

Project Hera

Project Hera is a unique collaborative model of support for victims/survivors of Domestic and Family Violence (DFV), co-locating a YFS Domestic Violence Support Worker at the Beenleigh Police Station to operate alongside their specialist Domestic Violence Unit. The initiative was established in 2016 with funding from the Department of Social Services.



How was the evaluation conducted?

The evaluation was conducted by Griffith University utilising a mixed methods approach comprising:



- review of literature on collaborative DFV responses

- domestic violence data from Queensland Courts



- interviews with DFV victims/survivors and external stakeholders



- a case study panel discussion with YFS and police

- review of YFS client records and program outcomes data.

What is the experience of multi-agency response models in other locations?

Coordinated, multi-agency responses have emerged as leading practice in reducing the harm associated with DFV. Key features of collaborative models include a shared understanding of the gendered nature of domestic violence and coercive control, a common risk assessment framework, and information sharing protocols.ⁱ



Collaborative models have been shown to improve safety, increase satisfaction with police services and increase the likelihood of reporting future incidents of violence to police.^{ii,iii} Swift action is critical in effective responses to DFV.

There is a window of opportunity immediately after an incident where victims/survivors are more likely to engage with services.

Who does Project Hera support?

92%
FEMALE

Project Hera is an inclusive service that responds to diversity in family type, culture, gender identity and more.

12%
ATSI

186 clients completed service in the 18 months from 1 July 2017 to 31 December 2018. Of these

- 92% were female
- 12% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 14% were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

14%
CALD

These models tend to be victim-focused and do not have the capacity to target offenders or to impact on recidivism. In Australia, reoffending rates for domestic violence were 23% six months after the offence.



Reoffending RATES 23% @6 months

Evidence indicates that the first 60 days after an offence is critical as those who reoffend more rapidly are also likely to reoffend more often.

What the victims/survivors had to say...

"[The DV Worker] was very helpful. [She] helped me fill out paperwork to get housing and other support. [She] called me up to check how things were going. I wasn't even expecting so much help. She helped me feel safer."

"[The DV Worker] made sure I was as safe as possible. Victim Assist got me security cameras. The help I got made me not go back...I felt like I had someone."

"I am more confident knowing that [the DV Worker] and police work together."

"QPS followed me up [and] made me feel that police are on my side... not just another woman slapping a DV on."

What impact does Project Hera have?

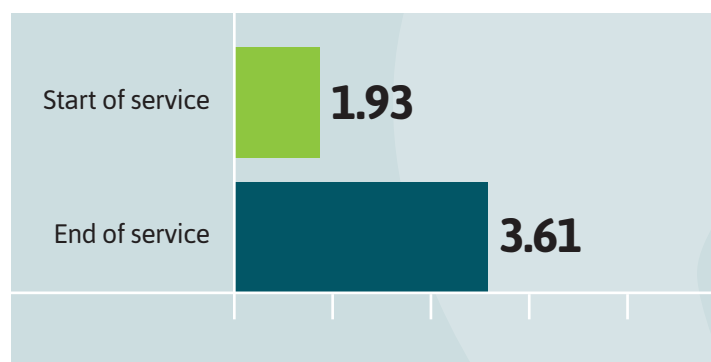
Project Hera is meeting its objective of improving safety and wellbeing for victims/survivors of domestic violence. In addition, improvements were recorded in relation to housing, financial situation, social connectedness, physical and mental health and family functioning.

82% showed improvements in being safe and/or protected from harm

84% improved their circumstances and made progress towards their goals

Substantial improvements in circumstances were recorded using the Standard Client Outcomes Reporting (SCORE) tool, from an average SCORE of 1.93 to 3.61.

Change in client circumstances



Project Hera clients reported high levels of satisfaction with the service – 4.8/5 on average.



The victims/survivors stated their safety and wellbeing had been enhanced by: the safety plan support they received, instillation of security measures, support to relocate and separate from offenders (where applicable), and incarceration of the offender (in some cases).



Positive impact was also noted in relation to police/community cooperation.



Project Hera is highly effective in engaging victims/survivors in services and legal interventions.



The victims/survivors reported a high level of satisfaction and much improved safety, family functioning and wellbeing.



The combination of proactive policing and follow up support appears to be very effective and is worthy of growth and replication in other regions and jurisdictions.



Project Hera functions well with its current resourcing. However, with more capacity it could support a greater number of victims/survivors.



Investigating and responding to recidivist behavior promptly and effectively, including DVO breaches, is outside of the scope of Project Hera, yet remains an area requiring attention within the region.

For more information contact communications@yfs.org.au

ⁱ The Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence. (2015). Not Now, Not Ever. Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland. Available from: <https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/resources/campaign/end-violence/about/special-taskforce/dfv-report-vol-one.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Centre for Innovative Justice RMIT. (2016). Multi-disciplinary response models. Report to the Southern Melbourne Integrated Family Violence Partnership. Available from: <http://mams.rmit.edu.au/6w000a8hnua.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Reuland, et al. (2006). Police–community partnerships to address domestic violence. Available from: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/abstract.aspx?ID=235088>

^{iv} Mazzerole et al. (2018). Criminal Justice Responses to Domestic and Family Violence. A Rapid Review of the Evaluation Literature. Available from: https://www.courts.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/586185/systematic-review-of-criminal-justice-responses-to-domestic-and-family-violence.pdf

^v Morgan, A., et al. (2018). "Targeting repeat domestic violence: Assessing short-term risk of reoffending Australian Institute of Criminology". Trends and Issues in Criminal Justice. Available from: <https://aic.gov.au/file/6586/download?token=LEFxmGZR>