



D V N Q

SPECIALIST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE

# Annual Report

2023-2024

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## Our acknowledgement

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live, the Wulgurukaba of Gurambilbarra and Yunbenun, the Bindal, Gugu Badhun and Nywaigi and Kalkadoon and Mitakoodi people and pay tribute to their cultures, their ancestors and their elders past, present and all future generations.

In the work we do, we recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children experience significantly higher rates of domestic and family violence. This is compounded by experiences of racism, marginalisation, and other significant factors deeply rooted in the impacts of colonisation and the loss of land and culture. We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart and acknowledge that sovereignty has not been ceded.

All at DVNQ want to say thank you for the generosity of strong Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women we work with in our organisation, as we listen and learn from you about your land, culture, protocols and how we can work together for reconciliation. Our organisation is a safe and inclusive service, welcoming and supporting people of all cultures, religions, LGBTQIA+ communities, ages, and abilities. Everyone is truly welcome here.

We respectfully acknowledge the women and children who have lost their lives to domestic violence, and those who continue to live with this fear and trauma amongst our community.



## Our appreciation

DVNQ deeply appreciates our supporters, funders and generous donors, whether through financial contributions or essential items donated for our clients. We would like to acknowledge the Fabulous Women's Luncheon and Lisa, Eleni and Heidi, who have generously raised funds for three consecutive years, helping to fit-out our new premises. We also extend our gratitude to Teresa Hope - HopeStars, Zonta Townsville Metro Inc., Queensland Country Women's Association - Rosslea Branch, The Rock Christian Family Church, Anglican Mothers Union Australia Diocese of North Queensland, Townsville City Council, Verve Design, Peak ARE Pty. Ltd., Eurika Furniture Townsville, Evolution IT, QPS, Townsville Hospital and Health Service and our main funders, the Department of Justice and Attorney General, 54reasons and Legal Aid Queensland, and the many individuals in our community who have kindly donated anonymously.





# > Vision, Principles and Values

## Our Social Vision

The elimination of domestic and family violence.

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## Our Principles

- The safety and the rights of women and children is at the heart of everything we do.
- The voice of First Nations people is heard and respected throughout our organisation.
- Decisions and interactions are grounded in ethics and integrity with transparent respectful communication.
- Continuous improvement is our responsibility so that we remain the specialist domestic and family violence service in the regions.
- Collaboration and integration with others provide the best service for our clients.
- Domestic and family violence will not end unless we relentlessly advocate for change.



## Our Values

### Integrity

We do this by - Modelling a deep sense of social justice and recognising that Domestic Violence is a violation of human rights. Our decisions and interactions are grounded in ethics with transparent respectful communication. We ensure that our approach is holistic, client centred, and survival led by continually learning from survivors through evidence-based practice that underpins everything we do.

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### Advocacy

We do this by - Standing as the specialist sector partner in the region fiercely advocating for the elimination of domestic violence.

We are strong advocates for structural and generational change, for balance, justice and equity, and we are recognised as a leader in our community driving a whole society change to gendered violence from a feminist framework.

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### Innovation

We do this by - Continuing to build on our 30 years of experience, professionalism, and practice wisdom as the go to agency for women experiencing domestic violence. Our trained, and skilful staff are agile and continually refining and improving our service response in support of our clients and community.

We are inquisitive, imaginative, and revolutionary as we lead change in domestic violence in NQ.

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### Compassion

We do this by - Walking alongside survivors of domestic violence through deep listening, being present, prioritising their safety, and allowing women and children to progress at their own pace. It is our priority to help women feel welcome, safe and be supported by us without judgement.

We support women to recognise, exercise and advocate for themselves and their children. We respect wherever they are on their journey and acknowledge that they are experts in their own story and have power in their own autonomy.

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### Collaboration

We do this by - Nurturing honest and respectful relationships with other stakeholders in supporting the safety of women and children. Working closely with organisations and the community to raise awareness, educate and promote the part everyone can play in ending domestic violence. Everything we do is with the women's voice front of mind.





# > About DVNQ

## ⇒ Short background – who we are

Established in 1994, DVNQ is a local charity operating under the Coalition on Criminal Assault in the Home Inc., in North Queensland. We provide services in Townsville, Ingham, Ayr, Charters Towers, Richmond, Palm Island, Mount Isa, Cloncurry, Dajarra, and Camooweal.

We offer free and confidential services for people experiencing domestic and family violence. The rights and dignity of victim-survivors and culturally respectful engagement are of paramount importance and underpin our service delivery. DVNQ is a strong feminist advocacy service, campaigning to end men's use of domestic and family violence and abuse.

We are committed to working with local communities to change the culture of domestic violence and abuse by providing leadership, raising awareness, and contributing to stopping this significant issue in our community. Our work is done through a range of partnerships, collaborative arrangements, and cooperative participation.

While women and children are the predominant victims of domestic violence, we also acknowledge that some men can be victims of domestic and family violence.





## Culturally safe organisation

DVNQ works respectfully in partnership with First Nations peoples in all aspects of service delivery. Cultural competency is an essential part of ensuring we continue to be a respectful and safe organisation in support of First Nations peoples.

As an organisation, we understand the connection between colonisation and intergenerational trauma. We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart, acknowledge that sovereignty has not been ceded, and recognise the distinct cultural rights of First Nations peoples.

