



Annual Report

2024-25

D V N Q

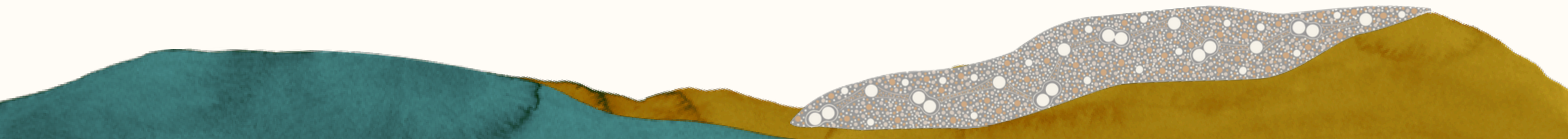
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Our Appreciation

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 Teresa Hope – HopeStars who have continued to generously raise funds for the DV Action Group's Pet Protect Initiative. We also extend our gratitude to The Women's Society, Anglican Mothers Union Australia Diocese of North Queensland, Queensland Country Women's Association – Rosslea Branch, Pinnacle Penetcostal Church, Quota, St Patricks College, The Rock Church, St Peters Congregation, Cranbrae Retirement Village, Mount Isa City Council, Moksha Room, Pene at Gift Baskets, Queensland Country Women's Association – Townsville Branch, Big W, Verve Design, The People Principle, Neat Consulting, XRX Print Centre, Peak ARE Pty. Ltd., Evolution IT, QPS, 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.

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 peoples 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 levels 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 within 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.

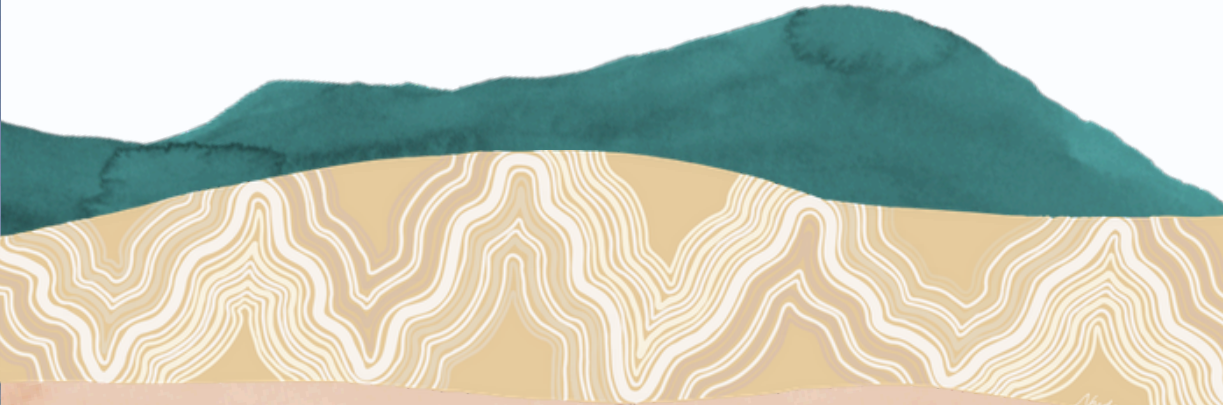
We respectfully acknowledge the women and children who have lost their lives to domestic violence, and those who continue to live with this fear and trauma amongst our community.



DVNQ

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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 2024-2025.

The 2024-2025 year has been a year of significant growth in programs and subsequently a high requirement for additional staff. Our Strategic Plan continues to provide direction and clarity for our growth and development which ensures we remain best placed to support victim survivors of DFV.

A 20% uplift came into effect on our main contracts from 1 July 2024 with welcomed longer contract terms. This provides greater stability and continuity of service delivery.

In this year, DVNQ commenced a new contract for the DFV Specialist embedded work in 3 Police Stations. We were also successful in being awarded two contracts (one staff member Townsville and one staff member Mount Isa) as part of the National Partnership Agreement to increase DFV frontline workers by 500 across Australia.

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 annual, Team Wellbeing and Development day was held on 1 August 2024 at Riverside Gardens – included service recognition awards and time together to reflect on practice and focus on our continuous improvement.

We were delighted to appoint two significant executive positions this year with Anne Marie commencing as Corporate Services Manager and Rechelle moving into the role of DV Service Manager after many years in the service having commenced as a student.

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 Queensland Government 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.

