



# Annual Report

2022/23

**DVCONNECT**  
*Be heard. Be safe.*







## Acknowledgement of Country

DVConnect acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional and ongoing custodians of the lands on which we live and work; lands for which sovereignty was never ceded. We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge the lived experiences of our First Nations women and children, who continue to experience disproportionate rates of domestic, family, and sexual violence. We honour and pay our respects to the women and children who have not survived.

DVConnect proudly supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart and Yes23 - Listening to advice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about matters that affect their lives, so we make better decisions.

# Honouring People Living with Experience

DVConnect acknowledges the many women, women's organisation and survivor advocates who have spoken out about their experiences for decades. The work that we are doing here builds on their legacy, their dedication, and their advocacy. It is critical that we continue to learn from and include the voices of those who have lived experiences when seeking to prevent violence across society.

We are committed to delivery of services that contextualise intersectional needs, promotes social inclusion and self-determination.

We also use these voices to guide our work with people who use domestic family and sexual violence as it is from this knowledge that we can help men to stop their use of violence and abuse. When men are safer, in themselves and to others, women and children are safe.

### Our Vision

All lives are free from violence and abuse.

### Our Purpose

Collaboratively shaping choices and pathways for a life free from violence and abuse

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**"We are your mothers, your sisters, your brothers, your aunties, your uncles, your cousins, your children, your partners, your colleagues, your friends, your family, your kin, your community. Do not continue to shame us for what other people have done to us. We did not ask for abuse. We have resisted violence or done what we needed to do – to protect ourselves, our families. To survive."**

*(Members of the Independent Collective of Survivors, National Plan to end Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032)*

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# Message from Trina

## BOARD CHAIR

The 22-23 financial year concludes my first year as Chair of the DVConnect Board for this remarkable organisation.

We know that approximately 3.8 million Australians have reported experiencing domestic, family and/or sexual violence (DFSV) since the age of 15 and for this reason, DVConnect continues its' core focus on raising awareness about DFSV and the important services available to support those impacted.

This financial year highlighted that more people are reaching out to our Womensline, Mensline, and Sexual Assault Helplines. This does not necessarily mean that more people are experiencing domestic, family and/or sexual violence, but rather those that are, feel safe and comfortable to reach out. We understand that reporting and contacting support services is an extremely brave step to make. We recognised the existing barriers that remain for victim-survivors to make this step, and we are focussed on working with key partners and government agencies to find solutions to reduce these.

As one of the largest specialist domestic and family service in the country, DVConnect remains focused on continuing to further strengthen our governance to ensure that people with lived experience of DFSV, particularly First Nations people and communities are heard and help lead the action for change.

Our strategy has been refreshed to include our focus on growing the evidence base to better understand engagement and accountability for people who use violence and to partner with Griffith University to lead research in this area. While DVConnect has a core role in the response to, and recovery and healing from violence, we are also determined to help address the root causes of DFSV, which is why our work with people who use violence

is a priority. Our Mensline service works directly with those who are using violence and want to understand and learn how to change their behaviour. Mensline has also seen an increase in calls received over the past 22-23 financial year, demonstrating the need for greater early intervention strategies and tailored support options.

We will continue on our path to advocate for all victim/survivors and to provide a sanctuary at Bella's, our own accommodation facility. I would like to acknowledge the ongoing hard work and dedication of the team at DVConnect who support those in crisis DFSV situations every day. We are mindful at all times of the health and wellbeing of our dedicated staff and celebrate their successes.

To our formidable CEO whose passion for change ignites us all daily, your leadership inspires the team, and your courage and tenacity is to be admired. To the strong leadership team and all those at DVC, on behalf of the board, I say thank you. It can be both incredibly rewarding and challenging working in this arena and we appreciate your efforts everyday. To my fellow board members, you add such depth and value to the organisation, and I thank you all for your dedication and time.

To those Directors who left us this year, thank you, you have left a great legacy.

Finally, a big thank you to the community, donors, sponsors, and government partners for your contribution to helping make the vital work we do every day possible.





# Message from Beck

## CEO

In a time where challenges to human rights, self-determination, and dignity persist in stark contrast to our advancements as a society, DVConnect has held fast our focus on hope and spirit. Our unwavering commitment, articulated through our core values of integrity, compassion, accountability, respect, and empowerment, has reinforced our resolve to address domestic, family, and sexual violence and violent crime in all its forms. As we release this annual report, I am both humbled by the responsibility we carry and emboldened by the positive difference we have made in the lives of many in the past twelve months.

