

**Report by**  
**Elizabeth Anne Taylor**  
**To the**  
**Winston Churchill Memorial**  
**Trust**  
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**Objective:** *To study multi-agency interventions to domestic violence with a focus on collaborative approaches to domestic violence, child abuse and sexual assault within a common model – USA & Canada.*

# Table of Content

**Acknowledgements**

**Executive Summary**

**Programme**

**Description**

- **Models of Inter- Agency Collaboration and Information Sharing**
- **Prosecution: Criminal Code vs Civil Legislation**
- **Domestic Violence Safety & Accountability Audits**
- **Mandatory or Pro- Arrest Polices**
- **Predominant or Primary Aggressor Policies**
- **Mandated Perpetrator Programs**
- **Domestic Violence Fatality Reviews**
- **Strangulation: Red Flag Issue**
- **Looking Out For Children**
- **Community Education and Training Projects**
- **Coordinating Councils or Committees**

**Conclusions & Recommendations**

**Implementation**

**Bibliography**

**Useful Contacts**

# Acknowledgments

I have worked in the domestic violence field for 13 years and was awarded a Churchill Fellowship for 2002 to investigate multi-agency interventions to domestic violence with a focus on collaborative approaches to domestic violence, child abuse and sexual assault within a common model. While in the US and Canada, I was able to visit 11 cities; Vancouver, Calgary, London and Toronto in Canada and Chicago, Minneapolis, Duluth, Plymouth, Boston, Seattle and San Diego in the US. The program changed during the tour - some programs I had planned to visit were no longer open or available while others were recommended and added.

The Churchill Fellowship afforded me the opportunity to extend my knowledge and skills in domestic violence intervention and prevention. The study tour was a very rewarding and enriching experience both professionally and personally and I express my gratitude to the Churchill Fellowship Trust for this opportunity.

There are many people whose support and encouragement made the study tour possible. The referees who encouraged me to apply; Gwynn Bridge, Justice Neil Buckley and Heather Nancarrow, Combined Women's Crisis Services Gold Coast Inc. who supported my time away from the agency and the staff of the Domestic Violence Service Gold Coast who gave of their support in numerous ways, and as always, my loving family.

There were many people both in Canada and the USA who gave generously of their time, resources, knowledge and hospitality and who didn't seem to tire of the never ending questions from me. The Churchill Fellowship study tour would not have been so successful without them. Thanks to all for making yourselves so readily available and sharing your knowledge, resources ( 7 boxes shipped home) and your hospitality of lunches, dinners and guided tours. Particular thanks to Margaret Hobart, Seattle; Sgt Dan Plein & Gael Strack, San Diego; Kevin McNichol, Calgary; Pamela Cross, Toronto; Dr Peter Jaffe & Dr Linda Baker, London; Janet Hagberg, Minneapolis; Kim Wells, Chicago; and Jim and Elaine Hardeman in Plymouth.

I would particularly like to thank Nadine Phillips from QANTAS for her time and support when the itinerary was changed at the last minute and to Margaret Bell at the Churchill Fellowship Trust for her support when tour arrangements were re-scheduled at the last minute owing to a family crisis.

The study tour has enabled me to advance my knowledge of innovative overseas domestic violence intervention programs and knowledge and resources acquired will be well utilized within the Gold Coast Domestic Violence Integrated Responses Project.

# Executive Summary

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## Project Description

I was awarded a Churchill Fellowship for 2002 to investigate multi-agency interventions to domestic violence with a focus on collaborative approaches to domestic violence, child abuse and sexual assault within a common model in both the USA & Canada. I was able to visit 11 cities, Vancouver, Calgary, London and Toronto in Canada and Chicago, Minneapolis, Duluth, Plymouth, Boston, Seattle and San Diego in the US.

## Highlights

During my eight weeks in the USA and Canada, I was privileged to visit many excellent programs in a diverse range of settings – and had the opportunity to meet with many dedicated and visionary individuals. While drawing out highlights and comparisons is difficult, I was particularly inspired and excited by the collaborative programs in Duluth, Minnesota and San Diego in the USA as well as the Homefront Program in Calgary Canada. All of these programs were underpinned and built on the premise of criminal justice reform.

## Major Lessons and Conclusions

While domestic violence interventions in Australia have advanced considerably over the past twenty years, they have predominately focused on the critical need for safety supports for victims and their children in a social service setting. There has often been little focus on the development of responses based on criminal justice reform. Intervention projects coordinating the responses of the police, legal systems, health and social services and victim advocacy programs have only begun to be developed over the past few years.

I believe we have much to gain in further progressing our work based on collaborative reform from a criminal justice perspective. From my observations of overseas programs, the implementation of pro-arrest policies, predominant aggressor policies, no-drop and ‘victim assisted’ approaches to prosecution, domestic violence fatality reviews, systems safety audits, court mandated perpetrator programs and specific domestic violence criminal courts who undertake rigorous monitoring of abusers, have all been significant deterrents in reducing domestic abuse and domestic homicides.

# Programme

<u>PLACE</u>	<u>ORGANISATION / EVENT</u>	<u>KEY CONTACT</u>
Vancouver Canada	<i>Symposium on Violence Against Women 20th Anniversary of the Report on Violence in the Family</i> 2 day Canadian National Conference	
Vancouver	<i>Conducting Domestic Violence Safety Audits</i> One Day Training Seminar provided by Dr Ellen Pence and based on her ground breaking work on systemic reform.	Dr Ellen Pence
Vancouver	<i>Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services</i> Consultation on the development of domestic violence advisory councils.	Joan Verwood Regional Program Manager
Vancouver	<i>British Columbia Institute Against Family Violence</i> Gaining an understanding of the work and structure of the BC Institute and their current research programs	Penny Bain Executive Director
Vancouver	<i>Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter</i> Discussion on the provision of women's safe space and gender specific services	Grace Balbutin
Vancouver	<i>New Westminster Community Safety Project</i> Discussion on the development of the safety project and strategies for conducting safety audits.	Juergen Dankwort
Calgary Alberta Canada	<i>HOMEFRONT</i> Multi-Agency Domestic Violence Program Visit to the Calgary domestic violence court and HOMEFRONT resource centre and an opportunity to meet with attorneys, prosecutors, victim advocates and police.	Kevin McNichol
Toronto Canada	<i>Women Abuse Council of Toronto</i> Discussions on the development, role and function of the women abuse council and the role of local government in creating safer communities for women.	Vivien Green Chairperson
Toronto	<i>METRAC</i> Visit and meeting to discuss the development of METRAC, the role they play in the community and view resources developed by them	Pamela Cross Executive Director
London Canada	<i>Centre for Children &amp; Families in the Justice System of the London Family Court Clinic</i>	Dr Peter Jaffe Dr Linda Baker

