

## Question on Notice

No. 631

Asked on 18 June 2020

**MS S BOLTON** asked the Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence (HON D FARMER)

### QUESTION

With reference to recent funding announcements for addressing domestic and family violence during COVID-19 including from Commonwealth, State and Women's Safety Council—

Will the Minister outline what funding has been committed during this time to directly assist efforts in the Noosa region for the provision of crisis support, emergency accommodation and perpetrator behaviour programs?

### ANSWER

In April and May 2020 the State Government allocated \$7.5 million statewide to assist communities to help manage increase in demand for DFV services arising from COVID-19 pandemic. This included:

- \$1.5 million to boost capacity of the 24-hour statewide crisis service DVConnect, including Womensline, Mensline, and online support
- \$1.7M for crisis accommodation, including transitioning women to alternative accommodation to keep shelters available
- \$3.8M to enhance specialist domestic, family and sexual violence services to meet anticipated demand; and
- \$500,000 to support a new awareness campaign.

State government COVID-19 funding of \$309,977 was specifically allocated to organisations delivering services into the Noosa electorate comprised of:

- \$40,636 for crisis support and emergency accommodation;
- \$104,179 for sexual assault and women's health and wellbeing;
- \$127,412 for counselling and support services; and
- \$37,750 for perpetrator intervention program.

State funding enabled organisations to flexibly respond to increasing demand for support and associated client related costs, arising as a result of the impacts of COVID-19.

Under the \$130 million National Partnership on COVID-19 Domestic and Family Violence Responses, Commonwealth funding of \$4.995 million for 2019-20 has been allocated to Queensland based responses to domestic and family violence. The timing and allocation of Queensland's 2020-21 share of funding under the National Partnership is currently being considered.

Commonwealth COVID-19 funding of \$178,819 to organisations delivering services into the Noosa electorate has already been distributed by the State Government. This includes:

- \$20,318 for crisis support and emergency accommodation;
- \$12,227 for counselling and support services;
- \$46,274 to the local Family and Child Connect service for flexible brokerage; and
- \$100,000 for a specialist Domestic and Family Violence worker to work with the Family Wellbeing Service.

That is a total of \$488,796 from State and Commonwealth funding to directly respond to DFV pressures arising from COVID-19, in the Noosa electorate.

Constituents residing in the Noosa electorate also have access to statewide services through DVConnect, Womens Health Queensland and Children by Choice, who have received additional funding totalling \$1.8 million to meet the increased demand for domestic and family violence assistance across Queensland.

In addition, the State Government held an Australian-first DFV Prevention Virtual Summit on 6 May 2020, which focused on the impacts of COVID-19 on the DFV sector and service delivery. Using video technology, the Summit plugged in 120 experts from frontline service delivery, government, peak representative groups and people who have lived with DFV. Before and after the Summit there were forums with more than 100 participants on how to best target and improve services during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Consequently the Summit identified necessary changes and practical solutions for preventing DFV under COVID restrictions. In addition to the State and Federal Government funding referred to above, outcomes to date include:

- Commenced the Good Samaritan Rental Initiative in an exciting partnership with REIQ
- Amended rental tenancy legislation to strengthen protections for people experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV)
- Modified the Home Confinement Directive
- Ensured electronic lodgement of affidavits and court proceedings
- Released the Queensland Police Service portal for online reporting of DFV
- Partnering with Telstra to develop a Bystander App
- Established the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Roundtable
- Producing DFV materials in 29 languages
- Launched a DFV Media Campaign
- Worked with corporate partners to promote messaging throughout their sectors to maximise reach – with a combined corporate commitment to date reaching over 12 million people
- Lunchbox Forums to help educate Corporate partners around DFV
- In-principle agreement with P&C's and P&F's to spread the campaign message, and with the National Pharmacy Guild and Australian Medical Association Qld
- Appointing a DV Coordinator within the LGAQ to help Councils respond to DFV
- Partnering with the National Retailers Association to support small businesses respond to DFV

Priorities for the remainder of Queensland's allocation under the National Partnership will be informed by the outcomes of the DFV Summit and emerging need, and once further discussions between the State and the Commonwealth have determined how much will be allocated to Queensland, and when.

The State Government has led the nation in providing:

- 10 days' paid DFV leave for state employees
- The first government-led DFV corporate and community forum (number of Queensland based corporates with DFV policies/ strategies has increased 13.3 per cent from 2018 to reach 61.5 per cent (1.3 per cent above national average) (WGEA 25/11/19).

In addition, since 2015 the State Government has:

- implemented all 140 recommendations of Not Now, Not Ever report;
- established the first new shelters by a Queensland government in more than 20 years (Brisbane, Townsville, Charters Towers, Coen, Roma, Caboolture, Gold Coast);
- been one of the first Australian states to establish a CALD DFV prevention roundtable;
- raised community awareness to shift community attitudes towards DFV;
- implemented a Bystander Campaign to improve awareness and reporting;
- introduced integrated service responses, including: DV High Risk Teams in Cairns, Brisbane, Ipswich, Logan-Beenleigh, Mt Isa, Cherbourg, Mackay and Caboolture;
- established the first specialist DV court on the Gold Coast and now expanded to Beenleigh and Townsville with circuits to Mt Isa and Palm Island; and
- toughened penalties for DVO breaches and introduced stand-alone offence of strangulation.