**DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE - BRISBANE SUMMIT**

**Transcript**

**Keynote Speaker – Key Messages**

**Matt Wordsworth**

From inside the industry you look at the media and you think what are you guys doing, we’ve got all of these major problems in Queensland but unfortunately the media needs to tell stories in different ways to engage our audience constantly

we also you know can’t just have the human face because that’s what people identify with, I think you also need to have a sound factual base for a story as well to see if it’s part of a broader picture, and as the son of an accountant I have an inherited love of numbers, so I started looking at the statistics on domestic violence and I find that the case becomes undeniable once you actually look into the sheer number of cases of domestic violence in Australia.

We all just can’t sit by and let it happen. I like the phrase civil inattention, I think it’s quite apt in this particular incident. But before I go into the stats, can I just bemoan the fact that there is a lack of information out there, there is a lack of regular statistics on domestic violence that: people like me need in order to tell the stories.

So whilst there was a certain number or percentage of women who were reporting that they had some form of violence in their lifetime, there wasn’t a real sound statistical basis on the crimes that were committed in their cases.

I do think it’s quite scandalous in this age of big data though that we also have instant opinion, 24 hour news, there are no regular statistical reports on instances of domestic violence and intimate partner homicide. I suspect that one of the reasons for that is that domestic violence is not a crime, assault is a crime, murder is a crime, if you get onto the Queensland Police website, they should be commended for the fact that you can drill down into your very neighbourhood and find out where the assaults, where the thefts are, but because domestic violence itself is not a crime, you don’t know what proportion of the crime is being committed in the home.

As I was alluding to earlier, we need to see more of this invisible epidemic, but the system that’s designed to protect your clients is also one that keeps us from reporting on it.

But what I was hoping to bring to you today was also a need in my opinion that in journalism we always need advocacy groups to go to because they connect us quickly with the issues and they connect us quickly with the people who can then put the human face, which is what connects with people at home. So every cause needs a champion and journalists have no authority to champion a cause and that’s you, you are those champions.

Look at all those other industries that have advocacy groups, from mining to child protection, they’re all there and it works, that’s why they’re there. So if you privately despair about the amount of time the media spends on other topics, be it one punch kills or anti-terrorism or the road toll, while this significant cause of death for men and women goes unremarked, then this Taskforce is the conduit for you to do something about it. And what I honestly believe is you are righteous, you have the authority, and we in the media will be watching you very intently over the coming months.