	Visit to the centre and opportunity to gain a comprehensive overview of the work conducted there.	Dr Dan Ashbourne Pamela Hurley Samantha Poisson
Duluth Minnesota	<b><i>Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Violence</i></b> 3 day training workshop at the Domestic Abuse Intervention Program Training covered all aspects of the Duluth Model	Dr Ellen Pence Michael Paymar Kristine Lizdas Lt Tim Hanson Melanie Shepherd Shelter Staff
Duluth	<b><i>Women's Coalition Shelter</i></b> Agency visit and discussions with staff on the diverse range of services provided including many community outreach programs.	
Minneapolis USA	<b><i>Silent Witness Project</i></b> Met with Janet and gained information and resources on the Silent Witness project and discussed ways in which local Australian projects could join together with the US project.	Janet Hagberg Director
Hopkins Minnesota	<b><i>Self Mastery Workshop</i></b> Met with Mary Rose for discussions on men's behavioral change programs.	Mary Rose Bloomberg
Chicago	<b><i>The Corporate Alliance To End Partner Violence</i></b> Kim organized a meeting in Chicago of prominent people involved in the development of corporate responses to domestic violence.	Kim Wells Executive Director
Chicago	<b><i>Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois</i></b> As Above	Robert Kieckhefer Vice-President
Chicago	<b><i>Cook County Commission on Women's Issues</i></b> As Above	Dr. Eva Mika
Chicago	<b><i>Office of Women's Business Development</i></b> As Above	Beth Doria Women's Business Manager
Chicago	<b><i>Vickii Coffey &amp; Associates</i></b> As Above	Vickii Coffey
Chicago	<b><i>Mayor's Office on Domestic Violence</i></b> As Above	Lesley Landis Project Manager
Chicago	<b><i>Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority</i></b> As Above	Jan Oncken Human Resource Manager
Plymouth Massachusetts U	<b><i>White Ribbon Campaign</i></b> Discussion on strategies to involve men in the campaign to	Charles Callan

end violence against women

Boston	<b><i>Dealing with Diversity &amp; Racism</i></b> 1 day workshop	Dr Hubie Jones National Assoc. of Social Workers
Boston	<b><i>Weymouth Police Department</i></b> Meeting and discussions on the role of victim advocates working with police responding to domestic violence	Gwen DeVasto Domestic Violence Coordinator
Plymouth	<b><i>Workplace Violence Prevention Strategies</i></b> Discussions on workplace domestic violence education	Jim Hardeman
Plymouth	<b><i>South Shore Women's Centre</i></b> Agency visit and meeting with staff. Briefing on the services provided to women experiencing domestic violence	Staff
Hingham Massachusetts	<b><i>Hingham Police Dept</i></b> Meeting and discussions on the role of victim advocates working with police responding to domestic violence	Marianne Shean Victim Advocate
Seattle USA	<b><i>Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence</i></b> Agency visit – Gained information on the coalition and community education resources developed by them	Margaret Hobart
Seattle	<b><i>Fatality Review Committee</i></b> Meeting to discuss the role and function of the fatality review committee – gained resources on fatality reviews.	Kelly Starr Coordinator
Seattle	<b><i>City Attorney</i></b> Discussion on the role of specific domestic violence prosecutors and the way in which domestic violence cases are progressed to court	Joanne Shoshona
Olympia Washington State	<b><i>District Attorney Thurston County</i></b> Meeting and discussion on prosecution of dv cases	Ed Holm
San Diego	<b><i>Domestic Violence Unit San Diego Police Dept</i></b> Agency visit to gain an understanding of the police response to domestic violence and role of a specific domestic violence investigation unit with the police department. Specific information gained on fatality reviews, data systems, video interviews, child protection and cross agency collaboration	Sgt Dan Plien Sgt Jim Arthur Sgt Terry McManus
San Diego	<b><i>Assistant City Attorney Criminal Division</i></b>	Gael Strack

Agency visit and specific information gained relative to the development of the Family Justice Centre

San Diego	<b><i>Child Abuse &amp; Domestic Violence Unit</i></b> Agency visit and meeting to gain an understanding of the court process – time spent at the San Diego domestic violence court	Brian Erickson Head Deputy City Attorney Jonathan Lupin
San Diego	<b><i>Domestic Violence Unit</i></b> Meeting and discussion on the role of victim advocates within the prosecutions unit	Kimberley Pearce Senior Victim Services Coordinator
San Diego	<b><i>Domestic Violence Court Officer</i></b> Meeting – gained information on Probation & Parole	Nancy Moyer Deputy Probation Officer
San Diego	<b><i>Stop DV Inc</i></b> Meeting – information on training and current trends and issues	Sgt Anne O’Dell (R’td)
Giddings Texas USA	<b><i>Giddings Police Department</i></b> Discussions on police practice in responding to domestic violence	Luis Collazo Chief of Police
Bostop Texas	<b><i>Family Crisis Center</i></b> Gained information on the internet based data and information system developed by several agencies involved in a CCR project.	Joy Sharp

# Project Description

## *Overview*

Efforts to end domestic violence were first begun by feminist activists almost 30 years ago. Over time, they have worked to protect women and children and to make the political, legal, health and social services systems more responsive to the needs of abused women and their children. Their pioneering work has accomplished a great deal. The establishment of shelters, enactment of protective legislation and pro-active community education campaigns have dramatically changed the way domestic violence is viewed and treated within the community including the justice system. Through their efforts there are more supports available to victims of domestic violence than ever before.

However, it is arguable whether women are any safer now and whether abusers are systematically held accountable for their violence. Much can be gained from strengthening system responses aimed at increased safety for victims and accountability for offenders. In recent times there has been a growing emphasis on the coordination of the responses of police, legal systems and health and social services. Effectively dealing with domestic violence requires enhanced and effective coordination and collaboration among different service systems and organizations that often do not ordinarily work together. While the development of coordinated community response project have only been on the Australian agenda for the past few years, there are many successful programs in North America which have been established for 20 years and more.

It was through my work with the Gold Coast Domestic Violence Integrated Response that I was granted a Churchill Fellowship to investigate further what elements contribute to the development of a successful coordinated community response – what works and what doesn't. During my eight weeks in the USA and Canada, I was privileged to visit many excellent programs in a diverse range of settings – and had the opportunity to meet with many dedicated and visionary individuals. Specific acclaimed projects visited included Duluth and San Diego. However, there were many elements of several other programs that were innovative and interesting. While the legal statutes and systems in North America are different to Australia, there are many core issues and elements that could be adapted to an Australian setting.

I believe we have much to gain in further progressing criminal justice reform in relation to domestic violence crimes. The implementation of pro-arrest policies, predominant aggressor policies, no-drop and 'victim assisted' approaches to prosecution, domestic violence fatality reviews, systems safety audits, stronger child protection links, court mandated perpetrator programs and specific domestic violence criminal courts who undertake rigorous monitoring of abusers could all enhance existing responses and interventions. We need to continue to improve the coordination of criminal justice and social service systems responses that provide a lifeline to those who suffer from domestic abuse.

## ***Models of Multi-Agency Collaboration and Information Sharing***

During the study tour, I visited several communities who had developed comprehensive multi-agency approaches to domestic violence. This report provides an overview of Duluth and San Diego in the US and Calgary in Canada.

### **DULUTH, MINNESOTA**



Duluth has a population of 90,000 and is situated on the shores of Lake Superior in Minnesota. Duluth is the world's largest inland port with a huge wharf facility for the loading of mineral ore which is exported across the world.

In 1981, Duluth became the first community in the US to develop a coordinated community response to domestic violence. Fifteen city, county and private agencies in Duluth adopted policies and procedures which coordinated their interventions in domestic violence assault cases. Formal agreements with agencies that deal with domestic violence have been developed including victim advocates, law enforcement officers and administrators, prosecutors, probation officers, court administrators, mental health services, policy makers and judicial officers.

The purpose of developing a coordinated community response in Duluth was to protect victims of domestic violence from further acts of abuse and to hold abusers accountable for their behavior. They have achieved this through combining legal sanctions, behavior change programs and where necessary incarceration. Victim safety is the central focus of all project development and interventions.

