006), but results vary and are shaped by mandatory arrest requirements in the US. QPS are also exploring the potential of trialling a police officer co-located at a DFV service provider's premises. The intent of this innovation is to: divert victims 'from the relatively sterile front counter at police stations ... to an environment that best meets the needs of victims, staffed by specialists who provide a holistic, timely and empathetic approach to a victim's experiences' (QPS 2021d: 9).

Frontline co-location models with DFV specialists at police stations operate in the Moreton, Gold Coast, Mt Isa, Toowoomba, and Townsville Districts (QPS 2021d: 9). These models support people experiencing DFV when attending a police station and work towards the QPS *Domestic & Family Violence Strategy 2021-2023* goal of building a victim-centric, trauma informed capability to respond to DFV. It is in this context that that co-location examined in this evaluation occurs.

Overview of co-location position at Toowoomba Police Station

In this context DVAC proposed to QPS the placement of a Domestic Violence Specialist (DVS) worker at Toowoomba police station two days a week to support clients seeking police assistance for DFV, and support police in their service to these clients. The worker supports clients seeking police assistance with DFV matters, providing them with information about processes and options, support referral and connection, safety planning and upgrades, and emotional support including when making police statements. She also supports with police with DFV clients across the above listed aspects. Police had a choice in approaching the worker for assistance with DFV cases; engagement was not a management directive.

Domestic Violence Action Centre is the main provider of DFV and sexual violence supports in the Toowoomba region. Services include referral, advocacy, counselling, court support, emergency relief, safety planning, men's behavioural change programs, community development, and education for young people and services. There are 25 staff at Toowoomba DVAC, and one is Indigenous, with four Indigenous employees across all its sites. All DVAC employees are trained in culturally appropriate practices. DVAC continues to link closely with the local specialist Indigenous support services in Toowoomba and receives increasing numbers of referrals from them for DVAC services.

The embedded worker is an experienced social worker professional with tertiary qualifications in social work and four years' experience in the DFV sector. She has also undertaken professional training including that which focusses on full understanding of DV, risk assessment, safety planning and case management support. Her level of experience and time working in the region meant she has detailed knowledge of complex police and legal processes, and of local services and networks.

The DVAC QPS co-location project was initially a short-term pilot beginning 18 January 2021 with a planned end date of 30th September 2021. From January to September 2021, the role was two days a week, with the worker also working one day at a week at the local court, and several hours a week at DVAC. The initiative has been fully funded by DVAC, specifically from non-ongoing COVID-19 Enhancement Funds from the then Department of Safety Youth and Women, now Department of Justice and Attorney General (DJAG). COVID-19 Enhancement Funds were from the Federal government, but distributed through the State government.

DVAC sought additional COVID-19 Enhancement Funds from DJAG, and these were granted enabling the placement to be extended until the end of June 2022. The DVS worker now works four days a week at Toowoomba station and one day at the local court. The court placement is funded separately and existed previous to the police station placement, but is important context for the role's operation and effects.

The role also involves participation in a pre-existing High Risk Panel that meets monthly and has participants from police and corrections. The High Risk Panels have been instigated at a local level, and exist in some other regions. Prior to the placement of the embedded worker, the panel had another DVAC worker as DVAC's representative. The Panel in Toowoomba consists of a Memorandum of Understanding between police, community corrections and DVAC. Services nominate individuals (the persons using violence) who meet high risk eligibility criteria and information is shared between the three services under DFV Information Sharing Guidelines (Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services 2017). The Panel shares information between the three organisations on the status of the high risk individual and then conducts safety planning for the partner or ex-partner. Nominations to the Panel are determined by an assessment of imminent risk determined by high risk factors indicating escalation and severity, amounting to risk of lethality. High risk factors include:

- Pending separation
- Separation
- Threats to kill
- Stalking
- Intimate sexual violence
- Strangulation
- Weapons
- Escalation
- Severity
- Coercive control
- Injuries
- Pregnancy
- Threats of harm to children

- Perpetrator suicidality

From time-to-time external services will make nominations. When this occurs that service attends the meeting as a guest to discuss the case nominated. Unlike the High Risk Teams, the Panels are not funded by the Department of Justice and Attorney General and do not have the same level of governance or membership as the Teams. The worker's role in this Panel and existing role in court support two days a week supplemented the networks and supports provided by her placement in the station.

Aims of the co-location

The aim of the DVS worker is to:

1. Be a link or connection point for client referrals between DVAC and QPS in both directions (DVAC to QPS and QPS to DVAC).
2. Provide assistance to clients presenting at Toowoomba police station reception counter for DFV matters as needed and as capacity allows. This would include assistance for client's general questions around DFV and supporting women to begin their statements relating to DFV/sexual violence.
3. Provide specific case consultation with QPS officers where needed and where there is capacity. This would include advice when officers are attending DFV matters, follow-up support for women specifically following call outs, education and support to officers around working with women in traumatic circumstances.
4. Undertake risk management for high risk cases and an integrated approach in relation to this including consultation with QPS, courts, corrections and other relevant services.

Objectives of the co-location

DVAC has identified the following objectives for the role:

1. To improve the experience of engagement with QPS for women and individuals who experience domestic violence
2. To strengthen the integrated response between the host station and DVAC workers when responding to incidents of domestic and family violence by providing:
 - i) Real time advice to QPS officers when engaging with aggrieved persons on call outs;
 - ii) Increasing QPS officers' understanding of referral pathways and referral options for aggrieved persons.

This report will assess how the co-location meets these aims and objectives. In addition, this report will also assess how this co-located model meets recommendations 76 and 78 from the *Not Now, Not Ever* report (Special Taskforce 2015). These recommendations are:

Recommendation 76: The Taskforce recommends that the Queensland Government establishes a model for inter-agency response to high risk cases which works within, or complements integrated responses and which is progressively established throughout the state (Special Taskforce 2015: 226).

Recommendation 78: The Taskforce recommends that the Queensland Government introduces enabling legislation to allow information sharing between agencies (government and non-government) within integrated responses, with appropriate safeguards. This would include legislative protection for the sharing of information without consent, if a risk assessment indicates it is for the purpose of protecting the safety of the victim and their immediate family (Special Taskforce 2015: 233).

Literature Review

Co-located responses to DFV

What are co-located responses and why are they important

Responding to vulnerability is central to policing work, rather than an uncommon occurrence, and this means that multidisciplinary service response is crucial (Asquith and Bartkowiak-Théron 2021). Police cannot respond to DFV independently, and they recognise the importance of partnering with external organisations for effective response (Mundy and Seuffert 2021; Queensland Police Service 2021; The Police Association of Victoria 2015). In fact, ‘meeting women’s basic needs may be a necessary precursor to fostering an effective criminal justice response’ (Allen et al. 2004: 1031). Well-integrated multidisciplinary work is key to victim-focussed DFV response (Chung et al. 2018; Fine et al. 2000).

There are various models involving collaboration between police and other services, such as high risk teams which work together to identify, follow up, and provide intensive support to high risk repeat cases (see, for example, Hamilton et al. 2021), and co-responder models where workers attend with or follow up police after DFV call outs (see, for example, Reuland et al. 2006). This review considers evaluations and studies of co-located services to support DFV victims, specifically examining services where *any* DFV victim can drop in and seek help from one or more services at the location with police being one service available at the location.

Co-located services may involve a single or many workers from one or several services, based in police stations, or a location housing many services, including DFV police. Different forms of co-locational services have been piloted in Australia, such as: a single victim-support project officer located in a police station, Tamworth, NSW (Wangmann 2003 in Breckenridge et al. 2016); an entire support organisation located in a police station; Nowra, NSW (Mundy and Seuffert 2021; Seuffert and Mundy 2020); and a multidisciplinary hub which includes several support and government services and police, Perth, WA (O’Connor and Fisher 2005 in Breckenridge et al. 2016).

The advantages of co-locational services have been broadly recognised in Australia. The NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team (2019) and the NSW Parliament Select Committee into Coercive Control (2021) recommended that the problems when victims report to stations could be addressed, and police responses to DFV generally improved, by the use of DFV services at stations. Women’s Safety NSW (Foster et al. 2020) found that 98% of clients agreed that support workers

should be co-located at stations to support victim reporting. The Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce heavily referenced the benefits of co-location in its recommendation for the trial of co-responder models (2021: 584-587).

This review considers evaluations and studies of co-location models from Australia, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Peru, Argentina, India, and Brazil. Benefits, limitations and challenges throughout studies are shaped by the scope of services provided by the specific co-location model, and its aims and objectives, along with other policy, practice, and legislative contexts.

Barriers to information

Evaluations and studies of co-located responses are hindered by barriers in measuring client outcomes, such as long-term cessation of violence or safety, due to factors of privacy and disclosure concerns, and record keeping (Mundy and Seuffert 2021; Sechrist and Weil 2018). These issues and police or organisational record keeping complicate tracking clients over time (Mundy and Seuffert 2021; Sechrist and Weil 2018). Clients may no longer show up in records if a) there are no longer issues or b) if they have stopped seeking help (Mundy and Seuffert 2021). Further, there are sensitivities around inviting clients to participate in research (Seuffert and Mundy 2021). Evaluation is not often financially supported in budgets for government funded pilot programs (AIHW 2016). Another challenge in the review of Australian co-located models was the inability to access primary studies (findings from O'Connor and Fisher 2005 and Wangmann 2003 were accessed through Breckenridge et al. 2016). A Freedom of Information request to Victoria Police found that an evaluation of multidisciplinary centres (MDCs, an overview of these is discussed below) has been completed but not yet cleared by Victoria Police and stakeholders. It is not known if these findings will be published.

What do co-located responses do

DFV workers in co-located services commonly offer crisis support, support in reporting to police, and connection to external services. They assist clients with understanding and navigating their legal options, and may provide court support. Depending on the service, they may also explain the nature of DFV to clients, provide psychological services and/or counselling, run programs for clients, work in various capacities with local boards and networks, provide legal services, and undertake primary prevention work.

One type of co-located responses are specialist police stations designed to receive women experiencing gender violence; these first emerged in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1985 (Nelson 1996; Hautzinger 2002). They were called *Delegacia da Mulher* (Police Stations for Women, DDM). Carrington et al. (2020) conducted field research in the Province of Buenos Aires (PBA), Argentina to investigate the work of specialist stations. Stations in PBA handle the policing and prevention of DFV in three main ways. They offer an emergency response and work with victims and perpetrators to prevent re-victimisation. These stations also participate in local boards with other local and state bodies, such as gender policy units to identify and prevent deadly outcomes for high risk cases. Finally, they undertake primary prevention work through community engagement activities that aim to challenge norms that sustain violence against women (Carrington et al. 2020). Specialist stations in other countries conduct similar work (although primary prevention work is unique to Argentina), to varying degrees of efficacy (see, for example, Hautzinger 2002 and de Oliveira and Ghisi 2019 on Brazil, Amaral et al. 2018 and Natarajan 2005 on India, Kavanaugh et al. 2018 and Alcalde 2006 on Peru, Jubb et al. 2008 on Latin America broadly).

Led by feminist informed support services, MDCs are one model currently in place in Australia. There is an absence of evaluation and scholarly literature on MDCs that include DFV response to enable inclusion throughout this review. The concept initially emerged as sexual assault response with seven MDCs currently in Victoria in this form. The concept has grown and there are three MDCs in regional Victoria that include DFV response (Mikakos 2018; Victoria Police 2017). MDCs include sexual assault police teams, family violence police teams, social workers, counsellors, and other support staff and programs. They carry out primary prevention work and work with offenders (The Sexual Assault and Family Violence Centre 2021). All services operate in a shared location, either in the same office or on a different floor (personal communication with former Barwon MDC board member 2021). Police are plain-clothed and use unmarked cars (personal communication with former Barwon MDC board member 2021). An MDC that will respond to DFV and sexual violence, and will include police on site, has just been announced for Tasmania (Petrusma 2022).

Evidence from co-located responses

This review finds benefits from the client, support organisation and police perspective. There are also challenges from all these perspectives. Benefits from the police and worker perspective generally translate into improved outcomes for clients.

Client outcomes

A range of positive client outcomes is reported across different models. These include longitudinal data around homicide reduction rates and reduction of violence, improved criminal justice outcomes, reported ease of system navigation and appreciation of the range and convenience of support, and long-term quality of life improvements.

In Brazil, a study of female homicide rates in 2,074 municipalities from 2004-2009 found a drop by 17% for all women in municipalities where there were DDMs (Perova and Reynolds 2017). The reduction was 50% (or 5.57 deaths reduction per 100,000) for women aged 15-24 in metropolitan areas (Perova and Reynolds 2017: 193-194). Their presence also contributes to men's attitudes condemning violence against women, potentially equating to reduced violence (Córdova and Kras 2020b). Studying women's justice centres (WJC) in Peru, Kavanaugh et al. (2018) found, a 7% decrease in incidence of intimate femicides in districts with the centres. Women living in a district with a WJC are significantly less likely to suffer from physical violence by their spouse compared to those living in districts without WJCs; this is a 10% decrease in violence (Kavanaugh et al. 2018). Research in India found a statistically highly significant decrease in dowry deaths in locations with women's stations (Natarajan and Babu 2020). Research indicates specialist police stations boost willingness to report, preventing further harm (Gomes and Avellaneda 2021; Hautzinger 2002; Jubb et al. 2010; MacDowell Santos 2005; Natarajan 2005; Pasinato 2016; Sardenberg et al. 2010).

In Australia, co-location in Tamworth contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of family violence obtained for individual case police records across 73% of cases (Wangmann 2003 in Breckenridge et al. 2016). In a United Kingdom (UK) study of a range of co-located DFV services, including support workers located at police stations, 65% ($n=47$) of clients had not experienced any further violence since contact with the embedded workers (Coy and Kelly 2011). In Caerphilly, UK a range of a range of criminal justice system (CJS) outcomes were identified including a decrease in retractions, withdrawals and cases with no evidence offered, and an increase in prosecutions and guilty pleas (Vallely et al. 2005).

There was awareness from clients how the co-location aided communication between themselves, the support services and the police (Eyre 2017; Mundy and Seuffert 2021; O'Connor and Fisher 2005 in Breckenridge et al. 2016). In addition to ease of access and access to information, co-located models also ensure clients receive consistency in response across services (O'Connor and Fisher

2005 and Wangmann 2003 in Breckenridge et al. 2016; Schubert 2018). Clients appreciated the convenience of the service and the range of supports offered (Coy and Kelly 2011, Schubert 2018). Collaboration among services improves the experience of DFV clients (Eyre 2017).

