

Inquest into the death of Elsie May Robertson

Elsie May Robertson died on 6 March 2013 as a result of violence inflicted on her by her partner.

State Coroner Terry Ryan delivered his findings of inquest on 23 October 2015.

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 the implementation of recommendations can be obtained from the responsible minister named in the response.

Recommendation 1

The Queensland Police Service extend the implementation of recommendation 138 [of the *NOT NOW, NOT EVER: Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland* report] to all officers within the Queensland Police Service who are likely to have contact with domestic violence situations, irrespective of whether they are administrative or sworn officers.

Not Now Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence recommendation 138: The Queensland Police Service facilitates an external independent audit and review of training packages currently available to officers, with a view to assessing the appropriateness and frequency of compulsory professional development opportunities relevant to domestic and family violence. Components for enhancement of officers' conceptual understanding of dynamics of domestic and family violence, communication skills, as well as cultural awareness and sensitivities should be assessed.

Response and action: the recommendation is implemented.

Responsible agency: Queensland Police Service.

On 12 January 2016 the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services responded:

In August 2015, the Premier announced the Queensland Government will implement all 140 recommendations from the *NOT NOW, NOT EVER: Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland* report into domestic and family violence.

The Queensland Police Service will examine the coroner's recommendation concurrently with the implementation of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report recommendations.

In March 2015, the Queensland Police Service established a Domestic and Family Violence Working Party to conduct a comprehensive review to enhance police response, investigation and prosecution policy and procedures to strengthen protection for victims and better hold perpetrators to account for the actions. The Public Safety Business Agency in consultation with members of the Queensland Police Service Domestic, Family Violence Vulnerable Persons Unit is scoping a review of training packages delivered to frontline police officers and civilian staff.

The review is underway and work will commence to address recommendation 138 of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report which will incorporate the coroner's recommendation to extend the implementation

to all officers within the Queensland Police Service who are likely to have contact with domestic violence situations, irrespective of whether they are administrative or sworn officers.

The review by the Domestic and Family Violence Working Party is expected to be completed in late 2016.

On 12 July 2016 the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services responded:

In response to the coroner's recommendation and recommendation 138 from the *Not Now, Not Ever* report into domestic and family violence, the QPS, in the First Action Plan (2015-16) of the Queensland Government's Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016-2026, undertook to scope current centrally administered training packages and locally delivered training initiatives to inform an independent assessment of the appropriateness and frequency of relevant learning to domestic and family violence.

The scoping of training and development – police administered training products has been completed. The content of individual training products for external review has been approved by the QPS. The products have been handed over to the external vendor to commence the audit/review of the training products. The First Action Plan activities have now been completed.

It is intended the audit of police training products, delivery of the audit report, consideration of the report findings by the QPS and implementation of recommendations will be progressed as an activity in the Second Action Plan (2016-17 to 2018-19) of the strategy. The results of the assessment will assist with development and refinement of further training packages deliverable to frontline police officers and civilians working in a community contact role.

The domestic and family violence module has been mandated as a compulsory requirement for completion of the Constable Development Program.

The substantial legislative reform agenda being progressed around domestic and family violence legislation will also require relevant QPS members to complete training to ensure they have knowledge of the new legislation and how it should be applied, and changes to QPS policy and procedures.

Under the broad umbrella of 'vulnerable persons', the QPS will deliver a combined domestic and family violence, and mental health legislative training program to frontline police officers and civilians working in a community contact role. It is planned to commence the statewide training program in late 2016 to ensure QPS members have knowledge of the new legislation and how it should be applied, and changes to QPS policy and procedures for when the changes take effect.

Delivery of training to relevant QPS members related to the domestic and family violence and mental health legislative reform changes will be incorporated into the Second Action Plan (2016-17 to 2018-19) of the strategy.

The assessment of the training products and subsequent findings will also be incorporated into the Second Action Plan.

On 27 January 2017 the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services responded:

Scoping for the independent, an external audit identified a number of core police training products, as well as opportunities for domestic and family violence (DFV) content to be incorporated in training generally.

The audit of DFV-related training products is underway, and includes activities such as a literature review, scoping and audit of QPS training packages, survey of officers to determine effectiveness of current training and to assess the current continuum of learning.

A report on the audit's findings, including recommendations, is planned for delivery by mid-2017. The findings will assist the QPS with the development and refinement of further DFV training packages deliverable to both frontline police officers and civilians working in a community contact role.

The substantial legislative reform agenda being progressed around domestic and family violence legislation will also require relevant QPS members to complete training to ensure they have knowledge of the new legislation and how it should be applied, and changes to QPS policy and procedures.

On 9 August 2017 the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services responded:

With regard to Recommendation 138, the independent, external audit of domestic and family violence-related police training products has been completed, with the report findings and recommendations delivered in May 2017. The QPS is considering the report, including how best to integrate implementation of the report recommendations into the broader QPS domestic and family violence reform agenda.

The QPS has delivered the Vulnerable Persons Training Package to over 11,500 sworn members, up to and including the rank of Inspector, and targeted unsworn members to support the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2016* which commenced on 30 May 2017.

Unsworn members that received the training included members from Policelink and Police Communications and Station Client Service Officers as they are the first contact for victims of domestic violence. Day two of the training concentrated on the challenges of responding and investigating incidents of domestic and family violence. Officers were provided with a greater understanding of the dynamics of domestic and family violence, as well developing an understanding of the new policing responses available to them through the new legislation.

There was a strong focus on cultural change, in developing and improving how officers respond to these often high risk and volatile situations whilst remaining professional and appropriately compassionate at all times.