

Domestic and family violence strategy

Updated 2022



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

Brisbane City Council supports the right of all people to live free from violence, abuse or intimidation.

Domestic and family violence is a serious social, health and safety issue for all levels of Australian government and social agencies to act on as a matter of urgency.

Council acknowledges the definition of domestic and family violence, as detailed in the *Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Act 2012 (Qld)*, encompasses any form of abuse to one person in a relationship with another, including an intimate partner, children, siblings, extended family and informal care relationships.

Abuse can be more than physical or sexual violence, it extends to actions or statements that make you feel afraid, powerless or unsafe.

Domestic and family violence has significant impacts including personal emotional trauma for individuals and far-reaching costs for the wider community.

Domestic and family violence can affect any person irrespective of age, gender, socio-economic status or cultural background. Certain groups within the community may be at greater risk of experiencing domestic and family violence. These groups can include but are not limited to people with disability and impairment, people with mental illness, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer.

While domestic and family violence violates people's basic human right to live in freedom and safety, according to the Queensland Government the economic costs are also significant - between \$2.7 billion and \$3.2 billion annually¹.

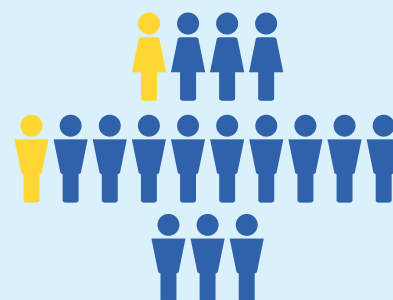
Australian, Queensland and local governments play a crucial role in driving change and preventing domestic and family violence in our community.

The Queensland Government is the lead agency for domestic and family violence prevention and response in our state.

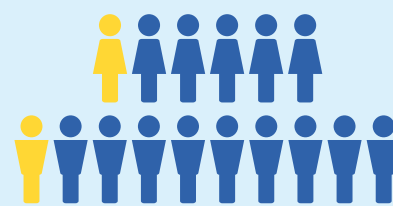
Council wants all of our residents and visitors to feel safe and live free from violence. Council's responsibility lies in educating the community on the services available to prevent domestic and family violence, including supporting local partnerships to tackle this important issue.

Council is committed to reducing the violence happening at homes across our city. Working in partnership at all levels of government and with the community we can collectively prevent this heinous crime and keep families safe.

Domestic and family violence in Australia²



1 in 4 women experienced violence by an intimate partner since the age of 15, compared to **1 in 13 men**



1 in 6 women and **1 in 10 men** experienced abuse before the age of 15



1 in 10 Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander women experienced family and domestic violence (based on their most recent experience of physical violence)³

²Australian Bureau of Statistics 4906.0 'Personal Safety, Australia, 2016'

³Australian Bureau of Statistics 4714.0 'National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2014-15'

¹Queensland says: not now, not ever. Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016-2026, Queensland Government

Council's position on domestic and family violence

Council supports the right of all people to live in a family or domestic relationship free from violence, abuse or intimidation.

While domestic and family violence often occurs in the privacy of home, the impacts are felt in our community and workplace. Responsibility for preventing it falls to society as a whole.

Council is committed to building a diverse and inclusive environment, which includes providing a safe and supportive community and workplace for all people.

Council adopts a zero tolerance approach to behaviours including:

- violent, threatening, coercive, controlling behaviour or behaviour that induces fear in another.
- people of any age, gender or sexual orientation who engage in behaviour intended to gain or maintain power and control over another within the community, workplace, family or intimate partner relationship.
- physical, sexual, psychological, verbal, emotional, economic, spiritual, technology-based, identity and social abuse.



Image credit:
DV Connect

Responsibility to tackle domestic and family violence

RESPOND

Helping survivors and managing crime

Queensland Government (judiciary) and support agencies

PREVENT

Early intervention working with those at risk

Queensland Government and support agencies

COMMUNITY

Raising awareness for ways that individuals, community groups and organisations can take action to help end domestic and family violence in our community.