For most clients (80%, $n=58$), in a UK co-location, it was important that the worker was a woman, for reasons of trust, feeling comfortable and feeling that a woman would not judge (Coy and Kelly 2011). Clients stated that a woman worker was particularly important after experiencing violence from a man; some stated that they would have not spoken to a male support worker. Given the male-dominated environment of policing (Bartkowiak-Theron and Layton 2012; Brown and Silvestri 2020; Rabe-Hemp 2008), the placement of one or many specialist DFV worker/s who are women is key strength across all models.

Broadly, across local and international studies, other positive client outcomes include prevention of revictimisation, ease of engagement with the criminal justice system, increased long term safety, and support towards obtaining long-term outcomes, such as permanent housing, education, employment, and increased confidence (Coy and Kelly 2011; Eyre 2017; Mundy and Seuffert 2021; O'Connor and Fisher 2005 and Wangmann 2003 in Breckenridge et al. 2016; Schubert 2018; Seuffert and Mundy 2020; Vallely et al. 2005).

Perspectives of DFV workers

There were numerous benefits to co-location from the perspective of DFV support workers. Sector workers and stakeholders reported collaboration enabled information and idea sharing, resource sharing and efficiencies, learning and increased accountability. Workers viewed co-location as critical to the models' success aiding seamless service provision (O'Connor and Fisher 2005 and Wangmann 2003 in Breckenridge et al. 2016).

Co-location influences the “culture” of family violence service provision’ (O'Connor and Fisher 2005 in Breckenridge et al. 2016). The approach allowed collaboration between workers and police improving efficiency by breaking down physical barriers and preventing duplication of effort through information sharing and the blending of skills across staff (O'Connor and Fisher 2005 in Breckenridge et al. 2016; Rizo et al. 2021; Vallely et al. 2005). Working closely broke down social barriers and stakeholders reported feeling more comfortable sharing information due to a development of trust over time (Mundy and Seuffert 2021; Wangmann 2003 in Breckenridge et al.

2016;). Workers based in police stations came to be seen as ‘part of police extended family’ (Coy and Kelly 2011: 17). Improved relationships with police and the wider criminal justice system were a significant benefit (Blake Stevenson Limited (BSL) 2017; Coy and Kelly 2011; Mundy and Seuffert 2021). Co-location also enabled financial efficiency with overheads shared (O’Connor and Fisher 2005 in Breckenridge et al. 2016). For Perth, WA staff ‘being in an agency that is single issue focussed [meant] that they [were] able to give the issue of family and domestic violence their singular focus and not be distracted by competing demands’ (O’Connor and Fisher 2005: 12 in Breckenridge et al. 2012).

Workers discussed the educational benefits of the co-location models, noting they had learned from police, and each other (Coy and Kelly 2011; Mundy and Seuffert 2021; O’Connor and Fisher 2005 in Breckenridge et al. 2012). A Nowra, NSW worker mentioned that the experience gave her ‘a whole new respect for police’ (Mundy and Seuffert 2021: 3). From observing other workers, the shared space enabled staff to reflexively incorporate new approaches and understandings into their practice (O’Connor and Fisher 2005 in Breckenridge et al. 2012). Accountability was another key benefit to co-location. It was noted that the decisions being open to scrutiny from different agencies, and the ongoing scrutiny, made workers more accountable (O’Connor and Fisher 2005 in Breckenridge et al. 2012). A review of co-location in Milwaukee, US found that DFV workers located at the centre reported high levels of job satisfaction and relatively low levels of burnout (Schubert 2018).

Benefits and challenges for police

Most studies focus primarily on client outcomes then support worker/organisation perspectives, and benefits to police are minimally reported. Where they are discussed, benefits are similar to those of sector workers and include information sharing, efficiency, learning, and improved accountability. This section considers the perspective of police working at co-located services, as well as police management and leadership who may not work at the services but would have engagement with the implementation. This section also considers benefits to policing recognised by other stakeholders.

For police, co-locating with workers from the DFV sector supported the exchange of information, ideas, and resources. This aided efficiency (O’Connor and Fisher 2005 in Breckenridge et al. 2016; Valley et al. 2005). Police also appreciated the effective and timely communication benefits (Eyre

2017). Officers welcomed access and support from workers with more experience in providing emotional support and service connection. The depth and quality of policing improved as police were able to dedicate time to cases, and not having to spend time providing emotional and service support to victims (Eyre 2017; Mundy and Seuffert 2021).

Police reported learning from workers and workers took advantage of the opportunity to influence police practice (Coy and Kelly 2011; Mundy and Seuffert 2021). In the Nowra co-location, a practice developed of officers on probation spending one to two hours with the support workers shortly after commencing their job:

They've [police] been to the academy. They think they know everything, but they know nothing [about domestic violence] and the best supervisors will instruct them to go and sit with [the support service coordinator] for an hour. [She] will take them under her wing and they will come out—in terms of their policing of domestic violence, they will be completely different to cops who haven't had that. (Government worker in Mundy and Seuffert 2021)

Police learned to view DFV more holistically (Mundy and Sueffert 2021). Workers reported that day-to-day contact with police meant that they could shape police knowledge and practice long term (Coy and Kelly 2011). In addition, co-location provided easier access to training opportunities delivered by partner organisations (Bastomski et al. 2019).

Accountability and transparency of police was another benefit of co-location:

Having a presence in the station that keeps hammering the importance of sensitivity and all of those kinds of things is vital. Left on their own, police tend to kind of forget about those aspects . . . Accountability can kind of slip. You're accountable within the chain of command but external accountabilities can go unserved. So having . . . [the DVIS] there . . . does provide . . . an accountable reference point. (Government worker in Mundy and Seuffert 2020: 315)

Improvements in knowledge, understanding, service delivery, investigation and accountability aided improvements in police legitimacy: 'Police support and cooperation increased over time; breaking down negative perceptions of police; adds credibility to the police response; and it may assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to contact police' (Wangmann, 2003 in Breckenridge et al. 2016: 9; see also, Córdova and Kras 2020a). Client satisfaction with police also improved (Vallely 2005).

Challenges

Most documented challenges reflected those of the DFV support sector broadly, such as human and other resource shortages, limited scope of service, and lack of staff, services and tools appropriate for particular marginalised groups (BSL 2017; Carrington et al. 2020; Coy and Kelly 2011; Eyre 2017; MacDowell Santos 2005; Mundy and Seuffert 2021; O'Connor and Fisher 2005 in Breckenridge et al. 2016; Vallely 2005). This section will thus focus specifically on the challenges of DFV workers and police being co-located. These challenges included clashes of workplace cultures, lack of clarity around roles and authority, and hesitance to share information. However, studies and evaluations also cite overcoming some of these early challenges.

Cultural and systemic differences between support services and police is a key challenge generally in family violence response (Mundy and Seuffert 2021; Buchbinder and Eisikovits 2008; Cooper et al. 2008; Hamilton et al. 2021). This is often grounded in distrust, and cultural and ideological clash. The different occupations have distinctive identities, hierarchies, goals, values, and cultures (Cooper et al. 2008; Hamilton et al. 2021). Cooper et al. (2008) note that in Australia, social workers focus on social justice, social change, victims' rights, and aim to empower others. This contrasts with police, which are patriarchal and paramilitary in structure, and focus on law and order enforcement and maintenance (Cooper et al. 2008). In the context of co-located services, this amounted to police resistance to share information and work closely with support services (Mundy and Seuffert 2021; Rizo et al. 2021). However, trust and relationships developed over time (Mundy and Seuffert 2021).

Clarity around support worker role and responsibilities was another challenge (Coy and Kelly 2011; Rizo et al. 2021; Vallely et al. 2005). This also improved over time (Coy and Kelly 2011), and in the co-location located with Toronto Police, Canada, an average of 88% respondents across two years agreed the project resulted in partners developing a better understanding of each other's roles and mandates (Eyre 2017). Finally, governance and bureaucracy challenges presented hurdles often

linked to role scope and the legislated restrictions around information sharing (BSL 2017; Valley 2005).

Police legitimacy was raised as a challenge, with police station-based models being inappropriate for groups who distrust police, such as Indigenous Australian women (Mundy and Seuffert 2021; Wangmann 2003 in Breckenridge et al. 2016). Such cohorts are unlikely to engage with services that share locations with police.

Aboriginal women don't—there are just a lot of trust issues with police. They're scared that the police are involved so [state child welfare agency] are going to be involved and we've always said that it would hinder people attending. (DFV worker in Mundy and Seuffert 2021: 5)

Rizo et al's (2021) systemic evaluation found that several review findings did not consider critiques such as these, erasing these critical concerns raised by various advocates and providers. In Brazil, Arvate et al. (2021) found that police stations designed to receive victims of gender violence generally do not improve homicide outcomes for women of colour, only improving slightly in well-resourced municipal areas. Here, it is important to note that Brazil's women's police stations have less formally integrated support services (da Silva and Bini 2021; Jubb et al. 2008; Souza and Faria 2017). Nevertheless, this points to structural and systemic policing factors inhibiting access to justice and safety for marginalised groups, and the importance of response and support options detached from police and legal responses.

Gaps and summary

Often, clear information on measurable client outcomes is unavailable (Rizo et al. 2021), sometimes for the reasons discussed in the Barriers to Information section above. Regardless, clients widely report satisfaction and identify the clear value of the co-located services. Throughout the literature the in-depth consideration of the perspective of the police officers is mostly absent. As they are often the first respondents to DFV, which makes up a large portion of their workload (40-70% of police on duty time: Garcia 2021; The Police Association of Victoria 2015; NSW Select Committee on Coercive Control 2021), their perspective of the support provided by co-located workers is critical. Receptiveness is crucial to any transformation in police practice. Clearer detail on financial

efficacies, and governance and bureaucracy challenges, considered in the relevant operational and legislative contexts is also required.

Identifying gaps in the rigorousness of research and evaluation of co-location, Rizo et al. (2021) note the importance of the development of data and evaluations committees established with researchers to create and implement thorough evaluation measures. Assessing and monitoring collaboration efforts is also critical with results being able to reveal barriers to collaboration, which can then be addressed (Rizo et al. 2021).

More broadly, other collaborative models, such as co-responder models and high-risk teams nationally and internationally, share similar benefits, challenges and limitations (including Queensland's high-risk team, Department of Youth, Child Safety and Women 2019; see others, for example, Hamilton et al. 2021; Lane, Greenspan and Weisburd 2004; Reuland et al. 2006; Smith-Stover 2012). This review shows a variety of benefits from client, support worker and police perspectives. Workplace challenges are mostly overcome with time.

Methodology

This evaluation considers the placement of the Domestic Violence Specialist worker in relation to Domestic Violence Action Service's aims and objectives for the role.

Seuffert and Mundy (2020) note four approaches for evaluating service delivery in this space:

1. Consideration of client perspective, prioritising their safety and autonomy, and how it enabled them to hold abusers accountable
2. Assessing the service against the stated goals or purpose of the programme
3. Focussing on the extent of victim engagement with the criminal justice and other support systems
4. Quantitative measurement of outcomes linked to specific criminal justice indicators

The first approach can include measures of how service users experience the programme and what is achieved for them, such as whether their safety and wellbeing of women had changed over the course of their participation. This approach can also include measures of how victims experienced the criminal justice process, including how they felt at various specific stages of the process (Seuffert and Mundy 2020). The second approach includes measures of 'identified outcomes for service users in reference to each of stated aims' (Seuffert and Mundy 2020: 309-310). The third approach may measure whether victim support increases engagement with CJS processes or victims' confidence in a new response and whether they are more willing to engage with services. The fourth may measure increases in reports to police, protection orders, early guilty pleas, and in the long term, reduced reports to police, decreased rates of offending and revictimisation.

Aligning with the goals of the evaluation, we focus mostly on the second, but have some client perspective of service experience, along with consideration of aspects of victim engagement with the criminal justice system. Our key data sources are:

- Surveys of clients collected by DVAC after client use of their service ($n=8$)
- Records from the DVS worker counting the source of the client and/or the type of task, including comments for most entries (469 records, 438 comments)
- Field diary of observations, case notes, and learning and reflections from the embedded worker for each week (36 entries)

- Surveys of police from collected by DVAC after their use of the specialist worker's services ($n=19$)
- Surveys and interviews of police conducted by the QUT research team ($n=6$)
- Surveys and interviews of DVAC workers conducted by the QUT research team ($n=4$)
- Source of referral data provided by DVAC 2017-2021, to date

De-identified data was provided by DVAC to the QUT team for analysis. Empirical research was approved by Queensland University of Technology Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval Number 4268. The research also had ethics approval from Queensland Police Service Research Committee.

Task tracking and worker comments

The work undertaken by the embedded worker as part of her role at the station was recorded for the period 18 January 2021 to 30 September 2021. The worker tracked and categorised each item of work undertaken, providing a quantitative count of 532 entries. Some items were coded in more than one category by the worker. The DVS worker took notes for each case consult providing some detail on the type of case/issue and the type of support provided. Finally, the worker kept a field diary recording observations, case notes and learning and reflections providing further insight into the experience from the worker's perspective. These findings are reported in the Work Undertaken section of the Results.

Source of referral data

Source of referral data provided by DVAC enabled us to measure numbers of clients referred by police to DVAC. While DVAC collects sources of other referrals, we focus on measuring police understanding of DVAC referral options and the connection between police and DVAC. These findings are reported in the Work Undertaken section of the Results.

Client surveys

Clients attending the host station and utilising the services of the DVS worker between 16 March 2021 to 28 September 2021 were asked for feedback about their experience via an online survey. Clients were provided with the Survey Monkey link via text or email. There were six questions in total in the survey including two open-ended questions (see Appendix 1). No demographics were sought. The survey took an estimated 5-10 minutes to complete. From around 90 survey invitations,

a total of 18 clients completed the survey. The findings from this survey are reported in the Client Perspective section of the Results, and are identified with the code Client Survey (CS) 1-18. Table 4 shows numbers of participants in all surveys and/or interviews undertaken and whether the participant was a client, police officer or DVAC worker.

Table 4 Research participants

Method	Administering Team	Participants	Reference Code and Number of participants
Surveys	DVAC	Clients	CS1-18
Surveys	DVAC	Police	PS1-19
Surveys and interviews	QUT Research Team	Police	PI1-6
Surveys and interviews	QUT Research Team	DVAC staff	DVAC1-4

DVAC surveys of police

Officers working at the host station were asked to complete a survey about their perceptions of the service provided by the worker. The survey did not collect any individually identifying information to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of QPS officers. This survey was open between the period 13 April 2021 to 9 June 2021 and 26 August 2021 to 22 September 2021. Officers who used the service were provided with Microsoft Forms link. There were six questions in total including three open-ended questions (see Appendix 2). No demographics were sought. The survey took an estimated 5-10 minutes to complete. This survey was completed by 19 officers, 16% of the 120 officers working in the host station. The findings from this survey are reported in the DVAC surveys of Police Perspective of the results, and are identified with the code Police Survey (PS) 1-19.