The key activities of the Duluth Model fall under one or more of eight activities;

1. Creating a coherent philosophical approach which centralises victim safety
2. Developing "best practice" policies and protocols for intervention agencies
3. Reducing fragmentation in the system's response
4. Building monitoring and tracking into the system
5. Ensuring a supportive community infrastructure
6. Intervening directly with abusers to deter violence
7. Undoing the harm violence to women does to children
8. Evaluating the system's response from the standpoint of the victim

The Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) is the coordinating agency for the project. For more than twenty years, DAIP have tracked and monitored domestic violence assault cases at the same time working with various agencies to improve their system responses from the perspective of victim safety. In 1995, DAIP embarked on a project to enhance the existing coordinated response within the community. This included additional training, new methods of risk assessment, implementing new sentencing recommendation procedures, developing a computerized information system to track and monitor domestic violence cases, and implementing extra men's non-violence programs.

While in Duluth, I was able to attend a 3 day training workshop at DAIP which covered all aspects of the Duluth Model – program development – police policies and interventions – prosecution – probation and parole – men’s domestic violence programs and conducting safety and accountability audits. Opportunities were also provided to visit services and programs and to meet key people within the project and I found these particularly informative and insightful.



Dr Ellen Pence

### **Cultural Considerations – Mending The Broken Hoop**



*“If the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being of the woman is intact, so too is that of the family, community and society” North American Indian Proverb*

In 1990, a group of advocates and community members from the Fond du Lac Reservation outside Duluth, were concerned about the escalating violence on the reservation. Reports of murder, brutal stabbings, shootings, and beatings were the impetus to begin developing a specific community response to end violence on the reservation. They found that social service programs were not enough to help men who batter make changes in their lives, and that men could easily slip through the system without consequences for their violence.

Together this group began thinking of ways the community could start to focus on finding solutions. The seed was planted to develop a project that would create changes within the judicial and law enforcement systems. The following questions evolved from this group:

- How could tribal leaders take a more active role in developing policies and procedures for dealing with domestic violence within their communities.
- How could traditional methods or consequences be implemented by the Indian community?
- What do we want from off reservation agencies working with Indian people?

From this the “Mending the Broken Hoop” Project evolved. The purpose of the project is to:

- To develop an intervention model to coordinate reservation and off-reservation agencies to work collectively on policy and procedural changes.
- To educate off reservation court systems and law enforcement agencies on myths and beliefs about Indian people and domestic violence.

- To coordinate the Council on Non Violence which includes judges, prosecutors, probation officers, law enforcement, public defenders, advocates, counselors, reservation service providers, and representatives of the business committee.
- To track domestic assault arrest cases and protection orders.
- To assist reservations in educating business committees about domestic violence and its effect on families.
- To publish a manual on the intervention model that other reservations could use as a resource.
- To provide training to reservations on developing an intervention project.

The development of the Mending the Broken Hoop Project demonstrates how a parallel response to domestic violence can be developed which is responsive to the needs of the First Nation People of America.

Another impressive feature of the Duluth Project is the formalized information sharing among agencies. This information technology project is referred to as DAIN (Domestic Abuse Information Network). Case tracking and monitoring is undertaken electronically with different reports generated for various agencies.

Program evaluation activities have been a critical part of the development of DAIP. These studies have employed a range of research methods to examine the project's effectiveness in enhancing victim safety and holding offenders accountable for their behavior. An evaluation by Shepherd (1995) examined many different aspects of the project. The evaluation found that recidivism rates were significantly lower after increased project development. Statistical analysis indicated that greater reductions in abuse occurred when the offender was court mandated and had completed the men's program.

### **Some Evaluation Findings**

- 60% of battered women felt safer when their partner was attending a group
- 80% of battered women thought the combined responses of police, courts, DAIP and shelter was helpful in ending the abuse.
- 69% of battered women had not experienced recent physical abuse and 41% had not experienced recent psychological abuse at a one year follow-up.
- Recidivism rate was 40% for a five year follow-up using criminal justice records
- Men who completed the program had better outcomes than those who did not

Duluth has been successful in developing an internationally acclaimed program of system reform which continues to challenge conventional thinking on responding to domestic violence.



## CALGARY, ALBERTA CANADA

### ***HomeFront* – Coordinated Community Response**

HomeFront, established in 2000, is a community based agency which coordinates a community response to domestic violence in Calgary. The project brings together social service agencies, law enforcement and the criminal justice system in Calgary for the purpose of providing an immediate, seamless response to those involved in domestic violence. HomeFront's states their mission is “to reduce domestic violence in Calgary through coordinated community action.”

Specifically, HomeFront has endeavored to increase public confidence in the justice system by providing a more immediate and appropriate response to domestic violence. The safety of victims is prioritised and abusers are held accountable through legal sanctions and mandated programs.

From my observations of the court process, I was particularly impressed with the manner in which domestic violence cases are processed through the court.

### **Specialized Domestic Violence First Appearance Court**

The HomeFront project includes a unique first appearance criminal court that specializes in domestic violence offences. Every effort is made to ensure that all cases of domestic violence in Calgary appear first in this court. The court uses a team of experts who meet and review each case with defense counsel prior to court. The court team consists of specialized Crown Prosecutors, Domestic Conflict Unit Police Officers, Probation Officers, Legal Aid Duty Counsel and Domestic Violence Court Case Workers. The team meets with defense representatives prior to an accused appearance in court. This meeting is called a pre-court conference. During the pre-court conference information is shared and updated and possible resolutions for each file are discussed. The pre-court conference enables the court team to provide extensive information allowing the Crown a more complete understanding of each file before it appears in court. This ensures that crown and defense have a clear understanding of the history, background and victim's wishes in each case. They can make better decisions that more accurately address the safety concerns of victims and the accountability of offenders

In appropriate cases, treatment focused sentences or dispositions are strongly considered. All sentences include some form of legal sanction (e.g. peace bond, probation, incarceration, fine) and treatment (e.g. domestic violence counselling, substance abuse counselling etc.) with an emphasis on victim/child safety and offender accountability.

Domestic Court Case Workers, employed by HomeFront, support victims while in the domestic violence court with safety planning, assistance in understanding the court process, referrals to community and legal resources, counselling and assistance with immigration status updates. Victims are contacted by the Domestic Court Case Workers when possible, prior to the accused's first appearance or as soon after as possible in order to provide them with updates and information regarding the case.

Probation's task is to monitor offenders and hold them accountable for their behavior while ensuring they comply with the conditions of their court ordered sentences. Specialized domestic violence probation officers provide the court with an offender's history along with sentencing and treatment recommendations. The Partner Support Program maintains contact with the victim to increase their safety during the probation period.

Calgary Police Service's Domestic Conflict Unit reviews all domestic violence reports. Risk assessments are conducted whenever charges are laid. Officers are required to perform thorough investigations aimed at increasing the Crown's ability to successfully prosecute cases. The Victim Assistant Unit within the Police Unit attempts to contact victims once a police report is filed. They supply the court with victim impact statements and can also accompany victims through trial if necessary.

## **SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA**



San Diego has a population of 1.3 million and is California second largest city and the United States' seventh largest. San Diego county has a population of 2.8 million and within its borders of 4,200 sq. miles, San Diego County encompasses 18 incorporated cities.

### **Domestic Violence Council**

The coordination of domestic violence responses in San Diego is achieved by the San Diego Domestic Violence Council which was established in 1989. The council is a county-wide network of 125 battered women's programs, criminal justice agencies, and other organizations and individuals who share the common goal of ending violence against women and children in the City and County of San Diego.

