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26

FORUM REPORT



THE FORUM



The Forum is hosted by the Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research and is shaped by its cultural Advisory Group.

The purpose of the Forum is to provide an opportunity for services and organisations supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence to share knowledge and best practice to ensure the continuation of quality service delivery.

The Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum aims to:

- highlight and celebrate the good work that is being done by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to end domestic and family violence;
- support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to share information and gain new knowledge about strategies and programs that could be used effectively by others;
- promote opportunities for networking between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers in the field of domestic and family violence prevention and
- provide Forum delegates with tangible materials to support frontline work, that may be shared with colleagues back in their communities.

“
WORKING
TOGETHER FOR
SAFETY AND
HEALING

“
INSPIRATIONAL
SPEAKERS – GAINED A
LOT OF KNOWLEDGE
ABOUT OTHER
SERVICES





THE ARTWORK



CREATED BY MR LES STEWART

The Forum has adopted the Dancing Crane logo designed by Mr Les Stewart, a longstanding participant of the Forum. He painted the beautiful dancing crane, with the following explanation about what the image meant to him:

"It is painted on the background of darkness that can overtake if we do not keep adding to the painting to block out the sad and harmful dangers that hide in the shadows. To me this painting represents the first time I attended the Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum and what it has become, since then. The bird represents the beauty of the Forum, its people and the attendees. The lines are the waves of change, getting stronger as we add to the discussions and services. Under the umbrella of services, we head in one direction together to bring strength and support to our communities that are now providing the safety our women, children and families deserve. This then supports our communities to become as one and beautiful like we want."

This image had such an impact that it was decided, with the permission of the artist, to keep this as the logo for the event now and into the future. We thank Les for his invaluable contribution to the Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Forum over the years and look forward to continuing to work with him.

STRENGTH IN UNITY



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Another successful Forum is now concluded. The Forum takes place in Queensland's Domestic and Family Violence Month and a minute's silence was called for in memory of who have lost their lives to domestic and family violence – centring us on the reasons why all our work is so vital.

With delegates from across our state, the gathering represented more than a professional meeting – it demonstrated collaboration, innovation, and shared purpose. The Forum offered a constructive environment for informed discussion, new perspectives, and the development of professional networks. Across registration, workshops, and scheduled breaks, the engagement and commitment of delegates was, as always, heartwarming and inspiring.

My thanks and gratitude to our wonderful Forum Advisory Group – the Forum is not possible without the careful and consistent guidance from them. The Group's efforts, along with attention to the feedback from past Forums, enable us to shape a Forum that resonates with delegates, sharing content of national, state, regional and community relevance.

Despite geographic distance, delegates demonstrated a collective commitment to learning, improvement, and positive impact. The presentations, workshops and discussions from the Forum will continue to influence our work beyond the month of May 2026, and we look forward to the initiatives and partnerships that will follow.

This Report provides an overview across the two days of the Forum with photos capturing some of the essence and value of the Forum with participant feedback also reinforcing the benefits of coming together and sharing in a safe and welcoming space. We hope delegates enjoy the reminder of the momentum and constructive energy present throughout the Forum – and, if you were unable to attend, that this Report encourages your participation in future years.

Lastly, our thanks to the Queensland Government who provide QCDFVR with the means to enhance the accessibility and effectiveness of the Forum, particularly for those working in regional, rural and remote areas of Queensland.

Associate Professor Heather Lovatt

Director, Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research



SPECIAL THANKS



We sincerely thank the Yuwi Aboriginal Corporation for opening the Forum with a heartfelt Welcome to Country. We are especially grateful to Aunty Deb Clark for sharing her words of welcome and cultural knowledge, setting a respectful and meaningful tone for the event. We also extend our gratitude to Lyndon Francis, whose didgeridoo performance created a moving beginning to the event. Together, your contributions helped set the tone for two days of learning, reflection and meaningful conversations. Thank you for sharing your culture and helping us gather in a spirit of respect and unity.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE FOR PUTTING THE FORUM TOGETHER - WELL DONE!



2026 ADVISORY GROUP COMMITTEE

As with every year, this Forum would not be possible without the invaluable support, guidance and expertise of the Forum Advisory Group. We express sincere appreciation to this year's members: MCs Yonnipin Corowa and Lyndon Francis; with Georgina Binjuda, Julia Yorkston, Robbie Mann and Sam Wild. Their commitment, insight and contributions played an integral role in shaping and enabling this year's Forum.



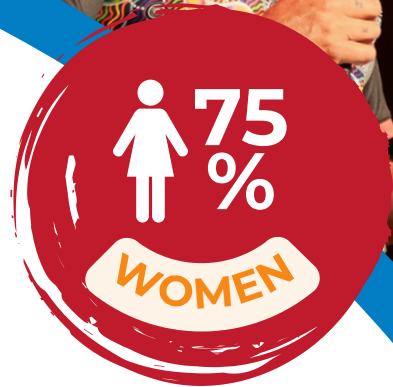
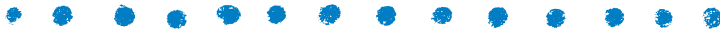
PARTICIPANTS

Where did our participants come from?





