Gendered Violence Activism

A Compendium of Queensland Stories

Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

Introduction

Making a difference in the arena of gendered violence requires many qualities – passion, fortitude, resilience and persistence. Making a difference also requires time, because change is a long and slow process. An idea of collecting some of the Queensland stories from across this field took root late in 2019.

The initial impetus was the imminent retirement of Pauline Woodridge from the North Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Service in Townsville, after many years of service. We realised this was going to be the end of a significant era and wanted to capture Pauline's inspiring story of activism and advocacy in preventing domestic and family violence. We wanted others to hear and benefit from Pauline's legacy. We wanted to honour, not just Pauline (whose story is the first in this volume), but a sample of the many people who have dedicated years of their lives to making a difference in the lives of others.

What was well known to us before, and underscored this this project, was that 'retirement' from a paid role in the specialist sector does not mean an end to activism and advocacy.

Pauline and others have continued their endeavours in different ways and this commitment is evident in a number of the stories you'll read in this volume. Indeed, this compendium project was driven by one such woman, Jude Marshall, who had long years working as a service provider in the field. Jude, like Pauline, now has her home as her base but continues her advocacy with contributions to ANROWS and QCDFVR. We are indebted to her for the gathering of these important stories.

During the 2019 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, QCDFVR shared a taste from the compendium stories each day on social media. Since then, Pauline and Jude have worked further on the project in readiness for 2020 Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month. In this edition, you'll read contributions from women and men from a range of areas who are dedicated to making this world a better place for women and their children. You'll be reminded that no two life trajectories are the same, you'll read of 'the personal' as well as well as 'the political', you'll encounter first person narratives and third person reports, and sometimes you'll learn more about resilience and self-care.

You'll see that this project was not an academic exercise, and these are neither standardised – nor the only – stories from this amazing sector. Rather, this compendium presents a sample of individual journeys, providing the reader a glimpse into what it takes, and has taken, for people contribute to this field.

Little did we realise when we convened in Mackay in late January that the coming months would challenge us all. The impact of COVID-19 has meant that we've all had to adapt to new ways of thinking and working. What has remained unchanged, despite all the turbulence of our world, is the

realisation that in order to care for others we must also care for ourselves. I encourage you to take the time for self-care – perhaps through dipping into the inspiring stories of our fellow Queenslanders?

Enjoy!

Director, QCDFVR, CQUniversity

Contents

PAULINE WOODRIDGE

Advocate

Ms Pauline Woodbridge OAM was the coordinator at the North Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Service, which she established in 1994 and now employs workers across Townsville and Mt Isa.

For more than 30 years, Pauline has worked tirelessly to eliminate violence against women and children and promote education about domestic and family violence in the wider community.

In 2008 she was invited by the Prime Minister and the Minister for the Status of Women to become a member of the National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, and in 2015 was awarded an Order of Australia honour for her service to women through social welfare and support organisations.

Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

There are many ways life can throw up all sorts of difficulties as well as opportunities. I was fortunate enough to grow up in the post-war period when Australia was a stable society; albeit a society with attitudes and policies that caused harm to our Indigenous population (the oldest society in continuous existence) and excluded people with the White Australian policy. And at the same time, the position of women was prescribed and proscribed by men.

The death of my mother and the withdrawal of my father brought physical and emotional problems for me as I had just entered high school and did not do well over those years. As was expected, I had a series of low paying jobs as I waited for the time of my real purpose; to marry and produce children. As a young married family, we moved about with my husband's job and lived in many different places and experienced many influences. I had many low paid, part-time jobs fitted in around the needs of the children.

For several years in the 1970s after a move to the Kimberley, I worked with an all-women company as a hawker (travelling salesperson) provisioning remote communities in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. I had access to remote Aboriginal communities and cemented strong ethical values and respect for the individual and community people of the Outback. The years went by and I picked up some great life skills and awareness about the world around me, especially in relation to the burgeoning agenda of

women's liberation. My women-centred politics, gendered analysis and feminism were forming. It was a difficult and emotional time to leave the work, my friends and colleagues, my horses and the wonderful remote environment when, for family reasons, it became time to move.

We transferred to Townsville to enable us to send the eldest child to high school rather than the boarding school option available. On arrival in Townsville in the late 1970's, I became aware of the newly developed opportunity to enrol at university, as the Whitlam Government had abolished the fees. I was accepted as a mature age student along with many other women, young and old who no longer faced the financial barriers to higher education. However, many women, myself included, still had many other barriers to overcome.

During my welfare studies, I volunteered at a new small women's refuge helping women experiencing domestic violence, rape and homelessness. In 1987 I was asked to fill a maternity leave locum position at the Women's Centre (NQCWS). My feminist understanding was growing, and I enjoyed the experience of working in a feminist collective. It was really hard work and difficult at times, but I loved the principle of women collectively working for women. After seven years there, I moved to the Townsville Women's Shelter as a refuge worker. I also really enjoyed that work, it was very practical and supportive. I especially liked the opportunity to support each woman as she worked towards achieving safety for herself and her children. I had continued my commitment to the Women's Centre as a management member and part of the Collective. However, the feminist collective model was increasingly under pressure from funding bodies and reluctantly the service embarked on change to a 'flat as possible hierarchy'.

Because we were in a regional area, all the local welfare services had great awareness of each other and worked together in ways to cover gaps and support each other. Over time, we also worked on ways to fill the gaps and as a worker at the Women's Centre, we initiated the service that was later funded as the North Queensland Women's Legal Service as well helping with the set-up of a Women's Health Service and the Townsville Community Legal Service.

When the Commonwealth introduced the SAAP (Supported Accommodation Assistance Program) in the 1980s, we were active in setting up the local Homelessness Services Networks. We also lobbied hard for Women's Services to be seen as distinctive in the homelessness sector as not all victims of domestic violence were homeless – they just couldn't stay safely in their own homes. As well,

many of the women's services funded under SAAP did not offer accommodation but rather were shopfronts that provided information, support and referral for women to the existing Women's Shelters. The Women's Centre (SAAP funded) was an important hub for meetings and activism and, along with the Australian Workers Union Women's Branch; lobbied for the Social and Community Service Award which still guides the services' pay and conditions today.

All through these years, the women's movement was gaining momentum. Advocacy around the issue of violence against women demanded that governments respond by setting up domestic violence task forces and funding more women's services. The Coalition on Criminal Assault in the Home (CoCAITH NQ) Inc. (Incorporated in 1982) was very active in the local community and successful with a submission for funds announced in 1990 which arose from recommendations of the Beyond These Walls Queensland Domestic Violence Taskforce (1987 – 1988). The Coalition employed a social worker to explore the services for and gaps facing women experiencing violence in the rural hinterland. The project was successfully completed and in 1994, CoCAITH was funded to set up a regional Domestic Violence Service and I was successful in my application to become the Co-ordinator of the service.

In the early days of setting up, finding premises and employing three other staff, I used my car and my contacts at the Women' Centre and the Shelter to access their space and landlines (there were no mobile phones then!) and with their support, including guidance with policies and frameworks, gradually everything came together. We started with one room offered by another local service, shared use of a fax machine, one computer to be used by Admin only and eventually, a service car.

The North Queensland Domestic Violence Service (NQDVS) settled into its own office space close to the Magistrates Court and joined the Women's Centre and the Women' Shelter as women-centred feminist services providing support and safety for women and their children. One point of difference was that although NQDVRS was underpinned by a feminist philosophy; we had male management members and over the years as funding increased; male workers. We worked with men as victims (few in number) and men as perpetrators (way too many in our community) always with the safety of women and children as the highest priority. From that early start, it was onwards and upwards as the year rolled by. Our major focus was assisting women with the Queensland Protection Order

process, providing Court Support, Crisis Counselling, Community Education, Information and Referral, and Group Work.

It was in 1996 that I had the opportunity to do my required JCU student placement experience at the Hamilton Abuse Intervention Program (HAIP) in New Zealand. They were using the world-leading Duluth model for working with men who use violence. I had been advocating for ways to respond to men to stop their violence and abuse and here was the key for me to develop ways forward for NQDVRS to do this work. I was very well accepted at HAIP and was given many opportunities to learn not only about the stopping violence programs for men, but also the important contextual, legal, justice and safety aspects that make the Duluth model the leader in this field. I quickly began co-facilitating the men's programs and found I had an aptitude for this work. I became a strong advocate for women's services to be involved in providing this work on the basis that we would always ensure that the safety of women and children was the key outcome of the programs. I bought back every scrap of information I could to Townsville and began to work with my community to set up a perpetrator program initially called Perpetrator Education Program (PEP).

In the early years, it was slow to get traction, it took lots of work to bring the key stakeholders along with us. There wasn't much policy or funding interest and I always believed we could only stop domestic violence by a combination of a 'grassroots up and top-down approach'. I also believed that the tolerance for domestic violence in our community needed challenging through community education and that the police and courts had a responsibility to hold perpetrators to account for the harm they had done, and the solution for most was a mandate to attend a group stopping violence program. I believe that feminist services have an important role in monitoring the systems. The systems at that time did not really have the same view.

A program for domestic and family violence perpetrators needs a comprehensive framework to ensure it meets its goals. It needs identification of abusive men and then for referrals to be made. However, this was occurring within a culture that did not hold men accountable, a justice system that didn't understand domestic violence, and an attitude that said that women either made up or exaggerated the abuse for their own selfish reasons; that men were unjustly being accused. It was a time when domestic violence and sexual assault were seen as women's business and there was little understanding of the far-reaching and intergenerational effects of

the violence and abuse. But it was an issue that women's services and researchers everywhere were slowly exposing; this 'inconvenient truth'.