Therese Smith
Chair



A message from the Ceo

CEO Reflection: A Mission-Driven Journey toward ending Domestic and Family Violence

When I stepped into the role of CEO just over four years ago, I was both excited and a little apprehensive. I was deeply aware of the strong activism and advocacy shown by early sector leaders who, in 1984, formed a lobby group that ultimately led to the establishment of this organisation.

Against all odds, and through many challenges, these inspirational individuals forged ahead with unwavering determination. Their efforts brought about lasting change to domestic and family violence (DFV)—driven from our Townsville community. Their work led to shifts in public understanding, legislative reform, and funding for dedicated DFV services.

It is difficult to fully capture the scale of work, support, training, and advocacy delivered over these years. Thirty years ago, the organisation looked very different—operating out of borrowed offices, with staff using milk crates as desks and transporting resources in car boots. From these humble beginnings, remarkable progress was made.

In September 2024 whilst celebrating 30 years of service, we also officially opened our new premises with a spoking ceremony delivered by the Wulkuruka Walkabouts and launched our new brand with a revised name – DVNQ.

The 2024–2025 financial year saw continued achievements aligned with our Strategic Plan. We were awarded a contract to work from three police stations, increasing the level of support provided to victim-survivors at critical moments when they seek police assistance.

This year also brought two new contracts: one staff member in Townsville and one in Mount Isa, as part of the National Partnership Agreement to increase DFV frontline workers by 500 across Australia. An additional 20% uplift in our main contracts enabled us to re-establish adult counselling through the Courage to Heal program in Townsville, as well as provide much-needed resources across all programs.

DVNQ continues to lead a coordinated community response to DFV, delivering and participating in a significant number of training sessions, community events, and awareness-raising initiatives to help prevent violence and ensure the right response in our community.

With the commencement of new contracts and increased investment, we implemented a planned restructure, creating new positions, titles, and teams. We moved away from “crisis team” terminology, introducing the Response Team (including High Risk Team), alongside a Therapeutic Team (providing AARDDVARC children’s counselling and Courage to Heal adult counselling), and a Prevention Team (Men’s Behaviour Change and Integrated Community Response).

Recruitment was a major focus, with the successful appointments of Anne Marie as Corporate Services Manager and Rechelle as DV Service Manager. Both roles are being fulfilled with care and diligence, alongside the entire Leadership Team.

This additional investment, restructuring, and recruitment of key positions have elevated our operations, allowing us to support a growing number of victim-survivors and contribute to a service system that holds those who use violence to account. This constituted a 30% increase in client numbers.

Reflecting on my time with the organisation and the privilege of leading this service, I feel deep humility and gratitude. I've been entrusted with guiding our work to meet the evolving landscape. Many speak of working to live, not living to work—a valid sentiment. But like those who came before me, and many others, I live to end DFV and stop men's use of violence against women. This is not a job; it's a mission.

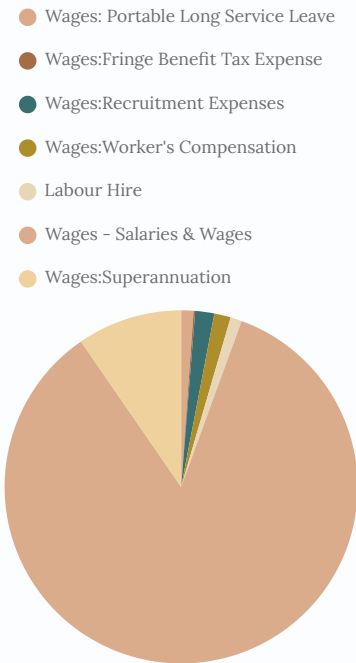
In closing, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to many. Our Board members continue to provide unwavering governance, inclusive leadership, and ethical decision-making, ensuring the organisation meets both current and emerging practice. I am reminded daily of the honour it is to hold this position and to work alongside our skilled and compassionate staff—true advocates for change.

We have again received steadfast peer support from SPEAQ, a network we auspice, and QDVSN, where I've had the privilege of serving as Secretary for a further term. The collective wisdom and integrity across these networks are invaluable and a constant source of inspiration.

To our supporters and generous donors—your care and kindness have helped countless victim-survivors. And to our funders, both Queensland and Federal Governments, and collaboration with 54 reasons—it remains a privilege to partner with you in our unwavering quest to end domestic and family violence.

Verity Bennett
Ceo

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 2025.