This year, our dedicated specialist workforce responded to over 163,000 inbound contacts across all of our programs. We are proud to have provided over 8,000 nights of safe accommodation and to have helped countless individuals and families across Queensland—including their beloved pets—find their pathway to safety. A monumental effort that speaks to the growing demand for our vital services.

As we look to the horizon, our focus is clear. We are committed to ending violence in a generation, a bold vision that drives every action and decision we make. Our work this year, particularly through VictimConnect and our renewed engagement as the Specialist Trauma Counselling partner for 1800RESPECT, underscores the importance of collaboration and the collective power of advocacy.

The space for recovery and healing at Bella's Sanctuary, the engagement of callers to our Mensline, and the embedding of webchat into our crisis responses are testaments to our holistic approach and drive for innovation and continuous improvement. These initiatives not only protect and heal but help individuals reclaim their lives with dignity, strength, and hope.

Our focus to influence public policy and drive positive reform has never been stronger. From game-changing law reform to the national housing crisis—we have risen to advocate for change, pushing for safer, more supportive systemic responses for everyone.

The journey of growth and change has been challenging, yet our team's tenacity and compassion is what has gotten us through. I extend my deepest gratitude to every one of our staff who have contributed this year. Special recognition goes to Kathy Whiting, Sophie McCashin, Candice Alvaro, Rhea Mohenoa, Tracey Makoni, Dr Kelly Dingli and Michelle Royes for their courageous leadership and to former staff Danielle, Simone, Taylor, Vicky, and James for their significant contributions to DVConnect's growth in 22/23.

To the DVConnect Board, our partners, and supporters, thank you for your trust, your support, and your belief in our purpose. Your allyship has enabled us to extend our reach and deepen our impact.

# Values and Principles



**In recognition of our role in and responsibility to our community, these values and principles are integral to our commitment to broader social change that improves the lives of all Australians.**

## OUR VALUES

### Integrity

We are trustworthy and act with honesty, always holding ourselves to a high level of ethical standards.

### Compassion

We treat those we support and each other with patience, kindness, empathy, and care.

### Accountability

We lead by example, are transparent and solution focused and take ownership for our decisions and actions.

### Respect

We treat all people with dignity, equity, and value each other's contribution.

### Empowerment

We support and inspire all people to have a voice and be able to make choices to enable them to grow in strength, confidence and knowledge. We support all people to voice their needs and provide access to options, enabling self-determination.



### Principles that guide us:

- Domestic, family, and sexual violence is prevalent, pervasive and a serious human rights violation.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people know best what their communities need and want, and we are committed to listening deeply to these needs and embedding reconciliation in practice.
- Everyone has the right to live without fear from violence.
- The use of violence is a choice and people need to be held responsible and accountable for their choices.
- We operate from an intersectional feminist framework, acknowledging that domestic and family violence is gender-based violence, predominantly perpetrated by men against women and children.
- It is critical that we continue to learn from and include diverse voices of survivors and culturally diverse communities when seeking to prevent violence.
- We acknowledge and respect the abilities, strengths, goals and needs of people living with disability.
- We acknowledge and are responsive to the unique needs and challenges experienced by the LGBTQ+ community.
- We acknowledge the value of including the voice of culturally and linguistically diverse populations in our work.
- We understand and are adaptable to meet different needs and challenges experienced by people living in regional, rural, and remote areas.
- We acknowledge the different priorities and concerns for different age groups, including young people and elders.
- We provide inclusive services that are evidence-based and trauma informed.
- We are committed to working collaboratively as part of a broader system.
- Our governance will be robust, ethical, and transparent.

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# Our strategic priorities 2020–2024

## Priority 1

### IMPACT

We will reduce the impact of domestic and family violence and sexual assault by promoting healthy relationships, supporting the empowerment of those experiencing violence, and holding those who use violence to account.

## Priority 2

### INFLUENCE

We are informed by the diverse voices of lived experience, collaborative partnerships, and research, to be an influential coalition for action to STOP domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

## Priority 3

### STRENGTH

We have a thriving workforce that is diverse, adaptive, inclusive, growth focused and committed to exceptional client care. We are supported by sound financial management practices and technology solutions.

## Priority 4

### COURAGE

We will champion reform that challenges structural gender inequality, improves people's safety and supports communities and individuals to understand their role in the prevention of domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

## Priority 5

### GROWTH

We are dynamic, effective, and sustainable.