It is amazing now to look back on those times when advocates and activists were treated with suspicion, silenced or shut down, but women continued to rally, to be out on the streets, to count dead women and to set up responses, educate other women and form networks and lobby. We were demanding funding to grow services and responses; demanding task forces be set up along with enquiries and research. So much of what we now know, and perhaps take for granted, has been built on the passion and energy of women who believed women's stories of what it means to live with a perpetrator of violence and abuse, and what it means when these perpetrators are not stopped or held to account.

I was so lucky to be active in this long period of change. I was there to implement the Queensland Beyond These Walls Taskforce findings. I participated in the earlier rollout of the Commonwealth's Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (PADV). I contributed to many of the research papers, I provided community education across the region and was using all forms of local media to raise awareness of the issues. I was active with Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network (QDVSN) from 1993 through to 2019.

In the early days, we were a rare women's service working with abusive men. Eventually, the addition of stopping men's violence work in the Queensland domestic violence arena saw the sector working with the funding body to develop some practice standards. Mick Devlin worked with a state-wide group to consult and produce 'Working with Men who perpetrate Domestic Violence Standards'. I, along with many others, have been very active in shaping the state-wide men's' programs network SPEAQ.

I was always interested in the work of the women's section of the Services Union and their activism around getting an Award for the women's services sector. I participated and supported that campaign which was successful in establishing the Community Services Award. After much lobbying Government departments supported and funded the Award. Years later, NQDVRS was one of the services visited by the Commissioner Fisher Tribunal as part of an enquiry into equal pay for women-dominated workforces. The subsequent pay rises helped gain recognition of the skilled and professional work being carried out across the State. I was a supporter of the work being done by the worker-led Death Review Committee DVDRAG in 2004. This group lobbied to have the deaths of women through domestic

violence reviewed by the Coroner's Office – a successful plan that occurs today. They also developed guidelines for the media reporting of domestic and family violence and the women who are killed.

I was fortunate to work through a time of development and many gains, and in more recent years, the many challenges of running a true grassroots community-managed local service. Increasingly we needed to grapple with contracts, data and competitive tendering along with quality frameworks etc. all the while supporting and responding to the needs of the victims and perpetrators in our community. The focus of strengthening and supporting the workers who dealt with the crisis issues daily; training and supporting students who will become the future workforce; connecting, informing and educating our colleagues and community have all provided me with great opportunities. Along with a group of women workers from around the state I attended the UN 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, as a community delegate, an amazing experience. I participated in two UN CSW conferences in New York and co-presented papers (on domestic and family violence in Australia) as well as listened to other presentations from all over the world. In 2015 I attended the 3rd World Conference of Women's Shelters in The Hague, once again mingling with women in the same field from all over the world. I hope we see Australia host one of these international events in the future.

I also had the pleasure of driving around the North Queensland area, informing and supporting rural and remote services, I got to visit lots of regional towns as well as Brisbane with QDVSN. I was a long-time member of WESNET – Australia's National Peak body for Women's Services. I had the chance to visit Parliament House in Canberra to speak to policymakers and politicians about domestic violence issues. I was a member of the Committee formed by the Commonwealth to develop the 12-year National Plan which has helped shape national services, policies and responses, clearly putting the issue of domestic and family violence on the public and Federal political agenda. What a contrast to the early years of silence and denial. The sector has been on a long road in the work of stopping violence against women – activism works, and there is still much to be done. It has been my passion and work for the last 35 years and I expect to continue to speak out.

I, along with so many extraordinary and women and men, have had opportunities to be part of the developing responses, the spread of knowledge, the creation of policies and frameworks that guide the work today. However, as things move forward we must ensure that

the feminist analysis of our society, with its clear understanding of the patriarchal power structure that underpins the violence, continues to ensure women's voices and women's experiences and importantly, women's and children's safety underpins all we do. We need to resist being 'mainstreamed', we need to look after ourselves and each other, we need to monitor the systems and continue to lobby for change. We need to ensure we build on the work of those before us. We must keep on with the work of stopping violence against women and children until it stops.

LYN ANDERSON

CEO | Helem Yumba

Manager of Helem Yumba, the Central Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Centre, Mrs Lynette Anderson is a Gangaalu/ Bitjarra woman from the Central Queensland region. Lynette has a diverse background, having previously worked in community engagement with the Fitzroy Basin Elders, taught business studies in the vocational sector, and was Head of Department of the Indigenous Education and Student Support at CQUniversity.

Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

Lyn left employment in a university to do extra study before moving to the vocational education sector, and work with the Elders in her area. In 2005 she was recruited into her role at Helem Yumba.

"Back then Helem Yumba was a fledgling organisation that hadn't had a big community response to the services available. I think it's because – and I'll speak for Aboriginal people – back then people didn't see a need to engage with counselling services. Families were, and still are, the mechanism that supports individuals and smaller groups within the broader extended family to work through their issues. There were also organic means within the community to respond to families in crisis. That self-sufficiency, when it came to addressing conflict and violence, was embedded within our societies, our communities and our families. But as we are more impacted by modernity, and people have to deal with conflicts and stressors, and with families getting smaller, bigger family-community mechanisms are disappearing."

Lyn could see that families were struggling. "Through colonisation, our families took on the patriarchal constructs of what a family should look like, and with that came gendered violence. I became involved in this work to help our families deconstruct these modern ways of participating within a family. I wanted to support our women to reinstate their roles in a traditional sense - that is, equal, but different, roles in determining how their families or groups would be sustained. We want our women to take back their roles of strength and responsibly, we want them to have their share of power

and control within their lives and relationships- with their partners, and their partners' families. For example, when we say Elders- we don't just mean men: we mean men AND women, both are our Wisdom.

Our work at Helem Yumba is about having men and women acknowledge the equality between them. The violence that happens in our homes isn't just between the man and the woman, families get involved as well. But the men and women involved each have important roles in their family, and responsibilities to not just their children, but their broader community."

Lyn has come from a "very strong line of women", the daughter of a woman widowed at a very young age." On losing her husband, Lyn's mother admitted that until then, she'd "left everything up to him… he was the breadwinner, the decision maker". Despite her "fiery spirit", Lyn's mother had been the one at home, looking after the kids.

"My father was a lovely man, and when he died, my mother stepped up and became responsible for us seven children. She was very shy but knew that she had to stand on her own two feet. She wanted to keep her kids together at a time when we could easily have been taken by welfare services. She was determined to raise independent, strong children, and actually raised eight strong independent adults, including our little brother.

In one respect, looking back, I can see now that we were able to benefit from our father's passing through the strength that our mother grew. She worked hard to ensure we had a good education, a roof over our heads, food and love. That strength was passed on to all of us, my brothers and sisters – but particularly to the women… the four sisters of my family are headstrong and opinionated. We always have a lot to say about everything."

Lyn also acknowledges the powerful commitment to social justice exhibited by the "strong line of women" to which she belongs. "If there were any stray kids around our house, they always had a bed and a feed- whether they were black or white. Mum taught us to look out for those who were more vulnerable, and to share with others. Coming from humble beginnings gave us an appreciation of the little things and taught us to be grateful."

Whilst a lot of the focus of Lyn's work now is on keeping "our families together, which some see as anti-feminist" she is very supportive of the feminist movement. Lyn believes "we women have

got to have each other's backs" and in particular, Lyn related feminism to her career history.

"Back in the 1990's I took over a Head of Department's role in a university when I was quite young. Ironically, although I was the manager, I had men working for me who were paid more. But I wasn't a woman who colluded with the masculine mentality predominant at the time. I was a manager who cracked the whip, who held people to account and sometimes that meant ending contracts. So back then I wasn't very popular."

On moving into the family violence sector, Lyn also encountered the resistance of some men to having a female manager. She also saw firsthand the resilience of women working in the sector. "I believe women have better staying power in this field, but I do appreciate the hard tasks our male staff have to deal with - working with men who have brutally harmed women is tough."

Lyn recognised that she is not alone in navigating the dynamics of gender, power and culture in the workplace.

"At some of the conferences I've been to have the question has been explored: 'does male chauvinism still exist in the workplace?' I strongly believe that it does. Our male staff have a strong black woman, and as a female boss, I have felt first hand being treated differently. I have friends in similar positions who have had a much harder time than I've had. I think we still see discrepancies between the roles held by our men, compared to our women, in government and non-government organisations. Men still tend to be in charge."

Lyn believes firmly that "we have to keep deconstructing those patriarchal concepts. Women still have a long way to go, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, especially, are often still part of patriarchal societies. A lot of those old ways of having to take care of everyone except yourself have led to a lot of our women neglecting themselves, neglecting their own wellbeing and healing."

On a personal level, Lyn maintains her sense of wellbeing in a number of ways. Besides "getting a massage every now and then", she takes joy from her culture, which intersects with her career approach.

"The work that we do here is challenging – it's interesting and invigorating. I find our healing work is spiritually strengthening for me. My grandchildren are another source of strength and happiness for me. Being a role model for my little people is important – and I

don't just mean my grandkids – I mean all our little people. I am not only a keeper of our knowledge, but my place is also to pass on this knowledge.

Lyn is also actively involved in her Native Title Group. "As a Gaangalu woman I am an applicant on the Gaangalu Nation People's claim, so I spend a lot of my spare time involved in progressing our claim through the courts. We want to ensure that our cultural heritage within our traditional catchment area is being kept safe. More and more this makes me feel connected to my homeland and more and more that connection makes me feel spiritually fulfilled. It always prompts me that I have to be responsible for helping to spread that connection across our family group. None of us live on country- we live all over the state- so I feel a responsibility to see that our mob retain their connection to country. It makes me feel happy that, despite everything that's happened in the Central Queensland area, and I mean events like the massacres, we can still have that connection. That sustains me."

CECILIA BARASSI-RUBIO

Director | Immigrant Women's Support Service

Cecilia Barassi-Rubio is the director of the Immigrant Women's Support Service. She has been instrumental in the progress of understanding and meeting the needs of women from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Cecilia has worked at a local, state wide and national level to inform and assist in the understanding of issues specific to immigrant women who are affected by family violence

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I was raised in a family with a mother who had strong views about women's rights and social justice. From an early age, I learnt about independence and about not tolerating injustice, and that I couldn't isolate myself from the pain and suffering of others because I didn't think it affected me directly.