The Council's stated purpose is to have a community of healthy, violence-free relationships and families in San Diego County by:

- Developing, promoting and enhancing creative prevention and effective intervention initiatives which will reduce the amount of violence in intimate relationships.
- Bringing people together - in coalitions and committees - to build healthy families in San Diego.

The Council has the following Committees:

- Child Abuse & Domestic Violence; Child, Adolescent & Youth
- East County Task Force

- Facilitator Training
- Grants & Data Gathering
- Law Enforcement
- Legal Action
- Medical
- North County DV Coalition
- Prevention
- Ramona Task Force
- Shelter & Support Services
- South County DV Coalition
- Summit Planning
- Treatment & Intervention
- Treatment & Monitoring

### **Domestic Violence Family Justice Center**



The San Diego City Attorney's Office, the San Diego Police Department and the Domestic Violence Council have worked together to establish the Domestic Violence Family Justice Center (Justice Center) - a center where approximately 100 domestic violence professionals working together under one roof. The goal of the Justice Center is to prioritize victim safety by providing centralised services, advocacy and justice. Opening in August 2002, the vision for such a centre has come from City Attorney Casey Gwinn, who has worked tirelessly to make it a reality. It was one of the

most visionary and significant initiatives I have visited and will provide a haven of support for domestic violence victims.

The Justice Center is the first of its kind in the US to house the entire Police Department Domestic Violence Unit as well as the entire Domestic Violence Prosecution Unit, other government agencies, nonprofit domestic violence and sexual assault organizations, medical professionals and volunteers. Staff are expected to address the approximately 11,000 annual new cases of domestic violence received by San Diego Police Department. The Justice Center will provide case management to existing high risk cases, share information and resources, fill gaps in services, and make the process much less overwhelming and more supportive to victims and their children.

The Center is centrally located in downtown San Diego near the courthouse. It has been designed specifically to handle domestic violence cases, improve accessibility of services to victims and children, improve investigations, obtain more convictions, and enhance community collaboration. It has special waiting rooms for victims and children, medical facilities, and state-of-the-art interview rooms.

**Police:** San Diego Police Department has one of the largest specialized Domestic Violence Investigations Units in the US. This unit, which was formed in 1992, consists of thirteen detectives, four sergeants, clerical staff and is managed by Lt. Jim Baker.

The Domestic Violence Unit is part of the Family Protection Unit of the San Diego Police Department which also includes the Child Abuse Unit, Sex Crimes Unit, Juvenile Administration and Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program (DARE)

The Domestic Violence Unit plays a crucial and pivotal role in domestic violence investigations. Operational police respond to the initial domestic violence call, conduct an investigation, arrest on probable cause, notify victim advocacy services and file a computer driven report. The case is then followed –up by a detective from the Domestic Violence Investigation Unit who then checks for prior offences and domestic violence related calls, exams the evidence (including photos, video interviews, 911 tapes and police and medical reports), and prepares the case for prosecution. An officer from the Unit may also re-interview the victim and, if needed, get further photos of injuries. The case is then sent to the City Attorney Domestic Violence Unit who handle all misdemeanor offences. The Domestic Violence Unit plays an active role in the San Diego Fatality Review Committee and the Domestic Violence Council.

**City Attorneys:** The Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Unit of the City Attorney's Office (DV Unit) prosecutes all misdemeanor cases of domestic violence as well as child abuse, elder abuse, school attendance, statutory rape, teen relationship violence and stalking offences that occurs in the City of San Diego and Poway.

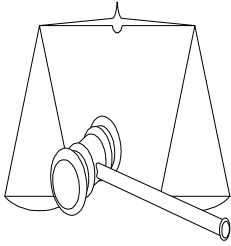
Since its inception in 1986, the DV Unit has evolved into one of the largest and most comprehensive one-stop family violence units in the nation with a staff of 11 prosecutors, 3 advocates, 3 investigators and admin staff. Through a partnership with the Center for Community Solutions and Children's Hospital, respectively, the Unit also has an in-house restraining order clinic and a Kids-in-Court Program.

The City Attorneys Office, under the direction of Casey Gwinn has provided strong leadership on progressing domestic violence responses in San Diego including the establishment of the Domestic Violence Council and the drive and vision for the Domestic Violence Family Justice Center. San Diego is an example where leadership to coordinate the response to domestic violence may also come from within the criminal justice system. Innovative programs that focus on integrated case management, can often be located within prosecutors' offices or police domestic violence units.

The Domestic Violence Unit of the San Diego City Attorneys Office has adopted many progressive approaches to domestic violence including aggressive prosecution of misdemeanor (often at first offence stage) domestic violence offences in order to stop the violence, an evidence based approach to prosecution and a 'no drop' approach aimed at safe guarding victims within the criminal justice system. Further information on the City Attorney's Domestic Violence Unit is contained in this report under the following chapter. Gael Strack, Deputy City Attorney has been instrumental in bringing to the forefront the serious issues of 'choking' or strangulation and the strong correlation this has to domestic homicide. More information on this is contained further in this report.

There were several specific issues relevant to program development which were investigated during the Churchill Fellowship tour which include the following:

### **Prosecutions - Criminal Code Vs Civil Legislation**



Domestic Violence takes many forms and ranges from physical attacks to emotional, sexual, financial and social abuse. Much of the violence in relationships occurs on a continuum ranging from menacing phone calls, to threats, to homicide. No matter what form it takes, the dynamics of abuse are the same. The abuse most often occurs over a considerable length of time – usually years, and is rarely a single “unexplained” incident.

In the past, the justice system response has been to consider domestic violence as a ‘domestic’ or social problem best dealt with outside the criminal justice system. In Australia over the past fifteen years, all states and territories have enacted civil legislation which provides for the protection of victims of domestic violence through court ordered protection orders. Governments have streamlined processes for obtaining protection orders as well as expanding the coverage of legal protection to other groups of people affected by violence and abuse. While access to legal protection through civil legislation has been enhanced, the road through the Criminal Code is still mostly difficult and arduous.

Research undertaken by Douglas & Godden (2002), suggests that domestic violence between intimate partners is rarely prosecuted as a criminal offence in Queensland. They further argue that civil legislation has trumped the operation of the Criminal Code and as a result violent perpetrators are not held publicly accountable for their dangerous behavior. The research of Douglas & Godden involved the examination of 804 court files of matters arising under the Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Act 1989. Only 1% of the files studied, identified possible prosecution of criminal offences under the Criminal Code.

Similar concerns were raised with the Queensland *Report Of The Taskforce On Women And The Criminal Code 2000* which found that men are rarely charged with criminal offences relating to acts of domestic violence. The only charges of a ‘criminal nature’ generally laid were for breaches of protection orders. A recommendation of the Taskforce was for further research on why domestic violence offences are not dealt with through the Criminal Code.

How have overseas systems responded? The people I met with in Duluth say their biggest challenge was to make a single incident focused adversarial criminal justice system responsive to the kind of crime which needs to be understood in context. Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior committed over time rather than a single criminal act dislocated from prior acts of violence.

