A Queensland Government strategy to target domestic and family violence 2009—2013

Consultation paper
October 2008
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It is never acceptable for anyone to experience violence in their family, nor is it acceptable that such violence is kept hidden. The Queensland Government is determined to tackle the causes of domestic and family violence through a range of new and expanded initiatives that build upon the foundations established over the past 20 years.

Domestic and family violence affects all communities, whether wealthy or disadvantaged, urban or remote and the human and financial cost to individuals, families and the community is significant. Federal and state governments have a key leadership role in addressing domestic and family violence. However, the government, private and community service sectors and the broader community need to work together if we are to reduce the incidence of domestic and family violence.

We recognise the commitment, dedication and expertise of all those who work hard to prevent domestic and family violence, to support those experiencing it to live lives free from violence, and to provide opportunities for those who commit acts of violence to change.

Accordingly, this consultation paper invites feedback on the development of a Queensland Government strategy to target domestic and family violence.

This consultation paper proposes a vision, principles and goals for the strategy, and areas for action and improvement. Your feedback on the proposed directions will contribute to developing a strategy which builds on and strengthens the significant efforts to date.

We are committed to working with all sectors to reduce the incidence and impact of domestic and family violence.

Hon Lindy Nelson-Carr MP
Minister for Communities

Hon Judy Spence MP
Minister for Police

Hon Margaret Keech MP
Minister for Women
Introduction

Australia is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Queensland Government is committed to enabling all people, particularly women and children, to live lives free from domestic and family violence.

This consultation paper seeks your feedback, as a key stakeholder, on:

• the development of a whole-of-government strategy to target domestic and family violence
• specific areas in which effort or improvement will be of most benefit to people at risk of or affected by domestic and family violence.

The Queensland Government anticipates that a domestic and family violence strategy will enable greater focus on those areas in need of action, promote the use of new models to improve outcomes for victims, and make perpetrators responsible for their behaviour.

There are a range of views on how to best target the complexities of domestic and family violence in Queensland. This consultation paper offers a starting point for discussion. Some initiatives may require significant development and further investment by government, while others will simply improve the use of existing resources. The Queensland Government will make decisions about the funding of particular initiatives following consideration of the final strategy.

We value your knowledge and experience with the domestic and family violence service system and appreciate your feedback and suggestions.

You can respond to this consultation paper by:

1. completing the ‘Response sheet’ at the back of this paper
2. returning your response by post or email to the Department of Communities
3. submitting your response online by accessing the government’s Get Involved website www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au

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| By post     | Department of Communities  
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| By e-mail   | dfvconsultation@communities.qld.gov.au                                  |
| Online      | www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au                                              |

Responses are due by Friday, 19 December 2008.

The Department of Communities will not disclose your personal details, your organisational details, or submission information without obtaining consent, unless required by law.

For additional hard copies, please call the enquiries line on 1800 081 934.
Background

To date, the Queensland Government has developed a number of initiatives to reduce domestic and family violence. The Safe Families – Safer Communities Policy and Action Plan 2001–2003 and Coordinating Efforts to Address Violence Against Women 2002–2005 identified significant gaps and overlaps in the way government agencies responded to violence. While results were achieved through these initiatives, more needs to be done to tackle the causes of domestic and family violence (not just the crisis), connect support services for victims and ensure perpetrator accountability.

The need to develop a new, whole-of-government strategy to address domestic and family violence was identified as part of the response to the Crime and Misconduct Commission’s 2005 report Policing domestic violence in Queensland: Meeting the challenges.

A Queensland Government strategy to target domestic and family violence

The vision, principles and goals that Queensland Government agencies have agreed to uphold when responding to domestic and family violence require a focus on the safety of all people, particularly women and children, and the accountability of those who are violent.

We recognise that targeting domestic and family violence is a long-term prospect which needs continued, collaborative and sustained effort and investment. Our strategy will build on the investments and achievements to date to tackle the causes of domestic and family violence.

Vision

Our vision for the domestic and family violence strategy is to create communities where all people feel safe and valued, and live free from domestic and family violence.

Principles

The following principles have been developed to inform future program initiatives and to govern the way that government agencies, private and community services sectors work together:

- All people have the right to be free from violence and to be safe in their relationships.
- The safety and wellbeing of the child will be paramount where adult interests conflict with child interests.
- Communities are supported to say no to violence and to foster healthy relationships.
- Culturally appropriate approaches are required within mainstream services that provide access into the service system for vulnerable groups.
- People who are violent are held accountable and responsible for their behaviour and are provided with opportunities to change.
Partnership between all levels of government, private and community services sectors and the broader community is critical.