We are strongly committed to hearing the voices of First Nations peoples through our Board representation, staff, and partner collaboration in everything we do. One of our core principles is that 'the voice of First Nations peoples is heard and respected throughout our organisation.' This has led to a reconciliation working group, engagement with First Nations peoples, and the finalisation of our draft Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan.





# > A Message from the Chair



On behalf of the Management Committee, I am pleased to present this report outlining the organisation's achievements and challenges in 2023-2024.

As the new President it has been my honour to have been a part of another year of significant achievement for the service. I would like to acknowledge the past President Nonie Harris, who led the service in the previous year, for her commitment and leadership in a time of significant challenges and changes.

The 2023-2024 year has been a year of growth and change. The organisation was awarded the HRT contract for Townsville and a new team was assembled and organised with the leadership of Skye Monk. This program is a significant step forward in the delivery of services in the Townsville district.

Other contracts awarded, commencing in the following financial year, include embedded workers in three Police Stations and two workers as part of the Federal 500 workers initiative which has enabled an identified position in Mount Isa and an embedded role at Townsville University Hospital through a partnership arrangement. The year also saw a new collaboration with 54reasons and continuation of the Domestic Violence Homelessness contract in Mount Isa.

This year has also seen the service successfully transition to our new premises on Ingham Rd in Townsville. Providing quality and centrally located premises has increased the comfort and security for our clients. The Men's Behaviour Change Program has separate access from Gordon Street, Garbutt which is a great improvement from our city premises.

The Mount Isa Service continues to be a challenging part of the organisation in relation to securing adequate experienced staff members and funding arrangements. These issues have been addressed successfully and our relationship with 54reasons has been effective. The provision of an identified Advanced Specialist DFV Advocate position at this service location is also a welcomed development.

Verity and her staff continue to progress our organisation's vision and purpose. They strive daily to provide compassionate, professional services under urgent timelines. Verity has led an extensive consideration into the wellbeing of our staff, with a Wellbeing and Development planning day as one of the initiatives. We continue to be alert and concerned about the psychosocial wellbeing of our staff and to be supportive and encouraging of their self-care.

Our Management Committee is an active, knowledgeable group which continues to be focused on providing sound considered governance. I am grateful for their commitment and engagement across all issues that arise.

The Department of Justice and Attorney General as our major funder, continues to be open and responsive to the changing landscape in which we operate. They enable us to do the work we do and to meet the increasing need of the women and children in the community and provide the service with considered advice and flexibility.

We are grateful for their support and open communications which assist us to improve and broaden the services we provide for our community.





# > A Message from the CEO



2024 marks the celebration of 30 years of service delivery in Townsville and 25 years in Mount Isa. Throughout these years of significant change, one thing has remained consistent—the organisation’s unwavering commitment to hearing and believing the stories of victim survivors of domestic and family violence.

We have learned so much about the forms of abuse and the tactics used by listening to the voices of victim survivors. They have shown us their strength, courage, wisdom, and resilience. We don’t build their capacity for them; we help them nurture the strengths they already possess. They have helped us better understand our role as a domestic violence service provider—supporting, walking alongside, listening to, and believing survivors. We have gained invaluable knowledge from their experiences, which has shaped our client-centred approach to the work we do. Our organisation remains steadfast in its commitment to one of our core principles: the safety and rights of women and children are at the heart of everything we do.

In line with our Strategic Plan, we have been expanding and growing our services across the regions. At the end of last financial year, we responded to two significant tenders issued by the QLD Government. The first tender was for the Townsville High Risk Team and Integrated Service Systems, for which we were awarded the contract at the start of this financial year.

Next came the Mount Isa and Gulf Tender, which saw us partner with 54reasons—a collaboration that successfully commenced in October 2023. As the year progressed, we secured two further funding contracts, extending our services into three police stations and the Townsville University Hospital through a partnership with the Townsville Hospital and Health Service. This growth, alongside additional increases across existing contracts, aligns with our planned restructure to ensure an organisational framework that supports frontline delivery and strong leadership capability.

Supporting this expansion was our mission to find a new home for the service in Townsville. We recognised the necessity of a move to provide premises that are fit for purpose and future-proofed for growth. The prolonged and complex process of securing and fitting out these premises spanned the past year. Our resolve was clear, premises that felt safe, welcoming, and respectful for clients and a space which reflects how much we value our staff. On July 24th 2023, this work came to fruition with our move to Ingham Road, and the Men’s Behaviour Change Program relocating to Gordon Street, ensuring suitable separation while operating from the same block of land.

Alongside this significant achievement was the rebranding of the organisation, which aligned with the new premises and informed the interior design, look, and feel. Change of this magnitude does not happen by chance, and once again, I am truly grateful for the collegiality across the organisation and the can-do attitude displayed through times of great transformation.

