**MEETING COMMUNIQUÉ**

**Tuesday, 22 November 2016**

**Brisbane**

On Tuesday, 22 November 2016, the Domestic and Family Violence Implementation Council (Council) held its ninth meeting. The meeting focused on domestic and family violence issues affecting **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders**, and **overall implementation progress** after Council’s first year of operation.

The **Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships** updated Council on its work to implement recommendations of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report, including:

* introducing a **Family Responsibilities Commission trigger** when domestic violence orders are made in respect to members of welfare communities (**recommendations 93 and 94**)
* working with the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services to develop a place-based, culturally appropriate **integrated response** models (**recommendation 9**)
* working with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to develop a **local authority model** for discrete Indigenous communities (**recommendation 92**).

It was noted that the imprimatur of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report has contributed to a **shared commitment and** **improved level of collaboration** across departments.

The **Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council** advised Indigenous health organisations are increasingly engaged with domestic and family violence issues. It was noted that relationships of trust **Indigenous health workers** develop with clients are conducive to addressing these issues but that sensitivity is always needed.

**Community Elders** from the **Logan and Ipswich** communities spoke about work in their communities to bring attention to issues of family violence and other related social issues. They conveyed perceptions that **domestic violence protection orders and police responses are not adequate** to protect victims, and that community members are **reluctant to engage with mainstream services**.

Link Up Queensland highlighted the **impact of trauma** on Indigenous people, and Link Up’s work to **connect victims with services** they need. The difficulty of achieving successful **interagency collaboration** was noted, despite goodwill and efforts to achieve this.

Gallang Place raised the **under-resourcing of Indigenous organisations** as the key issue in providing appropriate family violence services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Council was advised that **Indigenous organisations were best-placed to provide culturally competent services** and deal with issues of trauma, but that these organisations are not receiving the level of funding required. This is seen as resulting in **pressure on Elders to assist with developing cultural capability** of mainstream services.

The **Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service** spoke of the importance and its commitment to **employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members**. It was noted that **early investment** is needed to build capacity and training of Indigenous people to fill these roles.

The **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service** outlined experiences in addressing the high incidences of domestic and family violence in the Woodridge community. The key issue identified was the need for a clear **overarching policy framework on prevention and early intervention** to coordinate the many individual initiatives providing valuable support within the community.

Following the round table discussion, Council received an overview of work of its **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group**. The group has engaged in discussions with departmental representatives about implementation of recommendations on **integrated response pilots** (**recommendations 9 and 74**), strengthening community justice groups through a **local authority model** (**recommendation 92**) and development of the **engagement and communication strategy** (**recommendation 18**). The group has provided advice on issues arising from these discussions to Council following each of its meetings.

Council was then joined by representatives of the **Department of the Premier and Cabinet** (DPC), **Public Service Commission** (PSC) and the **Institute for Social Science Research** (ISSR) at The University of Queensland.

The Director-General of DPC led a presentation to Council about progress of the Government’s domestic and family violence reform program, emphasising the **Premier’s and Government’s strong commitment** to the reforms. The **Second Action Plan of the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy** has recently been released and lists key highlights and future actions required to implement *Not Now, Not Ever* report recommendations. Queensland’s role in **advancing national cooperation** and **contributing to public awareness** of the issue was also discussed.

The ISSR advised Council about development of the **evaluation framework** for the domestic and family violence reform program. The PSC outlined initiatives to enhance **workplace support** for people affected by domestic and family violence through preventing violence, supporting affected workers and creating a safe, inclusive workforce. It was noted that legislative amendments currently before Parliament would, if passed, make Queensland the first state to **legislate for domestic and family violence leave**.

Council concluded the meeting with a discussion of its past activities and future priorities and development of its **12 month report** which would cover its first year of operation.