When victims of domestic violence call police seeking intervention, they are ringing into a complex adversarial system which is usually single incident focused and rarely takes

into account the previous history of violence and abuse. Many women may stop short of initiating criminal proceedings against their abuser, afraid of retaliatory violence. This fear is well-founded: studies estimate that a victim's risk of being killed by her abuser rises dramatically after she separates from him. Abusive partners often threaten and intimidate their victims following police intervention. As a result victims may refuse to testify, ask police to drop charges, or even recant prior truthful statements regarding the abuse

Casey Gwinn, City Attorney San Diego advocates that a successful criminal justice system intervention with or without the victim's participation, is the best way to stop the violence and hold the batterer accountable. He further suggests if a case is properly investigated and prepared for trial (evidenced –based prosecution), the victim's testimony is not necessary to obtain a conviction. In San Diego, 70% of victims will choose not to testify and research suggests that victims of domestic violence may be safer if they can choose not to testify against their abuser.

Duluth, San Diego, Calgary and many other jurisdictions in the US and Canada have been able to adopt a specific criminal justice reform perspective to domestic violence. Some of these are outlined in this report. The Domestic Violence Unit of the San Diego City Attorneys Office has adopted the following approaches:

- Aggressively prosecute misdemeanor domestic violence cases in order to stop the violence
- Provide early intervention at the misdemeanor level in order to prevent the escalation of offenders' behavior to felony level conduct
- Shift the focus from victim responsibility for prosecution to a focus on offender accountability
- Enhance victim safety by safety planning, strong victim advocacy and use of state-of-the-art technology to assess lethality
- The development of a strong multi-disciplinary, inter-agency response to family violence
- Promote community awareness about domestic violence, elder abuse, child abuse, statutory rape and stalking cases
- Hold batterers accountable by not dropping or reducing charges at the request of victims

Similar approaches need further investigation in Australia. It is recognized that victims of domestic violence need services and supports that go beyond the criminal justice system – health, counseling, financial and social supports – which should be freely and readily available. However, the focus can not rest solely on victims. Abusers need to be held accountable for their behavior if the efforts to stop violence and abuse are to succeed. Civil and Criminal legislative responses are both needed and should work together to provide the highest possible interventions to address and stop violence. Victims of domestic violence need simpler, safer and more efficient pathways for criminal justice responses to address the violence committed against them

## **Domestic Violence Safety And Accountability Audits**

Domestic Violence Safety and Accountability Audits, pioneered in Duluth by Dr Ellen Pence, have become an integral function in reforming the systems which respond to domestic violence.

Dr Pence describes a Domestic Violence Safety and Accountability Audit as “a process of inquiry carried out by a team of domestic violence experts and criminal justice practitioners to systematically examine how an agency's or (set of agencies') domestic violence case management practices further two important goals: (1) keeping the victim safe, and (2) establishing state control over the offender to deter further violence.” (Pence: 1996)

Canadian sociologist Dr Dorothy Smith originally developed the notion of institutional ethnographies, and Dr Ellen Pence applied Smith's work to domestic violence criminal justice reform efforts. The field of ethnography is characterized by its attention to how members of society or a specific group of people -such as police officers, prosecutors, probation officers, social workers and other professionals interpret what they see or read, and then act, based on those interpretations.

A safety and accountability audit looks at the processing routines of one agency, or set of agencies, to determine if victim safety and offender accountability are central to their design. Gaining some kind of state control over the offender can, if done correctly, create a general deterrence to this pervasive form of violence, lessening the likelihood that an individual offender will re-assault a particular victim or batter future intimate partners.

The audit reviews focus on set procedures and individual assigned tasks not on the individual who perform the tasks. Attention is given to policies that drive a particular procedure and forms which are central to the completion of the task. As Dr Pence says “If it’s not on the form – it’s not in the brain”

Conducting a safety and accountability audit has become an integral function in developing integrated responses to domestic violence in many communities.

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## **Mandatory or Pro-Arrest Policies**



Minnesota was one of the first states in the US, where legislation was enacted allowing police to arrest domestic violence offenders without a warrant provided they acted in good faith. Now most states in the US have enacted arrest laws and police departments have adopted a pro-arrest approach to domestic violence interventions. Police are authorized to arrest domestic violence offenders based on probable cause. Probable Cause is defined in the Duluth Police Department Domestic Violence Policies as “A belief based on the officer’s observations and reasonable judgment, and statements by parties and witnesses involved, that a crime occurred and the subject committed the crime”. The existence of probable cause is the determining factor in making a mandatory arrest and is usually based on the fear of imminent harm. The intent of arrest is to prevent re-assaults and possible homicides.

Pro-arrest policies were in effect in all cities and counties visited during the study tour.

***Is pro-arrest an effective and safe intervention strategy?***

The National Institute of Justice conducted research across six legal jurisdictions to test empirically whether arrests deterred subsequent violence better than less formal alternatives. The research used both police data and interviews with victims. Key findings from this research suggest that arrest is associated with less repeat offending. The size and statistical significance of the effect of arrest varied depending on whether the subsequent aggression was measured by victim interviews or police records, however, in all measures (prevalence, frequency, rate and time-to-failure) arrest was associated with fewer incidents of subsequent intimate partner aggression

Recent years have seen an increase in the number of victims of domestic violence also arrested for domestic violence offences. Some victim advocates have attributed this to the increase in "mandatory arrest" policies, in which police are required to make an arrest if there is probable cause that a person has committed domestic violence. Passage of these laws was advocated by domestic violence experts to address the inadequate response to domestic violence victims by law enforcement and advocates were disappointed to find this policy used against victims of domestic violence. When officers arrive at the scene of a domestic violence crime, they often cite evidence that both partners have engaged in some aggressive behavior, and arrest both parties. This "dual arrest" strategy fails to take into account which of two people is primarily responsible for the aggression and which one is responding out of self-defense. Arresting a victim of domestic violence who had called police seeking protective intervention can have devastating consequences.

**Predominant or Primary Aggressor Policies**

To counteract the problem of dual arrests, most police department policies now provide guidelines for an officer to determine who is the "primary or predominant aggressor" in a violent incident. For example, the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training publishes a guidebook for officers responding to domestic violence, discouraging "dual arrests" and outlining several factors to consider when determining who is the primary aggressor in a domestic violence situation. The primary aggressor is defined as "the person determined to be the most significant, rather than the first, aggressor."

The term predominant aggressor is used in reference to making mandatory domestic violence arrests to indicate that only one person should be arrested (in the majority of cases). It charges officers with the responsibility of determining who has the most potential for doing the most harm, and what actions were done in self-defense. It encourages officers to desist from "equalizing" the violence or seeing domestic violence as mutual combat. Factors to consider include the history of domestic violence between the people involved, the threats and fear level of each person, and whether either person acted in self defense. These are appropriate considerations when determining who the primary aggressor is, and therefore which of the two parties should be arrested

## **Mandated Men's Programs**

An important component of Coordinated Community Response Projects in both the US and Canada has been the development of court-ordered nonviolence programs for offenders. In Duluth, DAIP have developed a specific curriculum *Power and Control: Tactics of Men Who Batter*, which is a 2 hour weekly educational program. Originally developed as a 26 week program it is now run over 52 weeks. Other programs visited used adaptations of this curriculum.

Many states and counties have developed and introduced Best Practice Standards to guide the provision of batterers programs. San Diego programs were under the control of Probation and Parole who themselves developed the practice standards and introduced a system of court certifying the programs. No offender could be referred to a program unless it had been certified. Probation and Parole convened regular meetings of program suppliers and court administration and certifications were regularly reviewed.

All programs were based on a user pay principle with some using a means test approach and others not. The use of such programs is now considered a norm in sentencing for domestic violence offences in many jurisdictions in the US. The majority of programs visited were of 12 month duration although programs with a focus of voluntary attended therapy were of a considerably shorter duration.