Valuing the voice of victim survivors one client shared with us –

*"I'm a woman living in a fairly affluent community, I had been experiencing DV for a long time, but I wouldn't do anything about it because the perception of DV is something "dirty" and places that looked after women experiencing DV were dark, dingy and secretive places. When things got so bad I had to leave I thought I couldn't have sunk any lower and when they referred me to the service, I thought well now I've really hit the gutter. Can you imagine my joy, relief and just total gratitude at walking into that beautiful, comforting building, it was like someone just wrapped their arms around me and said, "it's ok". The beautiful furnishings, the light, the space, artwork, the kind staff - you know it just made me feel valuable, I felt like I could do this, I could start again".*

I am deeply proud of the remarkable success of the organisation throughout 2023-2024, and the unwavering care shown towards victim survivors of domestic and family violence. I look forward to fully realising these achievements and much more in the coming year.

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to so many people. The Board members are steadfast in their governance, inclusive leadership and effective ethical decision making, ensuring the organisation meets current and emerging practice. It remains an honour for me to lead an organisation comprised of so many skilled, compassionate advocates and trailblazers amongst our staff. We have once again received unconditional peer support from SPEAQ, a network we auspice, and QDVSN, where I have had the privilege of serving as secretary. The collective wisdom and integrity across these collaborative networks are invaluable and a constant source of inspiration. To all our supporters and those who have generously donated, you have helped so many victim survivors with your care and kindness. Lastly, to our funders, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General—thank you for your trust in our high-performing, credible organisation.

Verity Bennett  
Chief Executive Officer





# > A Message from the Treasurer

On behalf of the Management Committee, I have the honour of presenting the audited financials for year ending 30 June 2024.

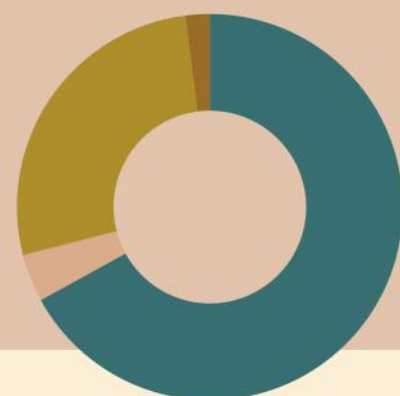
I have taken on the role as Treasurer after the spot was vacated by now Chair, Therese Smith. Additionally, the role of Corporate Services Manager was filled and successfully established by Kate Archer. Many thanks and appreciation of you both.

The Finance Sub-committee has continued to meet prior to the monthly meetings to discuss and review the monthly reports. Currently consisting of Corporate Services Manager and Treasurer. Upon reflection of the previous year's milestones, it is notable that new reporting software is now implemented. This year saw the introduction of local Townsville software Calxa, which has enabled advancements in the format of monthly reports including budget variance, balance sheet reconciliation, aged payables and receivables, along with commentary which has streamlined the financials.

The Townsville premises move was completed at the start of the financial year which was the culmination of many years work to find a new home for the service. During the year rebranding work took place, to be finalised and launched into the 2024-2025 financial year. The organisation has continued to grow with the successful awarding of new contracts ensuring much needed service delivery to victim survivors. These have been huge milestones for the service financially and in legacy. We appreciate and acknowledge the funders who have contributed to these.

Department of Justice and Attorney General (DJAG) continues to be the major funder, followed by the generous donations and gifts we gratefully receive as part of ongoing contributions. In December 2023, the service benefited from former Mayor Jenny Hill's Christmas Appeal, which provided a boost into the purchasing of critical items for clients that were outside of DJAG brokerage funding rules.

Figure 1. Expenditure



> Employee Benefits Expense	> Depreciation Expense
\$2,584,478	\$174,346
> Other Expenses	> Interest Expenses
\$1,048,456	\$66,526

The main expenditure cost continues to be salaries and labour hire including contractors and consultants, almost reaching \$2.6 million. (Figure 1. Expenditure). Other large expenditures include an increase in property costs associated with new Townsville premises and preparing for the rebrand being rolled out and an increase in computer and IT cost, with Evolution IT being engaged along with upgrading to keep up with technology and cyber security.

The Management Committee have been amazed by the generosity of the community by way of donations to the service. We would like to thank all the financial supporters, funders, members and staff in both Townsville and Mount Isa for their consistent commitment to the growth of DVNQ. The support has helped to create a safe space for women and their children to feel valued and empowered.

Penney Ferguson  
Treasurer



# > The people behind the organisation

## Management Committee

Our Committee is responsible for the strategic direction and performance of the organisation. We are proud of the mix of skills, knowledge, experience, and diversity, which enables DVNQ to be a leading organisation in the sector. The leadership style harnesses kindness, fairness, and empowerment, setting the tone for the culture throughout the organisation.

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### Chair Therese Smith

Therese was born and educated in North Qld and successfully operated an IT company for over 20 years. Therese had eight years as a member of James Cook University Council. Her roles included Chair of Univet Pty Ltd. Her experience includes over twenty years of board experience in Not-for-Profit and government organisations in tertiary education, mental health, employment training, sports management, and domestic violence sectors as well as corporate board positions. Therese is skilled in strategic planning, corporate governance, finance, and information technology. Therese is committed to community and is an active member of Zonta Townville Metro.

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### Vice Chair Alex Whitney

Alexandra Whitney (Alex) is an experienced family and domestic violence lawyer working in the community legal sector. Alex has considerable experience in alternate dispute resolution working as a mediator for the NSW Community Justice Centre and a conciliator of the Queensland Human Rights Commission. Alex was previously a Board Director for the National Social Security Rights Network.

