

Inquest into the deaths of Hannah Ashlie Clarke, Aaliyah Anne Baxter, Laianah Grace Baxter, Trey Rowan Charles Baxter and Rowan Charles Baxter

On the morning of 19 February 2020 Rowan Baxter killed his wife, Hannah Clarke, and their three children — Aaliyah, Laianah and Trey — when he entered the car being driven by Hannah and doused Hannah and the children with petrol and set them alight. Rowan Baxter died from a self-inflicted stab wound to the chest with burns as a significant contributing condition.

Deputy State Coroner Jane Bentley delivered her findings of inquest on 29 June 2022.

The Queensland Government responds to recommendations directed to government agencies at inquests by informing the community if a recommendation will be implemented or the reason why a recommendation is not supported.

The departments named in this response will provide implementation updates until the recommendation is delivered. Further information relating to the implementation of recommendations can be obtained from the responsible minister named in the response.

Recommendation 1

The Queensland Government fund the Queensland Police Service to provide a five-day face to face domestic violence training program for all specialist domestic violence police officers as a matter of urgency.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is completed.

Responsible agency: Queensland Police Service.

On 7 May 2023 the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services responded:

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) People Capability Command and the State Domestic, Family Violence & Vulnerable Persons Command (DFVVPC) have finalised a new curriculum for a five-day Domestic and Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Specialist Course. The course will focus on the delivery of victim-centric, trauma-informed responses that are sensitive to the cultural and specific needs of vulnerable persons and promotes understanding of gendered violence, intimate partner sexual violence, technology-facilitated violence, integrated case management and information sharing practices.

The course has been designed in collaboration with a number of eminent academics and industry experts who are co-delivering with Queensland Police Domestic and Family Violence specialists to reinforce learnings and lived experiences. Participants will also be assisted to explore and address the impacts of misogyny, sexism, and racism on police responses.

The Pilot course was delivered at the Queensland Police Service Academy in Oxley from 28 November to 2 December 2022 with three additional Domestic, Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Specialist courses scheduled between January and June 2023.

This will ensure a priority cohort of 120 police officers and frontline staff members engaged in domestic and family violence response across Queensland receive this face-to-face training before the end of June 2023. The training will continue into the 2023-24 and 2024-25 training years and ensure all QPS members who have a specialist role in domestic and family violence response, as identified in Recommendation 17 of the *A Call For Change* report arising from the Independent Inquiry into

Queensland Police Service Responses to Domestic and Family Violence (COIDFV), are specialist trained.

On 9 September 2023 the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services responded:

The QPS People Capability Command and the DFVVPC have developed the five-day, face-to-face, Domestic Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Specialist Course. The course focuses on the delivery of victim-centric, trauma-informed responses that are sensitive to the cultural and specific needs of vulnerable persons and promotes understanding of gendered violence, intimate partner sexual violence, technology-facilitated violence, integrated case management and information sharing practices. The course has been designed in collaboration with a number of eminent academics and industry experts who are co-delivering the course with QPS Domestic and Family Violence specialists to reinforce learnings and lived experiences.

This recommendation aligns with recommendation 17 of the COIDFV which stated within three months, the QPS develop and implement a procedure which requires members in designated roles to undertake the specialist five-day domestic and family violence training, with persons already in those roles to complete the training within 24 months.

The course is being delivered to a priority cohort of QPS members identified in recommendation 17 within the 2022-23 training year. These members work in high-risk teams and dedicated domestic and family violence response roles including Domestic and Family Violence Coordinators, Domestic and Family Violence Officers and members of DFVVPC. As at March 2023, People Capability Command has co-delivered three courses at the Oxley Police Academy, and a fourth course is scheduled for May 2023, with additional courses to be scheduled in the future.

People Capability Command is developing another two versions of the five-day specialist course to be delivered to the extended cohort of officers identified in recommendation 17, including frontline supervisors, officers-in-charge and staff members performing public-facing roles in police communication centres and at Policelink. More than 2,300 QPS members will receive the training in line with recommendation 17 from the COIDFV.

On 4 December 2023 the Queensland Government responded:

The Queensland Government will continue to report on the progress of this recommendation through the Annual Report on the status of COIDFV recommendations. The annual reports are tabled in Parliament by the relevant Ministers and implementation progress is monitored by the Independent Implementation Supervisor (IIS).

Recommendation 2

The Queensland Police Service include in the annual Operational Skills Training a face-to-face module on domestic violence which is mandatory for all police officers.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is completed.

Responsible agency: Queensland Police Service

On 7 May 2023 the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services responded:

The Queensland Police Service People Capability Command is currently in the consultation phase of designing the curriculum for the 2023-24 Operational Skills Training year which will be conducted over two days and incorporate scenario-based training. This training will reiterate the key learnings from the five day Domestic and Family Violence Holistic Training Module into an operational skills-based training scenario to be conducted on day 2 of the Operational Skills and Tactics training.

The QPS People Capability Command has designed the curriculum for the 2023-24 Operational Skills Training to be conducted over two days and include scenario-based training. This training will refresh the key learnings from the domestic and family violence five-day holistic approach course delivered throughout 2022-23.

Additionally, a new two-day mandatory face-to-face domestic and family violence training course for all police officers up to the rank of Superintendent, and staff members who have public contact, will be included in the 2023-24 training calendar. This training supplements the Operational Skills and Tactics Training (OST) two-day scenario-based training and will build upon the fundamental learnings delivered through the five-day domestic and family violence holistic approach course.