Surveys and interviews

The QUT team undertook semi-structured interviews with all four DVAC workers associated with the co-location. We then interviewed six police of differing rank from Toowoomba police station with direct experience of the embedded worker. This was the maximum number of interviews with police possible for the two days available for the field research. These interviews included a survey on aspects of the pilot using a Likert scale (see Appendix 3). Questions were informed by the aims and objectives of the co-location. Of the police interviewed, it was important to include general duties police, their supervisors, the station Domestic and Family Violence Liaison Officer and the District Domestic and Family Violence Coordinator. Police in these roles would have different levels of experience, undertake different tasks, and require different support from the embedded worker,

thus would report different experiences and perspectives. The findings of these surveys are interviews are reported in the Worker Perspective and Police Perspective sections of the Results. All the interviewees have been de-identified and referred to as DVAC 1-4 or Police Interview (PI) 1-6.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics are provided for the quantitative data. The interview data was transcribed using Otter recording software. The interview data, qualitative comments from client and police surveys, and observations were coded to identify key themes (Punch 2014) using NVivo software. This was done using a mix of inductive and deductive coding processes to allow for identification of new themes, as well as themes informed by the background literature (Nowell et al. 2017). The worker's weekly notes, observations, learning and reflections were read in view of existing themes from the interviews and are used to supplement this discussion.

Thematic analysis was undertaken of a sample of case notes to identify further detail around work undertaken. A sample of case notes from January, February, May, August, September (243/439 entries) was coded to provide further detail around work undertaken, in addition to quantitative counts. The period was selected to get a representative spread of the beginning, middle, and most recent time periods of the placement. Common acronyms and themes were grouped to provide a count of regular occurring tasks. Codes were not mutually exclusive and some entries fit multiple codes. The automatic counting tools in NVivo were then used to tally the most common themes. Author 1 identified some common themes and guided Author 3 in grouping these. Author 3 conducted this coding using NVivo and Author 1 refined for final tallies. These results are analysed in the work undertaken section below.

Care has been taken to disguise any potential individual identifiable information. This includes publishing socio-demographics of participants in aggregate and de-identifying participants in the interviews and surveys.

Organisation survey and interview demographics

Four workers from DVAC were interviewed. All four were female and not of an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or culturally and linguistically diverse background. Their age group was diverse with one employee in the 18-30 year age group, two in the 31-40 year age group and one in

the 51-60 year age group. Participants were asked what kind of work they do and could select more than one answer from a list of six options, including the option Other to provide a written response. DVAC employees reported their work involves Counselling ($n=3$), Domestic and/or Sexual Violence Agency ($n=3$), and Domestic Violence Court Services ($n=2$). Participants were then asked what vocation best describes their role or job. Responses included Domestic Violence Worker ($n=3$), Counsellor/Psychologist ($n=2$), and Social Worker ($n=1$). All DVAC workers reported they had worked in their current or a related role for more than three years; one had worked 3-5 years, two had worked 6-8 years, and one had worked 9-11 years. Three of the four DVAC employees had worked in their current position 4-6 years, and one respondent had worked 1-3 years. While all four DVAC workers reported they have had specialist training in responding to gender violence, three reported they would like more specialist training.

Police survey and interview demographics

Six QPS officers located at Toowoomba police station were also interviewed about their experiences with the co-location model. There was an equal proportion of male and females. One officer was of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, and all six reported they were not from a culturally and linguistically diverse background. The QPS officers were in the 41-60 year age group, with half in the 41-50 year age group and half in the 51-60 year age group. Participants were asked what kind of work they do and could select more than one answer from a list of six options, including the option Other to provide a written response. Although all officers reported their work involves policing, additional options of Counselling ($n=1$) and Domestic Violence Court Services ($n=1$) were also reported. Similarly, all officers best described their vocation as a Police Officer, with one officer also selecting Counsellor/Psychologist. Most officers ($n=5$) reported they had worked in this or a related role for more than 15 years, and one had worked 9-11 years. Three of the QPS officers had worked in their current position for 10-15 years, two had worked 1-3 years, and one had worked less than a year. Four of the six officers reported they have had specialist training in responding to gender violence, and four officers reported they would like more specialist training.

Limitations

There are limitations in the survey, interviews and sample sizes. The survey instrument designed by DVAC for client feedback was intentionally brief to reduce respondent burden. Therefore, it did not capture any socio-demographics, such as gender, age, or cultural background. In future client surveys, it is advisable to include socio-demographic questions to gather detailed information on

victims/survivors of DFV. The client survey response rate of 20% was a small sample size, but a good outcome given the circumstances of participants completing this survey. Similarly, the DVAC survey of police did not include any socio-demographics, such as gender or cultural background. In any future survey of police, it is advisable to include socio-demographic questions to gather this useful data. The sample size of 19 surveys completed is small, but a good response rate relative to the workforce in the host station ($n=120$, 16%). Therefore, the results of the DVAC client and police surveys, while small nevertheless meet the threshold of reliability.

As noted, we interviewed the DVAC workers with knowledge of the embedded worker role and the six police who were available to participate in the limited days of fieldwork. While only having a small sample size of DVAC workers for the research team surveys and qualitative interviews, these were the only or main workers central to this rather independent role. Interview data is triangulated with other DVAC collected data, client feedback, work undertaken and the field diary, which enhances its reliability.

The study design and scope feature a few limitations. The evaluation did not include the opinions of other service providers in the area, such as DVConnect (the lead state wide access service for people experiencing, or at risk of DFV) and Save the Children Ada's Haven and St Vincent de Paul Manna House (two long term DFV shelters operating in Toowoomba). We did invite all the external stakeholders identified by DVAC to participate in the evaluation; however, only one accepted the invitation. This data was later left out as this stakeholder was not aware of the co-location. This reflects the limited capacity of NGOs to participate in research when their priority is to deliver services within tight resource constraints.

Case studies of clients may have demonstrated client level outcomes of greater collaboration between the QPS and the specialist worker, but this sort of data would require high level ethics clearance and would add data collecting burden to the DVAC worker's daily schedule. Restrictions on client data collection are also discussed in the Barriers to Information section. If there were more embedded workers employed in these specialist roles at Queensland police stations then a future evaluation may be able to obtain systemic data of this sort.

Unfortunately, data about the Indigenous status of clients, a group which has higher rates of DFV and lower engagement with police, was not collected. In any future evaluation data collection could

be better designed to capture Indigenous status. On the other hand, the necessity of this level of socio-demographic data may be difficult to justify to university research ethics committees given the high stress environment for the client and existing worker burden. Nevertheless, survey questions and interview questions of police and workers could help determine any improvement in engagement with Indigenous clients. In addition, a more detailed assessment of what specific aspects of the embedded worker's strengths brought positive changes to the station and culture would strengthen the evidence base for policy and practice going forward.

Results and Analysis

Work undertaken

From the embedded worker's tracking of work undertaken, there were a total of 532 case consultations between 18 January to 30 September, 2021 inclusive. Monthly totals are reported in Table 5, and range from 46 to 92 consults, with an average of 59 consults per month. Proportions are reported in Table 6. This figure included 352 QPS consultations. QPS consultations include a variety of discussions between the worker and police. Police would the worker approach for verbal consultations regarding options of referrals and supports that DVAC is able to offer, such as emergency relief, accommodation, and other service referrals. They would provide the worker with a brief verbal case overview and would then seek assistance and support for ways to engage with the client, ways to assist the client feel more comfortable in providing statements to police, follow-up on system referrals (confirming contact was able to be made), and any other follow-up needed for the client. QPS consultations also included discussion of case management by the embedded worker for clients identified as being high risk including referrals into the High Risk Panel and discussion of safety options through DVAC's Safety Upgrades Program. Finally, QPS consultations included consultations with the police prosecutor to discuss upcoming court matters, consultations if any additional information needed to be provided to the prosecutor to assist the magistrate make a ruling, and safety concerns prior to and after court appearances.

Table 5 Work undertaken during the co-location trial

Month	Incoming Referrals			QPS consultation	Outreach/inreach planned appt	Monthly total
	Police (system)	Drop-in	Other			
Jan	6	6	0	37	5	54
Feb	12	9	0	66	5	92
Mar	5	11	3	41	3	63
Apr	6	8	0	32	2	48
May	1	9	3	42	6	61
Jun	5	7	3	33	7	55
Jul	7	5	2	30	2	46
Aug	5	15	2	35	3	60
Sep	10	4	2	36	1	53
TOTAL	57	74	15	352	34	532

Table 6 Proportion of work undertaken during the co-location trial

Type of work	Count	%
Incoming referrals		(27.4%)
Police (system)	57	10.7%
Drop-in	74	13.9%
Other	15	2.8%
QPS Consultation	352	66.2%
Outreach/Inreach Planned appt	34	6.4%

Other forms of work included Incoming referrals, which included 74 Drop-ins (clients coming to the station to speak to police to report an incident or seek advice), and 57 Police (system) referrals. These predominantly stem from when police attend an incident and make a referral through the Queensland Police system. There were also 15 referrals labelled as Other, which mostly included direct referrals from police, such as those communicated face-to-face. The Other figure also includes referrals from other services, such as courts. A total of 34 Outreach/Inreach planned appointments were also conducted by the DVS worker during this period. This involved supporting clients while they made police reports and providing other supports to clients.

In 2020/2021, overall referrals to DVAC via the police system increased by 16% ($n=114$) on the previous year (Table 7). There has been a significant increase in referrals to DVAC via the police system in the five-month period reported to the date of writing (29 November 2021). If the remainder of 2021/2022 continues at the current rate, this will considerably exceed the total referrals from 2020/2021 by 47% and double the 2018/2019 rate. The increase in referrals to DVAC from police through the system since the DFV worker has been embedded at the station indicates that the worker's close relationship with police increases their awareness of DFV services. This enhanced knowledge in turn encourages police to be more likely to refer victims/survivors for DFV support.

Table 7 Referrals to DVAC via the police system

Year	Referrals
2017/2018	622
2018/2019	609
2019/2020	712
2020/2021	826
2021/2022 (to date, 29 November)	507

Table 8 Coding of work undertaken from sample of field diary

Code	Count
Supports	45
Orders	29
High risk offenders	22
Safety	22
Court	20
Technology	17
Information	16
Types of violence/clients	13

From data coding of the sample of work undertaken (Table 8), there were several prominent codes. Support (45 instances) referred to the case consults with QPS discussed above. This code also refers to supporting clients in making statements and reporting breaches, and meeting with clients to provide information, emotional support and connection to other supports.

Orders was another common code (51 instances). This involved supporting victims/survivors in making applications for Domestic Violence Orders and reporting breaches. This also involved consults with the Domestic Violence Liaison Officer and other QPS officers around orders, court outcomes, conditions, variations, and breaches. Work undertaken coded as Court (20 instances) included case consults with QPS officers or prosecutors prior to or after court. This code also featured consults with clients to provide support or information prior to court. Although technically separate from the co-location role, the DVS worker's time spent at the local court one day a week enabled integration and follow-up with networks and client support.

High risk offenders (22 instances) included consults with QPS about these cases, including discussions about whereabouts, corrections correspondence, and safety upgrades. This also involved initial referrals for supports from and to the High Risk Panel and consults with clients. The embedded worker's membership of the High Risk Panel enabled another level of strategic and integrated support with frontline identification by the worker and police she worked closely with, along with close liaison with corrections. There was a lot of communication between the parties in between meetings including updates on what is happening with high risk individuals or if an urgent matter emerged. The small team and close contact meant quick communication and information

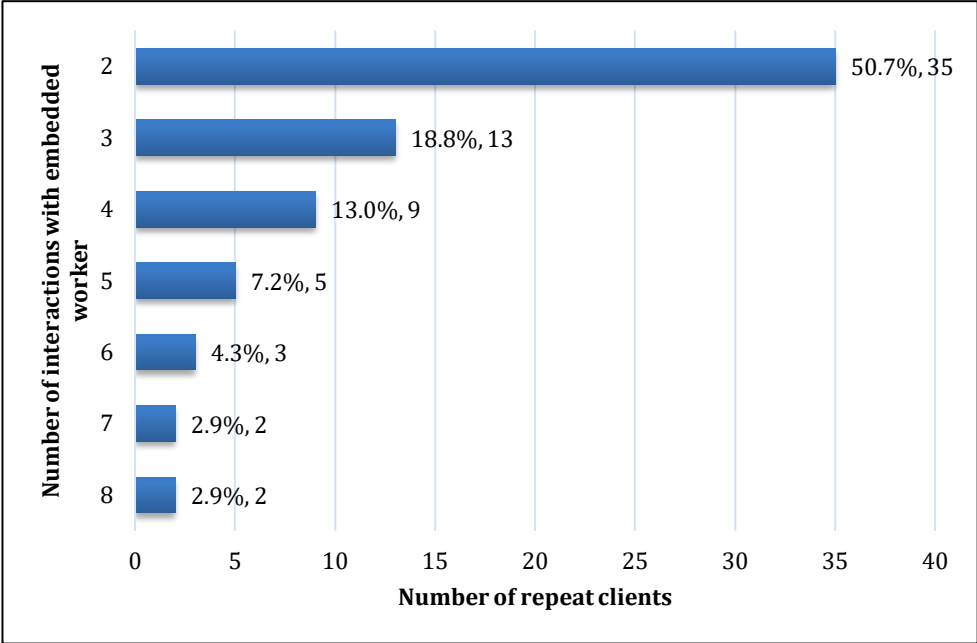
sharing. The worker's membership on the Panel also meant detailed knowledge of referrals received or cases she referred to the Panel.

The worker provided support for clients around about Safety Planning (22 instances). This is not detailed here to protect general approaches to client safety. Technology was another area of support (17 instances). This involved liaison with QPS around safety tools, or support to the client with phone and e-safety, including provision of a phone if the client did not have one. From the worker's field diary, it can be seen how the worker connected with clients making police reports and sought police assistance to enable these supports, further protecting client safety and preventing escalation of harm. Finally, the code 'Information' (16 instances) referred to providing clients with information around DFV or other supports.

In addition to partner violence support for female clients, some other types of violence and support was recorded in case notes. While these still fall under DFV, aspects were unique compared to other cases. These included: male aggrieveds (2), culturally and linguistically diverse clients (4), clients experiencing mental health concerns (3), sibling abuse (1), elder abuse (4), sexual assault (2), child abuse (as part of DFV case) (1).