DVNQ (‘Organisation’) has expanded throughout this fiscal year, and we welcomed a new Corporate Services Manager to drive the corporate services team through the change. Thanks, and appreciation to Anne-Marie for her dedication and hard work and a thank you to our outgoing Corporate Services Manager, Kate, early in this period.

New contracts were successfully acquired to support the vision and growth Verity, and the leadership team are driving. These include the embedded funding contract, which is the equivalent of 3 FTE into local police stations. In addition, the Townsville and Mount Isa frontline and community works contract, which commenced July 2024. This was a boost to funding of 1 FTE for each location. And to top it off, existing main Government contracts received a 20% uplift in funding.

A collaborative contract model in Mount Isa has enabled a partnership with 54 reasons to continue. Through this we were able to offer Adult Counselling, Men’s Behaviour Change and Court Support in the Mount Isa Specialist DFV Court.

Our funding contracts changed Departments after the application of its MOG (Machinery of Government). We give a special thank you and acknowledgement to the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety, who remain our major funder.

Some other notable donations came from a variety of community and organisational contributions. Special thanks to Teresa Hope Body Shop, Zonta International, Saint Patrick’s College and Mount Isa City Council. I also wanted to acknowledge all other donations which came from individual community members who donated through the Give Now link on the website. We appreciate the support and generosity of those who contributed to expand our team and services.

The main cost expenditure continues to be the salaries and employee related costs, sitting at about 80% for the year.

We have maintained a Finance subcommittee as an accountability function to keep the oversight of the Organisation’s finances as one of the Management Committee’s highest priorities. Regular meetings between the Corporate Services Manager and myself, as Treasurer, have helped with this accountability. Software options and training have been explored to ensure reporting is in the best possible format.

The audited financials come with this report for the members to see the financial position of the Organisation. It was a year of investment and reflection as the final phase of celebrating the 30-year milestone took place. And we look forward to the next 30 years. The Management Committee thanks all its members for their interest and commitment to the success of the Organisation and all its future endeavours.

Penney Ferguson
Treasurer

The people behind the organisation

Management Committee

Our Board is responsible for the strategic direction and performance of the organisation. We are proud of the Board’s 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. As an Incorporated Association and Charity, we have a clearly defined purpose. Information can be found on the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC) Charity Register.

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.

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

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.

Treasurer – Penney 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 Davies

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 20

Leadership

DVNQ embraces leadership as a valued responsibility that enables us to support our team and drive our organisation forward, while maintaining a steadfast commitment to the safety of our clients and staff.

The 2023–2024 financial year marked a dynamic period of growth, with expanded service offerings and a strategic restructure creating a wealth of leadership opportunities.

Through open recruitment, we welcomed new staff while also enabling existing team members to advance their careers. Notably, several leadership staff began their journey with DVNQ as students many years ago, reflecting the strength of our culture and internal development pathways.

Our leadership team brings together a rich and varied skill set spanning 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 strengths 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 base 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 maintaining 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

DVNQ’s team is made up of highly skilled, trauma-informed practitioner advocates who bring a multidisciplinary lens to their work. While each staff member leads specific programs, they also contribute across other areas, fostering shared expertise and ensuring a holistic, person-centred approach for everyone we support.

Client safety and well-being are central to everything we do. That’s why every team member holds relevant, industry-recognised qualifications or brings substantial experience suited to their role.

Our staff have qualifications in fields such as social work, psychology, criminology, and human services, and many have specialised backgrounds within these disciplines. Our team continually build upon their knowledge and skills through professional development and further study.

We also prioritise staff well-being, recognising the importance of self-care and a supportive work environment. Creating a healthy workplace is a shared commitment, built on peer support and genuine care for one another.

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 – which includes 3 identified positions, 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.

Vision Principles and Values

our social vision

The elimination of domestic and family violence.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 2024-2025 financial year with significant achievements –

Priority	What we achieved
Our people and our culture are highly valued <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enrich the experience of working here• Build a strong and inclusive team• Increase First Nations people representation• Nurture and develop professional growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Used new recruitment strategies• Welcomed many new staff• Established Identified positions• Increased casual staff members• Broadened student placement opportunities• Collaborated with WorkUp QLD around internship opportunities• Commenced enhanced EAP arrangement• Increased external supervision options• Continued to hold regular staff meetings• Established wellbeing working group• Increased staff training opportunities• Continued staff service recognition awards• Promoted staff into Leadership roles• Held team wellbeing and development day• Participated in statewide communities of practice
Our organisation prioritises the safety of women and children and demonstrates professionalism <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide excellence in service delivery• Enhance our cultural inclusivity• Strengthen efficiencies by transforming process• Grow and expand service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Launched new brand• Official opening of new premises in Townsville• Implemented restructure of the organisation to support service provision• Awarded & commenced delivering services under 3 new service delivery contracts• 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• Diversified revenue through fee for service training• Awarded grant application to facilitate the Courage to Change conference• Developed new Process documents and Practice Manual for new program.• Introduced peer review of practice manuals