Program success is determined by research with a strong emphasis on victim interviews to determine reduced violence and increased safety and well being.

Notable for his research work on men and violence is Dr Ed Gondolf, whose work continues to challenge current thinking of interventions for men who use violence. The most recent of Gondolf's work is a study of batterer intervention programs in four geographically dispersed cities involved in a 15-month to a total of 48 months follow-up of men after the initial program intake. The four research sites were Pittsburgh, Denver, Houston, and Dallas. The batterer programs involved in the research varied in duration, format, and additional services. The initial 15-month follow-up entitled "A Multi-site Evaluation of Batterer Intervention Systems" was conducted in September 1994 to August 1997

The extended follow-up research was conducted in 2001, and enabled Gondolf to retest his initial hypotheses: which suggests that more comprehensive programming and additional service contact by batterers reduces re-assault.

Gondolf endeavored to test the following hypotheses:

- Re-assaults will continue to decrease over time, despite expectations of a threshold of increasing re-assault.
- The equivalent re-assault rates for the four programs will continue in the long-term, despite the variation in program length and additional services.
- The re-assault rate of new partners remains low as opposed to increases as the new relationships become longer in duration.

- The separation of initial partners from their batterers will continue to increase over time, despite increasing economic problems for the women and the implementation of welfare reform.
- The striking lack of women's service contact can be explained as the result of inappropriate, unavailable, or inaccessible services.

**Trends:** Two-thirds of the men who re-assaulted did so for the first time within nine-months of program intake—when they were supposedly under program supervision. There was no evidence of an upturn or threshold in the extended follow-up. Less than 1% of the men, per 3-month follow-up interval, re-assaulted their partner for the first time. Approximately 16% of the men did re-assault sometime during the extended follow-up (30-48 months), but a substantial portion of these men had done so earlier. They were repeat re-assaulters. A major finding was that nearly 25% of the men repeatedly re-assaulted their partners throughout the follow-up. These men began their re-assaults soon after program intake and were responsible for over 80% of the injuries

The trend also indicates that the vast majority of the men eventually stopped their violence against their partners. At the 30-month follow-up, 80% of the men had not assaulted their partner in the previous year, and at the 48-month follow-up, 90% of the men had not assaulted in the previous year. The analysis of the non-physical abuse (i.e., controlling behavior, verbal abuse, and threats) showed a similar de-escalation and no evidence of a substitution to compensate for the de-escalation of physical abuse

The women's perceptions reflected these outcomes. Nearly two thirds of the women at the 15-month, 30-month and 48-month follow-ups indicated that they were "better off." At the 30-month and 48-month follow-ups, nearly 85% of the women also felt "very safe" and "very unlikely" to be hit again. It appears that the intervention takes some months to have an effect, but does eventually have an impact.

Gondolf also noted the importance of the effects of court surveillance and response and batterer program compliance. The intervention system mattered. Gondolf suggests that programs might institute more intensive programming and supervision immediately after intake rather than focus on extending program length. More decisive action needs to be taken in response to initial re-assaults to contain the potential re-assaulters.

There are certainly lessons for Australia as we undertake the provision of court ordered programs. In San Diego, it is the court who takes on a supervision and monitoring role. Offenders are sentenced to a 12 month program but are required to present to the court every 90 days. Reports are provided to the court from probations and program managers on program attendance and participation, further involvement with police and indicators of increased victim safety from their partners.



## **Domestic Violence Fatality Reviews**

Domestic violence takes a significant toll in human lives each year. Often many domestic homicides have predictive elements to them. Conducting fatality reviews is one way of gaining a better understanding of the nature and pattern of lethal domestic violence and abuse. A fatality review brings together representatives from various agencies within a coordinated response to domestic violence: police, courts, community corrections, health, domestic violence services, shelters, perpetrator programs and child protection agencies and other professionals with relevant expertise.

This multi-disciplinary team conducts a detailed review of public records and other documentation regarding domestic violence related homicides in order to identify gaps in community responses to domestic violence and barriers to effective intervention. In most instances, fatality reviews are only conducted on cases classified 'closed' with no pending appeal.

The purpose of the fatality review is not to assign blame but to create change. Information from fatality reviews combined with other sources of information ( research, crime data etc) allows for the identification of patterns in domestic violence fatalities. Conducting fatality reviews also enables the team to identify gaps in services and accountability structures and formulate recommendations for policies, services and resources to fill those gaps.

Many states in the U.S. have fatality review boards and some states (California, Washington )have enacted legislation regarding domestic violence fatality reviews which releases those professions governed by state law to bring information which would otherwise be confidential to the reviews.

California Penal Code s 11163.3 (a) provides for the establishment of county-level interagency domestic violence death review teams. These teams investigate both homicides and suicides related to domestic violence. The teams serve to ensure the role of domestic violence in the fatality is recognized and that subsequent preventive measures are introduced. Under California Penal Code 11163.3 (d1-11) domestic violence death review teams shall be comprised of, but not limited to, the following:

- 1)Experts in the field of forensic pathology.
- 2)Medical personnel with expertise in domestic violence abuse.
- 3)Coroners and medical examiners.
- 4)Criminologists.
- 5)District attorneys and city attorneys.
- 6)Domestic violence shelter service staff and battered women's advocates.
- 7)Law enforcement personnel.
- 8)Representatives of local agencies that are involved with domestic violence abuse reporting.
- 9)County health department staff who deal with domestic violence victims' health issues.
- 10) Representatives of local child abuse agencies.
- 11) Local professional associations of persons described in 1-10.

The California legislation still allows for local discretion around the construction of teams.

Texas, Chapter 672, Health and Safety Code allows counties to establish a fatality review team to investigate family violence homicides. The Code also outlines instructions for the confidentiality of information obtained by team members as well as civil and criminal liability for disclosure.

While provisions have been made for the facilitation of information exchange, the US experience suggests that when the civil and criminal systems are involved a great deal of information is public record. Review team members sign confidentiality agreements governing the sharing of information sharing and disclosures made to the review team. Forms and other resources have been specifically developed to assist with the review process.

The Washington State Fatality Review Project highlights two models for death reviews: the "Investigative Fatality Review" and the "Systems Analysis Fatality Review." The "investigative model" prioritizes the need to identify domestic violence fatalities which have not previously been identified by police, prosecutors, and coroners, as domestic violence related deaths. Its goals include understanding how or why deaths were not classified as domestic violence related and working toward clearer elucidation of causes of death. In particular, the investigative reviews make much of the need to improve protocols for coroners and others investigating deaths. If this is achieved then the outcome will be not only a more accurate count of domestic violence related deaths, but also an increase in public awareness of domestic violence as a threat to life and well-being. The "systems approach" prioritizes the need to identify how interventions were ineffective. The goal is to change the policies and procedures of involved agencies.

The San Diego Fatality Review Team investigates identified domestic violence deaths and seeks to determine if fatality falls under one of three categories:

- - Intervenable - An opportunity existed to intervene at the individual, family, agency or public policy level.
- -Not Intervenable – There was no apparent opportunity to intervene.
- -Undetermined – The team was unable to determine if an intervention opportunity existed, due to the limited information available to the team.

In the Australian context, such reviews could be of enormous benefit in advancing our own understanding of domestic homicides and ultimately progress our collective efforts to eliminate domestic violence deaths.