# Our Impact





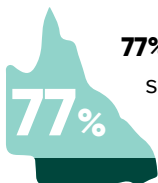
## ACROSS WOMENSLINE, MENSLINE, SEXUAL ASSAULT LINE AND VICTIMCONNECT



WE TOOK  
**163,758**  
inbound contacts



WE MADE  
**923,350**  
outbound contacts



**77%** of people accessing our services are from **Regional, Rural & Outer Regional** areas across Queensland.

**13,266**  
police referrals



### WOMENSLINE

#### WE BOOKED OVER

**7,084 intakes with women**  
to practically support them on their pathways to safety.



Of those we provided immediate **safety accommodation for 5,590 women**



**2375 webchats**  
hosted by **Womensline**

**Womensline** supported an additional  
**383 women to safe family or friends.**

**495 women placed in safe refuge**



**8434 nights**  
of **emergency accommodation**  
provided outside of shelters.

### MENSLINE

Mensline saw a

**38% INCREASE**  
**OF NEW CLIENTS**  
compared to last  
year across all referral  
pathways.



Mensline has provided  
outreach offers of  
support to almost

**10,000**  
**REFERRALS**  
**FROM POLICE.**  
This is an average of  
**27 referrals per day**

### VICTIMCONNECT



**VictimConnect** has been able  
to support a total of

**5674 callers**

**467** identified as  
**living with a disability**

**318** identified as **Aboriginal and/ or**  
**Torres Strait Islander**

# Support Survivors & Victims of Crime

A photograph of a group of people in a meeting. In the foreground, a person with curly brown hair and a yellow cardigan is smiling and looking towards the left. In the background, a man with a beard and a dark green sweater is also looking in the same direction. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a window in the background.





**DVConnect is a leading provider of evidence-based and trauma-informed services to people who have experienced violent crime and has assisted Queenslanders find pathways to safety, away from domestic, family, and sexual violence (DFSV) and violent crime for decades.**

Our professional specialist practitioners provide:

- Crisis response and comprehensive safety planning for people experiencing or using violence
- Coordination of emergency transport and accommodation for individuals, families and pets escaping violence
- Supported access to high security shelter state-wide for women and their children
- Crisis counselling
- Therapeutic counselling
- Referral and information relating to policing and justice interventions, emergency financial assistance, forensic medical assessments, housing support, and specialised case management support services.
- Psycho-education
- Professional training
- Advocacy (service user/systems)

DVConnect provides these through:

- Womensline (24/7 365 days)
- Mensline (9am until 12am midnight 7 days)
- Sexual Assault Helpline (7.30am – 11.30pm 7 days)
- VictimConnect (24/7 365 days)
- Forensic Support Line (9am – 6pm Monday - Friday)
- National Specialist Trauma Counselling for 1800RESPECT (24/7 365 days)
- Bella's Sanctuary

We are professional negotiators, navigating risk, planning safety, coordinating safe exits and advocating for access and justice every minute of every day. We do this confidently, transparently, and collaboratively. Our ability to communicate and cooperate is critical to our success, to enable the trust services and the public have in us, and to saving lives.

DVConnect provides a world class standard of response with 80% of calls being responded to in < 30 seconds, which is achieved over 92% of the time. This alongside our well-developed referral networks, inclusive practices, and enhanced technology, enable us to deliver best practice specialist services to people when they need it.



# WomensLine

Our Womensline service supports Queensland women and their families who have been impacted by domestic and family violence. Womensline is a 24-hour, 365 days a year confidential service that can provide assistance with:

- Emergency transport and accommodation
- Specialist crisis counselling
- Safety planning
- Information, referrals and support
- Safe accommodation for pets through the Pets in Crisis Program in partnership with the RSPCA.

Womensline provides a safe, accessible, and non-judgemental space for women to navigate their situation with the support of our services. We understand that every person's experience is different, which is why our crisis counsellors on Womensline provide individually tailored support and explore all options available to those seeking assistance.