Priority	What we achieved
Our sector recognises us as the lead agency driving change in our regions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continued to lead the Domestic Violence Integrated Response Partnership including DV Action Group and DV Network• Expanded the DV Network to 154 members.• Re-appointed to the 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• Reviewed and updated delivery of Common Risk Assessment Safety Framework (CRASF) training• Delivered Information Sharing Guidelines training across the sector• Provided peer support to the Townsville regional DFV service providers• Commenced planning for the Courage to Change Conference• Coordinated and participated in 16 Days of Activism events• Coordinated and delivered 16 events and campaigns during DFV Prevention Month• Participated in an additional 32 events during DFV Prevention month• Delivered 32 training sessions to 269 workers across the sector
Our governance continually improves to ensure ethical and sustainable practice <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set and model the organisation's positive culture• Instil the value of good governance and continuous improvement• Implement contemporary practices and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaged in Governance training• Reviewed existing policies and implemented new policies• Implemented actions following governance review against the ACNC standards• Reviewed and updated annual skills matrix• Board members engaged with staff through meet and greet• Supported the provision of training to staff on Sexual and Gender Based harassment• Continued to Auspice Service and Practitioners for the Elimination of Abuse (SPEAQ)• Introduced new Board software called Our Cat Herder• Board members attended staff celebration and team events• Commenced engagement to review organisation legal structure• Board members attended staff wellbeing and development day and team events

30 Year Celebration and Official Opening of DVNQ Townsville

The 2024-25 financial year marked a significant chapter in DVNQ's history. To commemorate this special occasion, a celebration event was held in recognition of three significant milestones:

- 30 years' service delivery Townsville and 25 years Mount Isa
- Official Opening of our new Townsville premises
- Launch of our new brand

The event was opened with a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony performed by the Wulgurukaba Walkabouts. The smoking ceremony for our new building honours Indigenous traditions by cleansing the space, dispelling negative energies, and fostering unity and respect for the land and its Traditional Custodians. It marks a new beginning, prepares the site for future use, acknowledges the enduring connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country, and strengthens ties to heritage.



Following this the opening words were delivered by the Chair of DVNQ's Management Committee, Therese Smith and CEO, Verity Bennett, which acknowledged the long herstory of women's services (DVNQ in particular) in Townsville and Mount Isa.

"30 years for NQDVRs a testament to commitment and perseverance by so many. However the seeds were sown even further back than that. Workers across the community supporting women – from the DV shelter, Family Court, Centrelink, Hospital, other large NFP organisations - joined together. Activism was at its best to ensure there were services for victim-survivors of DV amongst the other established services supporting women and children in Townsville. Initially funding was granted by Qld Gov for a few specialist DV services across Queensland - but not for Townsville. Application for initial funding was made for a 12-month project worker and was successful. Then the following year the service was awarded funding for 4 workers – NQDVRs was established and Townsville now had a much-needed Specialist DV Service. Anne Surtees, Kathy Krause, Pauline Woodbridge and Ines Zuchowski being the inaugural workers. A few years after commencing in Townsville the service expanded to Mount Isa showing recognition by the Government that NQDVRs had a good reputation and was the specialist service in the area of DV."

– Therese Smith, Chair DVNQ Management Committee





“When I stepped into the role of CEO just over 3 years ago, I was both excited and a little terrified. I understood the strong activism and advocacy shown by those early key figures from across the sector who had united and formed a lobby group back in 1984, which in time led to the establishment of this organisation. Against all the odds and through all of the struggles these inspirational people pushed forward with strong determination. They brought about lasting change for DFV, driven from here in our Townsville community. As we have heard already this evening this work created shifts in understanding, law change and funding for dedicated DFV services.”

– Verity Benett, CEO



Recognition was given to the inspiring women and men, that made up DVNQ’s Management Committee and members of the association over the course of 30 years in Townsville and 25 years in Mount Isa.

