

For Immediate Release

April 5, 2022

Domestic Violence NSW Releases Report on Policing of Domestic and Family Violence to Coincide with NSW Police Report

"I have had many, many clients who have no understanding of their AVOs [protection orders], no follow up by police, no update, not being informed about the outcome of court proceedings, perpetrators being released from custody, clients being unaware- it's very common." - DVNSW Member (Excerpt from DVNSW Report)

Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW) will tomorrow release a report revealing the experiences of domestic violence policing in NSW, based on the experiences of 93 specialist domestic and family violence (DFV) services in the state. The report found that DFV policing is inconsistent across NSW, with particular concerns in regional and remote areas and that less than a third (28%) of DVNSW member survey respondents agreed that children are included on protection orders where appropriate to do so.

"Our report shows that 68% of respondents disagreed police provide a trauma-informed service when responding to domestic violence, and an overwhelming 87% supported an annual independent audit of policing of DFV," said Elise Phillips, Interim CEO of DVNSW. "The report also revealed the majority of DVNSW survey respondents (82%) did not express confidence that police are adequately equipped to respond to DFV within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities."

The DVNSW report will be released to coincide with the Audit Office of New South Wales report on DFV policing in NSW released today. While the audit office report recommendations echoed those for DVNSW members regarding training, accountability of police accused of perpetrating domestic violence and introduction of accountability measures, there were clear gaps related to regular auditing, inclusion of children in safe policing of DFV, improved responses to sexual violence and improved cultural safety.

"DVNSW acknowledges the important and difficult job that the NSW Police Force perform in responding to domestic and family violence and supporting victim-survivors," says Ms Phillips. "However, due to the high rates of domestic and family violence and complexity of their role, it is imperative that the NSW Police Force is capable of delivering a consistent response so that victim-survivors feel safe and confident to call police seeking help."

The DVNSW report will highlight themes such as accountability and transparency in police policies and practices, cultural changes to improve police responses to DFV and sexual assault, police training enhancements, and assisting police officers to recognise the priority needs of marginalised groups and children. DVNSW's report has 19 recommendations, with 6 key issues missing from the NSW Audit Office Report:

1. The NSW Police Force implement a regular and comprehensive audit process of officer compliance with the Domestic Violence Standard Operating Procedures (DVSOPs)

2. Fund mandatory, regular, in-depth, trauma informed domestic, sexual, and family violence (DSFV) training delivered by sexual assault and domestic abuse experts
3. Fund mandatory training on including children who are in a domestic relationship with the Person in Need of Protection (PINOP) as named people on ADVOs, and consideration of mandatory compliance checks where children are listed as protected people on ADVOs.
4. Implement an action plan to improve police identification of the primary aggressor.
5. Positively influence a cultural shift in the police force in the view of DVLOs.
6. Greater consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for regular cultural awareness training for all police officers, including Aboriginal women's use of violent resistance.

DVNSW will release *Policing of Domestic and Family Violence in NSW: Insights from Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Services* tomorrow at noon.

---Ends---

Media Contact

Caitlin Morahan, Media & Communications Manager Domestic Violence NSW: 0466 813 124

Domestic Violence NSW is the peak body for specialist domestic and family violence services in NSW. DVNSW provides a representative and advocacy function for specialist services and the women, families and communities they support. Their mission is to eliminate domestic and family violence through leadership in policy, advocacy, partnerships and the promotion of best practice.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence help can be found via:

- **1800RESPECT** or 1800 737 732 which offers a national counselling helpline, information and support
- **NSW Domestic Violence Line** 1800 65 64 63 which offers a state-wide counselling helpline, information and support
- **Men's Referral Service** 1300 766 491 for men, or friends and family of men using violence