During the trial period, almost two-thirds of the 532 entries (63.7%, $n=339$) were documented with a client code. Identities of the codes are only known to the DVS worker. The 339 entries were coded against 190 clients. Of these clients, just over one third were repeat clients (36.3%, $n=69$), indicating they were in contact with the DVS more than once. Nearly two-thirds (64.3%, $n=218$) of the 339 entries were recorded from 69 repeat clients. Figure 2 shows that of the 69 repeat clients, half ($n=35$) were in contact with the embedded worker a second time, almost 18.8% ($n=13$) three times, 13.0% ($n=9$) four times, 7.2% ($n=5$) five times, 4.3% ($n=3$) six times and 2.9% ($n=2$ each) seven and eight times. Given the cyclical nature of DFV, this is unsurprising. An initial consult may also involve follow-up and some of these numbers may represent this. These figures may also suggest that clients felt comfortable to return to the station to seek the support of the DVS worker, and potentially police.

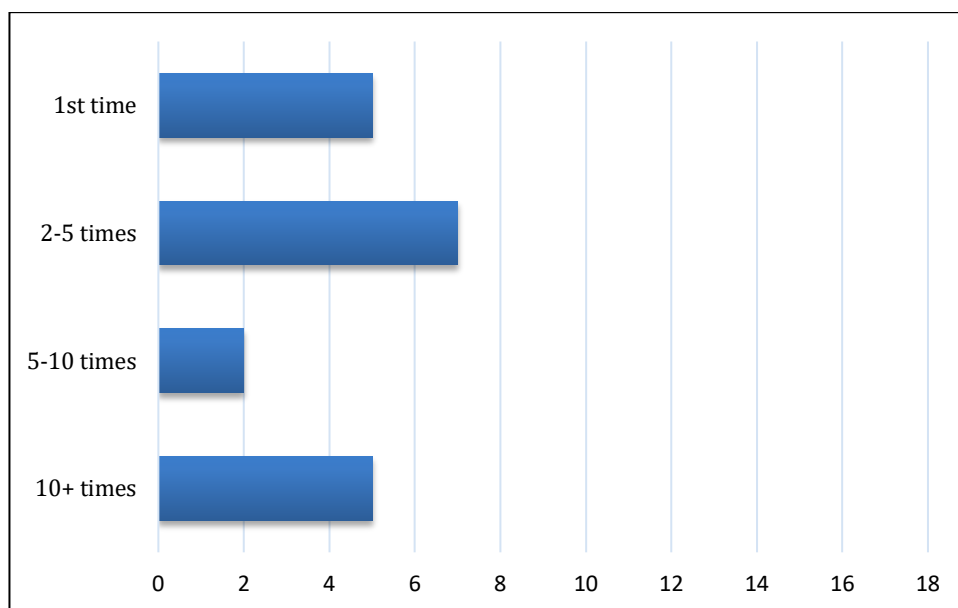
Figure 2 Number of consultations for repeat clients of embedded worker at Toowoomba police station (n=69)



Client perspective

A total of 18 clients who attended Toowoomba station and utilised the services of the DVS worker participated in the client survey administered by DVAC. The first question asked 'How many times have you had contact with the Police in relation to your DV matters?'. A list of four options were provided. Figure 3 shows five clients were in contact with police in relation to a DV matter for the first time, seven clients were in contact 2-7 times, two clients were in contact 5-10 times, and five clients were in contact 10 plus times. To note is that one client responded twice (1st time and 10+ times).

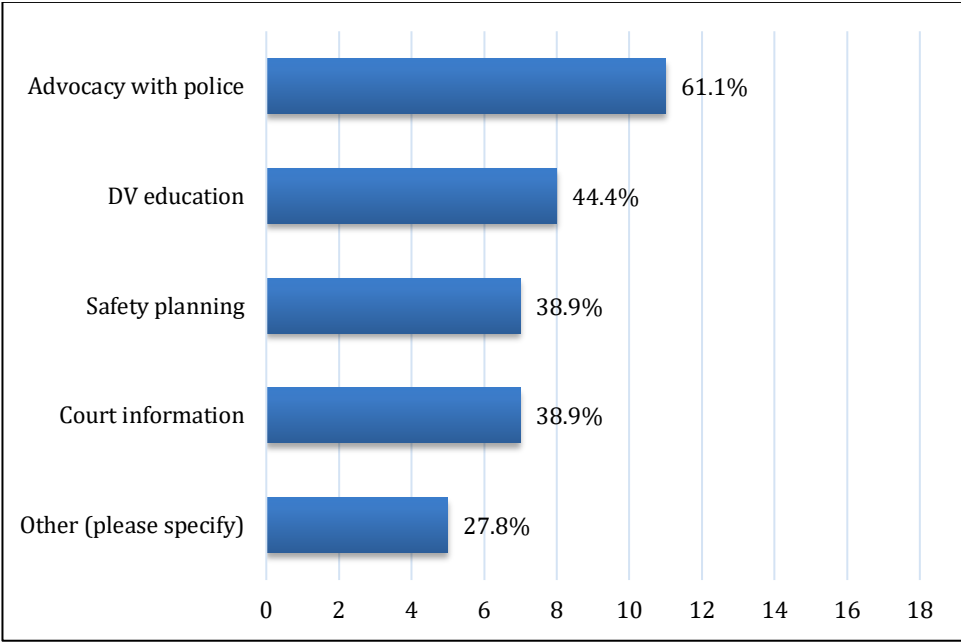
Figure 3 How many times have you had contact with the police in relation to your DV matters?



Note: One respondent answered twice, 1st time and 10+times

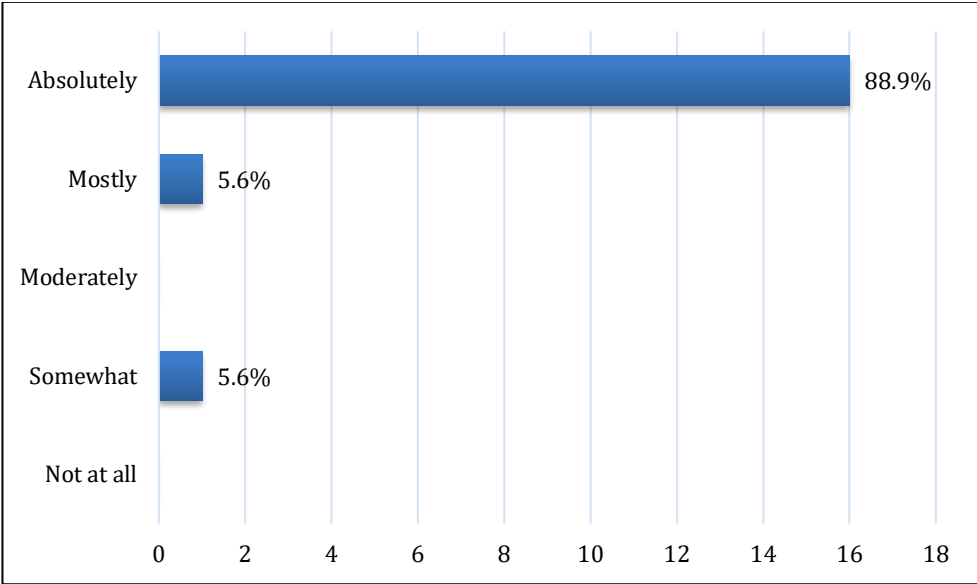
The next question asked 'What type of service did you receive today from the DVAC staff member?' A list of five options were provided including the option of Other where respondents could specify. Respondents could choose more than one answer, resulting in 38 responses. Figure 4 shows almost two-thirds of clients (61.1%, $n=11$) received advocacy with Police from the DVS staff member, less than half (44.4%, $n=8$) received Education on Domestic Violence, and 38.9% ($n=7$) received both Safety Planning and Court Information. Five clients provided written responses that included assistance with court orders, legal support around this, provision of a phone, and emotional support and calming tools.

Figure 4 What type of service did you receive today from the DVAC staff member?



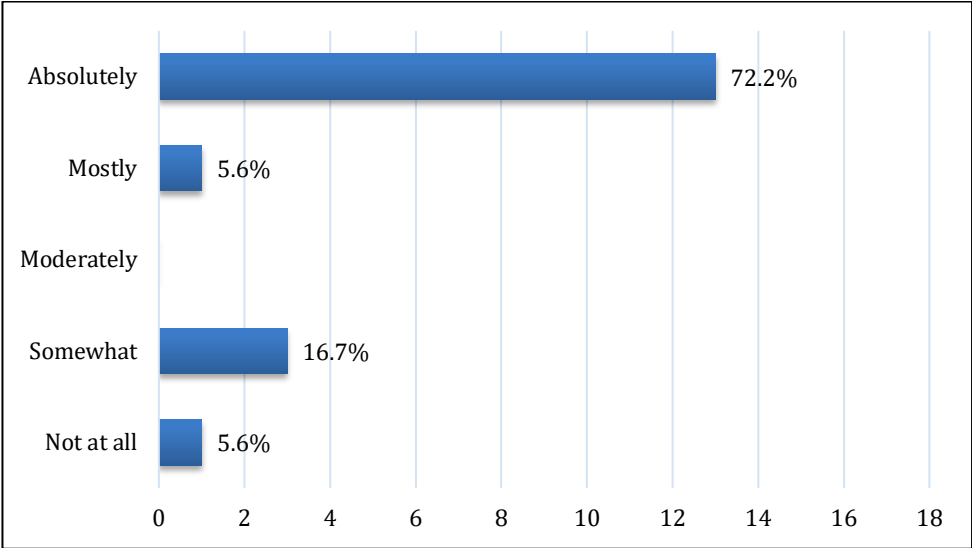
Clients were then asked ‘Did you feel heard, understood and respected by your DVAC worker?’. A list of five options were provided ranging from ‘Not at all’ to ‘Absolutely’. Figure 5 shows the vast majority of clients (88.9%, $n=16$) reported they were Absolutely heard, understood and respected by their DVAC worker, while two clients selected Mostly ($n=1$) and Somewhat ($n=1$).

Figure 5 Did you feel heard, understood and respected by your DVAC worker?



Following on, clients were asked ‘Do you feel more comfortable speaking to police as a result of your appointment today?’. A list of five options were provided ranging from ‘Not at all’ to ‘Absolutely’. Figure 6 shows almost three quarters of clients (72.2%, n=13) reported they Absolutely felt more comfortable speaking to police as a result of their appointment. The remaining clients selected Somewhat (n=3), Mostly (n=1) and Not at all (n=1).

Figure 6 Do you feel more comfortable speaking to police as a result of your appointment today?



The first open-ended question asked, ‘Is there anything that the DVAC Police Liaison worker could do better’. The second asked, ‘Is there any feedback you would like to give to the DVAC worker?’ Client responses were brief and were coded as three themes: Positive (18); Suggestions (4); Police critique (2).

Feedback was largely positive and very appreciative of the support provided by the worker. A selection of quotes from the 18 responses follow:

My experience so far has been professional and caring. I feel safe and supported. (CS2)

The support I have received from [the worker] during such a difficult time helped me immensely. Having someone that understands, is compassionate and knows what to expect at court and the police station

available took a lot of the anxiety out of my experience. Also connecting me to their services such as a solicitor with experience and understanding of family separation and parenting. (CS9)

The worker is absolutely amazing. Knowing that she is there to support & help through such traumatic events is comforting & reassuring. The worker is gentle, caring, and her role working alongside the police with DV victims is vital. The worker is extremely professional but yet shows great compassion & understanding. I am so grateful for having her as I have had to deal with police with very serious DV matters. I think her position is vital & necessary. (CS14)

I really appreciate the help and after DV becoming such a normal and regular part of my life, it's nice to get validation and support in trying to stop it. (CS17)

[The worker] is a kind comforting individual. I felt like I wasn't alone. ... Although I have a long way to go, if she hadn't of been there offering play dough and weight blanket, which I'll say really works, I think I would have crumbled. It was a difficult thing to do and still is. Good people like her are needed for women like me. Thank you. (CS8)

There were two suggestions for other service provision. One client stated she would like more information about the service and information about DFV, such as books to read. Another stated, 'Engage with education for everybody. We cannot hide the truth now.'

There were only two negative comments about police.

The way the police acted upon retrieving my belongings from my car ... it was raining whilst I and my aunt who is much older carried heavy stuff. They just watched did not even help, but I was given orders by them in a rude manner. DVAC are terrific maybe they could show officers how to treat people. (CS16)

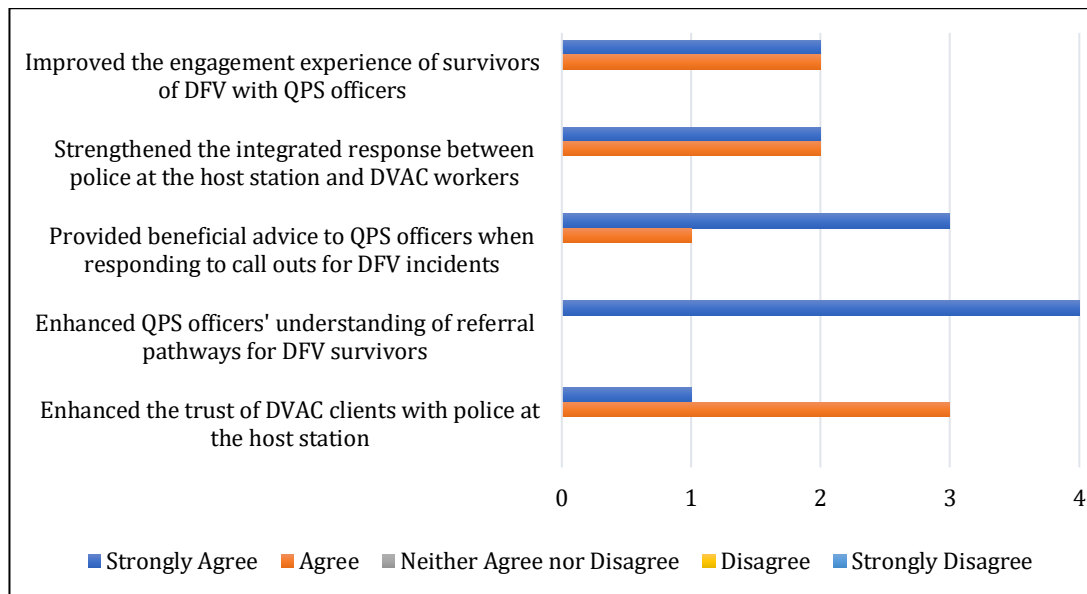
My lack of faith in the police will take positive action on their behalf to change. (CS17)

Worker perspective

Survey

We interviewed DVAC workers about their perspective of the co-location and this involved a survey. The four DVAC workers were asked to provide their level of agreement to five statements regarding the co-location model. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Figure 7 shows there was unanimous Strong Agreement that the co-location model 'Enhanced QPS officers' understanding of referral pathways for DFV survivors'. All DVAC workers Strongly Agreed ($n=3$) or Agreed ($n=1$) that the co-location model 'Provided beneficial advice to QPS officers when responding to call outs for DFV incidents'. All DVAC workers Strongly Agreed ($n=2$) or Agreed ($n=2$) that the co-location model 'Improved the engagement experience of survivors of DFV with QPS officers'. All DVAC workers Strongly Agreed ($n=2$) or Agreed ($n=2$) that the co-location model 'Strengthened the integrated response between Police at the host station and DVAC workers'. DVAC workers reported less strength in agreement that the co-location model 'Enhanced the trust of DVAC clients with police at the host station', as three DVAC workers Agreed to this statement, while one DVAC worker Strongly Agreed.