“There have been some key significant people who have given this organisation such a strong core and consistent mission that we hold firm to today. I want to acknowledge Lindy, currently on our Management Committee, who has been involved from establishment. I wanted to thank Lindy for this longstanding dedication and commitment. This has included the role of Treasurer for a brief period in the earlier days, and then the role of President from early 2010 until stepping down in 2022. Also Ines, who is currently our committee secretary and was one the original social workers employed at the service. Other original and early members include Viv Atkinson, Russ Fraser, Madge Sceriha, Bob Hinds, Sarah Challenor, Suzy Dormer.... As an organisation we have much respect and appreciation for their dedication and strong commitment to issue of DV.”

– Therese Smith, Chair DVNQ Management Committee



Acknowledgement, recognition and deep appreciation was paid to Pauline Woodbridge, the first coordinator for NQDVRS (now DVNQ).

“Pauline had many years of experience working with Women who had experienced DV - at the Women's Shelter and later the Women's Centre. She applied for the position as Coordinator of NQDVRS and was the most suitable with her experience and strong feminist values. Pauline held this role though to retirement in 2019, truly a lifetime commitment.”

– Therese Smith, Chair DVNQ Management Committee

While we reflected on the past, we also looked to the future growth and development of the service.

“As we look forward, we can see that it is a time of significant reform, increased recognition and investment into DFV. DVNQ is well placed with a strong Management Committee, a clear Strategic Plan and leadership by Verity and the team to meet future demands and remain the leading specialist DFV service for the Townsville and Mount Isa communities.”

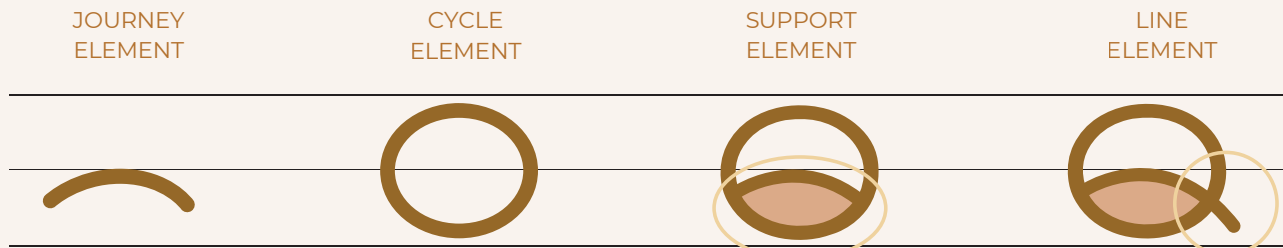
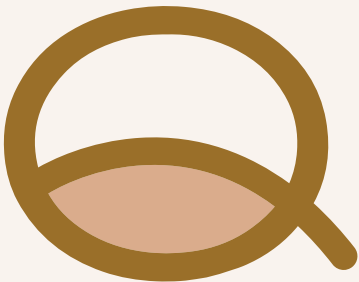
– Therese Smith, Chair DVNQ Management Committee

“Our commitment is that the organisation will not give up in our fight to end men's violence against women. It will stand strong and will adapt and change to best meet the needs of victim-survivors. We will be agile and anticipate the tactics and system abuse perpetrated by those who choose to use violence.”

– Verity Bennett, CEO

About our Q

The “Q” icon contains a story representing a woman’s journey with Domestic Violence, and the cycle of support received within the NQ community.



Each woman’s journey with domestic violence is unique. We respect wherever they are on their journey and respect the power they have in their own autonomy.