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### Secretary Ines Zuchowski

Dr Ines Zuchowski has extensive work experience as a social worker in social welfare practice, exposing her to a broad range of interventions and fields of practice. Research has been an integral part of her professional social work practice. Ines is now employed as a senior lecturer in Social Work and Human Services at JCU. Ines social work practice experience and research interest are particularly centred around, child and youth welfare, violence prevention, professional development of supervision, social justice and human rights, women's issues and field education for social work students.

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### Treasurer Penny Ferguson

Originally from Canberra, Penney has been in North Queensland long enough to call it home. She loves her Aboriginal and Irish heritage and believes there is always more to learn about culture. After more than 10 years working with young people in a volunteer capacity, she is one of five who co-founded an Indigenous Corporation, Queensland Youth Connections, which aims to empower young people. She completed a Bachelor of Laws at the end of 2019 and went on to complete a Master of Business Administration (Marketing Management). Currently, she combines her passion and education as Community Engagement Coordinator at NQ Women's Legal Service, a specialist Community Legal Centre providing legal help, education and reform especially for women experiencing domestic and family violence.





## Lindy Edwards

Lindy Edwards has more than 30 years' experience working in the Community Sector, in particular in the area of domestic violence and women's homelessness. Lindy has a Bachelor of Social Work degree and was the Co-ordinator of Seras Women's Shelter for over 20 years. Now retired, she continues to contribute to the work of eliminating violence against women and children through her involvement with DVNQ as a Board member. During the many years working in the Community Sector, Lindy held Executive positions on the boards of other local Not-for-profit organisations as well as State and National domestic violence and homelessness peak organisations.

## Meg Davis

Meg Davis has been a practising social worker in Townsville since 1978 working extensively in the community inclusive of Indigenous health, homelessness, mental health, family skills and was Manager of Townsville Multicultural Support Group Inc. (TMSG) 1998-2020. She is currently mid-way through a PhD at James Cook University that has been inspired by her work in the resettlement sector through TMSG. She has a strong feminist commitment to human rights and social justice. Through her diverse work experiences, she has participated in strategic advocacy networks and has been on the Board since late 2020.

## Kristin Perry

Kristin Perry has more than 17 years' experience in strategic human resources management and has held several management roles, including her current position as Manager, Talent Acquisition at James Cook University. Kristin has qualifications in Business and Human Resources Management and is currently studying Psychological Science and Sociology. She has a strong commitment to feminism, equity, diversity and inclusion and is a member of the JCU Gender Equity Action and Research Team and Indigenous Action Group. Relatively new to boards, Kristin has been a member of the Townsville Basketball Board since 2019 and joined the Board in May 2022.

# Leadership

DVNQ views leadership as a privilege that allows us to serve our team and drive our organisation forward, prioritising the well-being and safety of our clients and teams. Our leadership team possesses a diverse range of skills, including social work, counselling and therapy, training and development, community safety, human services, finance, risk and compliance, human resources, and communications.

Our Terms of Leadership Collaboration sets out what it means to us to work together as a Leadership Team:

Respect	this leads to trust which strengthens culture
Communication	so we are all on the same page
Commitment to something	our purpose, a common goal, what we set out to do
Confidentiality	knowing when things are not right to be shared widely
Accountability	to do what we say we will do, united team even where there are differences
Support each other	collective support, sense of care
Strengths based approach	draw on capabilities we have amongst us
Skills	negotiation and conflict resolution, challenging conversations, we won't always agree
Results	want to see achievements
Acknowledgement	celebrate success

We are committed to creating a healthy and robust culture by leaning into difficult conversations, encouraging accountability and vulnerability, helping each other, and bringing our authentic selves to work.







## Staff

Our staff are highly trained and experienced trauma-informed practitioner advocates who are multi-disciplined in their approach. Staff lead different programs but also provide backup support for each program to ensure shared knowledge and a holistic approach to everyone we work with.

At DVNQ, we take the safety and well-being of our clients as paramount, which is why we ensure that all our team members have suitable, industry-recognised qualifications for their particular roles or extensive experience.

Our staff have qualifications in social work, psychology, criminology, or human services, along with a background in specialised work in this field. All our team continually build upon their knowledge and skills through professional development and further study.

Together we recognise the need for self-care and a place of work that supports staff wellbeing. We see this is a collective responsibility to ensure a healthy workplace with peer support and genuine care for each other.



# > Our new brand

## Why we re-branded?

It is important for us to ensure that our brand identity reflects the professional, safe, and welcoming service we provide, and that our name is easy to understand and remember when someone needs to reach us.

## What was the re-branding process?

We began the process in 2023, collaborating with Verve Design and Crystal Clear Marketing, followed by creative engagement with Niketa Law, a local First Nations Wulgurukaba and Wakka Wakka artist. This journey involved listening to staff, stakeholders, and clients to deeply understand who we are and our unique role as a specialist service in our local communities.

The process taught us a great deal about branding, revealing that it goes far beyond just a name and logo. In fact, every interaction with our organisation represents our brand. This is why the move to new premises in Townsville was so pivotal - ensuring that anyone visiting our organisation can feel how welcoming, professional, and trusted our service truly is.

During the engagement process, one client expressed that they wanted a place where they could “just exhale”—this is the experience we aimed to create with our new brand.