**"Suzy wanted to thank 'every single hard-working person at DVConnect'. 'DVConnect saved my life and I feel humbled and grateful for the dedication and care I felt from the whole team. I am excited for the next journey of my life for me and my daughter!'"**

*\*Name has been changed for privacy reasons.*





# Sexual Assault Helpline

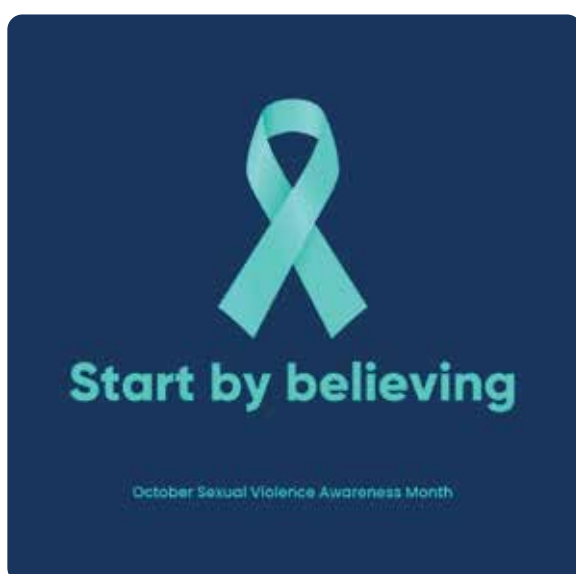
DVConnect Sexual Assault Helpline is available seven days a week, to support people who have experienced sexual assault and abuse, whether that is historically or recent, by someone known to them or not.

We are also here to talk with anyone who wants to help a friend, colleague, or family member.

During the past year, the Sexual Assault Helpline experienced a 15% increase from the previous year. This surge in demand underscores the pressing need

for our services and parallels the increasing community conversation about sexual violence, highlighting the importance of victim/survivors knowing that there is help available and that they will be believed.

The helpline has continued efforts to engage rural and remote communities underscoring our commitment ensuring access to support for all Queenslanders, no matter where they live or where the violence happened.



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**"I called your Sexual Assault support line and spoke to Rachel today about my experience. Rachel was absolutely fantastic! She immediately "got" what I'm going through and gave me a sense of self confidence and power over my healing journey. You helped me hugely at a time when I was overwhelmed and desperate. Thank you so much!"**

*Anon*

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# VICTIM CONNECT

In September 2022 on National Victims of Crime Day, (A day of national recognition of people who have been impacted by crime and an affirming of their rights) DVConnect officially launch of our brand-new program, VictimConnect supporting people who have been impacted by violent crime across Queensland.

VictimConnect provides general information, referral, therapeutic counselling, and case management services to victims of violent crime, while working alongside specialist services 54 reasons, WWILD, Homicide Victims Support Group, PACT and Victims Assist Queensland. As a network we support victims of violent personal crime including serious assault, property offences with violence, kidnapping, stalking, domestic violence, sexual assault, threats with a weapon, homicide, and more.

VictimConnect is a 24/7 365-day service that puts the safety and rights of victims at the centre of all decision making. Our work recognises and builds

on opportunities for people to regain a sense of hope, self-determination, and empowerment and to have a meaningful life of their choosing, beyond the catastrophic effects of violent crime.

As a fundamental part of our work, VictimConnect honours the experience of victim/survivors through advocacy. By asking and listening, we get to understand how systems responses impact on a person's experience of violence and their recovery.

In our first year of service, we could clearly hear how people who had experienced a violent crime often felt silenced and dismissed by the criminal justice system, how hard it was to navigate the complexity and unpredictability of a justice response and how accessing financial assistance to offset the impact that violence was too challenging and took too long. This echoed the experience of victim-survivors of domestic, family, and sexual violence.







In early 2023, DVConnect provided a submission to a parliamentary inquiry to streamline the process for financial assistance for victims of crime. The inquiry has since recommended several important improvements to the scheme and are progressing towards becoming law.

Since commencing VictimConnect, we have participated in six formal submissions into legislative and systemic reform that intersect with the experience of victims of crime including sentencing, legal services for victims, victims' rights, and court processes.

VictimConnect also co-hosted the 2022 National Victims of Crime Day event at Parliament House.

[www.victimconnect.org.au](http://www.victimconnect.org.au)



#### What is the Victims Register?

If you are a victim of a violent crime in Queensland, you have a right to information about the offender, including their sentence and release from prison.

The Victims Register will inform eligible people about important events in the sentences of those adult offenders they have registered against, according to the Corrective Services Act 2006.

Call the Corrective Services Victims Register (1800 098 098) to find out if you are eligible and how to access this information. If the offender is under 18, call the Youth Justice Victims Register for more information (13 74 68).

Need support? Call VictimConnect 1300 318 940

#VictimsRegister #Criminal Justice #Queensland



## Financial assistance after a violent crime



# 1800RESPECT

**The 24-hour national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling line for any Australian who has experienced, or is at risk of, domestic, family, and/or sexual assault and workplace sexual harassment.**

Expanding upon our five years of dedicated participation in 1800RESPECT alongside Medibank Health Solutions, DVConnect embarked on a new chapter beginning July 1, 2022. We transitioned to provide specialist counselling services across Australia in collaboration with Telstra Health, marking a significant milestone in our journey.