I was born in Chile, the third child to an Italian father who was a migrant to Chile, and a Chilean mother. I lived most of my teenage years and young adult life under a military dictatorship, following the overthrow of a democratically elected government. I learnt about anger and frustration, and to never give up despite the injustice I saw unfolding and affecting the Chilean society. I also learnt about the role assigned to women in patriarchal societies, and how women are abused in situations of political conflict. I also learnt that economic systems foster exploitation, i.e. men exploit women and men exploit men. However, women and children are always at the receiving end, as patriarchy is about asserting power by oppressing others.

Later on, when I moved to Australia, I took on a more academic interest in feminist thought, which continues to influence my thinking and practice. Prior to arriving in Australia, I became aware of the struggle of Aboriginal people, therefore I knew there were strong elements of racism in Australian society, often translated into social and economic policies.

I also became interested in immigration policy and migrants' issues, where also women's issues are linked to culture, politics, employment/unemployment, education, and the role assigned to women as caregivers and to the 'labour of love', which translates into higher expectations of women, especially having to take sole responsibility for their households, families, and elderly parents.

My feminist analysis of violence against women also comes from the struggle of women who are underpaid and exploited; women who are expected to work outside their home, and even harder at home. Women who are not allowed to participate as socio-political actors due to their gender. I am also inspired by the women before me, who fought for the rights I enjoy today, and these are the women we should never forget as we owe them the freedoms we enjoy and the inspiration to continue fighting for our rights.

I also bear witness to the impact of violence against women in my day to day work. For instance, whilst many women who escape from a violent partner are able to receive services and resources they need, some women, and some are too many, end up in precarious circumstances, unable to receive an income due to policies that discriminate against these victims because the perpetrator did not apply for a certain visa for them. My feminist analysis develops every day, for instance, when I see people who are homeless and we as a society and governments adjust to this reality instead of supporting them to meet their basic need for shelter.

I strongly believe in the connection between personal experience and larger social and political structures that oppress men and women, and also result in men oppressing women.

My work is influenced by the fact that not all women enjoy the same rights and my strong conviction is that if rights are denied, we need to fight for them. I also admire and respect the women I have met through my work, from women accessing the service to colleagues. I have learnt from all of them that women's resilience is remarkable.

The systemic barriers and challenges facing women in our society also influence my work every day, particularly those impacting women affected by violence in their lives. I am convinced we are all responsible for supporting women and children affected by domestic and/or sexual violence, therefore, we need to ensure we don't make it more difficult for them to achieve safety and a sense of trust in the systems established to support them. I also believe that the governments we choose must take responsibility for distributing

wealth and resources in ways that are fair whilst protecting those most vulnerable.

I cannot tolerate the arrogance that comes from positions of privilege or power. We all need to be accountable if we are serious about making a difference in society and stopping violence against women in all forms.

I know that I don't need to worry about my next meal or where I am going to sleep for the night. I know that I go home to a loving partner, and that I don't need to worry if I get sick because I can access good health care. However, I know that too many people in our society don't experience the same access to health, shelter, and income, as these become a privilege rather than a right.

When I go home every day, whilst I know I haven't changed the world in a big way, I know that, in a small way, I contributed to improving the lives of the women and children who come to the service – where they are not judged or blamed for the abuse they experience. We name the abuse and place responsibility on the perpetrator, and work hard at ensuring the women's rights and dignity are upheld.

I am aware of the many systemic barriers the women have to face, and we often experience challenges in attempting to break down these barriers. The need to continue working towards change is my biggest source of resilience, we cannot stop naming the issues or trying to work out solutions. We also need to continually call to account those responsible for creating and maintaining the barriers in the first place.

I have a life partner with whom I share the same values, who has a very strong social justice approach. I also have lovely family overseas, and wonderful friends, in Australia and overseas, whom I treasure. I also work with colleagues whose compassion and commitment are exemplary and nourishing, whom I trust in supporting the women with respect, high regard and a strong commitment to social justice. I also seek external supervision, as I find it helpful to bounce ideas and be challenged; I am always thinking about the work we do and how it can be improved for the women as the fewer the challenges for the women, the more rewarding our work becomes when we see the women thriving and participating in society through meaningful employment, study and being fulfilled as human beings. In terms of my specific job, working collaboratively with other like-minded women in the sector is a great source of resilience. Together we share knowledge, ideas, and the common struggle.

LEONA BERRIE

Disability Advocate

Leona is a social worker with experience in the disability sector as a direct support worker, case manager and manager of WWILD, an agency focused on the overrepresentation of people with intellectual disability as victims of violence, abuse and neglect. Leona has been the chair of the Queensland Sexual Assault Network, and is passionate about the intersection of disability, gender based violence and the range of systems that struggle to meet the needs of people with disability and complex needs.

Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

Leona's analysis of feminism is based on the recognition of the use and abuse of power. She saw first-hand how the abuse of power and violence against women dynamics overlap. She always understood that women with disabilities are over-represented in the incidence of family violence and sexual assault. Leona worked in the disability sector for many years until she was asked to complete a project for WWILD and subsequently joined them as a manager.

WWILD was established as the result of a women's group called the Living Association that met as an activity group for women with disabilities. As women told each other about their experiences it became obvious that a funded service was needed. WWILD is staffed by counsellors, Victims of Crime support workers and other support staff. They are funded by the Queensland government under sexual assault funding and by the Department of Justice.

Leona pointed out that abuse within the disability sector is nuanced by relationships between carers and violence from partners. While WWILD works mainly with women affected by intellectual or cognitive disabilities, they also support people with other needs. According to Leona women with disabilities experience violence from carers, from those on whom they depend for their ongoing needs.

The removal of choice and control is a key factor in the abuse of people with disabilities. Leona talked about the need for their clients to start with small choices and to teach people that they have a right to be in control of their own lives. Leona considers it "a big

part of our job" to educate people who are involved with the victim – to support them to learn how they can better assist in the recovery process.

Leona highlighted if you have someone who is living with someone who for whatever reason - they are touching that person when they don't want to be touched and they're in a living situation together, there can be a lot of excusing of behaviour or minimisation of impact. Doesn't this person have the right to live somewhere where they're safe and don't have to deal with that on a daily basis. Can we find an alternative that doesn't keep people in an unsafe living arrangement?

Challenging institutions and organisations that are disempowering is also a significant part of Leona's role. In a disability context "you're looking at how group homes or how disability providers wield power over individuals as well. And due to the gendered nature of caring a lot of those perpetrators can be women as well. At the heart of it are coercion and control and a sense of entitlement to be in control of somebody".

She commented on the state's responsibility to a woman leaving an abusive situation; leading to necessary changes in her NDIS arrangement. Leona looks forward to people with disabilities developing greater expectations over their right to a service, and getting to the heart of inclusion and accessibility, whether that's in health, education or family violence.

A major issue in violence against people with disabilities is the need to maintain accessible and supported housing. Women's refuges and emergency housing are often not an option for most women with a disability. What does access mean? "Is it the ability to reach out for support? Does it mean the service is affordable? Is the service somewhere people feel welcome – where they understand her needs?"

Leona thinks there is a long way to go across all sectors to live up to those basic needs. The enormity of a decision to leave home when it is unclear whether the place where they are going for support will meet their physical, mental and social needs has an impact on the wellbeing and recovery of women with disabilities.

As with every engaged manager and CEO, Leona is careful to practice self-care. She is mindful that, as a manager and advocate she is sometimes only a little more powerful than the vulnerable person she is advocating for; and that the person she is advocating to is immensely more powerful than she. Leona is aware that there are

bigger structures at play, and that sometimes she has the capacity to push and do more and at other times it is necessary to wind back and conserve energy. "Attending to your life in a way that you don't want to run away from it to work. So that you can run away from your work to your life." Leona particularly appreciates colleagues with whom she can share conversations and events.

Footnote – Leona has been appointed to Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

BARB CROSSING

Women's Shelta

Barb Crossing is a long time activist and leader in the Women's Refuge movement. She has been involved with Women's Shelta, a Brisbane refuge, for over thirty years. Barb has seen, and been instrumental in, changes to attitudes within governments, communities and women's issues. She has maintained her passion as she sees more changes that are needed and so is active on many local, national and international fronts.

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Barb's activism grew gradually, and significantly as she started work, when she immediately experienced sexual harassment and violence. As she got older, she realised that men's violence affected many of her friends and family, including her own.

Barb came to Brisbane in 1985 with a friend who knew women who worked in the refuge known as Women's House. She joined the community of women who were feminists, gradually working on some camps with women and kids in "Windana" refuge, then as a maintenance worker and cleaner at Women's House. In 1991 Barb joined the collective, taking a break for four years when her son was born, then returning to Women's House Shelta where she has worked ever since.

Women's House is the oldest refuge in Queensland, and includes centre based and outreach DV support. The outreach office is co-located with BRISSC. The Women's Community Aid Association (the organisation with oversight of Women's House) was incorporated in 1975, following two years as a women's centre. When Barb came to Brisbane in 1985, there was a collective of twelve women working around 60 - 80 hours a week, sharing wages with funding for six workers. Around 1992, under the Goss government, the refuge and rape crisis services split, and the government provided full funding for six workers for each service. The refuge service then became officially known as "Women's House Shelta". It is still run as a

collective, with shared and equal power and consensus decision making.

Government funding meant the WCAA was able to provide a quality service without having to source donations, or by partnering with corporations and having to sell a corporate message. Barb says that she loves being able to work in a feminist service. "Every organisation has its ups and downs, and while it's not perfect, Women's House is a wonderful organisation. It's fantastic to be able to operate as a collective and to work from a position of shared power and with an overtly political agenda".