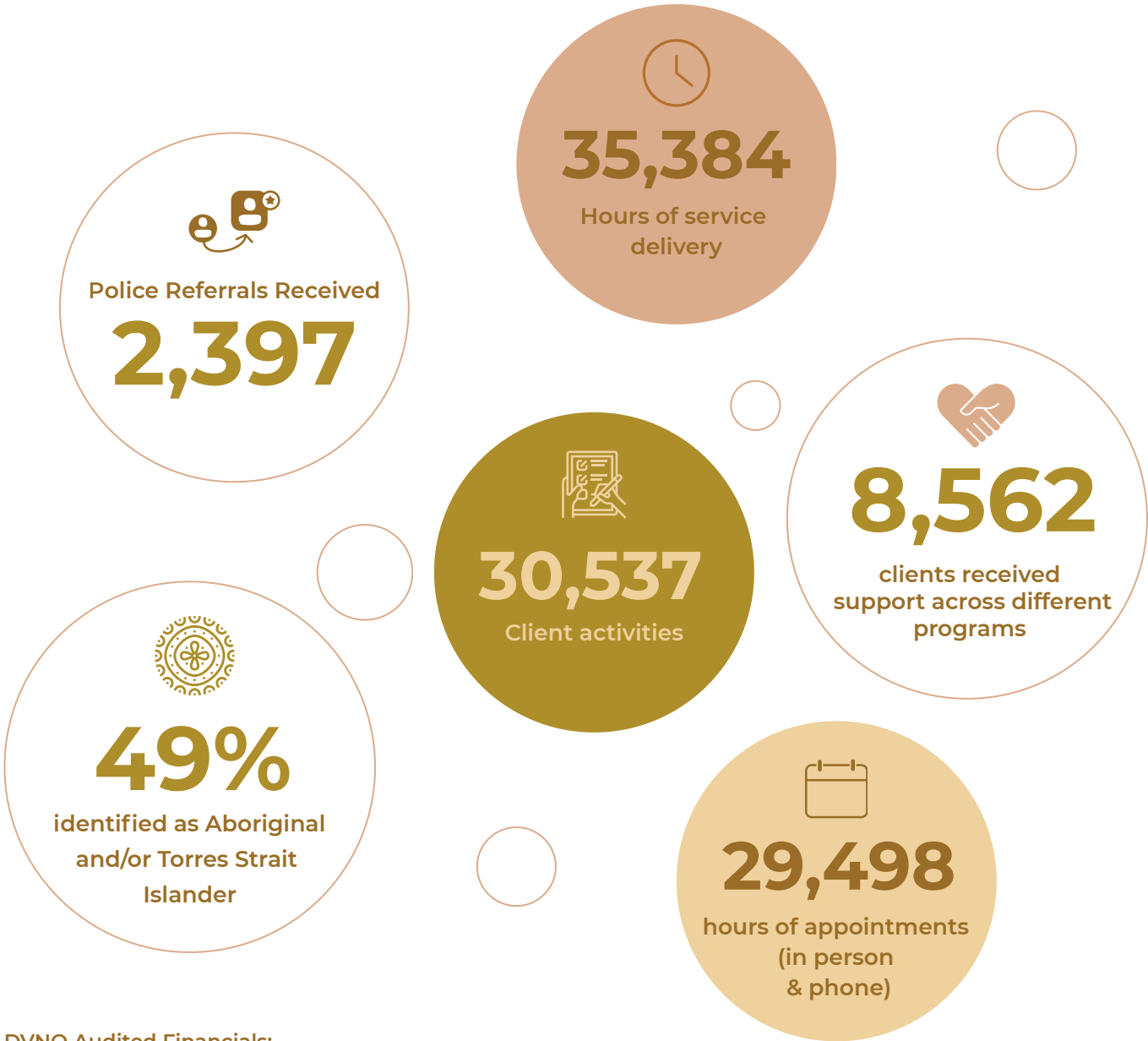
Our mission is to end the cycle of men’s violence towards women and children. The cycle element symbolises the community and collaborating to end the cycle within the community.

This element symbolises warmth and compassion, as well as holding space and being a support for a woman on her journey without judgement.

The line element breaks out of the circle and forms a “Q” symbolising North Queensland’s community and collaborative action towards Domestic Violence, and DVNQ being the specialist advocate for women’s empowerment and journey to break the cycle of abuse.

Our Service in Numbers

There has been a significant increase in client numbers and hours of service delivery, which correlates with increased investment to meet growing demand. During 2024/2025 financial year 8,562 clients received a service across our different program areas. This is a 30% increase from previous financial year. Of the clients we work with, 49% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, for Mount Isa this is 90%. This represents a larger proportion of First Nations peoples accessing support throughout our organisation. When considering Cultural and Linguistically Diverse clients, the number has remained consistent at 4% of clients.



Our Service Delivery

At DVNQ we walk alongside survivors of domestic violence through deep listening, being present, prioritising their safety and allowing women and children to progress at their own pace. We do this through offering a rang of free and confidential supports as part of our Response and Therapeutic services.

“I cannot thank the Embedded worker enough. She made me feel so comfortable in such an uncomfortable environment. This was the difference between me reporting to the Police and walking out of the station.”

Response Team

Crisis Support and Advocacy

Clients Supported 3,189

Crisis Support and Advocacy
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.