The Queensland Government will continue to report on the progress through the Annual Report on the status of the COIDFV recommendations. The annual reports are tabled in Parliament by the relevant Ministers and implementation progress is monitored by the IIS.

On 9 September 2023 the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services responded:

The QPS People Capability Command has designed the curriculum for the 2023-24 Operational Skills Training to be conducted over two days and include scenario-based training. This training will refresh the key learnings from the domestic and family violence five-day holistic approach course delivered throughout 2022-23.

Additionally, a new two-day mandatory face-to-face domestic and family violence training course for all police officers up to the rank of Superintendent, and staff members who have public contact, will be included in the 2023-24 training calendar. This training supplements the OST two-day scenario-based training and will build upon the fundamental learnings delivered through the five-day domestic and family violence holistic approach course.

On 4 December 2023 the Queensland Government responded:

The Queensland Government will continue to report on the progress through the Annual Report on the status of the COIDFV recommendations. The annual reports are tabled in Parliament by the relevant Ministers and implementation progress is monitored by the IIS.

Recommendation 3

The Queensland Government provide funding to trial a multi-disciplinary specialist domestic violence police station for a period of 12 months (preferably in the Logan or Kirwan district which have the highest numbers of domestic violence incidents) and the station includes at least the following:

- a. specialist domestic violence police officer/s including a detective to investigate criminal offences
- b. specialist domestic violence support worker
- c. a child safety officer from Department of Child Safety to assess risk of harm to children of families impacted by domestic violence
- d. an employee from Queensland Department of Housing to provide advice and assistance on accommodation for victims
- e. an employee from Queensland Health to assess mental health, drug and alcohol issues and the wellbeing of children
- f. a lawyer to provide legal advice to police and victims.

Response and action: recommendation is agreed in principle and implementation completed.

Responsible agency: Queensland Police Service and Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

On 4 December 2023 the Queensland Government responded:

The Queensland Government has considered this recommendation together with the recommendations from the Women's Safety Justice Taskforce (WSJT) *Hear her voice: Report one – Addressing coercive control and domestic and family violence in Queensland* and *Hear her voice:*

Report two – Women and girls’ experiences across the criminal justice system and the COIDFV that relate to integrated and multidisciplinary responses to domestic and family violence. The Government is committed to better meeting the needs of victims and people affected by domestic and family violence.

The Queensland Government is currently trialling or piloting a range of integrated service response initiatives that address the intent of this recommendation for integrated responses to victims of domestic and family violence by multidisciplinary teams, including embedding 300 domestic and family violence support workers in police stations across the State, embedding police officers within non-government domestic and family violence services, developing and trialling a co-response model and establishing arrangements with service providers to access offsite locations to engage with victim-survivors for whom attending a police facility may be problematic. In addition, a further three high risk teams are being established at Townsville, South Brisbane/Redlands and Rockhampton to supplement high risk teams in the existing locations, Logan/Beenleigh, Brisbane, Caboolture, Cairns, Cherbourg, Ipswich, Mackay and Mount Isa/Gulf.

Since the findings were handed down in 2022, the Queensland Government has reinvigorated its domestic violence response and support services and continues to support a specialist multidisciplinary approach to provide the best victim centric trauma informed responses to domestic and family violence. The Queensland Government will continue to build upon and improve services through a continuum of integrated service delivery options.

The Queensland Government will continue to report on the progress through the Annual Reports on the status of the WSJT and COIDFV recommendations. The annual reports are tabled in Parliament by the relevant Ministers and monitored by the IIS.

Recommendation 4

The Queensland Government provide funding for men’s behaviour change programs, both in prisons and in the communities, as a matter of urgency.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is in progress.

Responsible agency: Department of Justice and Attorney General and Queensland Corrective Services

On 4 December 2023 the Queensland Government responded:

The Queensland Government has committed \$25.5 million to perpetrator intervention related reforms in response to recommendations 25 to 30 of the WSJT *Hear her voice: Report one – Addressing coercive control and domestic and family violence in Queensland*. This includes establishing a state-wide network of perpetrator intervention programs in community-based settings by:

- providing additional funding to help mainstream community-based perpetrator intervention services meet increased demand and better support victim-survivors
- trial different approaches to perpetrator intervention programs, including:
 - online perpetrator intervention programs
 - early intervention programs for persons using violence seeking help before they enter the justice system
 - intervention programs that run for longer duration or increased intensity
 - more support for persons using violence after they complete a program
 - community-led project to design and pilot perpetrator programs specifically tailored to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples which embed a healing approach and are connected to culture, community and country

- programs specifically for culturally and linguistically diverse people, people who identify as LGBTIQ+, people with a disability and young people.

In January 2023, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General allocated almost \$3 million per annum to service providers delivering existing mainstream community-based perpetrator intervention programs, fulfilling the community-based element of this recommendation.

In response to recommendation 25-28 of the WSJT and as part of implementation planning, options for funding are continuing to be explored to enable further expansion of perpetrator programs for prisoners in Queensland correctional centres.

Options for funding will continue to be explored to enable further expansion of men's behaviour change programs for prisoners in Queensland correctional centres.

Queensland Corrective Services is currently trialling a domestic and family violence perpetrator program '*Disrupting Family Violence*' at some correctional centres.

In addition to providing a perpetrator intervention service, the program model includes a dedicated intelligence advisor and a contracted victim advocate service supporting partners or ex-partners of those engaged in the program.

Further evaluations of the pilot will guide the future development and possible expansion of the program to additional correctional centres.