Barb follows Ellen Pence's analysis of characteristics of oppression in our society. She spoke of her need to "be aware of my own privilege and the ways in which 'Whiteness', colonisation, and class not only benefit me, but contribute to the oppression of other women. Unless we are working to end all oppression, we are not going to be effective in working to end patriarchy and men's violence against women, because they're linked". Although Women's House is open to all women of different backgrounds, because the buildings are sourced through the private rental market, some women with a physical disability may not able to access all their refuges.

According to Barb, colonisation, incarceration and the ongoing dispossession of Aboriginal People put Aboriginal women at greater risk of violence – and that it is a national shame that our oppression of First Nation's People persists. This has to be at the forefront of our work. "White feminists need to listen to Aboriginal and Islander women. We grow up immersed in colonial society, the same way that we grow up in a patriarchal society and have to unlearn sexism and misogyny. I think the most that we can aspire towards is being a recovering racist, but it will take constant work".

Another issue is that of women living in poverty while trying to live on Centrelink benefits. "Women fighting over donated food; women who have been arrested multiple times for jumping trains because they do not have money to buy a ticket. Poverty means that women have fewer options available to them and therefore may not able to leave violence. They are more likely to be criminalised, to experience chronic violence, and to have their children taken by 'child protection' agencies".

Temporary visas are another factor creating vulnerability to ongoing violence and exploitation. Barb would like to see a special visa created for any woman who has experienced domestic violence in Australia, that makes available the same safety-net provisions that

are available to other women: access to a Centrelink income, public housing, and access to the public health system – whether she's here on a partner visa, tourist visa, or a working, or student visa. This, says Barb, would be potentially lifesaving.

Barb is concerned at the trend of shifting responsibility for funding social services to the corporate sector: companies are not accountable to communities – they're accountable to their shareholders and their job is to make a profit. She thinks that women's services need to be government-funded – properly government-funded. In "Advocacy on Behalf of Battered Women", Ellen Pence says, "Advocates must offer absolute confidentiality, a clear commitment to the safety needs of a woman, and the ability to speak out on behalf of women without risking reprisal -conditions that do not exist when we merge with the institutions that we are committed to changing."

The hardest thing about working with women and kids who have experienced violence, according to Barb, is the barriers in the system - Family Courts that send children back to live with an abusive father, or a Child Protection System that makes violent men invisible and punishes women. Being able to advocate for systems change is so important to her.

International solidarity is important, because what happens to one woman affects us all. Barb thinks we need to keep our vision clear and our practice reflective. There are many parallels between women seeking refuge from domestic violence, and refugee women. One report quoted a refugee woman who had been raped: "I was hoping to come to a safe place, but I have no safety."

After working hard and long, Barb enjoys her garden, and walking in the bush when she can. However, Barb concludes, "Seeing good outcomes for a woman, that's the real boost. When things go well for women it warms my heart".

PROFESSOR HEATHER DOUGLAS

Deputy Dean (Research) | School of Law, University of Queensland

Professor Heather Douglas researches in the areas of criminal justice and domestic violence. Heather has published widely on criminal justice issues and around legal responses to domestic violence and child protection. In 2014- 2019 she was awarded an Australian Research Council Future Fellowship to research the way in which women who have experienced domestic violence use the legal system to help them leave violence. She was the lead researcher and project co-ordinator with the Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration on the development of the National Domestic and Family Violence Bench Book, a project funded by the Australian Commonwealth Government.

Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

Heather recalled her first experience of feminist activism when she volunteered at the Women's Resource Centre while at university in the late 1980s. After graduating, she worked at a law firm where many clients had been affected by DV. Later Heather moved to Alice Springs and worked for an Aboriginal Legal Service, advocating mostly for men charged with criminal offences, then helping to set up the DV Legal Help service which has developed into the Women's Legal Service.

When Heather came to Brisbane, she started work on a program to support Aboriginal students transitioning into law school. This highlighted her awareness of the particular roles women play in their communities and the issues they face. Her first research was around family violence, particularly in translating the work in the field into evidence. This included talking to people working in DV support services about the role of the law in responding to DV.

Heather's PhD thesis was entitled "Aboriginal people and criminal justice interventions". It explained the way policy and politics informs law and how the assimilation policy in the 50s and 60s had really big implications for what the law looked like.

Heather emphasised that women are affected by a whole range of intersecting issues. For instance, working in Alice Springs made it clear that rural and remoteness plays a particular role for Aboriginal people and for Aboriginal women in particular. In her opinion, if law works for the people who are most disadvantaged it will work for

everybody. In more recent times, the women Heather has interviewed and worked with on a project have been women from a CALD background – a lot of women on spousal visas – very insecure visas. The issues facing them are different. For example, technology facilitated abuse for women whose main connections are overseas can be really isolating. There are different factors that affect people differently. Whether they have children or not; whether they have income or not, their cultural background, language background, all these things affect the way the law works for women.

In Heather's opinion, it's really important to think about your role and what you can bring to it. "If I can remain independent and have a reputation for providing careful research that will be one of the most important things I can bring to activism in a sense". Heather uses Twitter as a space to have some influence, as well as attending rallies. She was on the management committee of Children by Choice for five years over the period of abortion law reform in Queensland. That was a really important time for her. Throughout that process she engaged in all different forms of activism including directly talking to politicians; trying to persuade them, working out campaign policies and approaches, lobbying government for change, speaking at enquiries and so on.

Heather sees the importance of research bringing all of these things together to have any kind of change that you want. "You need the people on the ground. You need the stories from the people experiencing the issue. You need the research. I think you need to have all these things coming together. I see my strongest role where my expertise lies is bringing research to the table".

Heather sees the issue of climate change as the most important issue in the world today, not least because of its disproportionate effects on women, and its contribution to family violence. Populism in politics is another difficult issue, particularly in relation to toxic masculinity. This includes looking at women as somehow vulnerable and 'less than'. The consequent primacy of the nuclear family and its resultant emphasis on 'couples counselling' is an example of this conservatism.

Although there have been improvements in police responses to DV, Heather feels there is more that can be achieved, including improving the approach to domestic and family violence by judges and the need for a greater appreciation of domestic and family violence dynamics in the family law space. Heather is very worried about another review of the family law system. She sees grave dangers in the enmeshment of women in violent relationships until their children

have grown beyond family court decisions. This includes the issue of parental alienation which is allegedly being carried out by mothers and false reports by women and so on.

Heather considers self-care as a massive issue in academic research, especially in disciplines like law which don't have that history of supervision that counsellors and social workers have. She has been trying to set up university ethics approvals to include self-care, particularly where interviews with vulnerable people and hearing confronting stories are a feature of their research. Although there is scope at Uni to get counselling, she doesn't think it is done as a matter of course as it should be, and this is the same for legal practice. "All those people working in horrible criminal law cases and DV cases – family lawyers - there is no supervision practice in there and there should be for sure".

Heather's ongoing project is the National Domestic and Family Violence Bench Book, which has come out of evidence-based reports. The Australian Law Reform Commission recommended that it be introduced, and the Commonwealth Government has been funding it for the last four years. Heather is hoping that continues. The website gets thousands of hits a month according to Google analytics. "It's a really useful resource. It can't be relied on that it will continue. We don't have ongoing funding at the moment. I'm asking for it but it's always uncertain".

Heather's more recent work is totally driven by the stories of women. Over the past few years she has interviewed 65 women about their experience of the legal system in responding to domestic and family violence. She has been drawing out the consistent themes, including how women are using smart phones to record evidence but also being harassed by their partners and how false complaints to Child Protection are used as a form of ongoing abuse. Almost all these reports have been found to be false but nevertheless women are caught up in those investigations. Technology facilitated abuse has meant that women post-separation continues to feel like the abuse is everywhere.

Out of Heather's work in abortion law reform and through her talks with women, Heather thinks we still haven't made enough of a connection between sexual violence and partner violence. Part of that is reproductive coercion. One away abusers enmesh women in relationships of violence is to ensure she has children with them. Messing with contraception or not allowing women to choose when they become pregnant is a real problem that many women face in coercive relationships.

Other issues Heather mentioned are government recognition of the problem with breaches of DVOs and how that impacts on prosecutions of Indigenous women. The strangulation offence has been introduced and more work is being done to look further at that. The Law Reform commission's investigation into the need for rape law reform as part of a new emphasis on the issues of sexual violence is also important. Heather applauds the attitude of evaluating changes as they happen.

Heather remains hopeful, saying that good things have come out of government initiatives such as the Not Now Not Ever report. She feels that there is a genuine commitment from the current government. She sees a good example as the specialist DV courts. "They were evaluated twice and tweaks were made. And more of them have been rolled out. I think that a really good process and that's how change should happen – the information sharing – I think there are things we can do to improve that but that is also being evaluated and looked at and watched".

DEB KILROY

CEO | Sisters Inside

Ms Debbie Kilroy OAM is a leading advocate for protecting the human rights of women and children through decarceration - the process of moving away from using prisons and other systems of social control, in response to crime and social issues.

Debbie's passion for justice is the result of her personal experience of the criminal (in)justice system and an unwavering belief that prison represents a failure of justice. Whilst in prison, Debbie lost almost everything: her marriage, her home and her children. However, Debbie was in prison during a brief period of reform, allowing her to access opportunities for education, employment and day release. During her time in prison, Debbie completed a Social Work degree and since then she has qualified as a Gestalt Therapist and Legal Practitioner, and has completed a Graduate Diploma of Forensic Mental Health.

After her release in 1992, Debbie established Sisters Inside, which advocates for the human rights of women in the criminal justice system and responds to gaps in the services available to them.

Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

Debbie was raised in a working-class family in Brisbane's north. As a rebellious teenager, she found herself incarcerated and criminalised. She later became a mother, but was subjected to domestic violence in a relationship, from which she escaped.