CULTURAL BACKGROUND



69% Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander delegates

31% Non-Indigenous delegates



100%

of attendees strongly agreed or agreed that they gained new knowledge at the Forum



100%

of attendees strongly agreed or agreed that they could use the knowledge gained in their work



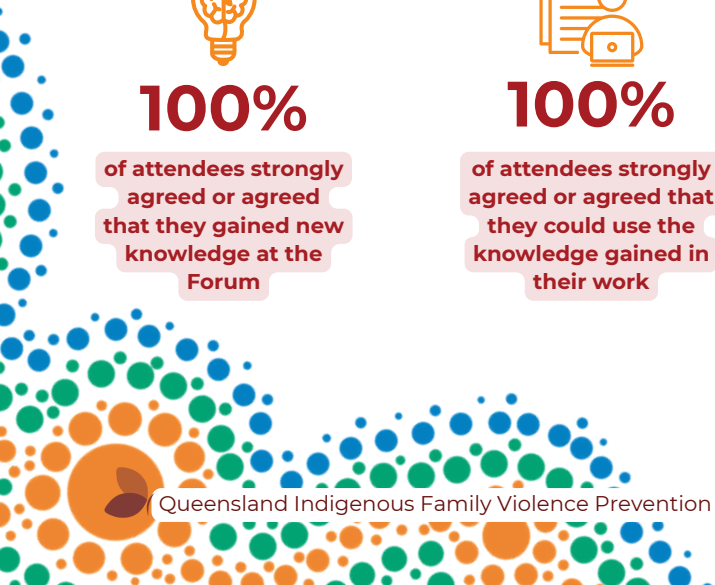
98%

of attendees were very pleased or pleased with the content/ topics/ presentations at the Forum



100%

of attendees were very pleased or pleased with the networking opportunities at the Forum



OUR SPEAKERS



Transforming Adversity into Influence Ms Courtney Ugle, Waangkiny

In opening her Keynote Presentation Courtney acknowledged that she held “victims (of domestic and family violence) in her heart”. A proud Ballardong/ Wardandi Noongar woman from Bunbury, Courtney was born into a family where domestic violence was normalised. At 11 years old, she experienced the death of her father, and eight years later, her mother was murdered at the age of 42, after being “abused by every man in her life”. Despite this adversity, football became a lifeline and over time Courtney channelled her pain into power. This was the seed that eventually grew into Waangkiny, a space where stories are shared and healing begins. Courtney believes deeply that “we are the warriors and the dreamers, and there are no limits to what we can achieve.” Throughout her presentation Courtney used family photographs to illustrate her message, reflecting that she sees in these images that she “came from love”. Courtney has realised that the power of transgenerational wealth does not always mean monetary prosperity, but could be in the form of “transgenerational healing”. Today, she works tirelessly to create safer communities, challenge social norms, and provide a voice for those who have been silenced.



“
COURTNEY WAS RAW
AND HONEST AND
SHARED WITH SUCH
COURAGE

“
I REALLY ENJOYED THE
KEYNOTE SPEAKER
COURTNEY. FELT VERY HEART
FILLED WHILE ALSO
EMPOWERING AND
ENCOURAGING



OUR SPEAKERS



WORKSHOP: Self-care through laughter Mr Leon Filewood, Comedian

Leon, a national award-winning comedian and proud Kuku Yalanji Bama and Kemer Kemer Meriam man from Zenadth Kes, is a firm believer that laughter is medicine. Through the course of the afternoon, he encouraged delegates to recognise that laughter can be a tool for healing, connection, and truth-telling. Leon modelled this through his observational humour, touching on themes that went to “dark places” as he called out divisions in our society, such as those caused by the legacies of colonisation. In contemporary Australian society, many experience the legacy of racism, and are familiar with its associated ‘debates’ (e.g. the place of Welcome to Country in our community practices).

During this Workshop, delegates were encouraged to share humour at their tables, and then with a broader audience. This was a session built around the concept that laughter can be a powerful form of self-care, offering release and lightness during the demanding days of domestic and family violence frontline work. The simple joke or a moment of silliness can strengthen connection and ease stress.



“
LOVED THE
COMEDY SESSION,
IT'S THE BEST
MEDICINE!”



“
LEON'S COMEDY
SESSION WAS 100/100!
IT WAS LOVELY TO
LAUGH AT THE END OF
THE DAY”

OUR SPEAKERS



WORKSHOP: Yarning for Change: A Call to Action Ms Marnie Davis, Women Up North

Marnie's final session created a space for reflection and discussion. She prefaced her workshop with statistics, including that 90% of young women think sexual assault is evitable in their lives. However, Marnie went on to stress that it must be clearly understood that the causes of domestic violence and sexual violence DO NOT derive from Aboriginal culture. Perpetrators should not be protected with silence, and through inaction.

Marnie spoke about her approaches to working with groups, ensuring Cultural Safety through Group Agreements. She spoke about the impacts of sexual assault on survivors and the barriers and gaps in support services and legislation. With this in mind, delegates were encouraged to develop their own personal Action Plans as a response to Marnie's "call to action". This entailed the audience completing an individual form in response to these questions:

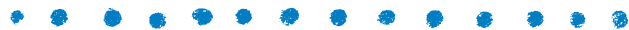
- How will I embrace and celebrate our country's First Nations culture and step up against racism in our community?
- How will I step up to stop domestic violence and sexual violence in our community? This is a national crisis!
- How can my workplace contribute to creating a culturally safe workplace including policies and practice?
- How can my workplace contribute to ending domestic violence and sexual violence in our community? This is a national crisis!

MARNIE HAD VALUABLE
ADVICE I CAN PUT IN TO
PRACTICE STRAIGHT AWAY
AND PROVIDE A SERVICE I
CAN USE MYSELF





PRESENTATIONS LOCAL-STATE-NATIONAL



ORGANISATION	PRESENTER/S	TITLE
Aboriginal Family Legal Services (Maruma-li-Mari)	Mr Charlie Rowe and Mr Laurie Stewart	Bamba Mari Men's Program
Reconcile Life	Mr Namarca Corowa	KNOW – HEAL – BUILD: Prevention Begins With Identity
Mola Consulting	Ms Topsy Mola	Shield Of H.E.R.S. First Nations Women's Empowerment Program
WorkUp	Mr John Turrisi and Ms Jessie Robinson	WORKSHOP: Attracting and supporting our workforce
Women Up North	Ms Marnie Davis	Yarning for Change
Our Watch	Ms Toni Hawkins and Ms Evie Rankmore	Changing the picture in action
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Group	Ms Topsy Mola	Our Voice, Our Safety: An Update from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander DFV Prevention Group
Various	Mr Namarca Corowa, Mr Charlie Rowe and Mr Laurie Stewart, Facilitated by Mr Lyndon Francis, MARABISDA	Panel Discussion: Working with men
Helem Yumba CQ Healing	Ms Cherie Ahmann and Ms Lisa Hurunui	Working Together for Safety and Healing: Cultural Advisory and Therapeutic Collaboration in High-Risk Response
Queensland Police Service and Queensland Corrective Services	Snr Sgt Kane Hildebrand and Mr Dylan Hyatt-Jacobson	Mackay DFV High Risk Team and Isaac Region Expansion Trial
Elders for Change, Justice Our Way	Ms Glenda Duffy, Ms Judy Sailor and Mr Jarick Evans	Elders for Change and Justice Our Way
Warringu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation	Ms Lauren Rickert and Mr Bernard David	Regional/ Remote Indigenous Women's Shelter Network



SOME GREAT EXAMPLES
OF LOCALLY DRIVEN
INITIATIVES



ALL PRESENTATIONS
WERE GREAT! THE
MEN'S PROGRAMS IN
COMMUNITY WERE
EXCELLENT



ALL THE SPEAKERS
OFFERED SOMETHING
GREAT AND VARIED



COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS
VERY HEALING AND
EDUCATIONAL TO SEE AND
LEARN ABOUT SECTORS I
DON'T WORK IN





NETWORKING EVENT



The twilight networking event provided a warm and relaxed setting for attendees to connect, build relationships, and share stories over light refreshments, while enjoying live music from local singer Namarca Corowa. Midway through the evening, guests were treated to a vibrant cultural dance performance by Ilun Roots, adding a special highlight to the event. With a photobooth capturing plenty of memorable moments, the evening was filled with laughter, connection, and a strong sense of community.



“
LOVED HAVING THE
OPPORTUNITY TO
NETWORK WITH
FELLOW WORKERS IN
THE SPACE



“
COMING TOGETHER AND
SHARING KNOWLEDGE. I LIKE
THAT THERE WAS PLENTY OF
TIME ALLOWED FOR
NETWORKING





THANK YOU

A sincere thank you to Tiarni from [Captured by Light Photography](#), for once again capturing the spirit of the Forum through her lens. Across the two days, Tiarni expertly documented the conversations, connections, and memorable moments that made the event so special, all while maintaining a respectful and gentle presence. Her photographs beautifully reflect the strength, warmth, and sense of community shared throughout the Forum. More of Tiarni's stunning Forum images can be viewed on our website.





THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND ATTENDANCE

 **QCDFVR**
Queensland Centre for Domestic
and Family Violence Research

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AUSTRALIA

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STRENGTH IN UNITY