Home Safety Upgrades

Clients Supported 622

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:**
- Changing locks
 - Providing window locks and alarms
 - Installing sensor lights
 - Providing personal alarms
 - Installing finger guards on screen doors
 - Installing security screens on windows
 - Installing CCTV cameras

Court Based Service

Clients Supported 2,324

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.

High Risk Team

Clients Supported 203

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 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

Embedded DFV Specialist Practitioners

Clients Supported 1,370

- We offer walk-in or phone support for people experiencing DFV at three Police Stations in Townsville. 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
 - Support when making statements to Queensland Police Service Officers

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

This year marked the launch of the Embedded Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Specialist Practitioner model delivered in partnership with the Queensland Police Service (QPS). Through this collaboration, DVNQ introduced Advanced Specialist DFV Advocates—known as Embedded Practitioners—who now work alongside QPS officers at three Townsville police stations: Kirwan, Townsville City, and Mundingburra.

Embedded Practitioners provide direct support to victim-survivors by conducting risk and needs assessments, developing safety plans, addressing immediate safety concerns, and offering advocacy during police statement processes. A key objective of this model is to build trust and rapport between victim-survivors and QPS.

In addition to frontline support, Embedded Practitioners play a vital role in enhancing officers’ understanding of DFV dynamics, including the influence of gender, power, and control and identification of the person most in need of protection. This partnership also promotes stronger inter-agency collaboration, improved system integration, and clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities across services.

“The Embedded worker was so helpful. She could see I was overwhelmed when making my statement and requested breaks. I honestly wouldn’t have reported my experiences without their support.”

“I cannot say enough how much help I have received from the Embedded worker at the Police station. The information and safety planning really helped me take back some control in a situation where I felt powerless.”



Therapeutic Team

The AARDVARC Program

Participants 304

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

- Acknowledgement of their experience of violence
- An opportunity to talk and make sense of this experience within a safe and supportive environment
- Information, ideas, and referrals

Courage to Heal Program

Clients support 16

The Courage to Heal Program provides a safe and supportive space for individuals aged 17 and older, who have experienced DFV to acknowledge, understand and process their experiences through ongoing therapeutic counselling. This is done through a holistic, client-centered, and culturally responsive approach to ensure those affected by DFV receive personalised support that promotes healing and recovery.

Our Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Counsellor is a trained and experienced. The Courage to Heal program consists of:

- Individual counselling sessions for victim-survivors for one hour per week for 12 weeks
- Information sessions
- Strengths-based group programs for victim-survivors

An increase in funding enabled DVNQ to re-establish ongoing therapeutic counselling services for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence (DFV). This financial uplift supported the creation of a new Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Counsellor role within the organisation, enhancing our capacity to deliver targeted support. It also facilitated the launch of the Courage to Heal Program, further strengthening our commitment to recovery and empowerment for those affected by DFV.

The Courage to Heal Program offers a holistic and trauma-informed approach to supporting individuals who have experienced DFV. This is done through a deep understanding of the lasting impacts of DFV and a focus on healing and recovery. The Specialist DFV Counsellor walks alongside victim survivors in their healing journey through deep listening, being present, prioritising safety and supporting victim-survivors to progress through goals at their own pace. This is done using evidenced based tools and frameworks including Shark Cage model, psychoeducational tools, narrative therapy and a strengths-based approach.

“The Courage to Heal program has truly helped me to fully understand the dynamics and behaviours behind what I have been through. I don’t think I would have made such a positive step forward. The program was really a saviour to me.”

Prevention Team

DVNQ is committed to addressing domestic and family violence through both direct support and systemic change. Our work spans behaviour change programs for men seeking to stop using violence, as well as broader sector development initiatives that strengthen community responses and prevention efforts. This work is done as part of our Prevention Team.

Men’s Behaviour Change

Clients engaged 1,172

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

Sector Development and Integrated Service Response

DVNQ partners with services, organisations, businesses, and communities to lead an integrated response that provides wraparound support for victim-survivors and holds those who use violence accountable.

We also focus on prevention through early intervention, awareness-raising, and building a shared understanding of domestic and family violence.

Our work includes delivering training, hosting events, and facilitating networks and groups. Additionally, we support and build the capacity of Specialist DFV Workers in Charters Towers, Ayr, Ingham, and Palm Island to address service gaps and improve responses to victim-survivors.