In 1989 Debbie was sentenced to six years imprisonment for drug trafficking. While incarcerated, she was stabbed, and witnessed a murder. Debbie also saw the insidious cycle of poverty, abuse and criminalisation, that she herself had been part of, on full display. She saw the overrepresentation of Aboriginal women, particularly Aboriginal mothers. "There were women who were impoverished and predominately women who were in state care as children."

However, because of prison reform (which only lasted for a brief time) she was able to study for a degree in Social Work. After her release in 1992, Debbie qualified as a lawyer and as a Gestalt therapist, later adding a Graduate Diploma in Forensic Mental Health.

Debbie established Sisters Inside, an organisation of women with shared experiences of prison. Since it began in the early 1990s, it has grown to be a significant community organisation, providing services to women in Queensland both in prison and the community. Sisters Inside advocates for the human rights of women within the prison system, as well as for decarceration (the process of moving away from imprisonment as a form of social control). Debbie is adamant that prison represents a failure of the justice system.

The high incidence of women in prison with a history of domestic and sexual violence, as well as the incidence of women affected by mental health, substance abuse, racism, poverty and homelessness experiencing criminalisation and imprisonment has motivated Debbie. Sisters Inside runs a Post Release Health Program which has supported 421 women over the past two years, with a 97% success rate of women not being recriminalized.

Debbie has a particular interest in Aboriginal women and their criminalisation. One of her initiatives has been a crowd-funding campaign using donations to release women held in WA prisons as the result of unpaid fines. #FreeHer has raised over $500,000 and has freed 20 women from prison and paid 117 women's fines so they did not go to prison and 50 women were supported by negotiating payment plans that women can afford so they don't have warrants issued and end up in prison.

Debbie is passionate about youth justice and the treatment of young prisoners. She also talks about the effect of prison on the babies and children of incarcerated women. She has been an executive member of the Queensland Council of Civil Liberties since 2001, and ex-officio chair of the Youth Affairs Network since 1997.

In 2003, Debbie was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for services to the community for working with women in prison. She was also awarded the Australian Human Rights Medal in 2004 and a Churchill Fellowship to explore decarceration strategies and programs internationally in 2014.

Debbie was admitted to the legal profession by the Supreme Court of Queensland in 2007 – a rare achievement for someone with serious convictions. She now has her own law firm and (in addition to her work as CEO of Sisters Inside) is one of Queensland's leading criminal solicitors.

In 2017, Debbie was appointed to the Queensland Government Sentencing Advisory Council.

"Women in prison provide incredible support and loyalty when they walk with me in my day to day struggles. Women who are in prison give me great inspiration. Their survival in a traumatic and abusive system feeds my passion to continue to struggle against the abuse inflicted by prison systems. Women prisoners keep me grounded, which is crucial in leadership".

In relation to the future, Debbie looks toward a richer Australian society which values diversity and builds on the strengths of all its members; a genuinely inclusive society. "We would address the needs and aspirations of the marginalised and disenfranchised … and instantly reduce crime rates! We would close down prisons and make ex-prisoners (including refugees) feel a welcome and valued part of community life. In particular, we would honour and learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures".

When it comes to self-care "A happy family and home allow me to undertake the work I do on a day-to-day basis. Without the support and understanding of my husband and children I would not be able to undertake the role I have. My family understands my passion and my role in agitating against the prison industrial system. They share the same values. Having a supportive family impacts on my energy and focus and how I struggle with the difficulties faced every day".

AMANDA LEE ROSS

CEO | Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service

Ms Amanda Lee-Ross has been the Chief Executive Officer of Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service since 2002. During this time, the organisation has grown from one service site to five service locations across Cairns, Tablelands and Douglas Shire regions. Amanda holds a BA (Hons) in Politics and a Post Graduate Diploma in Management (Health Services). She is currently Convenor of the Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network and has served on two Queensland Ministerial Advisory Councils on Domestic and Family Violence.

Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

Amanda grew up with a firm belief that the personal is political. As a declared member of the working-class in England, she could see that a working-class male had more privilege than a working-class female. Her feminism was born out of a class war. "My grandmother on my maternal side was a really strong matriarch. She was a force to be reckoned with for herself, but she wasn't about making changes for all women. She still held those same conservative views about what women can and can't, or shouldn't, do".

Rallies and protests were part of Amanda's young life. Her first ambition was to join the Royal Navy, but her father was scathing about the possible roles for women in that service, and her school careers guidance officer persuaded her to go to secretarial college. Amanda reluctantly ended up working in a bank, but subsequently became one of the youngest female driving instructors. Eventually, she decided to put her real ambition first, and at the age of 28 won a place at university and completed a politics degree. As a staunch supporter of the NHS and of free education she got a job as a management trainee in the NHS, adding a postgrad in health services management to her qualifications.

When Amanda moved to Australia she worked for a while at James Cook University, but seventeen years ago the job of service manager for the Cairns DV service came up. For her, it was the ideal job because she could bring her feminist and activist principles to the fore. In spite of her doubts around her qualifications – she wasn't a social worker - Amanda got the job. "It's just always been in me that

I needed to be doing something that was pushing the boundaries around equality. I think feminism is about equality". Referring to intersectionality, she thinks working-class feminists have always realised that you can be a minority across disparate fields at the same time. "Whereas I see mainstream middle-class people who have never really thought about intersectionality, it has always been there. I guess I've always been quite a strong advocate".

For Amanda, it's been about who has been in power at state level and federally. She notes that every time a few inroads are made, and people are saying the right things, the backlash happens, and things get harder – funding gets tighter and the men's rights groups have more sway. "It seems to be on the face of it a lot of funding is being pushed toward DV. It looks good on paper but a lot of the initiatives that are happening are not new. They have been done before but have not been continuous because the funding is always in and out". Amanda is not sure that we are seeing a great deal of change. She thinks the rhetoric is there that DV is terrible and we need to do something about it. But Amanda says "on the ground I have yet to see anything that makes me hopeful. Governments throw money at you and then expect you to find staff. There's not enough specialist staff to go round. So, we do our best but often we are running short-staffed because you can't recruit staff up here. It's a nightmare for all of us and all we can do is try to look after our staff as best we can."

While Amanda agrees that things have progressed from what it was like when she was younger, she thinks there is still a long way to go. Amanda talked about what concerns her most – "we had this conversation come up at work – we now have quite a lot of young women in our team - and we were talking about how things were when we were younger and when we were growing up. Women had to give up certain jobs because they weren't allowed to be married and hold a job. I recounted the tale to them about when I went for a pap smear, even though I worked they asked what my husband's occupation was. The young women were horrified by that because that isn't their experience now. This is history for us". Amanda is concerned that when we lose the older people in the sector with real lived experiences, if we're not careful, we will hear "I don't need to be a feminist".

According to Amanda, one organisation cannot stop this. On the whole, she says, it is really good to work collaboratively. One of her concerns is that trying to work collaboratively can sometimes stop you pushing as hard with your advocacy - trying not to rock the

boat because you have to have these great relationships with other people - which battle do you pick to win the war? Sometimes having to work more collaboratively closes down some of our advocacy and some of our potential – not always, but it has the potential to shut down some of that outrage and Amanda thinks it is perfectly acceptable to be outraged about this stuff. That reliance on government funding can be detrimental to advocacy for clients. "Sometimes you have to be truly brave".

The issue of dealing with perpetrators of abuse is really important. It's about generational change as well, which takes time. Amanda thinks it's important that we have to keep looking at equality – and all varieties of equality. "I was just hearing about 50 years since the Stonewall riots. And I thought Wow - now I understand how when I was a young girl there were all those marches and riots going on because it was all incredibly new. And people were having to get their head around stuff. And here we are fifty years later, and we've only just got marriage equality. I guess it's about equality in all aspects; there are several ways in which equality is denied".

Amanda's concern with career politicians and bureaucrats is that many of them are coming from one particular background. She feels we are missing out on that broader perspective. "What was really good about the Labour movement was that Labour MPs back in the day in the UK, came up through the union movement and they weren't career politicians. People are making policies based on just their experience and that's why you have to have words like 'intersectionality' – to make them think more broadly about other people's lived experiences".

Cairns has a large Indigenous population. Amanda is very careful that we have to recognise that family violence in Indigenous populations is high and is a problem. For Amanda, though, "I'm always mindful of not letting the wider society get away with saying 'it's them – it's the others.' I think it's really important to be getting it out there that this impacts on the whole community. I think that is a really important message. I'm not trying to say Indigenous family violence isn't as important, what I am trying to do is not let people treat it almost as a race issue. That's why I'm always really clear about this impacting on the whole community".

In her spare time, and as an exercise in self-care, Amanda runs marathons- she has completed the Berlin marathon! When not working or running, Amanda also relaxes with her extremely large dogs.

DI MACLEOD

Director | Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence Inc.

Ms Di Macleod is the founder and current Director of the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence Inc, Board Member of the Ending Violence Against Women Queensland (EVAWQ) and Secretary of the Red Rose Foundation. Di has worked in the area of violence against women and children for 40 years as a care provider, counsellor, refuge worker, advocate, educator and service manager in New Zealand, South Africa and Australia. She was instrumental in the development of both the Gold Coast Domestic Violence Service and Macleod Women's Refuge, which is named after her.

Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

In 1979, Diane arrived from New Zealand where she had already been working in the child abuse space and been a passionate feminist and advocate for women, particularly those women affected by violence. In Queensland, Di started working in a women's refuge as a child support worker and then as co-ordinator. While there she set up the Domestic Violence Action Group and was involved in discussions around future strategies for dealing with violence against women, including the landmark document "Beyond These Walls"; the Queensland DV Task Force report.