## **Strangulation: A Red Flag Issue**

As stated previously in this report, Gael Strack, Deputy City Attorney San Diego has been instrumental in bringing to the forefront the serious issues of ‘choking’ or strangulation and the strong correlation this has to domestic homicide. During my visit to San Diego, Gael provided me with her research findings and other significant papers and I am now keen to see a greater emphasis on this serious issue in Australia.

Following the strangulation deaths of two young women in San Diego in 1995, the City Attorney’s Office embarked on a study of 300 strangulation cases which were randomly selected from police reports submitted to the City Attorney’s Office over a five year period. The victims were women in 99% of the cases. They had reported to police of been “choked” by their partner’s bare hands (97% of cases) or with objects such as electrical cords, belts, cord etc (3% of cases). Strack’s study found that while police had documented an allegation of strangulation in all of the cases, they reported no visible injuries in half of the cases. Many of the police reports neglected to clearly document specific information about the strangulation including duration of the strangulation, what threats were made and any physical symptoms the victim may have been experiencing.

Findings of the study showed that there was a history of domestic violence in 89% of the cases. Strack suggests that a prior history of domestic violence could indicate an escalation of violence over time. Focusing on visible indications of strangulation, 50% of victims had no visible sign of injury and 35% had injuries too minor to photograph. Focusing on symptoms, many victims reported nausea, loss of consciousness, hyperventilation, defecation, uncontrollable shaking, sore throat, voice loss, memory loss and in one case, the victim had a miscarriage within 24 hrs of been strangled.

To understand the medical significance of these findings, the City Attorney’s Office enlisted the assistance of Dr George McClane, a local Emergency Room specialist. When medical expertise was brought to the forefront of the study it became more apparent of the serious nature and lethal possibility posed by strangulation.

With medical knowledge, it was learned that only 11 pounds of pressure placed on both carotid arteries for ten seconds is necessary to cause unconsciousness. Other medical symptoms include;

- Voice changes – including hoarseness and or complete loss of voice
- Difficulty in swallowing
- Changes or difficulty in breathing
- Mental confusion
- Memory loss
- Involuntarily urination and defecation
- Injuries to the neck including scratches and redness
- Chin abrasions
- Ruptured capillaries under the eyelids
- Bloodshot eyes
- Swelling of the neck
- Lung damage due to vomit inhaled during strangulation

Largely due to the pioneering work of Strack and McClane, strangulation is now seen as one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence where unconsciousness may occur within seconds and death in minutes. It is now regarded as a serious felony and specific training on investigating strangulation cases has been developed and implemented in San Diego.

### **Looking Out For Children**

A focus of the Churchill Fellowship study was to also to gain an understanding of the services and responses to children who live with domestic violence and links of domestic violence responses to child protection interventions.

The links and overlaps with domestic violence were as expected. The communities who had developed strong integration or at least strong coordination across responses to adult domestic violence were also the same places where there were stronger links and programs around domestic violence and child protection.

Duluth and San Diego both had strong coordination and collaboration between domestic violence agencies and child protection agencies. The First Witness Child Abuse Center in Duluth provides a response to children aged 3-17 years with 85% of referrals coming from the Duluth Police Department. Protocols have been developed for the interviewing of children and First Witness coordinates a monitoring team comprising of social workers, police and attorneys. The First Witness Center has strong links with DAIP and the coordinated domestic violence response. DAIP in Duluth are also managers of the Duluth Family Visitation Center which provides a safe and neutral place for the safe exchange of children for contact visits or for court order supervised contact.

To gain a perspective of a child focused agency, I visited the Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System of the London Family Court Clinic in London, Ontario, Canada



The Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System of the London Family Court Clinic has become known internationally for the work they do with children and young people. The Centre advocates for the special needs of children and young people involved in the justice system through crime or violence.

Dr Peter Jaffe, Betty Taylor & Samantha Poisson

The core business of the agency encompasses seven program areas:

- Child Witness Project
- Clinical Support Program
- Counselling Services
- Custody and Access Project
- Research Services
- Young Offender Services
- Violence Prevention Services

As part of the coordination and integration of responses in London, police are required to notify child protection agencies following all police interventions where children are present. This occurs irrespective of whether the children have been harmed or threatened. Responses to children are linked through a coordinated community response involving the Family Court Clinic.

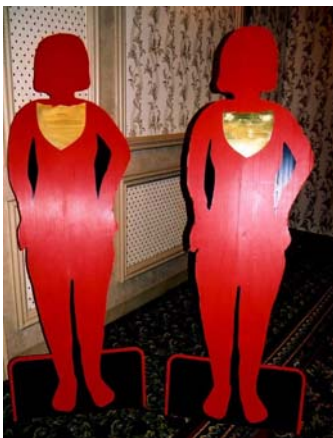
The London Family Court Clinic in London has been at the forefront of reform to recognize the damaging effects domestic violence has on children – often the forgotten victims. Specific police training has been developed by Dr Peter Jaffe and Dr Linda Baker which is focused on training police on skills associated with conducting sensitive interviews with children at the time of domestic violence intervention. Police are encouraged to document children’s statements and comments as the impact of violence on children can be a consideration at sentencing. In some US jurisdictions, exposure of children to domestic violence is a criminal offence.

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## **Community Education And Training Projects**

### ***Silent Witness National Initiative***

During my time in Minneapolis, I had the opportunity to meet with Janet Hagberg, National Director of the Silent Witness National Initiative.



The Silent Witness Initiative began in Minnesota in 1990. Angered by the domestic violence deaths occurring in their community, a group of artists began a project that would raise awareness to the tragic consequences of domestic violence and help to stop the deaths. They created 27 life sized red wooden figures representing all the women who were killed in acts of domestic violence in Minnesota in 1990. They called them the Silent Witnesses.

FBI statistics state that 30 percent of female homicide victims are killed by intimate partners. The Silent Witness Initiative gives a powerful and poignant message to the community of the lethal potential of domestic violence.

Sadly, domestic violence can escalate over time, leading in some instances to homicide. Women are trapped by a number of economic, social, religious, cultural, and emotional barriers in relationships with partners who are usually expert at convincing a woman that "it will never happen again" Women are in the most danger when leaving or attempting to leave an abusive partner.



The Silent Witness has now become an international initiative with projects developing in all 50 states and several other countries. The project continues to grow. Of the 66 US cities with populations over 250,000, 90% have Silent Witness exhibits. The project has a network of more than 30 organisations nationwide coordinating efforts in 50 states. Silent Witness is now one of the biggest community awareness projects focused on domestic violence in the US.

Domestic Violence homicides statistics for all states are tracked using FBI statistics and are monitored for homicide reduction – the ultimate goal of the project. The Annual Report of the Silent Witness National Initiative 2000 highlights the fact that the Silent Witnesses Initiative together with enhanced intervention can work together to decrease domestic homicides.

A similar project began on the Gold Coast in 1997 and an invitation has been extended for this project to join the Silent Witness National Initiative.

### ***Workplace Domestic Violence Policies and Training***

While in Chicago, I had the opportunity to meet with Kim Wells, Executive Director of the Corporate Alliance to end Partner Violence and several other prominent people involved in addressing workplace domestic violence from a government or corporate position.

The Corporate Alliance to end Partner Violence (CAEPV) was founded in 1995 by State Farm Insurance Companies. CAEPV is the only national organization of its kind founded by business leaders and focused on the workplace. Since 1995, the Alliance has brought together dozens of progressive companies who exchange information, collaborate on projects, and use their influence to instigate change within the workplace.