## What does our new brand identity symbolise?

Our new brand embodies our five values: integrity, compassion, advocacy, innovation, and collaboration. These values are reflected through the colours, symbolism, tone, illustrations, and First Nations artwork.

After listening and reflecting on the feedback, we felt it was important to evoke a sense of calm through simplicity in the brand style. It was important for us to honour the past 30 years, which we have done by retaining one of the original brand colours and part of the original name that held greatest significance.

Like any strong brand, it is present at every touchpoint our clients and stakeholders have with us. From when they see us online, to walking through our doors, or holding our brochures and documents, there is a consistent representation of our values in visual form, designed to build safety and trust.

The letter Q in our new logo carries deep significance. It symbolises the cycle of abuse, the support and space we provide for victim-survivors and their families as illustrated by the compassion colour, and the act of breaking free from that cycle.





# > Our Strategic Plan – Achievements

Our 5-year Strategic Plan sets a clear direction for what we need to do now and into the future to support victim survivors and courageously lead a positive domestic and family violence shift in the North Queensland regions. During this 5-year Strategic Plan, the voice of victim survivors is elevated, as their experiences teach us how to provide the most crucial services in our community.

**4 clear priorities have been driving the work over the 2023-2024 financial year with significant achievements –**

## > Priority

## > What we achieved

### ➔ **Our people and our culture are highly valued**

- Enrich the experience of working here
- Build a strong and inclusive team
- Increase First Nations people representation
- Nurture and develop professional growth

- Used new recruitment strategies
- Welcomed many new staff
- Established Identified positions
- Increased casual staff members
- Broadened student placement opportunities
- Re-negotiated enhanced EAP arrangement
- Increased external supervision options
- Continued to hold regular staff meetings
- Increased staff training opportunities
- Developed a psychosocial wellbeing plan
- Introduced staff service recognition awards
- Revised position descriptions to provide greater role clarity
- Promoted staff into Leadership roles

### ➔ **Our organisation prioritises the safety of women and children and demonstrates professionalism**

- Provide excellence in service delivery
- Enhance our cultural inclusivity
- Strengthen efficiencies by transforming process
- Grow and expand service provision

- Developed a new brand
- Relocated to new premises in Townsville
- Restructured the organisation to support service provision
- Expanded service delivery through new awarded contracts –
  - HRT/ISR Townsville Contract
  - Mount Isa 54reasons Collaboration
  - Federal 500 workers initiative Contract
- Embedded in QPS model Contract
- Reconciliation working group and plan in place
- Engaged with victim survivors to inform service delivery
- Engaged with stakeholders to inform service delivery
- Engaged in Cultural competency training
- Engaged in social media awareness campaigns
- Participated in DFV reform consultation
- Partnered in the delivery of fundraising initiatives
- Introduced new software systems
- Held team wellbeing and development activity



## > Priority

### **Our sector** recognises us as the lead agency driving change in our regions

- Engage in respectfully collaborative partnerships
- Stand as the specialist sector partner in the regions
- Boldly advocate for change
- Improve awareness and understanding of Domestic and Family Violence

### **Our governance** continually improves to ensure ethical and sustainable practice

- Set and model the organisation's positive culture
- Instil the value of good governance and continuous improvement
- Implement contemporary practices and procedures

## > What we achieved

- Awarded the contract to lead the High-Risk Team
- Continued to lead the Domestic Violence Integrated Response Partnership including DV Action Group and DV Network
- Expanded the DV Network to 94 members
- Took on role of secretary for Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network (QDVSN)
- Continued to Auspice and play an active role in Service and Practitioners for the Elimination of Abuse (SPEAQ)
- Coordinated Candlelight Ceremony with the Women's Centre and Sera's and other DFV Prevention Month activities
- Delivered Common Risk Assessment Safety Framework (CRASF) training across the sector
- Delivered Information Sharing Guidelines training across the sector
- Provided peer support to the Townsville regional DFV service providers
- Participated in Perpetrator Strategy reform consultation

- Provided training, undertook staff engagement and policy development on managing psychosocial hazards in the workplace
- Provided training and policy development on sexual and sex-based harassment
- Reviewed existing policies, Risk Management Plan and Emergency Management Plan
- Continued to Auspice Service and Practitioners for the Elimination of Abuse (SPEAQ)
- Undertook a governance review against the ACNC standards
- Introduced new financial reporting format using CALXA software
- Board members attended staff celebration and team events



# > Our Service in Numbers

The demand for service remains high across Townsville and Mount Isa.

During 2023/2024 financial year 6,824 clients received a service across our different program areas.

Of the clients we worked with, 39% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, for Mount Isa this is 81% and across our organisation 4% of clients identified as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse.

3,580

Police referrals  
received

20,542

Hours of  
appointments

26,074

Hours of service  
delivery

25,698

Client  
activities

6,824

Clients received  
support across  
different programs

39%

Identified as  
Aboriginal and/or  
Torres Strait  
Islander

DVNQ AUDITED FINANCIALS: SEPARATE REPORT



# > Our Service Delivery

## RESPONSE TEAM - CRISIS SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY

“The support has been amazing, they have gone above and beyond. The workers showed empathy and sympathy and really made you feel like they cared, and I mattered”.