Figure 7 Please select your level of agreement to each statement regarding the co-location model



Interviews with DVAC workers were coded to identify common themes and are reported in Table 9. Most of these themes mirrored the Literature Review about co-located DFV services and/or themes identified in police interviews. The themes are used to structure the discussion of DVAC worker interview data.

Table 9 Themes from DVAC interviews

Theme	Count
Learnings	12
Challenges	11
Benefits workers	10
Benefits client	9
Benefits police	9
Overcoming challenges	6
Future strategy	4
Limitations	4

Strengths

Client support

DVAC interviewees discussed the benefits of the embedded DVS worker to the clients. This included the emotional support the worker provided.

Just breathing. Just making sure that they are feeling grounded, such as having their feet on the floor, and that they understand exactly what's going on ... if I feel the officer is going too fast, I can advocate and ask for them to slow down. One thing that I really noticed in those early days at the station, is that all of the women that I saw were doing the same thing, picking at their nails. I don't see that here at the DVAC office when I sit in a room with a woman. Before police have even started the interview, she is already picking at her nails or fingers. For me, this opened my eyes to how nerve wracking attending the police station can be for people experiencing domestic violence and the role anxiety and fear play in how they present and interview. Police are focused on the task, they miss the emotional stuff. I started bringing weighted blankets and playdough with me to the station, and started offering this to women as an alternative. Just to see if that made a difference and made the experience a little more comfortable. (DVAC3)

[The worker] uses like playdough as a fidget tool and weighted blankets when women are feeling really heightened in the setting of giving a statement. (DVAC1)

Police are law enforcement officers first and foremost. They are not trained social workers with the skill set to respond in a trauma informed way to emotionally charged situations, such as when women who have experienced DFV are making police statements. The presence of the DVS worker who has these skills complements the skills of police.

The worker's presence at the station also had positive outcomes for women's reporting of breaches of DVOs, as an DVAC interviewee explains:

I have a lot of women who are hesitant to report breaches. And there's a lot of anxiety around trusting that process, but being able to say, to the women I work with, 'hey there's actually someone who's just like me up at the station who understands domestic violence, understands what you're going through. ... She's going to be there to support you to report those breaches.' ... Then I message [the worker] that 'My client's going up to report' or 'This is my understanding what the breaches are and how this process is going to go.' So there's just kind of what's almost like a *warm handover*. And I would say I have noticed an increase in my clients feeling more comfortable to report breaches. (DVAC2, emphasis added)

Another DVAC worker explained how having an embedded worker in at the Toowoomba station has improved referral pathways:

I was thinking that the process for us to get a client from my intake phone line to a supportive environment in the police station around reporting breaches ... has massively improved. There's no doubt about that. But I guess in terms of referral pathways back into DVAC, *there's no doubt there's a massive improvement*. (DVAC1, emphasis added)

The DVS worker's presence at the station, development of the relationship between police and the worker, and police awareness of the worker's presence and services available also amounted to increased referrals to DVAC services (see Table 7). This also led to increased referrals from surrounding regions with word spreading of the service and its benefits amongst police. In addition to the on-the-spot emotional support and advocacy provided by the worker, the increase in referrals from police translates to increased service connection and support provision for clients.

DVAC benefits

DVAC interviewees reported information sharing as a key benefit of the close contact with police; this amounted to improved safety planning and service connection for women reporting DFV to QPS Toowoomba. This was a particular benefit for cases from the High Risk Panel. For example:

We can get the information quicker and faster, and women aren't sitting in a space of worry and not being able to safety plan. (DVAC2)

I used to coordinate the High Risk Panel that we operate here, and I handed the reins over when [the worker] took over. ... And I think the benefit of the person in this role then coordinating some of the high risk matters, had a really positive outcome and just, you know so much more information got shared and it was just such a better flow. I think that's been really helpful. (DVAC1)

I think it really helps that balance in the High Risk Panel as well ... it means that I can have easy access ... and sourcing that information quickly and fast. (DVAC 2)

The DVS worker mentioned that, even though the panel meets monthly, conversations around this happen on a day-to-day basis. This improves awareness of and response to these cases. The worker's field diary and work undertaken data also provided evidence of the two-way information exchange, enabling immediate follow up and efficiency in making referrals for service and safety planning.

DVAC has been able to provide police with items to hand to clients with emergency contact numbers for support to victims/survivors. The worker's field diary states that police thought this was a clever

idea and wanted more of these items to keep in their kits to provide when out in the field. This further improves contact with DVAC aiding support and connection for clients.

Benefits for police

The DVAC interviewees recognised how the embedded worker at Toowoomba station enhanced police appreciation of the services offered by DVAC. Moreover, police learnt the importance of a victim-centred and trauma informed approach to DFV victims, and the DVS worker can empower victims/survivors with information and advice to make informed decisions. This is something police do not have the discretion to do under *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act (DFVPA) 2012*. The following comments illustrate this key benefit.

I think some of it is still about that very basic embedding the fact that DVAC is a valuable resource, and DVAC's knowledge and awareness around DFV is really helpful. I think tapping into that early and probably embedding in those first year constables that that's been really critical. ...

I think that [the worker's] been a really good face for us [at DVAC], because I know sometimes we can be seen as too, like, gooey and like not helpful and [those not in] human services can have that perception. (DVAC2)

Even getting [police] to recognise that therapeutic tools are not lofty. They're like tangible things that can make somebody's experience so much better. ... They used take the piss out of [the worker] and her weighted blankets, but now they are like, 'hey [the worker], can you come with one of those weighted blankets?' (DVAC1)

I think with that greater understanding that we try and really go with what the woman wants. It's an understanding that we're not just doing nothing. We're actually really trying to be like person-centred and go with what the client wants at that point in time. (DVAC2)

In addition to conducting some formal training with first year constables, it was clear from the field diary how the worker made efforts to shift police perspective about aspects of DFV in day-to-day discussion around specific clients. For example, the worker would discuss with officers:

- clients who may not accept a referral and potential reasons for this
- why women would be hesitant to contact police
- why clients may want to withdraw court orders, and other ways to support these clients
- the intersectional aspects of DFV experience
- coercive control
- high risk indicators to demonstrate why a case should be regarded as a police order application rather than a private application.

These in-context conversations with general duties officers on a day-to-day basis have the potential to influence police practice more than abstract workshops or online trainings, or to supplement such training strengthening its practical application.

The placement of the embedded worker also aided DVAC to understand the police perspective:

I think that [the worker] has really given us greater insight into the perspective of the police, and greater empathy, as well. You know because they're here around the high risk responses that they have to go through and it makes you understand the police mindset ... So I think that's really helpful and she really made us understand that there's a lack of resourcing and policing. So I think it's really helpful to understand that perspective, more ... Also understanding ... that police will follow up on a breach, but then it's actually the court system who doesn't. (DVAC2)

These responses and the response of the police discussed in the next section demonstrate that the embedded DVS worker enhanced understanding of limitations and mindsets in mutually beneficial ways for both the DVAC and the QPS.

The placement of the embedded worker also aided trust in police. as other DVAC employees knew the worker was the station to support clients in their engagement with police

I would say it also gives me faith in what the response could be as well because I know there's an ally, sitting in that station (with) ... a trauma informed domestic violence practice framework behind them. (DVAC1)

This is also evident in survey data with all DVAC workers responding positively (Strongly Agree=3 and Agree=1) that the co-located model Enhanced the trust of DVAC clients with police.

Other benefits could be gleaned from the worker's field diary. The worker was able to identify technical and procedural issues. These included: detail fields filled out by services and sent to police using the police referral system not coming through on the police's end; and the location of the initiating station being listed on statements leading to some clients being hesitant to report due to fear of being found by the respondent. Due to the close working relationship with police, the DVS worker was able to raise these issues with local senior police or the District Domestic Violence Coordinator. Although some issues were unable to be resolved, the DVS worker was able to connect with other police stations and District Domestic and Family Violence Coordinators so that women could report breaches in another location (Ipswich, Brisbane, Dalby). The worker would complete safety planning and upgrades prior to aiding these women in reporting breaches. However, some women still decided not to report breaches as the risk of being located was too high.

For DVAC interviewees, benefits of emotional support, information exchange, and service awareness are clear. In the view of the interviewees, these amounted to increased referrals and improved reporting around breaches. This is also supported by quantitative data (see also, Table 7, Figures 5, 6, 7, 8). Secondary benefits include improved trust between QPS and DVAC as well as a greater understanding of each other's perspective including service limitations. DVAC interviewees also observed an improved understanding by police of the benefit of emotional support to victims/survivors. Together these benefits translate to improved responses to victims/survivors when reporting DFV to Toowoomba police station.

Challenges and overcoming them

Working in a police station was a novel idea and experience for DVAC and the embedded worker, and not unexpectedly the placement came with some challenges from the worker's perspective.

The placement was challenging at first with police being unsure of the worker's role or how she could assist them in their duties. Due to the roster structure, this also meant meeting a new team of general duties officers (120 at the station) each week, over a four week period, as she explained:

A DVAC team leader sat with me on the first day and then it was just me. I have had to be flexible with my boundaries as a worker but also know when to hold strong boundaries as a professional in this space. My fears of being rejected in the space have been disproved and have only resulted in a better understanding of the role one another play in the DV space.

Not many people on the ground at the station knew I was coming or about the role being created. This made my role harder in those early days because they had no idea who I was or why I was there. It was like I suddenly appeared at the station, not an officer, but sitting right next to officers and exposed to their everyday. (DVAC3)

The early entries in the DVS worker's field diary notes that general duties officers were initially hesitant to engage. At the commencement of her placement, there was interest in her role from specialist officers, such as training and mental health specialists. She quickly identified the need to introduce herself at the front counter on arrival, and this resulted in further referrals and rapport building. She also quickly identified a need to conduct some introductory training to general duties officers explaining what her role was and how she could assist them in responding to reports of DFV.

Once she ran introductory sessions around her role and the services provided, for five teams over five weeks, and developed rapport with some higher ranked officers, general duties police began to engage her services more, as she explained:

I had rapport with a high rank officer before I started at the station through supporting a client. This was someone the general duties officers looked up to. This officer began supporting me at my talks and saying 'This is how [The worker] has helped me and this is what the result was.' Having an ally in this space who believed in the role and could speak to the work I had done, helped me in building trust and rapport within the station. (DVAC3)

After her role was extended to four days a week and for a further nine months, the embedded DVS worker was provided with a drawer and locker indicating being further welcomed by police. She had finally become part of the police family.

While she had DVAC support and supervision,⁴ she felt that her external DVAC supervisor was unable to provide the support required. Through the District QPS Domestic and Family Violence Coordinator, the worker found a supervisor that had experience in working with police and this provided her with more appropriate support for the role.

I sought external supervision ... that had links to QPS. She is a psychologist who has experienced working alongside QPS in the domestic violence space ... This has been a big change for me in the last few months in the role because there's someone there that understands what it's like from the inside, the challenges and the benefits of working closely with QPS. She has been able to provide advice and validate my experiences and we have been able to work together to overcome obstacles that my leadership team at DVAC might not have had experience in. (DVAC3)

The worker also discussed managing challenges of boundaries by learning to tune out of conversations, wearing headphones while working, and making the scope and limits of her role and DVAC support clear to general duties police officers.

Two key learnings emerge for DVAC from these challenges. Introduction to each policing team is critical for orientation of the embedded worker to the station, and for the station to the embedded worker's role. Important here are key allies with officers and station leadership utilising the service and discussing its benefits with other police. Developing relationships with these key allies should commence prior to placement in future. External supervision from someone with policing knowledge and engagement experience from the beginning is also important so that the embedded worker can receive appropriate workplace support.

⁴ In social work, supervision is 'a forum for reflection and learning. ... an interactive dialogue between at least two people, one of whom is a supervisor. This dialogue shapes a process of review, reflection, critique and replenishment for professional practitioners. Supervision is a professional activity in which practitioners are engaged throughout the duration of their careers regardless of experience or qualification' (Davys and Beddoe 2010: 21).

Limitations

DVAC interviewees identified a number of limitations of the placement the embedded DVS worker with QPS. Limitations included the fact that one embedded worker is not sufficient to appropriately serve the entire police district that extends beyond Toowoomba.

The realisation that it's not necessarily enough. The realisation that the region we cover is so big, that there's such a void in equity around the services that people receive depending on where they are, and the people that are most disadvantaged often, the women that live out west of our region, don't have access to these kinds of services ... I think that's the biggest thing is realising that this is such a massive gap. (DVAC1)

One of the limitations identified by the DVAC interviewees was the precarious funding model of the embedded worker. This pilot was funded by DVAC using funds allocated the COVID pandemic. When that funding expires the role will cease.