In 1991 Di and other members of the DV Action Group lobbied successfully for a second refuge on the Gold Coast. It was named Macleod Women's Refuge as a tribute to her work. In 1992 Di wrote the successful submission for what would become the Domestic Violence Regional Service (now DVPC).

After six years Di went on maternity leave. She used that time to write submissions and to plan for the provision of a sexual assault service. After some clever lobbying Di was successful in being allocated two rooms, a card table and a typewriter at the Gold Coast Hospital. With her baby in a playpen next to her, Di set about creating alliances with local police and hospital staff. Initially, there were issues with the hospital not understanding that, as a feminist service, the organisation would only be seeing women clients. Di and her one and a half new staff provided counselling, support and information to women. At first, most clients who came for support had experienced historical abuse, unlike the present-day split, the Gold Coast service deals with just over half of new clients

reporting recent abuse. As with other similar services, however, the proportion of successful prosecutions and the length of time between reporting and a court appearance still fall short of ideal.

Di is passionate about specialisation within the criminal justice system – she advocates for specialist detectives who have been trained in the trauma-informed model, and specialist prosecutors who can prioritise the complainant. Educating the players in the criminal justice system about trauma-informed responses and to start by believing the complainant is a priority.

Di is very concerned about the lack of progress in community attitudes. She refers to the 2018 report from NCAS; the national community attitudes survey. She is concerned that attitudes have not significantly changed among young people, and at the new ways women are abused; via technology, social media and the internet for instance. Di asked, "How are we shaping effective new responses as women supporting survivors at the coalface"?

Working on the Gold Coast, Di is mindful of the diversity within the wider community. Barriers experienced by women from other countries, women experiencing the effects of disabilities, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women as well as the impacts of poverty and mental health on women. Di says we need to "get in and provide the best response. Whatever door women find themselves knocking at – that door is opened – they are welcomed – they are offered services, information, alternatives and referrals".

Di is looking at the issue of elder sexual abuse and how all services need to be aware of the specific needs of this group and work together. She views advocacy as "walking alongside a woman" to help her navigate systems rather than following instructions from a case management model. Further, Di talks about lobbying for improvement at a systems level. This includes campaigns, education, including in social media. Di quoted the U.S. Family Justice Centre model, which is justice driven and victim centred.

Di is concerned at the lack of emergency accommodation for women escaping sexual violence. She pointed out that women do not always qualify for accommodation at a refuge, as the rapist may be a flatmate or an acquaintance. She has a particular concern for older women who are unsafe in their homes, and our homelessness statistics include older women who have been financially or physically abused, and who are afraid to be accommodated in a share house with men.

On the topic of accountability for their actions, Di talked about the number of assaults that never reach a just outcome. Therapeutic programs for perpetrators can only be accessed by those in prison, so the number of men given the opportunity to change their behaviour is minimal. Young men need to be encouraged to change offending behaviour early. The lack of opportunities for men being able to ask for help with dangerous behaviour – being able to say they are at risk of offending – needs action. At the other end of offending, there are violent serial offenders who have lost their right to live amongst us and thus create another need within the prison system.

In looking at her history, Di reflected that she has lobbied sixteen Attorneys General around much-needed changes to policy and strategies. She remains concerned about silos that separate sexual violence from domestic and family violence, saying the planned development of a sexual violence framework and resulting strategies will be a good beginning.

Di manages staff who are at risk of vicarious trauma. She does this by providing in house supervision and careful management of shifts, so no-one is overloaded. Staff meeting for debriefs at the end of shifts and being flexible about staff needs for time off for mental health and family connections are also important. Di advises young women coming to work in the violence against women sector to "Strap yourself in. It's a long ride".

DI MANGAN

Chairperson | Red Rose Foundation

Ms Diane Mangan has worked in the area of domestic violence and child abuse for forty years both within government and the non government sector including 14 years as the CEO of DVConnect. Since 2008 Diane has been instrumental in the development of many programs and initiatives including the founding of a national network of all telephone crisis services across Australia (SafeNet Australia) and the only peak in Australia that includes sexual violence, women's health and domestic and family violence (Ending Violence Against Women Queensland 2013). Diane was also a founding member of The Domestic Violence Death Review Action Group – DVDRAG (2004 – 2016), the forerunner of the Red Rose Foundation.

Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

I first came to Australia in 1973 for a five-week holiday but I found that I was more intrigued with the country than I had first thought and decided I wanted to see more of the country. I was a teacher but chose to work very different jobs for a year and then began a six-month journey around the country missing only ACT and Tasmania. I did travel back and forth between Australia and New Zealand but apart from two stays of 12 months each in New Zealand I have mostly lived in Australia for the last 46 years.

I was introduced to the world of domestic violence through a cousin in law who worked at Women's House. The Brisbane sector was fairly small at that time but quite active. My initial involvement was around helping the service get its books ready for audit. At that time Women's House was mostly unfunded with only a small federal grant to cover the rent all work was on a voluntary basis. With only a small core group of volunteers, Women's House maintained a face to face and phone service for domestic violence and rape crisis on a 24/7 basis and a women's refuge (Shelta). Previous to this the Gough Government had fully funded the service, as well as a medical centre.

We put the books in some sort of order for the auditor. And it was just a matter of – I could see they had a lot of work to do and hardly anyone to do it. There weren't a lot of volunteers. The phones did ring and women were coming in. Women's House still operated a 24-hour phone line. So, I decided I would help. I just learnt on the job and it was a fast and intensive learning, but we needed all the help we could get. Two of us were always available in the evening. At that

time if a woman or the police phoned, we would go to her home and pick her up. Often, we would contact the police who were generally very supportive.

We also ran the Brisbane Rape Crisis Service which meant that we would often get calls from the police that a woman was at the hospital. We supported women through all the medical examinations and police interviews. We also followed the cases through court. Women's House was a public address and as well as responding to many calls we also had many women come to us for support.

Women's House had an old van called the Bongo. It often broke down. One Saturday night we were on our way to pick up a woman and seven children. She had taken one too many beatings. He had gone to the pub. We were about a mile from the house when the Bongo broke down. I ran down the road to find a service station. A taxi took us to the house. The driver waited outside. In that taxi were two workers from Women's House, the mother, seven children and not a seat belt in sight.

We were fortunate that Women's House was in a separate location from the Shelta, but we still changed the location of Shelta on regular basis because of its high-risk status. At the time we had basic funding just to cover rent. We found money through Zonta for example. We were a small committed group of women who just gave of our time and energy to work of Women's House. We emptied our houses, brought our own toys and clothes for the kids.

Women's House then and now operates as a collective and that was a very new experience for me. Collective meeting day was Tuesday and often went most of the day because of the consensus required. In the five years that I worked at Women's House we conducted two fairly extensive surveys.

The first was entitled the Incest Survey. In those days sexual assault within the family was called incest. It was supported by the UNSW and done as a research document under their guidelines. The one we did later on was the Rape in Marriage Survey. We did both surveys through phone ins. We sat there day and night. I think they were ahead of their time documents and shone a light on two subjects that were hardly thought about within the wider community at that time.

The other thing that's important to know is the difficulty of working with the lack of domestic violence legislation. The best we could hope for then was a Restraining Order but being evidence-based it

brought many issues for women following through to the court. We were fortunate in those early days to have the services of the late Wayne Goss. He came to us freshly from university and wanted to support our work. He did all our pro bono work and was able to secure restraining orders in a very short time. Wayne was a legal lifeline to us for a number of years. As we all know, Wayne went on to be the Premier of Queensland. DV Legislation finally came through in 1989.

I left Women's House in 1983, and in 1987 I started work with Child Safety for the next 18 years during this time up until 1991 the Department's After-hours unit, Crisis Care also provided 24/7 state-wide refuge referral. When I worked at Women's House, I would often call Crisis Care in the afternoon to update any vacancies our Shelta may have had. In 1991, the refuge referral service was taken from Crisis Care and provided by the sector for the next 9 years.

I was at Crisis Care when we were advised that the DV Line was being defunded and that Crisis Care had to take it back. Crisis Care provided the service for a number of months while the Department put the service out to tender. Women Connect (later changed to DVConnect) was the successful tenderer in 2002. It was a year later when I was approached to take over the role of Head of Counselling at DVConnect. This was only to be a twelve-month contract but ended up being 14 years.

In 2003 I began at DVConnect as the Head of Counselling and ended up being the CEO. I began at a time when the funding was unable to match the demand and the service was seriously in danger of losing its contract. We were able to turn it around with a major restructure and increased funding as we were able to prove ourselves. I remained in this position for the next 14 years and the driver that pushed me was that a state-wide 24/7 crisis line has to be accessible, caring and provide the immediate safety that the caller is seeking. My entire focus at DVConnect was to that end and centred was around improving the response rate and making the experience for those calling us safe and supportive. During that time, we developed a number of initiatives to support this aim e.g. Pets in Crisis program, Court Support, creation of strong networks with other states (SafeNet) for the easier and safer transfer of women and children around the country. DVConnect travelled around the state on a regular basis to build informal state-wide networks with services from areas where DVConnect was required to transport women from on a regular basis (Torres Strait Islands, out west and Far North etc).

After leaving DVConnect in late 2017 I have increased my involvement with the Red Rose Foundation (was a founding member of Domestic Violence Death Review Action Group which became the Red Rose Foundation in 2016).

JUDE MARSHALL

Advocate

QCDFVR Research Project Officer Jude Marshall brings much practice wisdom to her role at the Centre. Jude came to Queensland in 2008, following a career working in disability support, the abuse of young women within the family, emergency housing and women's refuge. She graduated in Sociology, Social Work and Women's Studies and has been the owner of a feminist bookstore. In more recent years, Jude has managed a domestic violence and sexual assault service and served on several state and national advisory groups.

Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

Looking back, I learned about a feminist analysis before I understood the word.

As a teenager, I was sent to a girls' training centre as an incorrigible juvenile delinquent. I realised that nearly all the young women there had been through abusive situations and had been subject to racism, sexism and poverty. Their resilience was ignored as they were blamed for their rational reactions to these events.