Queensland Government and support agencies

EDUCATE

Educating and supporting the community on their responsibilities to stop behaviour and acts of violence before they start

Queensland Government, Brisbane City Council and support agencies

Healthy relationships

In healthy relationships, people feel supported and connected but still feel independent. People speak openly to one another about their thoughts and feelings, they listen and treat each other with respect and trust. They celebrate each other's successes and don't criticise, accuse or try to control others.

Respect for people

Council recognises the devastating impacts of domestic and family violence and is committed to supporting staff and community members upholding dignity and respect.

In assisting people impacted by domestic and family violence, Council will apply discretion and will maintain privacy and confidentiality, other than where the safety of individuals, law or policy requires information to be disclosed.

Council adopts a zero tolerance approach to these behaviours, which are a violation of human rights:

- **Cultural and spiritual abuse** such as denying, ridiculing or putting down the person at risk's beliefs and culture, preventing them from belonging to or taking part in a group that is important to them. Misusing cultural or spiritual traditions, practices and expectations to justify physical violence or other abuse.
- **Elder abuse** can be any act which results in harm to an older person, including emotional, psychological, financial, physical or sexual abuse, or neglect.
- **Emotional abuse** such as blaming the person at risk for relationship problems undermining their self-esteem and self-worth through comparisons with others, withdrawing interest and engagement, and emotional blackmail.
- **Financial abuse** through controlling finances, not allowing the person at risk to access to money, taking wages from them.
- **Physical abuse** including pushing, shoving, hitting, slapping, attempted strangulation, hair-pulling, punching, and the use of weapons. Physical abuse can range from a lack of consideration for the person at risk's physical comfort to causing permanent injury or even death.
- **Psychological abuse** or controlling behaviours, including preventing the person at risk from working, not allowing them to express their feelings, making threats, manipulating others to harm the person at risk, asserting the justice system will not believe or support the person at risk, destroying property like kicking in doors, smashing a mobile phone or vandalising household furnishings, abusing pets and driving dangerously.
- **Sexual abuse** is any form of unwanted sex or sexual degradation, causing pain during sex, coercive sex, forcing intercourse without protection against pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease, making the person at risk perform sexual acts unwillingly and criticising or using degrading insults.
- **Social abuse** involving isolation from social networks (family and friends), instigating and controlling relocations to places where the person at risk has no social or employment opportunities, and preventing them from meeting people.
- **Technology abuse** including hacking into the person at risk's mobile, monitoring phone calls, messages and emails, using their technology devices such as laptops, mobile phones, or tablets, without consent, forcing passwords to be shared, controlling how the person at risk uses their technology devices, setting location trackers, coercive behaviours, online humiliation or intimidation.
- **Verbal abuse** including using words as a weapon through screaming, shouting, put-downs, name-calling, swearing, using sarcasm or ridiculing the person at risk for their beliefs or background.

Council affirms any such practice in the community, or the Council workplace cannot be tolerated and is contrary to the values of Council and the Brisbane community.

What is domestic and family violence?

Domestic and family violence occurs when someone in an intimate (past/current) or family relationship uses fear or harm against another person/s in that relationship. It can be an ongoing pattern of abuse or a one-off incident of violence. Domestic and family violence is about the abuse of power by one person over another in that relationship.

The term 'domestic violence' refers to a range of behaviours including but not limited to, physical, emotional, social and financial abuse.


Domestic and family violence can occur in any family regardless of ethnic or cultural background, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, age, gender, or socioeconomic status or ability. We acknowledge this issue affects both men and women; however, the vast majority of dangerous, abusive and violent behaviour that occurs in the privacy of people's homes is committed by men against women.

Children and young people who live in homes where there is domestic violence also suffer physical, emotional and psychological trauma which has detrimental impacts for their development and their future.




Image credit:
DV Connect

How Council is taking action in the community and workplace



Domestic and family violence leave for all staff.
Fundraising by Council staff for charities and support services, such as the Murri Sisters.
Promotion of support services to employees on Council's intranet.
Implementing the Fresh Start for Me program to support employees to rebuild after domestic and family violence.



Supporting the Inclusive Brisbane Board Professional Advice Alliance, which provides pro bono advice for community organisations including domestic violence support services.



The Community Support Funding Program offers financial assistance to community groups providing affordable housing in Brisbane.