We offer walk-in or phone support for people experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV). This includes but is not limited to:

Providing information, resources, and options for next steps

Safety planning and creating support plans

Assistance with applying for or varying a domestic violence order

Referral to safe accommodation

Providing support letters and assistance with applying for support packages

Referral to other services as needed

We do this by using a trauma-informed, non-judgmental and survivor-led approach.





## RESPONSE TEAM - CRISIS SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY (CONTINUED)

The demand for crisis services remains consistent, with additional societal pressures contributing to the increased complexity of client presentations. As a result, workers have observed a rise in one-off crisis interventions developing into ongoing support for clients. Additionally, Police Referral numbers have remained consistently high across both Mount Isa and Townsville. These referrals provide a valuable opportunity for Specialist DFV Advocates to reach victim survivors who might otherwise have been unaware of the available support.

Over the past year, across both service locations, Specialist DFV Advocates have assisted more than 412 clients in applying for third-party financial compensation programs, such as Victims Assist Escaping Violence Payment. These payments have been instrumental in helping victim survivors rebuild their lives after experiencing domestic and family violence.

The Mount Isa DFV Homelessness program continues to be in high demand. Whilst the shortage of housing proves a constant barrier, support continues to assist clients to find suitable accommodation or to help with safety upgrades to prevent future homelessness.

DVNQ continues to strengthen its relationships with local organisations to facilitate seamless referrals for services such as legal advice, financial counselling, and shelter. These partnerships have led to regular clinics at DVNQ, in collaboration with NQ Women's Legal Service, First Nations Women's Legal Service, Townsville Community Legal Service, and Community Gro Financial Resilience Program.

DVNQ has also maintained strong partnerships with James Cook University and established a new partnership with Central Queensland University to support student placement opportunities. We are proud to contribute to workforce development through placements within our Response Team, recognising that many staff across the organisation have progressed from placement to employment, and even into leadership roles.

10,862 hours of support provided

3,477 clients supported



## RESPONSE TEAM - HOME SAFETY UPGRADES

261 clients  
supported

"Receiving assistance with safety upgrades has enabled my children and I to feel safe in our home and remain a part of our local community."

Home safety upgrades assist women and children in enhancing their safety while remaining in the home after leaving an abusive relationship. This is done by providing practical safety upgrades to the property and ongoing support as required. This can include, but is not limited to:

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Changing locks

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Providing window locks and alarms

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Installing sensor lights

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Providing personal alarms

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Installing finger guards on screen doors

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Installing security screens on windows

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Installing CCTV cameras

Demand for support through both the Choosing Safety program in Townsville and Safe at Home in Mount Isa remains high, with the ongoing housing crisis further increasing the need to help women and children stay safely in their homes. We continue to receive referrals to both programs from a wide range of service providers, including Queensland Police, Intensive Family Support Services, Housing and Homelessness Services, DVConnect, and the Department of Housing.

This past year marked a new partnership and funding arrangement with the Centre Against Domestic Abuse (CADA) for our Townsville location, which introduced the Keeping Women Safe in the Home (KWSITH) program. This brought a shift in how women and children are supported, allowing them greater autonomy in their safety planning through the provision of physical safety upgrades to be installed in their homes. Additionally, the program expanded the types of support available, providing items such as Wi-Fi dongles, security and sensor alarms, dash cameras, and mobile phones. Since the program's launch in February 2024, DVNQ has made 114 referrals to the Keeping Women Safe in The Home (KWSITH) program.





## RESPONSE TEAM - COURT BASE SERVICE

“I feel safer physically and mentally, not just for me but my kids too. They have been a great support”.

We provide court support to women experiencing domestic and family violence who have proceedings before the Townsville and Mount Isa Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Courts.

### We do this by offering:

Information about the court process

Support in the safe room

Support in the courtroom

Safety planning

Referrals to other agencies

Advocacy to stakeholders

Our service also works with respondents by providing information about the court process and referrals to services, including our Men's Behaviour Change Program.

2,697 hours of support provided

1,900 clients supported

DVNQ continues to provide court-based services for women attending the Townsville and Mount Isa Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Courts for both civil and DFV criminal matters. Additionally, workers provide services at the Family Advisory and Support Service in the Federal Circuit and Family Court in Townsville.

A vital component of court-based services is advocacy for victim survivors. Over the past year, workers have engaged in advocacy with various stakeholders, ensuring that victim survivors have access to free legal support (where conflicts of interest may have otherwise prevented it) and that their voices are heard in the courtroom throughout the DFV Criminal Court process. This advocacy has been made possible by the strong relationships between DVNQ and court stakeholders at both local and statewide levels. Workers have participated in the DV Court Advocacy Network meetings and forums, offering connections to other court support workers across the state. Additionally, workers have delivered presentations at the Townsville, Palm Island, and Mount Isa DFV Specialist Court Workshops to increase stakeholder understanding of perpetrator accountability and the barriers victim survivors face when accessing support.

The court setting also provides a critical opportunity for Men's Behaviour Change Facilitators to engage with respondents, encouraging reflection, accountability, and participation in a Men's Behaviour Change Program. Men's Behaviour Change staff have been working closely with court stakeholders to solidify and promote Intervention Order processes in both Townsville and Mount Isa courts.





