**DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE - BRISBANE SUMMIT**

**Transcript**

**Guest Speakers - Key Messages**

**Ms Diane Mangan, Chief Executive Officer, DVConnect**

Domestic violence allows the perpetrator to gain control of the victim through fear and intimidation. Gaining the victim’s compliance even temporarily reinforces the perpetrator’s use of these tactics to control. More importantly, the perpetrator’s abusive behaviour is reinforced by the socially sanctioned belief that men have the right to control women in relationships and the right to use force to ensure that control.

**Mr Paul Syvret, Assistant Editor, The Courier Mail**

As a newspaper we often campaign and campaign hard on issues of public interest and safety. It might be alcohol fuelled violence, it might be the road toll, but in every case the grim statistics alone are not enough, you have to back them up with the all too human stories, the human faces that Matt was talking about. And that means the perpetrators, the front line workers, the support groups, those people who have to mop up and rebuild afterwards.

**Mr George Theo – Chief Executive Officer, Unitywater**

And while business continues to focus on, you know, the physical wellbeing of its employees in the workplace, for us it’s really important to also do as much as we can to promote a zero harm culture if you like within homes. So it’s a home free of physical abuse, of emotional and financial abuse. And all I can say to you is that it’s encumbered upon people like myself, and especially males in leadership positions within their own organisations, to do everything that we can to ensure that we provide as much education and as much information and as much support as possible to not only talk about the subject, but also put in place programs and mechanisms to ensure that we can actually deal with it.

**Dr Shannon Spriggs-Murdoch, Director, Mentors in Violence Prevention Program, Griffith University**

Too often people are waiting for an expert, they’re waiting for someone who might have more information or they’re waiting for the systems that are put in place to do that job. And what we really want to do is get people to think about how important bystanders can be in creating an environment that says men’s violence against women is not okay.

**Sergeant Ash Dubbelman, Domestic and Family Violence Coordinator, Queensland Police Service**

This system is only as good as the information that travels through it. If we don’t have accurate and timely information, it just doesn’t work and it puts the people at risk. Perpetrators must be held accountable for their actions. If they’re not going to be held accountable, again that cycle just continues around and around and around.

**Ms Rosemary O’Malley, Manager, Mens Domestic Violence Program, Domestic Violence Prevention Centre – Gold Coast**

We want to make sure that violence in relationships is taken at least as seriously as the street violence. In fact it should be taken more seriously because there’s a massive relationship of trust that’s breached and that’s one of the overall key focus areas of the Integrated Response.

**Ms Catherine Hand, Regional Manager, South Coast Region, Queensland Corrective Services**

When confronted with so many obstacles in finding a solution to this problem that somehow the woman could have avoided or done more to prevent the violence, the pain, the injury inflicted on herself and her children, when in fact what the victim needs is not to be the verb in this situation, the action, the doing is the responsibility of the perpetrator of the violence and the Criminal Justice Systems, our message should be of help to the women and children and a message of accountability to the male perpetrators.

**Ms Ann Andrews, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services**

It’s a lot about relationship, you know, it’s about like-mindedness, it’s about best practice, and moving forward in the best interest of children, women and their families. It takes a whole community. And child protection and the safety of children is everybody’s business. It’s not just one agency, it’s everybody’s business.

**Ms Shirley Slann, North Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Service – Mt Isa**

I’m glad the change has been to work with perpetrators of violence because if we do not do this we know that all we’re going to do is a band-aid solution and we’re not going to stop the domestic and family violence from happening. I believe that assistance needs to be made available for perpetrators and victims of domestic and family violence, but not forgetting that women and children’s safety as a priority.

**Ms Angela Lynch, Lawyer, Women’s Legal Service**

For women to proceed through the system we believe that the criminal justice response should sit within a wider integrated community response to domestic violence that perhaps could include a court with specialised domestic violence, or it could include a specialised domestic violence criminal court division, perhaps having special features including support for the victim up to and including court appearances, diversion and sentencing options for offenders to complete perpetrator programs, specialised DV bail hearings and risk assessment, and specialised Magistrates and prosecutors.

**Dr Jacoba Brasch, Barrister-at-Law, Bar Association of Queensland**

In our experiences day in, day out in court, the adjectives domestic and family to describe the nouns violence and abuse have the effect of diminishing what is plainly and simply violence and abuse. All too often we hear witnesses say it was just a domestic.

**Ms Michelle Emeleus, Principal Solicitor, Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service**

Or ideally, if we work with the family as a whole to give them what support they need to be safe, to achieve what they want, in an integrated multi-disciplinary approach that follows right through the justice system.

**Magistrate Annette Hennessy, Maroochydore**

If the message of accountability is current from day one, first time you appear in court, then the message is going to get through a lot better in my experience than trying to address that many months sometimes down the track.

**Ms Zoe Rathus, Senior Lecturer, Griffith University Law School**

There is much to be done. As Angela said and many people have said, we have managed to decriminalise domestic violence. There are many complicated reasons for that and it is very difficult successfully prosecuting domestic violence at times. But we do need to think about whether there is a need for a specialised crime.