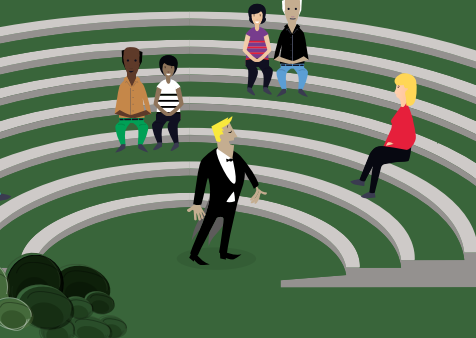
Council supports and sponsors awareness raising campaigns and initiatives.

Support of community initiatives via Grants and the Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust Giving Program.


Community leased facilities for domestic violence support services.

Exemptions and financial concessions for eligible charities and not-for-profit service providers.

Suppression of sensitive information during Development Assessment processes to maintain confidentiality of domestic and family violence service providers.



Collaboration with organisations like Zonta International.



Delivery of the Community Housing Partnership Project, and support of the Brisbane Housing Company.



The Red Bench Project

Red benches in Brisbane's parks and neighbourhood streets are serving as an important beacon, highlighting the issue of domestic and family violence in our community.

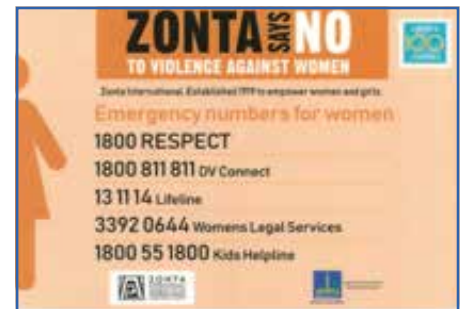
The Red Rose Foundation's work aims to eliminate domestic and family violence through education and awareness, advocacy and community partnerships.

The foundation is responsible for the Red Bench Project, created to raise awareness of this important issue. It aims to have at least one Red Bench in every local government area in Queensland.

Council has taken up this challenge with more than 20 benches installed in suburbs throughout Brisbane, making sure this serious issue remains in plain sight.

The Red Rose Foundation unveiled the first of the red benches during Domestic Violence Prevention Month in May 2019 and now red benches are popping up in other locations across Queensland.

For further information visit redrosefoundation.com.au



Say no to violence

Council is helping Zonta International through the support of its campaign 'Zonta says no to violence against women'.

Signs have been installed in Council's female public toilets, including City Hall, libraries and community halls across the city. The signs provide important contact details for support services for women who may be experiencing domestic and family violence.

Council allocated the funding to support the campaign through the Lord Mayor's Community Fund. This fund supports projects that build stronger communities in Brisbane.

Zonta International is seeking to build a world where no woman lives in fear of violence. Zonta's work helps to promote the human rights of women, achieve gender equality and end violence against women and girls.



Image credit: DV Connect

Workplace actions

Delivered and ongoing actions



Up-to-date information provided on Council's intranet to ensure employees can readily access assistance for domestic and family violence support.



Training for employees to help them identify and support colleagues who may be experiencing domestic and family violence.



Supporting the training and provision of contact officers in the workplace, providing a resource for employees who may need help and support due to domestic and family violence.



Research to assist Council in determining how to improve awareness of domestic and family violence support services in the community.



Equity and inclusion

A key cause of domestic and family violence is gender inequality.

Council is proud of its diverse and inclusive workforce. It contributes to the economic, social and environmental outcomes for our community.

Inclusion has measurable benefits for Council. Council is committed to providing a workplace with inclusive opportunities, an inclusive environment, inclusive development and inclusive leadership.

Inclusive opportunities - everyone gets to the starting line

Ensures fair and equitable access to employment and career prospects fostering a diverse workforce.

Inclusive environment - bring your whole self to work

A positive culturally aware workplace where everyone is valued, respected and safe to fully contribute perspectives and talents.

Inclusive development - maximise individual and team potential

Everyone is able to access resources, responsibilities, opportunities and benefits of employment.

Inclusive leadership - Drive outcomes through diversity

Our leaders respect, embrace and champion individual differences and harness the innovation and agility that diversity brings.