Reporting, monitoring and an action learning approach are essential to promote innovation.

Goals
The domestic and family violence prevention strategy has two overarching goals:

1. To ensure people, particularly women and children, experiencing domestic and family violence are safe, adequately protected and supported.
2. To ensure people who commit acts of domestic and family violence are monitored and held accountable and responsible for their behaviour.

Methodology
Queensland Government agencies have worked together to produce the framework set out in this consultation paper. Five areas for action across the continuum of domestic and family violence responses have been identified through research, literature reviews, consultation across government agencies and targeted information gathering with domestic violence service providers.

Queensland Government partners to the strategy will include:

- Department of Communities (including the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Multicultural Affairs Queensland)
- Queensland Police Service
- Office for Women
- Department of Child Safety
- Queensland Health
- Department of Education, Training and the Arts
- Department of Housing
- Disability Services Queensland
- Department of Justice and Attorney-General
- Legal Aid Queensland
- Queensland Corrective Services
- Department of Emergency Services.
Context

About domestic and family violence

Defining domestic and family violence
Domestic and family violence occurs when one person in a relationship uses violent and abusive tactics to maintain power and control over the other person/s in the relationship. People who experience these acts of abuse or violence often feel afraid and unsafe and can suffer physical injuries. The violence can take many forms, ranging from physical, emotional and sexual assault through to financial control, isolation from friends and family, threats to harm pets, loved ones or self and constant checking on whereabouts. Some people may not recognise they are being abused.

Domestic and family violence can take place between people in a range of domestic relationships including spousal, intimate personal, family and informal care relationships. The range of relationships identified in the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989 reflects the changing nature of domestic and family arrangements that exist in contemporary Australia.

Although this strategy focuses on domestic and family violence-specific responses, we recognise that the violence occurs within a social context and is linked to other environmental and individual risk factors. These factors include social isolation, financial and housing stress, attitudes to masculinity and femininity, drug and alcohol use and mental illness or mental health concerns.

Key facts and statistics
The following summary of key facts and statistics on domestic and family violence highlights groups that have an increased risk of vulnerability and who face additional difficulties in accessing assistance. There is limited available research and data specific to Queensland, particularly in relation to incidence and prevalence.