Many US Corporations, Government Agencies and Businesses are now seeing domestic violence as a workplace issues and are developing polices and programs to address this. There is growing awareness of the impact and repercussions domestic violence can have for an employer. Consider –

- American businesses pay an estimated \$3 to \$5 billion a year in medical expenses associated with domestic violence and businesses forfeit an additional \$100 million a year in lost wages, sick leave, absenteeism, and non-productivity. (*Domestic Violence for Health Care Providers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Colorado Violence Coalition, 1991*) (*Bureau of National Affairs, 1990*).
- 94% of corporate security directors rank partner violence as a high security problem. (*Personnel Journal, April 1995: 64.*)

Many corporations and government agencies are adopting policies and practices aimed at addressing domestic violence as a workplace issue. When in Illinois, I was able to meet with key people from the following organisations, all of whom had developed different policies and approaches to address work place domestic violence.

- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois
- Cook County Commission on Women's Issues
- Office of Women's Business Development
- Vickii Coffey & Associates
- Cook County Hospital
- Chicago Mayor's Office on Domestic Violence
- Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

Domestic Violence also impacts on Australian workplaces and I look forward to the continued work I have become involved with in this field.

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### **Coordinating Councils or Committees**

Coordinating councils (also known as domestic violence councils, task forces or committees) have been formed in many communities to provide a forum for interagency communication and collaboration. The Santa Clara County Domestic Violence Council has been a model for the development of other councils around the country.

Statewide coordinating councils also play an important role in shaping the response to domestic violence. A survey conducted by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Coordinate Judges (1995) found that of 43 state domestic violence coalitions contacted, 23 participated in some form of statewide coordinating council or task force. While the structure and form of these coordinating councils were diverse, the study found that "their statements of purpose can be distilled into the following three major functions: assessment of the legal justice and social systems involved; policy development; and planning. An Urban Institute study of community responses to domestic violence in six communities found that all of them had some type of coordinating council (Clark, et al., 1996). The councils in the communities studied varied in terms of their membership, structure and purpose. Coordinating Councils or Committees encountered during the study tour include:

The *San Diego Domestic Violence Council* has representatives from over 120 agencies that provide services to victims and offenders. Subcommittees focus on different aspects of the community response: law enforcement; shelter and support services; medical; legal action; child abuse/domestic violence collaboration; ethnic concerns; treatment and intervention; grants and data collection; and education and prevention.

*METRAC* ( Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women & Children) is based in Toronto. METRAC focuses on all aspects of life which impinge on women's safety – women's public lives as well as women's private lives. They work with local government and urban planners and designers to create safe spaces and places for

women. METRAC has been successful in creating a safer Toronto for women through community safety audits. Of particular note is their work on creating safer transit systems and campuses. They have produced many resources on women's safety in public places as well as domestic and sexual violence.

***Women Abuse Council of Toronto*** was developed in 1991 and evolved out of a community need to have a more coordinated approach to Violence Against Women in Toronto. The Council has been successful in developing a coordinated response to woman abuse in Toronto through the development of protocols and policies involving Police, Crown Attorney's and Probation. The Council was also instrumental in developing specialized domestic violence courts in Toronto. Currently chaired by Vivienne Green, the Council has a membership of 175 individuals across all service sectors.

***Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence*** was incorporated in 1990, the Coalition is a private, non-profit organization based in Seattle, whose primary membership is comprised of agencies that provide shelter, support and advocacy services to victims of domestic violence. The Coalition also has a large associate membership base of individuals, professional groups, and organizations that work on domestic violence and related issues. The Coalition also supports the networking and organizing efforts of several constituent groups, including survivors of domestic violence, women of color, lesbian/bisexual/transgendered/gay people, immigrants and refugees and Native American advocates. The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence is currently working on many projects, including:

**Advocacy Based Counseling (ABC Trainings)**

The Coalition provides specialized training for domestic violence victim advocates on advocacy-based counseling.

**Fatality Review Project**

The Coalition convenes community based multidisciplinary groups to review and analyze the circumstances surrounding domestic violence related deaths in Washington State.

**Disability Advocacy Project**

The Coalition develops training curricula, service protocols, and models for collaboration that will increase and enhance support and advocacy for people with disabilities who are victims of domestic violence.

**WSCADV Annual Conference**

Each year, the Coalition sponsors a statewide conference for domestic violence advocates, community organizers, and colleagues. Conferences include opportunities for training,

**Public Policy**

The Coalition reviews, monitors, and analyzes state and national public policies related to domestic violence. To that end, we participate in committees and work groups that address a variety of social justice issues and initiatives.

## **Conclusions & Recommendations**

From my time in both the US and Canada, I believe we have much to gain in developing collaborative reform from a criminal justice perspective.

Specific issues for further investigation and consideration include:

- The development and implementation of pro-arrest programs and policies in police departments in respect to domestic violence physical and sexual offences.
- The development of a national data system to gain an Australian overview of the extent of reported domestic violence including criminal offences and homicides.
- The development of technology systems for the sharing of information across departments involved in the justice system to enable improved tracking and monitoring.
- The establishment of multi-disciplinary domestic violence fatality reviews committees.
- The establishment of specific domestic violence criminal offences courts.
- The development and introduction of policies and associated training on all aspects of predominant aggressor.
- Strengthening the links between child protection agencies and responses and domestic violence agencies and responses.
- Review of criminal justice responses to enable greater utilizing of the Criminal Code for domestic crimes including adopting a ‘no drop’ approach to prosecution and enhanced supports to victims of domestic violence engaged with the criminal justice system
- Further development and use of court ordered behavior change programs designed and compliant with best practice standards.
- The development of specific training and responses which recognize the seriousness of attempted strangulation (choking) in domestic violence

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## **Implementation**

Information and resources obtained during the Churchill Fellowship Program, will be used to further advance the work of the Gold Coast Domestic Violence Integrated Response. A specific information sharing workshop is been held while specific information and ideas will form the basis of submissions, journal articles, future training and program development.

I have appreciated the opportunity the Churchill Fellowship has afforded me and I look forward to using new information, skills and ideas to advance responses to those affected by domestic violence.

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## Useful Resources

HOMEFRONT

Calgary

Website: [www.homefrontcalgary.com](http://www.homefrontcalgary.com)

British Columbia Institute Against Family Violence

Website: [www.bcifv.org](http://www.bcifv.org)

METRAC ( Metro Action Committee on Violence Against Women & Children)

Toronto

Website: [www.metrac.org](http://www.metrac.org)

Ontario Women's Justice Network

Website: [www.owjn.org](http://www.owjn.org)

Woman Abuse Council of Toronto

Website: [wact@womanabuse.ca](mailto:wact@womanabuse.ca)

Centre for Children & Families in the Justice System

London: Ontario Canada

Website [www.lfcc.on.ca](http://www.lfcc.on.ca)

Domestic Abuse Intervention Project - Duluth

Website: [www.duluth-model.org](http://www.duluth-model.org)

Silent Witness Project

Website [www.silentwitness.net](http://www.silentwitness.net)

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

Website: [www.icjia.state.il.us](http://www.icjia.state.il.us)

Corporate Alliance to End Domestic Violence

Website [www.caepv.org](http://www.caepv.org)

Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Website [www.wscadv.org](http://www.wscadv.org)

San Diego Police Department

Website: [www.sannet.gov/police/](http://www.sannet.gov/police/)

San Diego City Attorney – Domestic Violence Unit

Website [www.sandiegodvunit.org](http://www.sandiegodvunit.org)

National Institute of Justice

US Department of Justice

Website: [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij)