

**QDVSN MEETING ISSUES PAPER**  
**FOR DISTRIBUTION TO OTHER NETWORKS**  
**KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM QDVSN MEETING ON**  
**19<sup>TH</sup> & 20<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2008 - CAIRNS**

In the spirit of enhancing information sharing and collaboration between our networks, Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network (QDVSN) decided to distribute to other related and like networks and services, relevant issues arising from the QDVSN meetings. In addition, QDVSN recognizes that our networks are frequently responding to and discussing the same issues, and the strength that lies in coordinating and sharing information.

After each QDVSN meeting, the QDVSN Secretary can forward to your network/service the key relevant issues arising from the QDVSN meeting. If you do not feel it is useful for your network/service to receive this information, please do not hesitate to let us know. In addition, if your network/service would like to similarly disseminate information relating to your network/service, we would certainly welcome this.

### **Update on Service Agreements and Reporting requirements**

Ana Alvarez (VPT) had confirmed (by email prior to the meeting) the department's funding policy requirement to have separate service plans, even when an organization may have a single service agreement. One service asked their Regional Office for a letter to confirm splitting of the service plans but this was refused as the Region felt that this might change. A response to the QDVSN letter to Linda Apelt had been received suggesting that we raise this issue again with VPT at this meeting. The group was concerned that although the letter mentioned lessening administrative burden the situation with separate service plans actually increased administrative burden. Jo mentioned that the Sunshine Coast is a pilot for the OASIS system which will be online financial and PPR reporting.

QDVSN was provided with a brief summary of the training that the regional CSOs have had around service agreements and service plans. The training was provided by the Statewide Quality Service Team CCSQ and was to equip departmental staff with the knowledge, skills and confidence to:

1. Understand the transition from Family Services Act 1987 (FSA) to Community Services Act 2007 (CSA) in relation to funding assistance and service agreements.
2. Understand the changes made to the 3 Forms of Agreement (Long, Short and Under \$10k).
3. Prepare the 3 Forms of Agreement (Long, Short and Small Grants one-off).

See also 'Telephone Link with VPT' (below).

### **QDVSN events**

Donna updated that the working group has met a couple of times by phone. Ellen Pence has cancer and will not travel overseas at present. She is happy to do video link with us. Members of the Feminist Steering Committee have been talking to Ellen too. Barb Crossing was following up with her having a video appearance at the conference in September. Decided to hold a video link (with multiple sites) with Ellen Pence and hold it on Remembrance Day and invite key stakeholders.

- *Action: Working Group will progress this.*

### **Family Law Court certificates**

Diane had sent an email about FLC certificates project. This was looking at whether there was a negative impact on women from the wording of the certs. Diane needs info by end 27th July to feedback to Justice and Attorney General. Amanda mentioned that as most clients are being encouraged to go through the mediation process by solicitors there is not much feedback yet for those who have certs saying don't need to do it. It is important to feed this info back. In Cairns, solicitors

are saying “It’ll look good for you to do mediation”. Annabelle suggested we should document these things and feedback to the AG. Donna suggested feeding into the paper being written by Marie Hume and Elspeth Innes. Heather mentioned that the AIFS is doing an evaluation into the FLC amendments and suggested we find out who is doing the evaluation and see if we can feed into this.

### **Telephone link with VPT – Ana Alvarez and Heather Lovatt**

#### Funding agreements, PPRs, CSO training

VPT not involved in CSO training, it was delivered by the Statewide Quality Services team, part of intro of CS Act. (See Service Agreements above.) Discussion about multiple service types under one service plan – advice from quality service team is that this is not possible unless there is some alignment with ending dates but also issue with monitoring of the funding. There had been no input from program areas into this decision. Heather has been transferred into Program and Sector performance team to look at PPRs that had been user tested. The CSO training package delivered around the state by statewide quality service team highlighted to CSOs that if there are multiple service plans with varying end dates it is not advantageous to put under one agreement, but if same end date, then not a problem in putting them under one service agreement. Standard practice is generally service plan for each service and service agreement with PPR attached to it. However, this is an issue for Regional DV services, and Heather has looked at the QDVSN letter sent to the DG. Regional services tend to have one service number with a bundle of service types. Heather confirmed our concern is that these are now being split out. This issue is ‘going up the line’ for a consistent call at DDG level about the issue of regional DV services and need a call that is either like everyone else ie service number for each different service and separate service plans or whether practice evolved is endorsed. Heather believes we are unique in our issue. Cabinet Budget Review Committee needs to understand the issue for DV services as they often want knowledge of funding by different service types. Hoped to give a clear decision today but Heather still does not have that. Advice has been given to the regions that if their service agreement is not due for renewal they should be allowed to run as they are.

PPRs – taking on board QDVSN’s and individual services comments. Heather assured the group that they are really looking at the comments and user feedback regarding the reporting. Important to include any comments in the PPRs around when we have met full capacity and can’t see more clients. They have identified the need to improve data collection for both us and for the department’s purposes.

#### Funding sustainability for IWSS

Annabelle briefed VPT that IWSS is having to reduce its level of service from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008 and the impacts this will have on refuges and regional services. Ana stated that department is facing problems regarding resources and it is important that IWSS monitor the impact of its reduced operating on other services. Also talked about reimbursement of interpreter payments and the lengthy time this can take. Ana is managing and monitoring this process and was concerned about the delays and would like to hear if delays are still occurring. Ana felt there was a need to promote the policy a bit more.

#### Standard Chart of Accounts (SCOA) voluntary re OASIS

Jo asked for clarification about having to change their accounts to fit SCOA as they have been told that this is no longer voluntary. Is it because of OASIS? Heather will follow up with Tracey Kay and Andrew Sheppard who are running the OASIS project and will email Amanda with result. Heather queried with the group that if using OASIS for performance reporting could the approval process be to flick the report to committee by email to sign off and send on as suggested by Department. It was raised in another area that this may be problematic if they don’t have broadband or appropriate computers etc. QDVSN members agreed that it could be problematic for some. Heather will follow up and report back on this.

- *Post meeting update: Heather contacted Andrew Sheppard who sent an information email to Amanda. Amanda has forwarded this to all QDVSN members.*

#### Input into green paper for Qld gov response

QDVSN asked Ana whether the VPT had input into the green paper response by the Qld government. Ana informed the group that it was a decision by cabinet that it will be a whole of government submission. Department of Housing is leading the response and DoC contributed to that response. Subject to cabinet endorsement. Ana informed the group that some of the issues she had concerns about were that responses to D&FV kept into SAAP agenda and was saying it needs to be broadened to strengthen early intervention and prevention; concerned it didn't capture CALD and indigenous people sufficiently; even though DV is acknowledged as main factor for crisis accommodation not much in the paper about the impact of DV on people without children; and very little is known about the families escaping DV and the generic sub-services support they can provide.

Ana mentioned mini realignment in department in that Office for Community Support will no longer exist from 1<sup>st</sup> July and VPT will move to the Office for Children. Ana is advocating that the agenda for OFC be broadened so that the work it does is not just about children and will cover the violence prevention area. QDVSN felt that this was a regressive step as DV is clearly on the agenda nationally and the state response seems to be becoming invisible with this move. DV needs to be clearly named and 'badged'. Ana advised this is an internal operational issue so DDG has decision on this. There might be a change of name of the Office but commitment is that the VPT will still be named in the Office.

- *Action: QDVSN will write a letter to Bette Kill, Deputy Director General, with copy to Anne Reddell. Concern is that Office of Children will convey an inappropriate message about DV, the visibility of the issue and the department's commitment to this.*

#### **Management Issues (Standing item)**

Discussion around the Community Standards self assessment. Donna spoke about a fantastic self assessment tool devised by Christine Kwasny and would be happy to share this with others. There was also a discussion about managing the practice standards for working with men and difficulties in recruiting and retaining management committee members.