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<tr>
<th>Fact</th>
<th>Statistics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Most domestic and family violence is committed by men against women.</td>
<td>For the 12 months prior to the ABS survey, of those women who were physically assaulted:</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey Australia 2005</td>
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<td>• 31 per cent were physically assaulted by a current and/or previous partner, compared to just 4.4 per cent of men.</td>
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<td>• 64 per cent of incidents occurred within the home for those who experienced physical assault by a male.</td>
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<td>• Only 36 per cent who experienced physical assault by a male perpetrator reported it to police.</td>
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<td>Many children are affected by domestic and family violence.</td>
<td>61 per cent of persons who experienced violence by a previous partner reported that they had children in their care at some time during the relationship.</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey Australia 2005</td>
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<td>Indigenous females are more likely to be hospitalised or become victims of intimate partner homicide than non-Indigenous females.</td>
<td>Indigenous females were 35 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence than other Australian females.</td>
<td>Schmider, J., and Nancarrow, H. (2007) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Violence – Facts and figures. Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research: Mackay. Mouzos 2001 in Schmider and Nancarrow</td>
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<td>Indigenous women and children are among the most victimised people in the community.</td>
<td>For Indigenous females, about 50 per cent of hospitalisations for assault were family violence-related (compared to 20 per cent for men).</td>
<td>Blagg et al., 2000 in Crisis Intervention in Aboriginal Family Violence: Summary Report. University of Western Australia (2000).</td>
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<td>People living in regional, rural and remote areas of Queensland may be at a higher risk of experiencing domestic and family violence due to geographical barriers and isolation from friends and family. People may also be reluctant to access services due to a lack of confidentiality in small communities (which may lead to intimidation of the victim).</td>
<td>Reported domestic violence rates were highest in very remote Australia (16.7 Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) periods per 1,000 population), remote Australia (12.8), outer regional (3.4), inner regional (2.6), and major cities (2).</td>
<td>SAAP/Australian Institute on Health and Welfare data 2004–2005</td>
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<td>People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who experience domestic and family violence may find it more difficult to engage with services due to a range of factors, including:</td>
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<td>• different attitudes in their country of origin towards women and domestic violence</td>
<td>7.5 per cent of women born in non-English speaking countries had experienced violence by their partner during the course of the relationship.</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996</td>
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<td>• differences between the Australian (and Queensland) service system and the one in their country of origin</td>
<td>13.1 per cent of women in SAAP funded services during 1999–2000 were women from a non-English speaking background.</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2000.</td>
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<td>• fear and/or mistrust of police or medical personnel</td>
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<td>• linguistic and cultural barriers to seeking and accessing support.</td>
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<td>People with a disability (including those with impaired capacity) are at increased risk of being victims of domestic and family violence due to the inherent vulnerability of some forms of disability and subsequent reliance on informal support people or carers.</td>
<td>Women with disabilities in general experienced intimate partner violence 40 per cent more often than other women.</td>
<td>Brownridge (2006) cited in A Framework for Influencing Change: Responding to Violence Against Women with Disabilities 2007–2009. Victorian Women and Disabilities Network</td>
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<td>People with a disability are also more vulnerable to some forms of violence, such as sexual violence, financial abuse or controlling behaviour.</td>
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<td>Older people can be susceptible to abuse because of their dependence on others, social isolation, mental and physical health and carer stress. Abuse can remain unreported due to feelings of powerlessness, shame and fear of retaliation and institutionalisation.</td>
<td>2.6 per cent of older people aged over 65 years were found to be mistreated by family, close friends or care workers in one United Kingdom study.</td>
<td>O’Keefe et al (2007) in Sanderson and Mazerolle, 2008.</td>
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<td>2.7 per cent of older people aged over 65 years were found to be abused in one South Australian telephone self-report study.</td>
<td>Dal Grande et al (1999) in Sanderson and Mazerolle 2008.</td>
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| People in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex relationships who experience domestic and family violence may find it more difficult to receive appropriate support due to:  
  - differing methods of control (such as threatening to ‘out’ the person)  
  - lack of community understanding. | A range of studies have sought to determine the prevalence of domestic and family violence in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex relationships. It is generally agreed that it occurs at the same rate as within heterosexual relationships. | Vickers, L. (1996) *The second closet: domestic violence in lesbian and gay relationships: a western Australian perspective.* Murdoch University Electronic Journal of Law. |
| Domestic and family violence represents a high workload for the police and the Courts. | There were 13,305 Domestic Violence Protection Orders and 7,580 Temporary Domestic Violence Protection Orders made in 2006–07.  
8,978 breaches of Domestic Violence Orders were reported in 2006–07.  
Calls received by the Queensland Police Service between 1 April to 30 September 2003 for the Gold Coast and Redcliffe districts demonstrate high incidence of domestic violence:  
  - 28,814 calls for service in the Gold Coast.  
  - 23,438 calls for service in Redcliffe. | Data provided to the Department of Communities by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (August 2007).  
*Annual Statistics Review 2006/07* Queensland Police Service.  
| Queensland communities perceive family violence and physical assault as problems in the neighbourhood, although this perception is declining. | In 2004–05, 37.4 per cent of Queenslanders believed family violence to be a major problem or somewhat of a problem in their neighbourhood, compared to 38.5 per cent nationally.  
In 2006–07, this declined to 30.9 per cent and 32.2 per cent respectively. | *Report on Government Services 2008* |
### Fact
Domestic and family violence imposes significant costs to the economy.

Costs include loss of productivity in the workplace due to injuries or attendance in court, social isolation, increased physical and mental ill health and housing burdens when women and children (primarily) have to leave their homes to escape violence.

### Statistics
The cost of domestic and family violence is $8.1 billion per annum to the Australian economy.

If extrapolated, this would equate to around $1.5 to $2 billion to the Queensland economy, based on a population share estimate.

### Source
*The Cost of Domestic Violence to the Australian Economy.*

Note: This estimate is conditional upon a number of assumptions, such as extrapolation of reporting rates to estimate true prevalence, and assumptions used to calculate the cost of pain, suffering and premature mortality.