## HIGH RISK TEAM

“Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your help. I can't find enough words to express my gratitude to all your support, I know that if I need support, your door is always open for me and that is such a great feeling thank you.”

The Townsville High Risk Team (HRT) is made up of core members from various Government agencies including Queensland Police Service, Community Corrections, Child Safety, Victims Assist, Queensland Health and Queensland Courts, with DVNQ being the lead agency and Yumba Meta providing a First Nations Cultural Advisor.

The HRT is one component of a much broader integrated service system. HRTs are a formalised, place-based coordinated response model that addresses cases of high and imminent risk. Cases are referred to the HRT only when there is evidence to suggest escalating or imminent risk of serious bodily harm or lethality to the victim-survivor and existing agency and/or integrated service responses have been unable or are insufficient to manage the level of risk.

The primary aims of the HRT are to:

increase the safety of victim-survivors and their children and help prevent serious harm or death

manage the high risk posed by the Person using Violence, increase their accountability, and reduce reoffending

prevent systems abuse

increase agency understanding and accountability, and deliver coordinated, consistent, and timely responses.





## HIGH RISK TEAM (CONTINUED)

Since its inception, the High-Risk Team (HRT) has accepted 244 referrals for victim survivors assessed as being at imminent risk of harm. These referrals have come from a diverse range of services beyond core members, including Palm Island Community Centre (PICC – Palm Island), Burdekin Community Association (BCA – Ayr), Prospect (Charters Towers), DVConnect, FACC, Yumba-Meta, The Women's Centre, Sera's Women's Shelter, Act for Kids, Relationships Australia Intensive Family Support (RAQ IFS), and TAIHS. The Townsville HRT continues to maintain one of the highest rates of consenting referrals.

Through the interagency sharing of information, the HRT have been able to reduce barriers and increase wrap around supports for high-risk victim survivors. Victim Advocates have attended the HRT meeting from services, inclusive of Centacare, Burdekin Community Association, The Women's Centre, Act for Kids and Prospect Community Services.

The HRT also continues to achieve successful outcomes in holding Persons Using Violence (PUV) accountable, focusing on referral pathways and opportunities to engage PUVs through police referrals, service referrals, and Court based Service provided by DVNQ.

The HRT Coordinator and Case Managers have strengthened relationships and supported the implementation of information-sharing protocols across the Townsville District.

2,176 hours of support provided

244 clients supported





## THERAPEUTIC TEAM - CHILDREN'S COUNSELLING



“[child] seemed to understand me more, I had no idea what they did, but to let go and feel completely safe was incredible. It was like they connected us emotionally again”.

### THE AARDVARC PROGRAM

The AARDVARC Program is specifically for children and young people aged 4 to 18 years, and their safe/non-violent caregiver who have experienced domestic or family violence. Once the violence has stopped, the AARDVARC program offers the children and their caregiver:

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Acknowledgement of their experience of violence

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An opportunity to talk and make sense of this experience within a safe and supportive environment

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Information, ideas, and referrals

AARDVARC staff are trained and experienced domestic and family violence specialists who are here to help. The program consists of:

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Individual sessions for children/young people and their primary caregiver for one hour per week for approximately six weeks

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Information sessions for caregivers

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Strengths-based group sessions for families

**3,263** hours of support provided

**369** participants in the AARDVARC program

The AARDVARC program remains a well-regarded support for safe caregivers and their children post-domestic violence. This is evidenced by the consistent demand and waitlists to access support. Despite wait times, AARDVARC continues to receive positive feedback from caregivers and children attending the program. This year saw the format expand to a 3-worker model to better support the demand and families with children in different age ranges and the ability to extend support for carers to engage separately where needed.

AARDVARC workers have built strong partnerships with local stakeholders and schools to support referral pathways and opportunities for primary prevention with children and young people. This includes working closely with local schools including William Ross, Heatley, Thuringowa and Northern Beaches State High Schools to facilitate and deliver programs on healthy relationships, including the Love Bites Program. Strong collaboration has continued with the local First Nations Service TAIHS with the AARDVARC staff engaged to facilitate Crossroads – trauma informed reflective parenting program for their service users.





## PREVENTION TEAM - MEN'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

"I feel my partner participating in MenTER has contributed positively to our relationship that I finally feel equal and feel like I can safely express my feelings to him".

MenTER (Men Towards Equal Relationships) is our behaviour change program for men who want to stop using violence and abuse in their relationships.

MenTER operates in a group format for a total of 20 weeks. We offer this group both in person and online weekly. Participants gain information to challenge and change the values, beliefs, and behaviours that underlie their use of violence and abuse.

### The program covers nine themes:

Non-violence

Non-threatening behaviour

Respect

Trust and support

Honesty and accountability

Responsible parenting

Shared responsibility

Economic partnership

Negotiation and fairness

We focus on how participants can take responsibility for changing their behaviour and decision-making without using violence, and how they can use this knowledge to make positive changes for healthy and safe relationships.

MBC Facilitators work closely with Women's Advocates who perform ex/partner contact with the participants in the program. This is to ensure that all practice is survivor-led and elevates the voice and safety of women and children in any intervention involving the man using violence.