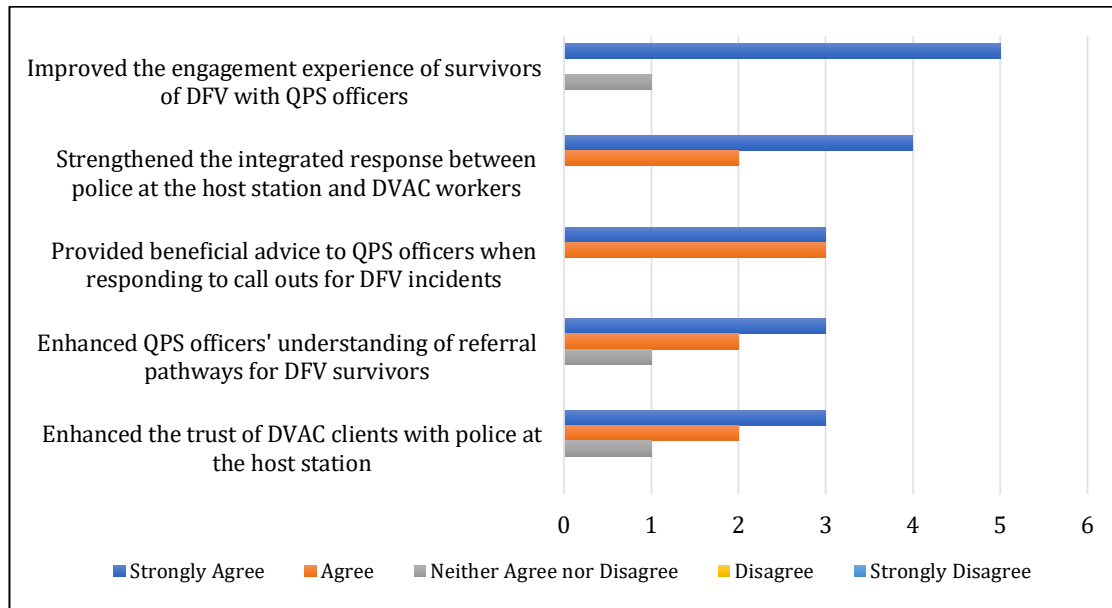
I think it would be criminal, for want of a better word, if there wasn't some way to continue this movement forward. Yeah, and like I've already said, to expand it to other areas would be fabulous. Yeah, even on a rotational basis because I think, you know, like you were saying before, around the cross pollination of information and sharing, even that just integrated service system approach and that networking is so critical in that space. If we can build trust, particularly out in the regional areas for our service. I feel like then [the police] might actually utilise us better. (DVAC1)

Police perspective

Survey

We interviewed police officers about their perspective of the co-location and this involved a survey. Six QPS officers were asked about their level of agreement to five statements regarding the co-location model. Figure 8 shows most officers ($n=5$) Strongly Agreed the co-location model 'Improved the engagement experience of survivors of DFV with QPS officers', while one officer Neither Agreed nor Disagreed to this statement. All officers Strongly Agreed ($n=4$) or Agreed ($n=2$) the co-location model 'Strengthened the integrated response between police at the host station and DVAC workers'. All officers Strongly Agreed ($n=3$) or Agreed ($n=3$) that the co-location model 'Provided beneficial advice to QPS officers when responding to call outs for DFV incidents'. There were diverse levels of agreement that the co-location model 'Enhanced QPS officers' understanding of referral pathways for DFV survivors' and 'Enhanced the trust of DVAC clients with police at the host station' with 50% who Strongly Agreed ($n=3$), one-third Agreed ($n=2$) and one officer who Neither Agreed nor Disagreed to these statements.

Figure 8 Please select your level of agreement to each statement regarding the co-location model

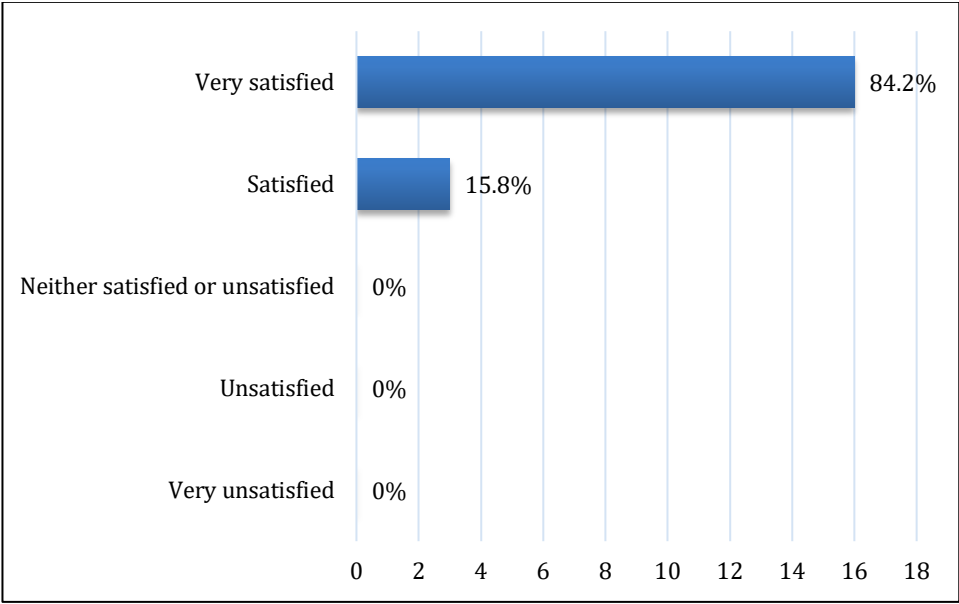


DVAC surveys of police

The DVAC surveys of police also revealed that 100% of police who completed the survey were Satisfied with the impact of the embedded worker on their ability to better respond to DFV and of these 84% Very Satisfied. Most officers ($n=17$) received support with or for a client and two

responded that they received support with 'other', specifying 'information' and 'information sharing'. Police were asked 'How satisfied are you with the support provided today?' and 16 reported that they were very satisfied and three reporting that they were satisfied. In response to the question 'Do you think the worker is beneficial to the station?', all 19 respondents selected 'yes'. Quotes from officers from this survey are integrated into the discussion below and denoted with 'PS' to signify police survey respondent.

Figure 9 Police satisfaction with embedded DFV worker



Police interviews undertaken by the evaluation research team were coded to identify common themes (see Table 10). Most of these themes mirrored the Literature Review about co-located DFV services and/or interviews with DVAC workers. The themes are used to structure the discussion of police interview data.

Table 10 Themes from police survey and interviews

Client support	33
Benefits police (Communication and efficiency)	30
Positive general	22
Future strategy	19
Benefits police (Knowledge)	9

Challenges	9
Learnings	7
Client police relation aid	5
Client information (police/law procedures)	4
Benefits police (other)	2
Overcoming challenges	1

Strengths

Client support

Police recognised the broad benefits of the service to clients, such as providing trauma informed victim-centred emotional support, information about support services, and information about police and legal processes.

Police widely appreciated the emotional support the worker provided women who came to their station to report DFV, for instance:

Provided heavy blanket and aids to assist/calm the victim which aided in providing a statement. I believe face to face contact with referred person has a higher chance of engagement with support services and enables targeted support. (PS4)

Provided the aggrieved with good support and advice. Assisted while I was doing the statement, aggrieved was upset and blaming herself, DVAC provided her support to which she opened up more and which in hand helped me complete the statement. (PS8)

Her interactions with stakeholders, victims and officers within QPS Toowoomba is greatly assisting victims in navigating what can be a stressful and traumatic experience. (PS9)

Police interviewed were also appreciative just how much the social work skills of the DVS worker complemented their law enforcement duties, providing the victim/survivor with more support, and

leading them to be more willing (rather than typically reluctant) to make an official statement about their experience of DFV. In the words of one police officer:

Just having that DVAC worker here has just helped all of us. ... It has been brilliant having [the worker] there so, yeah, again just little things that we said like, ... she gives [items with service contact numbers], weighted blankets, or she just looks after the emotional side a lot more as well. So we as police we tend to switch off a little bit. [The worker] has a lot of time to spend a lot of time with them as well. (PI1)

We're enforcement, whereas [the worker's] about care and welfare. We don't do care and welfare well, I'm not a social worker. So we've got that contact now where [the worker] can effectively social work with those people. (PI4)

Police valued the service information and therapeutic aids, as well as the referrals the worker provided to those victims/survivors who came to the station.

Able to explain supports available, provide phone numbers, information and other products to support victims. Current worker has great knowledge of victims and families and was able to provide information to support the victim/ aggrieved when dealing with police. (PS2)

The police interviewed also appreciated the way that the co-located DVS worker could explain, in a trauma informed victim-centred way, information about police and legal process to victims/survivors in a way that law enforcement officers could not.

Because [the worker] can talk to them in a completely different way to how we can talk to an aggrieved. So she gets people in and goes, 'how do we do this, what do we do?' you know. She can enlighten them about, probably because we're such an offense based system And they go, 'righto. We understand where police are coming from'. (PI4)

Someone like [the worker] who's not a police officer explained to the aggrieved, like she might recommend having charges referred by police, so it's good coming from someone that isn't a police officer because also, ... like if you're a police officer, [the perspective] coming from an outsider, as well also saying that, that's beneficial then. (PI1)

Another police officer explained how having the support of the DVS worker onsite helps interrupt the cycle of violence, and thus acts as a form of prevention to prevent revictimisation and potentially a case escalating to homicide.

You talk about a Vulnerable Persons Unit and they look at that serious back end of it ... but [the worker's] trying to get in at the ground, to stop it getting to that serious back end. And that's where as QPS ... we don't get into that back end to provide that extra care from the outside, whereas [the worker] does provide that extra care to get in that back end, to prevent it getting to murder case. ... *She breaks that cycle.* If we can get some assistance in earlier to break the cycle, then we might get someone out of a relationship, so they're not going to be that vulnerable person. (PI4, emphasis added)

This officer also noted the impact of the DVS worker on prevention from the view of the respondent.

Interviewer: So, would it be fair to say then that this integrative process is a win-win for everybody, the aggrieved, QPS, and DVAC?

Interviewee: Definitely. Yeah. I think, you know, hopefully to respondents as well because then the respondent can see, 'It's not just the police that are chasing me.' An aggrieved has got that support elsewhere so the respondent knows, 'If I go and do something, it's not just going to be the police that again do something to make sure that this doesn't occur.' ... So it all works in together. It's great for the aggrieved, but I think also that there's little back end bit a bit as well. (PI4)

Networks and services

Having onsite access to the co-located DVAC service meant that police could take advantage of the DVS worker's knowledge in terms of networks and services, in addition to her complementary skills. This quote from a police officer explains how:

[The worker] is another point of contact for us with the community, she's someone else that we can refer people to get assistance for them. Be a simple thing like you have a domestic violence aggrieved that doesn't have a mobile phone because her partner may have destroyed it. With things like that, [the worker] can organise that mobile phone. Yes, we will take that mobile phone out to her, but [the worker] has that contact and those people that can do those things for us. But [the worker] is also a source of information in regards to other agencies. (PI4)

This support went wider than the jurisdiction of the station with police from other regional areas seeking support. The District Domestic and Family Violence Coordinator at Toowoomba police station is responsible for a very large rural and regional district of Queensland. Once word spread about the value of the co-located worker to smaller stations in the district, the worker was able to provide connections to other supports local to those regions.

We have [the worker] here, and the beauty is, with the Domestic and Family Violence Liaison Officer and the Coordinator, she knows what [the worker] can do, what she can provide to those outside stations with, particularly with their problem DV situations. ... She can say 'hey, talk to [the worker] and see what else we can do for that person.' ... [The worker] might not have someone immediately in that area, but I can guarantee [the worker] will find someone in that area that can assist at some kind. ... She would work on a network that I wouldn't even dream to have access to. That's how they work. She would know that there's no DVAC that looks after someone in Goondiwindi but it might be someone in Bergen or might be someone in Kingaroy or it might be someone elsewhere, that's with a completely

differently named NGO, and she goes, 'Oh, they do the same job as me'. She'll shoot an email to them. We don't have that contact. (PI4)

The co-located worker's support also went wider than DFV issues.

[The worker] knows how to use the system when it comes to interpreters completely differently to us. ... [the worker's] contact with interpreters is more based on the welfare of people. ... but I've had a couple of people come to the counter about things, and [the worker] goes 'Do you want me to talk to them? I can get an interpreter to do this and this because it's a more a welfare issue.' And I go 'Can you do that for me?' She goes 'Yes, yeah, I'm happy to do that for you.' She trots back and explains to me, 'This is what I found out'. Righto, now we know where we are, so then we can engage. (PI4)

Communication and efficiency

The onsite access enabled ease of communication for police in terms of seeking information to support clients and the exchange of information about cases. Below are a selection of quotes that illustrate this point.

I found it very useful that the DVAC worker was in the station. It allowed me to complete my job quickly and effectively. Communication was easy as well due to the worker being so close. (PS5)

Was able to confirm DVAC were working with the aggrieved and they were able to provide further assistance to the aggrieved immediately. (PS19)

We have the same clients all the time and we both know all the people that are involved. Like, I don't even have to brief [the worker] anymore. I go, 'this is a respondent.' She goes 'yep, I'm onto it,' straightaway. (PI1)

We've had instances where my staff have come back, they've been to a domestic violence job of some kind and ... they are talking to me seeking

advice. [The worker] will be sitting over next to this and typing away, and her ears will prick up right up and she'll hear something and she'll come in when she goes, 'Oh, we've had involvement in this matter through DVAC', which is not something that shows up on your system. ... It may not necessarily change our involvement or our dealing with that matter, but what it will do is give us a bit of a focus right. 'This is what we need to do. We can talk to [the worker] about it.' It will also give [the worker] and DVAC something further that they can do, try and break that cycle together. (PI4)

In instances where cases fit within the DFV Information Sharing Guidelines (Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services 2017), such as high risk cases, or where consent to share information is in place, the co-location enabled quick and efficient sharing about cases improving the speed to which the police and the worker can provide appropriate response and supports.

Some officers specifically mentioned the high risk cases.

[The worker] was the perfect person because we follow the high risk ones, that normally get referred on to [the worker] all the time, so [the worker] and I had that rapport for ages with the regards all the same clients, so yeah it was perfect having [the worker] in that spot. (PI1)

There was a very high risk aggrieved person ... I went around personally, myself and just knocked on the aggrieveds door just to make sure that she was okay. ... She had no means of communication ... her mobile phone was broken by the offender. ... I come back and explained it to [the worker] and within five minutes [the worker] was up at the location and had given her one of those DVAC issue mobile phones. So for me, that was an incredible result. (PI2)

Information sharing and efficiency was a benefit even when the worker was not on site.

[The worker] attends DV Court as well. So when my Sergeant and I can't go, which I normally can't go to court, so [the worker] will go in. Then she'll fill me in on how respondents and aggrieveds have reacted during the day and then we'll put a plan in place for that, and that's been very helpful. (PI1)

When she's not here. I'll just flick her an email and she'll get it as soon as she gets in and she attends to it. (PI3)

The access to quick communication and information also enabled efficiency.

You know when people come into the counter and they need those little things that [the worker] can help out with. It saves so much time in having to contact someone to try and get their service. (PI2)

The efficiency of having access to on-site support for victims/survivors was also appreciated. With the embedded worker, police could provide victims/survivors with an integrated one-stop shop response that goes beyond law enforcement, and includes safety planning, referrals and other supports. This is how one police officer explained the value of co-location:

It's all one place. I don't have to go drive to DVAC or go somewhere else. Everything's just here like with [the worker], she'll have [things] here ready for us. We don't have to pick them up from the office or something. So they'll ... do a statement with me, see [the worker], ... and then they don't have to go anywhere else then (PI1)

Officers speculated on the adverse effects of no longer having the worker at the station, referring to it as a 'backstep for sure' (P13).