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*Note: All figures provided are estimates only, as the studies from which they are drawn vary in their reliability, currency and applicability to Queensland. The purpose of these statistics is to provide a snapshot of some of the data currently available about the nature of domestic and family violence.*
Current Queensland responses

The Queensland justice system provides both civil and criminal responses to domestic and family violence and plays a key role in holding perpetrators accountable and supporting and protecting victims. There are also a wide range of support services and other initiatives to target domestic and family violence, working with both victims and perpetrators.

The Queensland Government’s achievements to date

- The *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989* (the Act) contains a broad definition of domestic and family violence and covers a range of groups.
- The Act allows for the removal of the violent person from the home.
- There are a range of funded service responses, including dvconnect which provides a 24-hour womensline and mensline.
- The Queensland Police Service Domestic and Family Violence Unit is improving training, investigation and case management practices.
- The Ministerial Advisory Council on Domestic and Family Violence provides advice to the Minister for Communities on issues relevant to domestic and family violence.
- The Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month promotes the message that domestic and family violence is not acceptable, raises community awareness about the social and personal impacts of domestic and family violence and provides information about available services.
- The Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research funded by the Department of Communities contributes to the prevention of domestic and family violence through research, evaluation, sector development and community engagement.
- The Seniors Legal and Support Service pilot by the Department of Communities provides free assistance for seniors who are at risk of or experiencing elder abuse or financial exploitation.
- Queensland Health provides domestic violence screening in ante-natal clinics.
- The Queensland Ambulance Service is developing training resources for paramedics to assist responses to vulnerable people, including those experiencing domestic and family violence.

The Queensland Government currently invests in a range of initiatives for people affected by domestic and family violence, including:

- housing support such as crisis accommodation
- regional domestic violence services
- community services such as support groups and counselling programs
- counselling for children who experience domestic and family violence
- legal support and advice and court support workers to assist people through the court process
- family support and education programs
- Indigenous Domestic and Family Violence Counselling Support Services
- behaviour change programs
• information sheets and a ‘Find a Service’ database for women and girls
• information on tenancy rights in relation to domestic and family violence
• some courts that have dedicated times to deal with domestic and family violence cases

Many universal services not specific to domestic and family violence have a preventative effect and are also funded by the government, including:
• maternal and child health initiatives
• early childhood programs
• crime prevention and health promotion initiatives.

The Queensland Government has introduced significant alcohol reforms which aim to reduce the unacceptably high level of alcohol-related harm in discrete Indigenous communities. It can be expected that these reforms will have some impact on family violence in those communities. To support these reforms, alcohol-related legislation has been amended, a service assessment has been undertaken in each community and service enhancements in relation to health, harm reduction and diversionary activities are currently being put in place.
Key challenges

To victims seeking information, support and protection, the Queensland domestic and family violence service system comprising the police service, the legal system, housing, health and counselling and support services can seem complex and disjointed. Where these services are not adequately linked, information that is vital for providing safety for victims can go unnoticed, and opportunities to intervene with perpetrators of domestic and family violence may be missed.

Gaps in our current responses

We recognise that there are opportunities to improve in the following areas:

- Services for victims and perpetrators, including behaviour change programs, child counselling services and accommodation options.
- Coordination across government and non-government sectors.
- Consistency in responding to domestic and family violence across Queensland, including the use of safety and risk assessments and the monitoring of perpetrators.
- Opportunities for service providers across Queensland to share best practice and ideas to better protect victims of domestic and family violence.
- Community involvement and education to promote the message that domestic and family violence will not be tolerated in Queensland.
- Access to services for people with diverse needs, including people with a disability.
- Open information exchange between government agencies and services, including addressing some privacy barriers.
- Culturally appropriate domestic and family violence programs for Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse people.
- Standard information and awareness training for mainstream services (such as allied health and community service professionals and school staff) about the identification and appropriate response to people experiencing domestic and family violence.
- Research and data on related issues and incidence and prevalence of domestic and family violence in Queensland.

Innovative solutions are needed to tackle the causes and improve the responses to domestic and family violence in Queensland. Support and justice services need to find better ways to work together to support victims, provide for their safety, and hold perpetrators accountable.

What is missing from Queensland’s current system is an integrated approach to service delivery. In order to be effective, this would require ‘agreed protocols and codes of practice, joint service delivery, agencies reconstituting or realigning their core business to confront the challenges posed by a broadened conception of the problem’.

An integrated approach would mean reorganising the way we do business so that people do not have to approach multiple services, telling their stories multiple times, and preventing people from falling ‘between the gaps’ to achieve a more efficient and effective response to safety.

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Responses in other jurisdictions

New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and New Zealand have introduced multi-agency case coordination, including court supports, common risk assessment tools and assistance for victims of domestic violence to remain in their home where this is a safe option. The success of these approaches hinges on the collaboration of the agencies involved.2

The benefits of a coordinated approach have been realised through a decrease in reports to child protection in Victoria and reduced repeat offences in the Northern Territory. Similar impacts are reported in Tasmania.

While there are differences in each jurisdiction’s approach to minimising the harmful impacts of domestic and family violence, common features include:

• central coordination of reforms
• multi-agency case coordination models
• a focus on legislative and justice system improvements
• expansion of service delivery programs
• prevention and community engagement activities
• housing choices for victims, including programs to help them stay safely at home
• a focus on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people affected by domestic and family violence.

Alongside strong policing protocols and integrated practices, jurisdictions such as New Zealand, Canada and the United States of America have established interdisciplinary committees to learn from homicide cases related to domestic and family violence and to advise on measures needed to improve service and systems responses to domestic and family violence. There is no single model for learning from domestic violence-related homicides, with mechanisms ranging from reviewing case information to the establishment of a formal board.3

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Five areas for action

To address the causes of domestic and family violence and close the service system gaps, we have identified the core elements of an effective system and propose five areas for action across the continuum of responses:

1. Prevention (a focus on healthy relationships)
2. Early identification
3. Connected support services
4. Perpetrator accountability
5. System planning and coordination.

For the five areas for action, we have identified new initiatives that might be introduced and existing programs that may warrant expansion. Key proposals include a social marketing campaign, development of Case Coordination Teams and cross-government planning and coordination.

Some of the suggestions presented within this section may require significant development and further investment by government while others will improve the use of existing resources. The Queensland Government will make decisions about the phased roll-out of the strategy and funding of particular initiatives following consideration of the final strategy.

In addition, there are a number of potential opportunities to partner with the Commonwealth Government to introduce further initiatives and improvements, including the ‘A Place To Call Home’ initiative, the White paper on homelessness, development of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children and the review of domestic and family violence in the family law system.

1. Prevention (a focus on healthy relationships)

The problem of domestic and family violence is too significant to limit efforts to interventions in cases where violence has already occurred. To address the causes and reduce the incidence, there needs to be a range of responses, including primary prevention and promotion. A stronger focus is needed on working in a variety of settings across age groups to deliver messages about healthy relationships and the identification of domestic and family violence. This includes development of social marketing campaigns and targeted education programs for children and young people to build self-esteem and empowerment.

Initiatives to prevent domestic and family violence

Possible options include introducing:

- a sustained Queensland Government social marketing campaign that could target a range of audiences, including young people, Indigenous people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and carers of people with a disability to raise awareness and change behaviours. Campaign elements could include:
  - television advertising and supporting media
  - an integrated campaign website to provide information on domestic and family violence, how and where to get help and advice

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practical initiatives to drive action at grassroots level, such as:

- community engagement grants program for local initiatives to support domestic and family violence prevention
- a community development program to build community capacity in domestic and family violence awareness and prevention
- media training for domestic and family violence service providers.

Options also include expanding:

- materials, programs and strategies in schools that promote the social and emotional development of students and that deliver proactive anti-violence messages
- community engagement models, including arts and cultural programs to promote healthy relationships in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities
- collaboration with industry partners to develop and introduce workplace policies on respectful relationships and to raise awareness of the impacts of domestic and family violence.

2. Early identification

Consistent information and professional awareness is a crucial aspect in ensuring victims of domestic and family violence are identified and supported at the earliest opportunity. It is important for professionals to understand gender and power dynamics, especially when confronted with mutual claims of abuse, to prevent ongoing violence and enhance safety and wellbeing. The quality of response at the earliest disclosure of domestic and family violence may have an impact on a person’s future help-seeking behaviour and subsequent need for ongoing support. Early identification can also avoid the need for more costly and intrusive interventions for families if violence continues to escalate.

Initiatives to enable early identification and provide support to victims of domestic and family violence

Possible options include introducing:

- the domestic violence screening initiative applied in Queensland Health ante-natal clinics to other Queensland Health clinics and services where appropriate
- screening for domestic and family violence during the postnatal period as part of the roll-out of the universal postnatal contact service program
- improved models of support and assistance to better respond to victims who present at Queensland Health Emergency Departments
- a workforce skills development strategy for domestic and family violence services that could include:
  - a professional development program, including capacity building for cultural competence, working with diverse communities and carers of people with a disability
  - practice forums
  - web-based practice tools
- standard information kits for a variety of allied professionals for recognising and responding to domestic and family violence, particularly in relation to children and young people, people with a disability and people from diverse communities.
3. Connected support services

Tasmania, the Northern Territory and Victoria have found that effective information sharing between agencies, and access to a variety of support services, can lead to the improved safety of victims and prevention of reoccurrence or escalation of violence. Culturally appropriate responses are required for people from Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. There are also many complex issues that intersect with domestic and family violence, including child protection and family law and living and care arrangements for people with a disability. A lack of coordination and support can result in a justice response that is time-consuming, confusing and intimidating for victims.

**Initiatives to better protect families earlier**

Possible options include introducing:
- Case Coordination Teams that would be trialled, and subject to evaluation, phased implementation could occur across Queensland. These teams could be co-located and include the Queensland Police Service, Department of Child Safety and domestic violence specialists working together on a full-time basis, focusing on supporting victims (child and adult) and monitoring perpetrator behaviour. A regional coordinator position could be created to support establishment of these teams. The aim of these teams could be to:
  - undertake risk assessments and coordinate safety and security assessments to inform case coordination
  - broker referrals to support services, including child counselling, behaviour change programs and victim advocate positions, court support workers, case management and alternative accommodation where required
  - undertake ongoing monitoring of outcomes for the family.

**Initiatives to support children and young people affected by domestic and family violence**

Possible options include introducing:
- practice guidelines for people who work with child victims of domestic and family violence
- regular practice forums for professionals providing services for children
- research and development of resources on best practice therapeutic interventions for children and young people exposed to domestic and family violence.

Options also include expanding counselling and support programs for children and young people affected by domestic and family violence.

**Initiatives to support victims of domestic and family violence to stay in their own homes where this is safe**

Possible options include introducing:
- a safety upgrades program to support the work of the proposed Case Coordination Teams that could include:
  - the use of a standard risk assessment tool to determine whether staying in the home is a safe option for those affected
  - upgrades to the security of the home.
Initiatives to support victims of domestic and family violence who need safe alternative accommodation

Possible options include introducing:

- support models to address the needs of victims in crisis and transitional accommodation to help them transition into long-term stable accommodation
- models to engage people subject to ‘ouster conditions’ (these allow the removal of the person using violence from the home, as part of a Domestic Violence Order) to access alternative accommodation
- a specialist assessment and referral model for women escaping violence who have particularly complex needs. This could include developing agreements between agencies to provide support based on a thorough safety and needs assessment.

Initiatives to improve the justice system response to domestic and family violence

Possible options include introducing court coordinators for domestic and family violence cases to support the work of the proposed Case Coordination Teams.

Options also include expanding specialised court supports to support the work of the proposed Case Coordination Teams that feature:

- court support workers for both the offender and the victim
- specific list days to hear domestic and family violence matters (criminal and civil).

This will deliver more timely access to quality evidence for the Magistrate resulting in improved decision making, and increase the availability of support and information for people affected by domestic and family violence.

Other initiatives

Possible options include introducing:

- a domestic and family violence rural and remote outreach model that could include support for victims and assistance to perpetrators to access support to change their behaviour
- a program for female prisoners who have been victims of domestic and family violence, with a focus on assistance to avoid returning to violent relationships upon their release
- a regional strategy for the Torres Strait that could include community education, community involvement and an outreach model to support victims, including travel assistance to access safe accommodation
- culturally relevant models for male behaviour change programs in Indigenous communities and ensuring they are delivered in the context of child and adult victim support.

Options also include expanding:

- access to interpreter services for funded domestic and family violence programs and other relevant funded services
- translation of information materials into the main language groups in Queensland (and including, for example, materials for Auslan and Braille).
4. Perpetrator accountability

Every state in Australia has criminal and civil justice mechanisms in place to respond to domestic and family violence. The aim of these mechanisms is to protect victims and to reinforce the message that domestic and family violence will not be tolerated and is punishable by law. A major difficulty in this area is often the availability of evidence to support claims of domestic and family violence. Where evidence exists, it needs to be used to prosecute incidents, including breaches of Domestic Violence Orders.

Behaviour change programs (also called ‘perpetrator programs’) have a significant role in preventing and responding to domestic and family violence. While the underlying philosophy of these programs can vary, the general purpose of these programs is to challenge abusive behaviour and to implement non-abusive alternatives to violence in the home. To be effective, such programs must include direct advocacy and support to maximise the safety and wellbeing of the partners and families of the perpetrator.

Initiatives to hold people who use domestic and family violence accountable for their behaviour

Possible options include introducing:

- development and distribution of investigation kits to strengthen police practice
- victim advocate positions attached to behaviour change programs so that the victim's views and safety are taken into account
- behaviour change programs appropriate for Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Options also include expanding community-based behaviour change programs to support the work of the proposed Case Coordination Teams.

Initiatives to strengthen justice responses to domestic and family violence

Possible options include introducing:

- a cross-agency examination of the links between the domestic and family violence system and the broader justice system to recommend improvements where necessary, for example:
  - the use of ouster conditions and attendance at behaviour change programs as a condition of an order
  - penalties for breaches of orders
  - less traumatic ways for victims to present evidence.
5. System planning and coordination

Effective systems reforms in other jurisdictions have involved strong leadership and coordination to drive development, implementation and reporting of changes. This would require a formal structure that sets out mutual obligations, relationships and responsibilities agreed by all agencies.

Domestic and family violence is an issue that cuts across both state and federal legislative and program functions. It is therefore important to have a coordinated approach to identify intersections, undertake negotiations on the various issues and collaborate with the Commonwealth Government to achieve the best outcomes for people experiencing domestic and family violence.

Initiatives to give effect to system planning and coordination

Possible options include introducing:

- a new Queensland Government domestic and family violence coordination unit, that could:
  - drive implementation across government agencies and sectors and coordinate monitoring and reporting on the strategy
  - develop and implement a code of practice for Queensland Government agencies that could include an agreed definition of domestic and family violence, roles and responsibilities, grievance resolution processes, model protocols and policies, and provisions for responding to diverse groups
  - identify opportunities to collaborate with the Commonwealth Government and negotiate on priority issues identified for Queensland

- improved research and data collection, including:
  - a strategic research program on domestic and family violence in Queensland, in partnership with academics, to better understand the issues and how we can improve our responses (including prevention) to meet diverse needs
  - improved collection of data on the incidence and prevalence of domestic and family violence in Queensland, to fill the gaps in our knowledge base
  - an examination of models to learn from domestic and family violence related homicides, such as death review boards, which identify factors that could have improved service system responses and prevented the escalation of domestic and family violence incidents.

A review of the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989 will commence in early 2009, as agreed as part of the response to the Crime and Misconduct Commission’s 2005 report Policing domestic violence in Queensland: Meeting the challenges. Terms of reference will be informed by the outcomes of consultation on development of the strategy. The review will:

- ensure the Act’s effectiveness in protecting the victims of domestic and family violence
- ensure the legislation is in line with new policies arising from implementation of the strategy
- examine the appropriateness of justice interventions to hold perpetrators responsible for their behaviour
- determine whether any legislative refinements are necessary.
# Response sheet

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Prevention (a focus on healthy relationships)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you think the proposed initiatives would effectively address the prevention of domestic and family violence?</td>
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<td>Are there other, better ways to prevent domestic and family violence?</td>
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<td>2. Early identification</td>
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<td>Do you think the proposed initiatives would improve early identification and responses to domestic and family violence?</td>
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<td>Are there other, better ways to improve early identification and responses to domestic and family violence?</td>
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<td>3. Connecting services</td>
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<td>Do you think the proposed initiatives would effectively close service system gaps?</td>
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<td>Are there other, better ways to connect support services?</td>
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<td>4. Perpetrator accountability</td>
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<td>Do you think the proposed initiatives would effectively improve perpetrator accountability?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there other, better ways to improve perpetrator accountability?</td>
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### 5. System planning and coordination

Do you think the proposed initiatives would effectively improve system planning and coordination?

Are there other, better ways to improve system planning and coordination?

### Additional questions

Has the consultation paper adequately covered the main issues to be addressed to effectively target domestic and family violence?

Are there any other issues or initiatives that you believe should be considered as a priority? If so, please list your top three priorities.

1. 
2. 
3. 

Are there any other issues or initiatives that you believe should be considered for groups that may have increased vulnerability?

### Your comments

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this consultation paper.