After studying psychopedic nursing, I raised four children, including a son with severe disabilities. I realised that it was expected that I did nothing with the rest of my life except care for him. I met a large number of women who also had no other hopes and dreams. We joined together and advocated with parliamentary ministers about our concerns for women who were expected to care for their adult children, without support, until they died. Our campaign resulted in a payment of $11 per week to the families!

Much later, I learned about the theory behind these assumptions as I studied Sociology and Women's Studies at university.

I began in community work as a residential assistant and community work supervisor with boys who had been convicted in the youth court, then I set up and ran the Young Women's Support Trust, a residence for young women from abusive homes, I recruited women with a feminist analysis to support young women towards independence. I learned more about the dynamics of sexual violence

and its effects on the whole family. Unfortunately, government funding lasted only three years.

I was then given the huge privilege of being the owner/operator of the local feminist bookstore. I met wonderful feminist authors, held long conversations with readers, and worked closely with the Women's Studies department at the local university. Unfortunately, like many feminist bookstores in the nineties, it was not a profitable exercise.

For the next nine years I ran the Housing Advice Centre, working closely with Women's Refuge to ensure domestic and family violence survivors could access social housing as a priority. At the same time, many people who had been housed in psychiatric facilities found themselves homeless as psychiatric facilities closed.

After a short stint as an advocate for the Health and Disability Commission I moved to Queensland, where I took up the position of manager of the Mackay DV Resource Service.

Intersectionality was a feature of our learning within the Women's Studies department at Massey University. We studied the effects of colonisation on Maori, the discrimination against those with a disability, the impacts of poverty. Feminism is important to me because as a philosophy it works and changes people's lives.

I believe one of the most important issues we face today is the move toward regarding the acquisition of wealth as an imperative. Women are castigated for living with the aftermath of domestic and family violence, with the trauma of sexual abuse. Women are encouraged to have successful careers at the same time as they (still) are expected to be the main caregivers. Poverty is punished and wealth is regarded as a positive personality trait. Women who live in remote communities, in poverty, with disabilities, as immigrants, have little recognition of their added disadvantage.

I am passionate about maintaining the richness of community; where the care and support of everyone is a primary aim; where women are respected for their strength and leadership, where men are encouraged to be carers and where children enjoy a real connection with their elders and mentors.

ZOE RATHUS

Academic | Griffith University

Ms Zoe Rathus OAM is a Griffith University Law Lecturer who was previously a solicitor, and then coordinator, at the Queensland Women's Legal Service, in whose establishment she played an integral part. In 2011 Zoe was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for service to the law, particularly through contributions to the rights of women, children and the Indigenous community, to education and to professional organisations.

Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

When Zoe was studying law at university, she realised that that there would be a difference in being a woman lawyer. Along with other students, she started a women's room to discuss political issues, although up until then Zoe had not considered herself 'particularly politicised'.

Zoe's first position after graduation was as an articled clerk in Toowong. The man who had been in the same position before her had started doing work for a women's refuge. When the refuge made contact with Zoe, it was the 'moment of complete change' for her. Within a few weeks she had started working with women who were at Mary and Martha's refuge, noting that there were several issues that needed addressing.

In 1984 Zoe was a leader in the setting up of the Women's Legal Service, becoming its first president. The WLS was a completely voluntary organisation, providing legal advice on Wednesday nights and community legal education. Zoe became involved in making funding submissions and organising rosters and other grass roots tasks. One of their activisms was the campaign to free Beryl Birch, who had been imprisoned for killing her violent husband.

The WLS operated out of Women's House at that time. Members included social workers and women working in the Violence Against Women sector, as well as lawyers. Zoe jokes that "If you just leave the lawyers to do things it's not a good idea – they have just one way of seeing the world". They debated whether to provide a wide

range of services to women, or to concentrate on Domestic and Family Violence and Family Law. They decided that the vast majority of enquiries came from women needing advice for their experiences with family violence, so that would be their focus. However, they would lobby on wider issues affecting women, such as discrimination at work, in finances, and in tenancies.

According to Zoe records were first kept to assist clients and explain what had been done in the past year. With government funding came bureaucratisation and the need to operate 'slickly' in the data gathering and sharing area.

Working together meant that a fantastic amount of knowledge was brought into the room. The women's movement was still growing, and women lawyers were a significant minority. Zoe reflected that there were no women judges, and the issue of women's safety was a radical idea! There was even a debate on whether to use the word 'feminist'. Zoe told the story of going to her former private school and finding that the students now are daughters of judges and the like.

The level of public discussion around changes in attitudes to violence against women – the Me Too movement and publicity around domestic and family violence for instance - reminded Zoe that the UN World Women's Conference in 1992 confirmed that women's rights were human rights. Zoe is passionate that VAW affects women in refugee camps and in wealthy suburbs equally. The common factor is men with power, and sexual violence and trafficking, sexual slavery and domestic servitude are still affecting women everywhere. The issue of older women being homeless is also of concern to Zoe.

In terms of the important issues women face today, Zoe is completely afeared of climate change. She spoke of a growing connection between feminism and the planet, citing the early movement of women discussing Mother Earth and what has become the climate change debate.

Young women who say there are no barriers live in contrast to others for whom the issue of early motherhood impacts on their poverty, autonomy and ability to advance their career. Disadvantage experienced by First Nations people and immigrant women is another contributor to inequity

For Zoe, the most pressing issue around domestic and family violence is prevention. She spoke of the impact of domestic and family violence on boys and girls, and the need for generational change.

Zoe worked at the WLS for around fifteen years before going to academia, where she is a Senior Lecturer at Griffith University's Law School.

In 2011 Zoe was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for service to the law, particularly through contributions to the rights of women, children and the Indigenous community, to education and to professional organisations.

DR BRIAN SULLIVAN

Senior Lecturer | Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

Dr Brian Sullivan moved from leadership roles in the education and human service sectors to undertake his doctorate in counselling and mental health at the University of Toledo, Ohio where he researched readiness for change in court-mandated male perpetrators of domestic violence. Prior to his CQUniversity appointment Brian worked at YFS, Logan, as the practice manager of five men's domestic violence intervention groups per week. He has supervised Facilitators of the Men's Program, Women's Counsellors and Women's Advocates in the Domestic and Family Violence Program at YFS, Logan. He is currently on the Board of the Red Rose Foundation.

Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

Brian completed a PhD at the University of Toledo, Ohio, in the School of Health and Human Services, beginning in 1998. As part of this, he did an internship as a co-facilitator of a court-mandated Duluth perpetrator intervention program. "Initially, I was terrified with the thought of working with violent men. I worked in that program for three years while I was in the States and I was facilitating up to 3 - 4 groups a week. It felt I was dropped in at the deep end. From fear, I moved into fascination. Just the way these guys thought and justified, and legitimised their violence and the excuses around that, was something to behold."

Brian is grateful for the skills he learned from women, including Ellen Pence, whom he called "a prophet and a visionary". He became aware of unequal and inappropriate reactions between men and women, and his radar to abuse became more sensitive. Brian wants to produce a better time and culture for women and children, and consequently for men.

After he came back to Australia, he taught on violence issues in counselling, largely focussing on domestic and family violence. As well, he delivered training within communities and to Corrective Services. Brian was offered a position as practice manager at the men's DV program at YFS in Logan. "Less money, less holidays and I get to hang with violent guys – so sign me up!" For the next three years he revised the program and developed a men's violence rehabilitation program.

Brian quoted an Evan Stark publication analysing coercive control and uses his words in his practice framework – Dignity, Equality, Autonomy, Liberty – to make the acronym DEAL, stressing women have the right "to a better DEAL". Brian is also impressed with (ex U.S. President) Jimmy Carter, who concluded his Ted talk saying that violence against women continues because men don't give a damn. Although Brian thinks that most men DO give a damn, their passivity and silence has to be challenged and it has to stop. "We have to see this as a men's problem. Michael Kaufman talks about a triad of men's violence – Men's violence to other men: Men's violence to women and children: Men's violence to themselves."

The incidence of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from cultural and linguistically diverse communities and other women who are disadvantaged, increases the risks to their safety and their lives. "I'm very conscious that in group work with men we hear all kinds of creative excuses for their violence. As a facilitator, I will call out any excuses for them choosing to be violent. There may be reasons for that violence, but nothing will make violence acceptable or tolerable and I wouldn't want to see a man using disadvantage as an excuse for violence against women. We have to know there are people in our society who are going to be a lot more disadvantaged and therefore at risk than other groups. We need to prioritise safety for them and understand that level of intersectionality that puts them at higher risk. In our offenders' programs, we have such little time really that we need to keep our focus on them stopping their violence and understand that the violence is directed at her as a woman."

For Brian, feminism means that he wants men who leave a program to understand that women are not doormats, not men's property, they are human beings in their own right. Not less than, not the same as obviously but not less than by any means. This is a human rights issue and a social justice issue when working with men.

Brian gets concerned sometimes, that there's a changing of the guard in the workplace – many of that first generation DV workers, strong feminist activists and advocates – the women who were most critical in my thinking and development in this space were activists – they were pioneers, are moving into retirement. "They've been my teachers and anything good I might say can be traced back to what I learned from them. I hope we don't lose (we cannot lose) that strong feminist gender analysis."

Brian wants to help support a new sustainable workforce, especially for those who want to work in men's DV intervention programs, so

that we have accountable programs. We have programs that are nested in a co-ordinated community response, connected to police and courts, Probation and Parole, Child Safety, where we are having very strong supervision of these men while they are on a program – even post-program where we can give them the best opportunity and support to change. He wants to explore areas of men's programs. "Where we can mitigate unintended and harmful consequences, but where participants can be mindful and intentional how they use programs. I think there's still a lot of work to do around how we work with offenders in a group space and I really want to open up some conversations about what we do in that space. In terms of sexual assault; stalking, men's use of pornography, strangulation. How we deal with that in group because it's always there. Sometimes groups don't go there, and I think we have to go there if we're going to achieve deep change."

Brian thinks there should be some non-negotiables in terms of this work, and these should be around safety and accountability; linking with courts, police, corrective services; the criminal justice system. I think programs should be involuntary; that men are ordered to attend. Anything kept in isolation in this work is a danger. Every program has to be connected with another service; with statutory authorities to make a tighter and more effective net in which to keep women safe and men accountable. We need to ask, "how effective is our integrated intervention system?" How are courts, police, Corrections, Child Safety holding offenders accountable? How are they supporting the safety of women and children? Where can we plug the gaps? We tend to focus on the accountability of perpetrators, but Brian thinks we need to look at accountability across systems.

"I think having a diverse group can actually help men build connections with men who are different … and that can help build up respect for people who are different and may actually help men go that next step to respect women more. It's good for men to have a choice. Ultimately the culture we are dealing with here is male culture. The belief of male superiority, the male right to power and control, men's privilege and entitlement over women and children, women as men's property, comes in many cultural expressions and actions, but the belief underneath driving that is the same.

When I do this work, I like to believe my primary clients are women and children. Even when I work in men's space my job is to make sure women and children's lives aren't jeopardised. Even so, there is some space for trying new approaches and new ways of working

with men, albeit making sure that none of that is unsafe or risky work."

Brian practices self-care by maintaining hope. "I can only work effectively in this sphere if I maintain hope. I may not see the fruits of my labour. I think it's going to be some generations before we get there, but that doesn't mean I'm free to leave the work. I keep learning, I keep reading, I keep hoping, surrounding myself with respectful, life-giving family and friends, where coercion and control are not issues. That's how I look after myself."

BETTY TAYLOR

CEO | Red Rose Foundation

Ms Betty Taylor has worked across the violence against women sector for almost 30 years holding many positions during that time. She is currently the CEO of the Red Rose Foundation, an organisation formed to reduce the homicides, suicides and other deaths directly related to domestic violence.

She is also currently on the board of the Queensland Death Review Board and the Child Death Review Board and runs Betty Taylor Consultancy.

Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

I became a feminist activist when I started gaining an awareness that life is different for women. Growing up in a family of boys and knowing that the role of women in society is different from the role of men, both within the home and broader society. In many instances women had to leave their jobs when they got married; they didn't get the same salary as men, there were limited fields of study open to women etc. We never challenged or questioned these gender rules, but we were certainly aware of them.

Something that stayed with me was an incident where two women, Merle Thornton and Rosalie Bogner, chained themselves to the public bar at the Regatta Hotel Brisbane. At the time, the media made a lot of women wanting to drink in public bars and missed the critical point that this was an act of defiance against gender discrimination.

When I thought about it, I thought why shouldn't women be allowed to get a drink wherever they like? But then I read the back story about the broader issue of gender discrimination and yes it made sense that their actions were very noble indeed.

I started to read and consolidate my thoughts, beliefs and ideals. During the early rise of feminism, people just thought it was women on the streets burning their bras.

The early feminist writings were so important. In those days there was no internet. It was hard to get hold of reading material. We pictured a different world for women, we started to look for

likeminded women that could be part of our own movement for change.

It wasn't until I worked in a women's refuge in the 1980s that I started to consolidate my own feminist framework about women's place in the world.

I felt so at home working at the refuge. I felt at home with the women who came seeking support, I felt at home with the women who worked there, I felt at one with women in the broader sector, meeting with like-minded passionate feminists – like Di Macleod and others. You follow your calling and it becomes your passion. I don't think you can work fully in this work without a passion.

I think first of all, working in a refuge with women who had been abused, I very quickly realised the enormity of the problem – it isn't about that one woman. Even if your feminist framework is not fully developed it does not take long to think this place is always full. It's not about what she said or did that's the problem.

The issue wasn't about how individual women were abused but the power structures of patriarchy and the disadvantaged place of women in society.

In the early 90s I set up the Gold Coast Domestic Violence service. Women were coming to Women's Refuge for a number of reasons. Back then we knew a lot of women were going to Women's Refuge to get help. They didn't necessarily need accommodation but safety, support and counselling. So, we were saying there's a cohort of women who need support in the community. The only telephone service available was Lifeline or Crisis Care.

In 1988 the Queensland government convened a Task Force to look into various systemic responses to domestic violence. The report from that task force was called Beyond These Walls which became a watershed moment in time. The first Domestic Violence Advisory Council was formed after this and I had the privilege of chairing this Council for two terms.

I believe the personal is political. If organisations aren't involved in some broader level of activism, then they remain operating at the personal level. That is not necessarily wrong, but it doesn't bring about broader systemic change. While they remain to operate at the personal nothing changes. Ghandi said – "Be the change you want to see in the world". Survivors of violence themselves want to be part of that change not passive recipients of support services.

I remember an Australian government campaign that had a fabulous poster that said, "Violence against one woman affects all women". So true for all women. We are still not safe in so many aspects of our lives. We still have much to do to change this.

There is a lot of talk now about 'recovery programs for abused women'. Women don't need recovery or even empowerment. They, like all women, need liberation from the dominant power structure that still exists and results in violence against women on so many levels. We need no further evidence than the appalling rate of male homicides and rapes of women.

Societal patriarchal structures impact on all women but not all women equally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, CALD women and women with a disability are left so far behind in policy, funding programs and awareness campaigns.

The overrepresentation of ATSI women in homicide statistics is something that really concerns me. It is not improving. The theme of International Women's Day 2018 was 'Leave No Woman Behind". We are still leaving so many women behind.

I'm not very good at self-care, but I think vicarious trauma is real and I think we've all got to do something to look after ourselves. At the same time, I think that people also need to know if their work is coming from a place of congruence with their own beliefs and values. If you are working from a position of your own beliefs and values and are passionate about what you are doing, I believe that is something that can mitigate some of the stress of your work... not saying all. Everyone needs to have hope. In having hope, you have to believe you are making a difference. If you're working on something where you make a difference, have goals, be positive.

MARK WALTERS

Associate Lecturer | Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research, CQUniversity

CQUniversity's Mr Mark Walters has been instrumental in the development and delivery of professional development in responding to domestic violence, including training for Queensland's High Risk Teams. He has had a career in behavioral change which spans 30 years in which he has delivered front line interventions in the form of client counselling, behavioral change programs, professional development and training.

Mark serves as a board member on the Queensland Death Review and Advisory Board that works with the coroner to make recommendations to Government on improving service provision for those who have died as a result of domestic and family violence.

Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

Mark first encountered feminism in a meaningful way when he started working at DV Connect in 2004.

Before then he had progressed from being a tradesman painter to studying psychology at UQ. A friend told him about shift work at Mensline. He saw it as an opportunity to bring a textbook with him while waiting for phone calls.

Mark mentioned several women who supported his learning. He was challenged to consider the invisibility of privilege and entitlement, and to recognise his place in the equation of men and women. Mark found the process transformational and realised that if he were to work with men, he would need real clarity about the assumptions he had been making.

After he graduated in 2006 Mark went to Canada and looked at the social services system there. He was impressed at the different attitude to people in need of social support. They were offered a social safety net and are given an active voice.

Mark had a history of working with Drug and Alcohol services and Corrections as well as working on the DV Connect Mensline.

He reflected on the way men asked for help.

"Men can have difficulty opening up – particularly to another man when the assumptions of needing to maintain control and not to be

perceived as weak or vulnerable, dominates the model of masculinity that promotes stoic individualism".

"It really creates a barrier to access support and engagement if the notion of asking for help comes with the shattering sense that I'm failing as a bloke; as a real man. Men often need a crisis to access help; to give themselves permission".

Mark found the Circle of Security training helpful. He realised the way he had been socialised constrained his emotional repertoire to a large degree. He realised that anger often masks grief and loss and a lot of other feelings men (as boys) are not given permission to acknowledge that they are feeling.

In recent years, Mark has travelled around Queensland in his role with the Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research, speaking to services and practitioners as the principal trainer for the rollout of the High-Risk Teams.

Mark suggested that as a sector responding to the intersectionality of victims and perpetrators in the way their diverse needs interact with the current service delivery models, there are often real challenges and barriers.

Challenges around language and culture become evident in the courts, with examples of perpetrators suggesting that it is "part of cultural expectations that I make all the decisions". Mark pointed out that this is a contradiction because not every man who belongs to the culture behaves in that way. Mark emphasised that perpetrators have choices. Male privilege reinforces this. The need to be in control is featured even in same sex relationships.

Mark talked about the importance of creating the opportunity for an "Aha" moment with the perpetrator. He suggests when we are interacting with perpetrators, we should use the word "choice" as much as possible in the conversation to plant the seed so that a perpetrator realises the choice of behaviour lies with him. ("Good choice to make the appointment with me today...")

Mark endorses behaviour change programs, saying that a group model, when managed well, provides an environment where men might feel safe opening up. He quoted Alan Wade and the response-based approach to working with perpetrators. He also stressed the importance of men 'owning' the program, and thereby countering some of the resistance from others. Programs should be seen and

promoted as an opportunity for men perpetrating violence, rather than just a punishment.

Through partnership with female colleagues, Mark has engaged in complex and difficult presentations to multiple audiences. He emphasised the need for information in those training settings that is built on research and openly and transparently reported. He mentioned his access to Death Review reports and their importance in understanding what is more likely increase harm to victims and their children. Most recently, Mark has taken an interest in developments on the issue of non-lethal strangulation and is a keen advocate and supporter of community organisations like Red Rose Foundation that provide accessible and relevant training for practitioners to increase safety, justice and accountability in the lives of those so devastatingly affected by domestic and family violence.

Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

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