Interviewee: It would take longer to get good outcomes for the aggrieved, yeah, it would take longer.

Interviewer: So everything would have to go back to the way it was which is sitting on the phone waiting for DVAC to respond?

Interviewee: Yeah, and email correspondence or phone calls.

Interviewer: And having to send the aggrieved to a different place?

Interviewee: Yes, so it'd be a backstep for sure. (PI3)

Efficiency also enabled police to continue with the core business of police work.

Before it just, it takes a lot of time away from the crews as well like having [the worker] here and instead of like ringing DVAC during the shift to try and arrange a mode of accommodation or something. They know to ask [the worker] and she will sort it for them, so and they can go on and do their business at other jobs and stuff. So it's been a big thing. (PI1)

With general duties (officers), you can't really build that rapport, [they] just go job to job to job. So that's why it's been good with [the worker]. Go give [the worker] all the details and [the worker] will just build good rapport with [the aggrieved] as well ... so we sort of take that out of the hands of general duties police as well. (PI1)

Police legitimacy

One of the most significant reasons why women are seemingly so reluctant to seek police assistance relating to DFV is that police lack legitimacy. Police cannot be trusted to believe them, to take actions consistent with victim wishes or even take them seriously. This is an issue widely identified in academic research and by a number of inquiries into the policing of domestic and sexual violence (Douglas 2018; Douglas and Fitzgerald 2019; Ragusa 2013; Royal Commission 2016; Shircore et al 2017; Special Taskforce 2015). One of the significant virtues of the co-located model for QPS was surmounting the lack of trust, aiding the ability of the police to respond.

I think that is vitally important because of, I think, some of the clear barriers that exist for groups communicating with police, and some of the implications that has, so it's always good. (PI5)

[The worker] has a lot of time to spend a lot of time with [the aggrieved] as well. Because [the worker] has been doing that, a lot more trust is getting

built like with police as well. Yeah, they find it's a lot more trustworthy speaking to police. (PI1)

This victim found it difficult to speak with police without a support worker present, I was able to complete my job with the help of the DVAC worker. (PS15)

This is also supported by survey data with most police responding Strongly Agree ($n=3$) and Agree ($n=2$) to the statement the co-location model enhanced the trust of DVAC clients with police.

Legitimacy was also improved in terms of the relationship between DVAC and QPS.

I think, from their perspective, it's probably a really healthy thing for us to allow someone from DVAC in, so it's probably got more potential to break down perceptions about what those people have of police. I think there's probably a lot of people in DVAC who I know from comments that I hear in the community that sometimes have a negative perception of the police. And I think it's probably a very helpful thing for [the worker] to see what the police are really like, and for her to go to DVAC and say, 'that's not what they're like.' (PI2)

Generally beneficial

Overall QPS officers interviewed were impressed with the general benefits of having a well-integrated complementary response to law enforcement to support victims/survivors. By working together, they have a better chance to break the cycle of violence than working alone and the victims/survivors of DFV receive a better quality service that is more comforting and empathetic.

We're very much focused on solve the initial problem, and move on to the next one ... And to be honest I don't think a lot of us would have the skills and also the knowledge of all the support services that is needed to give that support. *Yeah, so it's totally complementary.* (PI5, emphasis added)

So, the social work and the law enforcement has to go hand in hand. It is the one area where that has to happen because if we don't, just doing [law enforcement] isn't gonna solve the domestic violence problem. Yeah, and just doing the social work side of it isn't gonna break the cycle either ... Together I think it's a lot easier to break the cycle than separate it. (PI4)

I feel more, more confident knowing that the police ... here have got more of an understanding of, you know what the women, how scared they can be of their partner. Because they deal with a lot of DV. Especially the new first years, you know, they haven't had a lot of experience with DV. But after, you know, speaking with [the worker] and getting information off [the worker] on how to how to best protect the aggrieved. They're a lot more confident when they go and speak to the aggrieved. That in turn makes the aggrieved, more comfortable. (PI3)

Challenges and overcoming them

Police were cautious about the placement of a civilian within the station and initially had a few concerns. The QPS officers at Toowoomba were uncertain about how the co-location role would operate, especially with general duties officers sitting within a short distance from the worker's work station. The worker was deliberately placed in sight and close to the counter to enhance her integration into the station, and to encourage the 120 general duties police to regard the DVAC worker 'just like a piece of furniture effectively, which makes it so easy' (PI1) and as part of the police family.

Just like with the worker, for some officers, developing rapport took a bit of time due the roster structure of the station. In the beginning as one officer explained: 'So, to start with it wasn't so much, it wasn't the mistrust, it was just the unknown. With the trepidation of the unknown what are we stepping into' (PI1). One officer described his initial hesitance and change in perspective:

After 33 years in this job you get some pretty set ways that you do things.
... if you were to say to me even 18 months ago, we're going to have a social worker sit at the police station. I would have gone, 'Don't waste my time.'

However, after seeing her here, in her role I can't rave enough about how good she's been here. (PI4)

Another key concern raised during the interviews by officers was how the DVS worker would fit in a police station environment in terms of organisational culture generally and with specific concerns about swearing and dark humour.

I'm a very loud out there, robust, and not afraid to speak my mind, don't hold my p's and q's. ... I got told on a number of occasions 'you're going to have to watch yourself' because I'm notorious for dropping swear words. (PI4)

However, this concern never eventuated, partly because of the exceptional boundary maintenance, and people skills of the DVS worker, but also the willingness of police to accept her advice, to see it as complementary and to value her as part of the police response to DFV. One police interviewee described the challenge and how it was overcome in these terms.

It was a really interesting challenge for us, and I didn't know how my staff would react to it because police especially the general duties police. They go in and do their work out on the road, then go to the dayroom area where they talk about it. Yeah, is the only place where they can then speak about the job that they've been, to debrief with each other. For them it's a very secure and safe environment, yes. And sometimes, perhaps you know speak about things inappropriately, but that's their way of dealing with a stressful situation ... She's gonna have to probably have a very thick skin because different police deal with things in different ways. Yeah, I thought we'd have a lot of issues with her overhearing inappropriate conversations or my troops being worried that they can't speak freely in their workplace anymore because there's some outsider coming in. And there really hasn't been any of that at all. (PI2)

At the beginning, the stakes and risks of having a non-QPS officer work alongside officers were high:

Simply the challenge was having someone who's not a QPS member embedded in your workplace. ... So it's quite unique that we just have a person who we have no control over, really. So it was a bit of a risk for us. Not just for that person listening to our goings on, but that they can be exposed to a lot of information that no other member of the public would be. So, big, big risk for us in that respect, and also vice versa you know if the person turned up here and was a really inappropriate person, I couldn't discipline that person, or I couldn't control their behaviour. So it's a unique situation that can, or could present a lot of issues if you don't have the right person. (PI2)

Challenges and anxieties were soon overcome as officers adapted to the worker's presence and she was seen to be a good fit for the station. The worker came to be seen as part of the station family.

I thought that would take a while, but people were very receptive to her, because she was able to pretty early on give these police these little things that could make their job easier. (PI2)

[She fit in] really, really smoothly. It's just like she's part of the family already, basically, it didn't take long. I'm saying that she's very approachable, and she's very accommodating, ... and compassionate as well. (PI3)

Interviewer: So she's sort of like almost de facto QPS?

Interviewee: Yeah, de facto QPS. Yes, yeah, yeah, she's good. We love having her here. (PI1)

Future strategy

Police interviewees stated that the embedded DVS worker was needed more often, and that the police district could benefit from the employment of additional co-located workers at QPS Toowoomba, for example:

I can see the benefit to victims and police resources of increasing hours/days of this service. I believe justification of 7 days/wk with maybe 10a-6p shift to cover the time periods for higher calls for service. (PS3)

It has been excellent so far. An additional worker co-located or additional hours of availability would be a huge benefit. (PS16)

Officers surveyed raised suggestions about the provision of a more private space within the station and the possibility of extending the model to a co-responder trial with the worker visiting victims/survivors at their homes, and attending call-outs with police, once the safety risk was neutralised.

The only suggestion would be to have an allocated space for the [worker] to work and speak privately to clients and police away from the noise of the station dayroom—however I understand that this is a station issue with respect of space for this to occur. (PS9)

More access to workers for aggrieved including visits to scene. (PS18)

While recognising the benefits, interviewees were aware of the risk involved in having the worker attend visiting the victim/survivor at the scene. However, the DVS worker does occasionally attend to call outs with police to aid clients in making statements, but only after the perpetrator has been removed and the risk minimised

The police interviewees were supportive of the co-location model becoming a more widespread practice across the QPS.

I think it'd be a massive benefit to any police station, particularly the bigger police stations that have the volume of domestic violence, to the extent that we do. The smaller stations, I would see every one of those police stations benefiting from something like this on a massive scale. (PI4)

All officers interviewed felt that the prospect of the embedded position being discontinued would be a significant loss. Their answers to this question are as follows:

We would all be upset, because [the worker] is a massive asset ... because all the aggrieveds they know that [the worker's] here as well. It'd be a major loss losing [the worker]. ... Yeah would be a huge loss because she really has been so helpful. (PI1)

We'd go back to the way we did business before. And but, it would be a step backwards. ... ultimately at the end of the day, why are we all in this business is to provide the aggrieved people with a better service, it'd be step back for the aggrieved, number one. ... We would move on but the end of the day is, our priority should be about the aggrieved. They wouldn't be getting as many services as they need. (PI2)

I think it would be a massive blow for us ... It'd be a real disappointment. ... The loss would be fairly hard felt I would think ... I'm not a social worker, I'm a police officer. That's all I've done, you know, I know policing very well. But that other sort of thing, now I don't know. Yeah, yeah, it'd be, *it'd be a massive loss, I think for police in Toowoomba.* (PI4, emphasis added)

Outcomes

The aim of the embedded worker is to:

1. Be a link or connection point for client referrals between DVAC and QPS in both directions (DVAC to QPS and QPS to DVAC).

Work undertaken, survey and interview data shows that the embedded DVS worker was a connection point between DVAC and QPS. Qualitative interview data discusses the efficiency and communication benefits of the embedded worker. Survey data also confirms that both QPS officers and DVAC workers regarded the co-location model as assisting client referrals in both directions. In addition, all police officers and DVAC workers selected Strongly Agree or Agree that the co-location model 'Strengthened the integrated response between police at the host station and DVAC workers'.

In 2020/2021, referrals to DVAC via the police system increased by 16% ($n=114$) on the previous year. DVAC referral data shows a significant increase in police system referrals for the five-month period reported to the date of writing (29 November 2021). If the remainder of 2021/2022 continues at the current rate, this will considerably exceed total referrals 2020/2021 by 47%. This increase in referrals to DVAC from police since the worker has been embedded at the station suggests that the worker's close relationship with police increases their awareness of services and the need for DFV support, so they are more likely to refer victims/survivors for support.

Based on this data, this aim has been achieved.

2. Provide assistance to clients presenting at Toowoomba police station reception counter for DFV matters as needed and as capacity allows. This would include assistance for client's general questions around DFV and supporting women to begin their statements relating to DFV/sexual violence (e.g., Provision of weighted blankets and other therapeutic tools as well as emotional support).

Data shows the variety of ways the worker provided assistance to clients. For example, interviewees discussed at length the support the DVS worker provides clients.

Coding from a sample (January, February, May, August, September) of work undertaken data shows this assistance was provided around various codes, such as support (45 instances), court (20 instances), and information (16 instances). One way assistance was provided was through trauma informed support to clients when police were taking their formal statements. The worker used

various tools to calm anxious clients while making statements and spoke to clients before and after speaking to police to provide information about processes. Qualitative client responses speak very positively of the worker's support.

There is less evidence on the provision of support to clients reporting sexual violence but work undertaken coding from a sample of entries shows two cases where support was provided regarding sexual violence. Closer examination of these instances shows similar supports were provided here.

Based on this data, this aim has been achieved.

3. Provide specific case consultation with QPS officers where there is capacity. This would include advice when officers are attending DFV matters, follow-up support for women specifically following call outs, education and support to officers around working with women in trauma.

Case consultation made up a considerable portion of the work undertaken (66.7%). This includes a variety of discussions between the worker and police around: options of referrals and supports that DVAC is able to offer; ways to support and engage the client; follow-up on system referrals and after call outs; high risk cases; and discussion around court cases, including with the police prosecutor.

DVAC interviewees and field work notes discussed the way case consultations influenced police perceptions and understandings of DFV and client needs on a day-to-day basis, outside of formal training. Police reported having a better understanding of client emotional support needs and widely appreciated the convenience of the worker for answering general questions. Police spoke positively about the ability of the embedded worker to follow up support for cases they discussed with her.

This aim has been achieved.

4. Undertake risk management for high risk cases and an integrated approach in relation to this including consultation with QPS, courts, corrections and other relevant services.

The High Risk Panel is an innovative and somewhat unique feature of the Toowoomba region. Evidence of the contribution of the placement in relation to risk management can be seen in coding from a sample of the work undertaken and interview data. From this sample, there were 22 work

items recorded in relation high risk offenders. Interview data also demonstrates the effect of the risk management and integrated approach, such as discussion from police about quick provision of phones provided by the DVS worker, and the implementation other safety upgrades. Two DVAC interviewees noted that the flow of information regarding the High Risk Panel has improved considerably, and the worker mentioned that, even though the panel meets monthly, conversations around this happen on a day-to-day basis.

The worker's placement in the station aided the operation of this Panel and enabled efficient and effective information sharing between QPS, corrections, courts and the worker. This, in turn, enabled the DVS worker to provide swift safety planning and other supports preventing further harm to the victim. The small team and close communications meant efficient information sharing. The worker's membership on the Panel also meant detailed knowledge of referrals received or cases she referred to the Panel.

This aim has been achieved.

DVAC has identified the following objectives for the role:

1. To improve the experience of engagement with QPS for women and individuals who experience domestic violence

There are no pre-program equivalent measures from the host station for comparison, but client surveys, field diary, DVAC surveys of police and interview data suggests women felt comfortable with the worker and were supported by her presence, and that this ensured further engagement with police and the criminal justice system thus increasing client safety. There is less clear data about other clients; however, client surveys did not ask gender. From the sample of work undertaken data, the following types of other clients have been identified: male aggrieveds (2), clients experiencing mental health concerns (3), sibling abuse (1), elder abuse (4), sexual assault (2), child abuse (as part of DFV case) (1). While these still fall under DFV, aspects were unique compared to the majority of cases. From these cases, the provision of similar supports can be identified.