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 -

- Defence Community Expo
- Presentation to Youth Work students at TAFE Queensland
- Discussion and presentation at the Connected Beginnings Women's Group
- Presentation at Ignatius Park College International Women's Day Breakfast
- 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 Castle Hill Lions
- Delivery of Know DFV – It's in every neighbourhood to Feros Care
- Red Rose Rallies
- NAIDOC March
- Deadly Day Out
- Candlelight Ceremony
- TAIHS training - Know DFV – It's in every neighbourhood
- HopeStars Fundraising event
- Cowboys Community Corner
- Burdekin DFV Walk
- Services Visit to QC for LGBTQ Awareness day
- LGBTQ Awareness Day Rainbow Yoga
- Palm Island Community Event
- Community Networking Forum
- Community engagement at St Patricks Musical Fundraiser for DVNQ
- Our Townsville Expo
- Training for Department of Housing staff - Know DFV – It's in every neighbourhood
- In Her Shoes session with Community Gro
- Townsville Pride Festival
- Common Risk Assessment and Safety Framework Level 1 and 2 training

- Information Sharing Guidelines Training
- In Her Shoes partnership with Townsville City Council and NQ Women's Legal Service
- Healthy relationships presentation for CALD women
- Fostering healthy relationships presentation for CALD men
- Seniors expo
- Reclaim the Night
- Interagency Networking Mount Isa
- NAIDOC March Mount Isa
- Northern Beaches State High School Mental Health Week Expo
- Thuringowa High School Community Connect Day
- Willows State School Mental Health Week Expo
- Headspace Day
- Walk Against Violence
- 16 Days of Activism Campaigns
- Know DFV – It's in every neighbourhood – Women's Care Collective
- Healthy Relationship Education Sessions for Heatley State High School
- DFV Candlelight Vigil Mount Isa
- Sister Service Peer Sessions – Mount Isa
- Community Service Network with Salvation Army Mount Isa
- DFVPM Working Group Mount Isa
- Family Law Practitioner Network annual dinner presentation

3,545 hours
of sector development and
integrated service response

29 CRASF and Information
Sharing Guidelines training
sessions delivered
with 252 attendees

Our commitment to Staff Wellbeing

At DVNQ we remain committed to supporting the wellbeing of our staff, with a strong focus on implementing initiatives to improve psychosocial wellbeing. In 2024-25 we held our first annual Team Wellbeing and Development Day. With the support of our funders, DVNQ was able to provide an offline day for staff to participate in activities designed at improving self-care and reduce the effects of vicarious trauma and burnout. The Team Wellbeing and Development day was facilitated by Amy Wormwell at Work Within, held at the picturesque location of the Riverway Community Centre.

As part of the event, we proudly presented Recognition of Service Awards to staff to celebrating 5, 10 and 15 years with DVNQ. We acknowledged four staff for five years of service and 2 staff for 10 years. This is a significant achievement that we are proud to recognise and celebrate.



In addition to holding a dedicated day for team wellbeing and development, throughout the year staff were supported to participate in a number of training sessions and professional development opportunities. We believe that it is vital to continue to foster ongoing learning and development in staff to ensure contemporary evidence based practice.

Professional development and training sessions attended included:

- Understanding Domestic and Family Violence Information Sharing Provisions
- How to use Empathy to elicit personal responsibility with men who use violence
- Courageous Conversations
- Integrate Service Response Training
- Theraplay
- Facilitation Skills for Working in a Perpetrator Program
- Beyond Awareness: Culturally Safe Practice in Our Sector
- Understanding Stalkerware
- Social Media and Survivors
- Location, Location, Location
- Smartphones and Safety
- Child Centered Play Therapy
- SPEAQ Forum
- School Refusal in Children and Teens
- Adolescent to Parent Violence
- Trauma-Informed Practice
- Vicarious Trauma Training
- Lego Based Play – Facilitator Training
- Working with Children after Complex Trauma
- The Art of Dialogue – Working in a Perpetrator Program
- Foundational Shark Cage Training
- Advanced Trauma Workshop
- Coercive Control and Social Entrapment Workshop Series
- Preparing DVO Applications
- Certificate in Child Centered Play Therapy with Neurorelational Emphasis
- Co-Regulation Techniques
- Certificate in Individual and Group Supervision
- Play Therapy Training: Innovative Interventions to Meet the Needs of Young Clients
- Psychosocial Wellbeing training
- Sexual and Gender Based Harassment training
- Cultural Competency and Capability Training