#### **Internships with Colleagues Gulf/Cape Region**

Donna informed the group that Doornburg refuge has been closed but is hoping to reopen soon. A men's shelter has been funded in Lockhart River in the last month - \$540,000 per annum – not sure who has funded this. Donna will try and clarify. Indigenous Womens Coordinators of the shelters are lobbying for a statewide conference. Services in Weipa and Napranum might be closed and are lobbying around this. A couple of the women are hoping to go to Alberta in Canada for a conference.

- *Action: Donna will clarify and email out to QDVSN.*

#### **Working party re Brian Sullivan's Forum**

Amanda raised this on the agenda as an item of discussion as it seems to have 'dropped off the agenda' and wondered if it had 'died another natural death'. A general discussion was held about this. Talked about the powerfulness of the QCOSS Futures Forum and the compact with government and whether this would assist with some of our issues, rather than creating another body. Many felt that they were fully committed (or should be!) at this stage. All agreed that the forum had proved useful in that they liked the idea of sending a 'report card' back to the government to let them know how good/bad they are on the issue of D&FV and also enjoyed meeting with other colleagues from the other networks.

**Queensland Health Victims of Crime Support Service – Adrienne Irvine and Nicole Carmichael**  
QDVSN was joined by Adrienne and Nicole who informed the group about the VSS. Adrienne is the manager for this statewide service and Nicole is a Victims Support Coordinator. The service was launched 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2008 expanding on a single role of the VS Coordinator that had been operating since 2002. It was a response to the Review of the Qld Mental Health Act 2000 (Butler Review).

Team consists of Manager, Assistant Manager and Principal Project Officer (all Brisbane), 5 Victims Support Coordinators (4 in Brisbane, recruiting 1 to Townsville) and two admin officers (1 Brisbane, recruiting 1 to Townsville).

The service is for victims of crimes where the perpetrator is diverted to forensic Mental Health system or the Mental Health Court. There have been some legislative changes, one being that victims can have information to enable them to feel safer ie. where is the perpetrator if back in the community?

Role of team is to “provide information and support in understanding and negotiating Forensic Mental Health System and Criminal Justice System”. Assist with Mental Health Court (MHC); Confidentiality Orders; Classified Patient Information Orders; Forensic Patient Information Orders; submission and statements to MHRT and MHC; supportive counselling; referral to other agencies. Client group is direct victim, parents/guardians of child victim or impaired capacity, family of deceased victim, other people directly harmed by the offence, professionals and others seeking advice or assistance on relevant topics. Number for the service is 1800 208 005 and they are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

### **Senior Level Meetings**

A discussion was held in light of the recent response from the DG to our attempt to meet with her as a senior level person. Felt we should keep trying to meet with more senior staff but may need to target who is appropriate depending on what the issue is. It may be good to try and engage with the Whole of Government Strategy team. It was also felt that it was important to keep our profile up as a DV peak.

- *Action: Once a year when meeting in Brisbane try to set up a strategic meeting with whoever is the highest person in relation to that particular issue.*
- *Action: Write to Whole of Government Strategy (WGS) team (Helen Warnecke) for an opportunity to meet with them to share information and assistance to ensure the WGS framework is appropriate and viable for services on the ground. Moved Heather, seconded Donna. Amanda to write letter, invitees to include Chris, Diane, Donna and Pauline.*
- *Action: Heather moved that we should put a submission from QDVSN to the QCOSS Peaks consultation. Seconded by Gayle. Narelle agreed to draft the submission.*

### **Request to CDFVR to provide data to D&FV Policy Team and Evidence Group**

Rick Williams from Strategic Evidence Branch of the Department had written to Heather requesting data from the CDFVR database to assist with the development of WGR. She responded that CDFVR needed to work with D&FV agencies to get their support before providing him with data. Heather has since sent Rick some data but has no response so far. QDVSN has not received a response to our letter either. Heather’s service’s CSO has been involved in discussions with Rick Williams and advised that he stated that they are re-jigging all their data requirements so, in his opinion, the DoC’s data collection should consider what the CDFVR could collect that ‘adds value’ to the Department’s COMSIS data collection. Heather stated that the DoC does not own the database, the university does and so we can agree to collect what the sector thinks is still appropriate. Heather suggested we continue collecting the same data that we are at present until she knows more about the DoC’s requirements.