The field diary and interviewee data discuss the visibly calming levels the worker's presence, advocacy and therapeutic tools provided to clients. Of 18 clients surveyed, almost three quarters (72.2%, $n=13$) reported they Absolutely felt more comfortable speaking to police as a result of the

worker's presence. Qualitative comments from client surveys do not specifically mention an improvement of police engagement experience but very positively state appreciation for the worker's presence, information and support.

One measure of improved experiences of engagement with police is victims/survivors reporting breaches of Domestic Violence Orders by respondents to police. Interviewees mentioned a pre-existing hesitance to report breaches and that the reporting of breaches increased since the presence of the worker. An increase in Contravention of DVO charges lodged at Toowoomba courts between the year 2020/2021 (21% increase on 2019/2020) and for 2021/2022 to date (43%) could support this (Queensland Courts 2021). Without statistical testing against all factors and regions this cannot be stated for certain.

From the survey of police and DVAC workers, all but one Strongly Agreed or Agreed that the co-location model 'Improved the engagement experience of survivors of DFV with QPS officers'. From the survey of police and DVAC workers, all but one Strongly Agreed or Agreed that the co-location model 'Enhanced the trust of DVAC clients with police at the host station'. Qualitative data from police surveys conducted by DVAC and from interviews suggests client experiences were improved by the presence of the worker and the support provided. Discussion around police learnings and how the worker's general presence aided changes in police practice also potentially translates to improved experiences.

Combined, this data suggests an improved self-reported engagement with QPS for women who experience DFV.

2. To strengthen the integrated response between the host station and DVAC workers when responding to incidents of domestic and family violence by:

i) Providing real time advice to QPS officers when engaging with aggrieved persons on call outs

There is less data available to measure the provision of real time advice to QPS when they are engaging with victims/survivors on call outs. Of the six police and DVAC workers surveyed, all Strongly Agreed or Agreed that the co-location model 'Provided beneficial advice to QPS officers when responding to call outs for DFV incidents'. There is little discussion of provision of real time support to police responding to call outs in qualitative data.

However, data reflects the provision of extensive real time advice to QPS officers at the station regarding the engagement of victims/survivors. Although not all counts of QPS consultations refer to real time advice when victims/survivors were present, many did include this. During the period 18 January to 30 September 2021, there were 352 QPS consultations, making up 66.7% of work undertaken. This includes a variety of discussions between the worker and police. The benefits of the provision of this support are reflected throughout all the other data, including police and DVAC interviewee discussion of quick communication around cases and supports while clients are at the station.

This integrated response between QPS Toowoomba and DVAC has been strengthened by the real time advice to QPS officers when dealing with victims/survivors.

ii) Increasing QPS officers' understanding of referral pathways and referral options for aggrieved persons

Survey and interview data suggests police understanding of referral pathways and options has increased. Of the police officers and DVAC workers surveyed, all but one Strongly Agreed or the co-location model 'Enhanced QPS officers' understanding of referral pathways for DFV survivors'. Interview data strongly suggests that police understanding of referral pathways and options for victims/survivors improved. In addition, an increase in referrals from the police system has also been recorded and is discussed above under point 1 in the Aims.

This objective has been achieved.

Positive responses from police and DVAC workers to the broader survey question asking whether the co-location model 'Strengthened the integrated response between police at the host station and DVAC workers' also suggests that these objectives have been achieved.

In addition, this report also assesses how this co-located model meets recommendations 76 and 78 from the *Not Now, Not Ever* report (Special Taskforce 2015). These recommendations are:

Recommendation 76: The Taskforce recommends that the Queensland Government establishes a model for inter-agency response to high risk cases which works within, or

complements integrated responses and which is progressively established throughout the state (Special Taskforce 2015: 226).

The High Risk Panel complemented by the DVS worker's placement at the station enabled well integrated inter-agency response as discussed under Aim 4 above. Two DVAC interviewee specifically noted how the co-location of the DVS worker improved the sharing of information around high risk cases. Police interviewees also noted how support for high risk cases was strengthened by the presence of the DVS worker in the station.

This objective for the role has been met.

There is scope for future evaluation of these Panels in other locations, and closer measurement of outcomes in relation to the Panel in the Toowoomba region.

Recommendation 78: The Taskforce recommends that the Queensland Government introduces enabling legislation to allow information sharing between agencies (government and non-government) within integrated responses, with appropriate safeguards. This would include legislative protection for the sharing of information without consent, if a risk assessment indicates it is for the purpose of protecting the safety of the victim and their immediate family (Special Taskforce 2015: 233).

In instances where cases fit within the DFV Information Sharing Guidelines (Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services 2017), the co-location enabled quick and efficient information sharing improving the speed in which the police and the worker, and other agencies, could provide appropriate response and supports. This is evident in a range of data discussing efficiency, communication and the High Risk Panel. Although the research team received no data regarding which information regulations applied to which cases, evidence suggests the DFV Information Sharing Guidelines has aided protection.

This objective for the role has been met.

There is scope for broad government evaluation of the benefits and effectiveness of these guidelines.

Conclusion

Much like the literature reviewed, the co-location introduced benefits from the client, support organisation and police perspective. These included emotional support, information sharing, communication, efficiency, education, access to networks, and improved police legitimacy.

Real time case consults allowed instant information exchange and swift service connection translating into timely, quality and effective support for victims/survivors, but also for police officers. These in-context conversations with general duties officers on a day-to-day basis have the potential to influence police practice more than abstract workshops or online training. Police also learnt about the importance of emotional support, empathy, trauma informed practices, and the value of social work skills, along with and referral options. During the pilot, Toowoomba police enhanced their referrals to DVAC by 16% and is on track to increase the 2020/2021 referral rate by 47%. These changes in police practice have the potential to translate into further improved experiences for victims. In turn, this then leads to improvements in police legitimacy as more clients are satisfied with the outcome of their engagement with police. During the pilot, there was also an increase in the reporting of breaches. This has the potential to prevent cases escalating, thus preventing further harm. Benefits to DVAC and the police translate to benefits to the client, client safety and harm reduction.

Challenges included an initial reluctance to engage with the worker by police which the worker swiftly identified and addressed by running introduction presentations. Close relationships with one or two key officers aided here, and their positive view and visible use of the worker meant others then followed suit. For the worker, external supervision from someone with experience in working with police was also important for appropriate support. Police initially had concerns about police station cultural norms upsetting the embedded worker, but this turned out not to be an issue at all.

The worker's role in the High Risk Panel and existing role in court support two days a week supplemented the integrative opportunities of the embedded placement, strengthening connection and communication with police, clients and other stakeholders. Having the embedded worker as the DVAC representative on the Panel has also improved and the implementation of safety planning and upgrades for clients. There is scope for closer examination of this Panel's outcomes.

Overall, QPS officers interviewed were impressed with the general benefits of having a well-integrated complementary response to law enforcement to support victims/survivors. By working together, they have a better chance to break the cycle of violence than working alone and the victims/survivors of DFV receive a better quality service that is more comforting and empathetic. This approach works toward a key aim from the QPS *Domestic & Family Violence Strategy 2021-2023*: building a victim-centric, trauma informed capability to respond to DFV.

Responding to domestic and family violence requires multi-agency integrated response and it is not something the police can address alone, yet it is task taking a considerable portion of police time. The integration of specialist DFV workers into police stations that support victims and provide connection to services translates to support for the policing of DFV and improves the quality of their response, also saving police time. The combined benefits of co-location can potentially save lives.

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About the Project Team

Professor Kerry Carrington

Kerry Carrington is a research professor in the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Centre for Justice and a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia. She is the lead investigator on two current Australian Research Council projects, the first investigating how to prevent gender violence, and the second on how to improve the policing of gender violence.

Dr Jess Rodgers

Jess Rodgers is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the QUT Centre for Justice. Jess has contributed to research in the School of Justice since 2010, in addition to other schools and institutions. He has undertaken research work in a wide range of topics including policing domestic violence, small town policing, ableism in academia, transgender people in prisons, and creative industries employment.

Vanessa Ryan

Vanessa Ryan is a Senior Research Associate at the QUT Centre for Justice. She has undertaken extensive research on the impact of COVID on domestic and family violence services and their clients in Australia, and is a senior researcher on the Preventing Gendered Violence: Lessons from the Global South project.

Industry Partners

Kathleen Turley

Kathleen Turley is a member of QUT Centre for Justice Stop Domestic Violence Advisory Committee, as well as the Service Manager of Domestic Violence Action Centre Toowoomba. DVAC is the specialist Domestic Violence Service for the Darling and Southern Downs regions

Regan Carr

Regan Carr is an Adjunct Industry Fellow QUT Centre for Justice and a member of the QUT Centre for Justice Stop Domestic Violence Advisory Committee. Following a 34 year policing career she has accumulated strategic operational police management knowledge and has extensive experience working with complex vulnerable community groups in the project environment.

About the Project

This project, Evaluation of a Domestic Violence Action Centre Domestic Violence Specialist co-located in Queensland Police Station, Toowoomba, is funded by a Queensland University of Technology Centre for Justice Practitioner Grant. Empirical research was approved by Queensland University of Technology Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval Number 4268. The research also had ethics approval from Queensland Police Service Research Committee.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Domestic Violence Action Centre Client Survey Instrument

How many times have you had contact with the Police in relation to your DV matters?

-1st time -2-5 times -5-10 times -10+ times

What type of service did you receive today from the DVAC staff member?

-Advocacy with Police -Safety Planning -Court Information -DV Education
-Other (please specify)

Did you feel heard, understood and respected by your DVAC worker?

- Not at all - Somewhat - Moderately - Mostly - Absolutely

Do you feel more comfortable speaking to Police as a result of your appointment today?

- Not at all - Somewhat - Moderately - Mostly - Absolutely

Is there anything that the DVAC Police Liaison worker could do better?

[open field]

Is there any feedback you would like to give to the DVAC worker?

[open field]

Appendix 2 Domestic Violence Action Centre Police Survey Instrument

What type of service did you receive from the DVAC staff member?

- Aggrieved support - Other [Open field]

How satisfied are you with the support provided today?

1 2 3 4 5

1 being least satisfied and 5 being most

Do you think that the DVAC Police Liaison role is beneficial to the Toowoomba Station?

-Yes - No

What supports were provided by the DVAC worker that you found to be most useful in assisting you with a Police and integrated response?

[Open field]

What supports were provided by the DVAC worker that you found to be least useful in assisting you with a Police and integrated response?

[Open field]

The purpose of the DVAC Police Liaison role is to assist clients through providing an integrated response between Police and DVAC. Can you suggest ways to improve this service?

[Open field]

Appendix 3 Queensland University of Technology Research Team Survey and Interview Instrument

Semi-Structured Interview Survey of Pilot Co-Location Program

Information Statement Discussed (Including detailed instructions about how to manage discomfort, ask for a pause in the interview, withdraw consent etc)

- Yes (1)

Consent agreed

- Yes (1)

Section A: Demographic Information

We would like to begin this survey by asking you some questions about yourself. You can skip any question that you do not feel comfortable answering.

1. What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Other (3) _____

Please self describe.

2. Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
-

3. Are you from a linguistic or diverse multi-cultural background?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
-

4. What age group do you belong to?

- 18-30 (1)
 - 31-40 (2)
 - 41-50 (3)
 - 51-60 (4)
 - 61-70 (5)
 - 71 or over (7)
-

5. Where do you work?

Toowoomba Police Station

Domestic Violence Advocacy Centre

Stakeholder in the domestic violence sector

6. How long have you worked in this position?

Less than a year

1-3 years

4-6 years

7-10 years

10-15 years

More than 15 years

7. What kind of work is it? (you can select more than one answer)

- Policing (2)
- Counselling (4)
- Domestic Violence Court Services (5)
- Domestic and/or Sexual Violence Agency (6)
- Legal and Advocacy Sector (7)
- Other (12) _____

8. What vocation best describes your role or job?

- Police Officer (1)
 - Counsellor /Psychologist (5)
 - Social Worker (6)
 - Government Policy Advisor (7)
 - Domestic Violence Worker (9)
 - Other (16) _____
-

9. How many years have you worked in this or a related role?

- less than 3 years (1)
 - 3-5 years (2)
 - 6-8 years (3)
 - 9-11 years (4)
 - 12-15 years (5)
 - more than 15 years (6)
-

10. Have you had any specialist training in responding to gender violence?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
-

11. Would you like more specialist training in responding gender violence?

- Yes (4)
 - No (5)
-

Section B: Experiences with Co-Location Model

The Domestic Violence Advocacy Centre (DVAC) in Toowoomba is conducting a nine-month pilot co-location project with Queensland Police Service (QPS) beginning mid-January 2021 and ending 30 September 2021. The initiative is a joint project with QPS Toowoomba and DVAC Toowoomba and has been fully funded by DVAC from COVID funds.

Description (Paraphrase or hand out as separate sheet)

DVAC Domestic Violence Specialist (DVS) co-located in QPS Toowoomba station 2 days a week.

The role of DVS is to provide:

1. A connection point for client referrals between DVAC and QPS in both directions ie. DVAC to QPS and QPS to DVAC.
2. Assistance to clients presenting at QPS reception counter for domestic family violence (DFV) matters as needed and as capacity allows. This would include assistance for client's general questions around DFV and supporting women to begin their statements relating to DFV/sexual violence (eg. Provision of weighted blankets and other therapeutic tools as well as emotional support).
3. Case consultation with QPS officers where there is capacity. This would include advice when officers are attending DFV matters, follow-up support for women specifically following call outs, education and support to officers around working with women in trauma.
4. Risk management for high-risk cases and an integrated approach in relation to this including consultation with QPS, Courts, Probation and Parole and other relevant services.

We are now going to ask some questions about your role, experiences and assessment of this pilot program.

12. Can you describe your role in the Co-Location Model?

13. How long have you worked in the pilot program?

14. We are now going to ask you questions about whether you thought the program met the following objectives and to what extent.

Please select your level of agreement to each statement: The co-location model:

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)
Improved the engagement experience of survivors of DFV with QPS officers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strengthened the integrated response between Toowoomba Police and DVAC workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provided beneficial advice to QPS Officers when responding to call outs for DFV incidents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enhanced QPS Officers' understanding of referral pathways for DFV survivors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Enhanced the trust of DVAC clients with Toowoomba Police

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Were there any challenges with being located at the police station/having a DFV worker located at the police station? [please detail]

[if yes] Were these overcome and, if so, how?

17. Did you learn anything working at the station/having a DFV worker located at the police station? [please detail]

18. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience?

19. Would like: (a) to review any of your responses, and (b) would you like a copy of the summary report of the research findings, when available (noting that they can still request a copy of the report at a later time by contacting the QUT research team).