MenTER has continued to offer in-person and online programs in Townsville and surrounding areas, including Ingham, Ayr, and Charters Towers. In Mount Isa, DVNQ provides an online program each week and supports the Birlinka Program in partnership with 54reasons. Although recruitment in this specialist field remains a challenge, DVNQ has leveraged its networks across the state to bring in experienced and skilled facilitators for online program delivery. This is complemented by local Men's Behaviour Change Facilitators, who handle intakes, case management, and in-person group facilitation for program participants.

DVNQ also continues its strong connection to the SPEAQ network through involvement in the steering committee and as the auspicing body.

3,632 hours of engagement

834 clients engaged



## PREVENTION TEAM - SECTOR DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATED SERVICE RESPONSE

DVNQ works with services, organisations, businesses and community to lead an integrated response system that provides wraparound supports for victim-survivors and their families and ensures those using violence are held accountable. Our secondary focus is an integrated prevention approach that supports early intervention and increases awareness and shared understanding of domestic and family violence.

We achieve this by delivering training and information sessions, hosting and attending events, and facilitating structured networks and groups.

In addition, DVNQ offers support and capacity-building activities to the Specialist DFV Workers in Charters Towers, Ayr, Ingham and Palm Island to support them to address service gaps and respond effectively to victim survivors experiencing DFV.

In 2023, DVNQ was awarded the contract to lead the Townsville High Risk Team and Integrated Service Response, replacing the well-established DVIRG collaboration that began in 2017 and expanding the service to the wider Townsville District. The Townsville High Risk Team operates within the Townsville Domestic Violence Integrated Response (DVIR) Partnership, which also includes the DV Governance Group, DV Action Group, and DV Network.

**3,444** hours of sector development and integrated service response

**22** CRASF and Information Sharing Guidelines training sessions delivered

**>** with 155 attendees

“The strengths of DVNQ are the knowledge and experience of caring professional staff and positive relationships with stakeholders”.







**The DV Action Group** focuses on proactive and preventative interventions against domestic and family violence. It comprises 32 partner organisations that meet monthly to discuss service gaps, identify trends, and collaborate on initiatives to improve DFV practices, education, and community awareness. One of the group's key achievements in 2023-24 was establishing the DV Pet Protect program, which provides temporary care for pets belonging to victim survivors fleeing domestic violence.

**The DV Network** has expanded to 94 members who receive regular updates from DVNQ via a dedicated webpage.

**DV Prevention** month 2024 was filled with awareness raising, events and media coverage with the Theme being '**1 Thing**' – encouraging everyone to do just one thing during the month to address DFV.

**Sector Development** support from DVNQ has continued across Ingham, Ayr, Charters Towers and Palm Island assisting with capacity building, training and support to the local networks and groups and events.

In Mount Isa, DVNQ is an associate member of the High-Risk Team and an active member of the Domestic Violence Action Group.



# > Capacity building and community awareness

DVNQ remains committed to engaging and partnering with stakeholders and community to raise awareness, build the capacity of the sector and improve responses to DFV. Some of the ways DVNQ has achieved this is through the following:

- In Her Shoes collaboration with NQ Women's Legal Service and Townsville City Council
- Connect Protect – Community Safety Expo
- William Ross Mental Health Expo
- Thuringowa High Community Connect Expo
- TAIHS Yarning Circle - 16 Days of Activism
- My Pathways Teddy Bears Picnic
- Defence Community Expo
- Love Bites with Heatley State High School and William Ross State High School
- Keeping the Sharks at Bay delivered in partnership with The Women's Centre
- Presentation to TAFE Community Services Students
- JCU Medical Students Expo
- Red Rose Rallies
- NAIDOC March and Deadly Day Out
- Candlelight Ceremony
- Cowboys Community Corner
- Partnership with Townsville City Council and QC to deliver LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Training
- Safer Families DFV Event - Ingham
- HopeStars Fundraising event
- Townsville District DFV Information Sharing and Networking Forum
- Supporting LGBTIQ+ Service Delivery in Townsville Workshops
- Rainbow Yoga as a part of LGBTQ DV Awareness Day
- Townsville Provide Festival
- Red Bench Launch - Townsville University Hospital
- Red Bench Launch - Mater Hospital
- Small Steps for Hannah presentation
- Presentation to Townsville Day Surgery
- Healthy Relationship Education Sessions for St Patricks High School
- Presentation to CWA on DFV
- Presentations at the Townsville, Palm Island and Mount Isa DFV Specialist Court Workshops
- Guest presentation at JCU lecture on the intersection between Child Safety and DFV
- Support to Townsville District DFV Action Groups
- Presentation to Port of Townsville staff
- HRT Resilience and Leadership Forum
- Common Risk Assessment and Safety Framework Level 1 and 2 training
- Information Sharing Guidelines Training
- Presentations to Queensland Police Service Mount Isa
- Mount Isa Community Network Presentation
- Presentation to Mount Isa Community Corrections
- DFV Prevention Month March
- NAIDOC March Mount Isa
- Presentation to Serenity House Women's Shelter
- Primary Prevention Workshop for Department of Education
- Healthy Relationships session at Project Booyah
- Laverack Barracks Open Day
- Northern Beaches State High School Mental Health Week Expo
- William Ross State High School Mental Health Week Expo
- Healthy Relationships group with Heatley State High School









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