Community actions

Delivered and ongoing actions



Council's website and communication includes information directing people at risk of domestic and family violence to appropriate support services.



Council supports gender equality, inclusion and domestic and family violence prevention initiatives.



Funding requests are assessed under grants and community support schemes.



Council advocates for safe and affordable housing for community members and vulnerable groups.



Council will continue to partner with DV Connect and other peak organisations, to promote domestic and family violence prevention campaigns to the community.

Lord Mayor's Community Fund

Council's Lord Mayor's Community Fund supports local community projects that build stronger communities in Brisbane.

Each Councillor has an allocation of funding for projects undertaken with their Ward. The Lord Mayor has an equivalent citywide allocation. The minimum grant is \$250 (GST exclusive) and the maximum is \$10,000 (GST exclusive) per organisation. Funds are available year-round or until the Ward has spent their allocated annual budget.

Projects must contribute to the *Brisbane Vision 2031* by helping achieve our aspirations for Brisbane, including a friendly and safe city.

Community organisations can apply for funding for local projects. Councillors can also apply to support community events, activities or capital projects.

For further information search Lord Mayor's Community Fund at brisbane.qld.gov.au. It is recommended to contact the Ward you intend applying to for advice and assistance before commencing an application.

Homeless Connect

Many people experiencing family violence will have to get help from homelessness services because they lack the financial resources needed to secure housing.

Homeless Connect brings together businesses and community groups at a one-day event. It provides free services to people experiencing homelessness, or those at risk of homelessness. The project has helped more than 19,240 people and is part of Council's commitment to improve quality of life for all residents. Council held Australia's first Homeless Connect event in November 2006.

This event is run completely by volunteers and donations. Homeless Connect events provide the following:

- volunteer medical and allied health care professionals housing support and community support
- immunisation delivered by Council's immunisation team
- haircuts and personal grooming items such as face washers, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo and deodorant
- clothing and shoes for adults, children and babies
- non-perishable food items.



Support and resources

Call 000 if you're in danger now.

Council values and supports the work of:

1800RESPECT

1800 737 732

1800respect.org.au

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service

1800 012 255

atsils.org.au

Beyond DV

beyonddv.org.au

Community Legal Centres Queensland

07 3392 0092

communitylegalqld.org.au

DVConnect

1800 811 811

dvconnect.org

Elder Abuse Helpline

1300 651 192

Kids Helpline

1800 551 800

kidshelpline.com.au

Legal Aid Queensland

1300 65 11 88

legalaid.qld.gov.au

Lifeline

13 11 14

lifeline.org.au

Mensline

1300 78 99 78

mensline.org.au

Micah Projects' Brisbane Domestic Violence Service

3217 2544

bdvs.org.au

Our Watch

ourwatch.org.au

Queensland Courts

courts.qld.gov.au

Sexual Assault Helpline

1800 010 120

Women's Legal Service Qld

1800 957 957

wlsq.org.au



Safety plan

If you are worried about domestic and family violence, then you should seek support from specialist services to assess your risk and make a safety plan. A plan needs to be made and continually changed to suit your individual current circumstances and is vital to ensuring your immediate and ongoing safety. Family, friends and work colleagues can play an important role in helping you create this plan. Specialist services including domestic and family violence services and sexual assault services are also available to assess your risk, and provide advice and options for what you need to do.

Elements of your safety plan may include:

- considering leaving a relationship if you feel threatened
- packing and hiding a bag in a safe place, or with someone you trust, with essentials such as spare clothes, keys, money, important documents (or copies) such as birth certificates, licence, credit cards, medication, Centrelink documents, copies of domestic violence orders, insurance policies, copies of any deeds to property and any other important documents
- reviewing how you travel to and from work, including the safety of parking arrangements
- considering the safety of child care arrangements
- seeking help to provide children with emotional support
- making sure that civil protection orders are up-to-date and are on hand at all times
- providing your employer with your address details, home contact number and an emergency contact number if you can't be reached
- letting an emergency shelter know in advance if you or your family have special health and/or disability needs.

For more information about getting help and creating a safety plan, refer to [dvconnect.org](https://www.dvconnect.org) or [1800respect.org.au](https://www.1800respect.org.au)

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