The vital role played by First Nations organisations in domestic, family, and sexual violence response and healing became a reality through our partnership with Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre (MWRC), a remarkable community-led Aboriginal women and children's support service in remote Western Australia, as our specialist counselling partner for 1800RESPECT. Additionally, our collaboration with 54 reasons underscores our commitment to supporting specialist community-led services that acknowledge children as victims in their own right. These partnerships align with our shared values within the Specialist Counselling Program.

The recruitment and onboarding process for this transition was meticulously executed by our dedicated People and Culture team led by Kathy Whiting. Successful onboarding was achieved in close collaboration with DVConnect IT and the Quality and Training team. In addition to developing extensive professional learning resources, we equipped and provided training to over 125 Specialist Counsellors

across the country. Since the go-live date, our teams have conducted nearly 1129 quality audits.

The past year of Specialist Counselling within 1800RESPECT have been defined by five key words: Flexibility, Resilience, Partnership, Consistency, and Consultation.

Our specialist counsellors have displayed remarkable flexibility in adapting to the evolving needs of individuals seeking support through 1800RESPECT. They have demonstrated incredible resilience by embracing new facets of their roles. Our processes and open lines of communication have contributed to the outstanding performance of our Specialist Counsellors. Month after month, our team not only met but exceeded quality expectations.





Our leaders have been unwavering in their support of their teams, employing a consultative model that places the skills and expertise of our counsellors at the forefront. Staff advocacy, including regular supervision and coaching, remains a top priority, offering our specialist counsellors opportunities for reflection and growth through continuous feedback.

The dedication, flexibility, and resilience of our team, combined with the strength of our partnerships and consultative leadership, have enabled us to consistently deliver exceptional Specialist Counselling within the 1800RESPECT service.

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**"I am very grateful to be part of 1800RESPECT. It is a unique experience to see how a project of this magnitude progresses. It is so rewarding to know how 1800RESPECT helps so many women around Australia. It is wonderful to receive feedback from our callers on how we have helped them. Thanks to Rhea and all the team leaders for their patience and guidance, I feel supported in the important work that we, the Specialist Counsellors, do."**

*DVConnect Specialist Counsellor*

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### **Beck O'Connor**

CEO | Non-Executive Director

Today I am thrilled to announce that together with Telstra Health and other specialist organisations, DVConnect's work on the frontline of 1800RESPECT Australia, the national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service, will continue for the next 5 years.

As a 1800RESPECT provider since 2017, we understand the importance of making pathways to safety as accessible as possible for people in Australia who are experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence.

Listening is a deeply ingrained behaviour at DVConnect and our people are passionate about the work we do.

We will help to strengthen 1800RESPECT by continuing to actively collaborate, seeking the learned experiences of organisations, including Indigenous community controlled organisations working on the frontline of domestic, family and sexual violence, and embedding the voice of those who have experienced violence and abuse, including Indigenous people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the LGBTIQA+ community.

As we write the next chapter of 1800RESPECT with Telstra Health, we will evolve the service to bring together DVConnect's expertise in gender-based violence, and Telstra Health's innovative digital health solutions and extensive health sector experience.

## **Announcement**



**Our work with 1800RESPECT  
to continue to 2027**



# Forensic Support Line

In mid-2022 a Commission of Inquiry into Forensic DNA Testing in Queensland was announced in response to repeated calls that DNA had been mishandled by the forensic services of Queensland Health impacting on a number of criminal matters over many years. The Inquiry found significant concerns with how samples were tested and reported on recommending the retesting thousands of DNA samples connected to serious crimes such as rape and homicide.

As these findings were handed down, and on behalf of the Department of Justice and Attorney General, DVConnect established a specialist helpline specifically to assist victim-survivors impacted by this situation.

Due to the significant nature of the findings, the number of people impacted, and the importance of victim/survivors to have ready access to informed, specialist support DVConnect was able to stand up the Forensic Support Line in three weeks. The Forensic Support Line was established in close partnership with the established network of specialist sexual assault and victim support services throughout Queensland. Focused on providing immediate information and support with practitioners knowledgeable about the inquiry and resulting police actions as well as access to specialised sexual violence counselling over the phone.

## Webchat

In the face of the unprecedented challenges posed by and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, DVConnect, established a webchat functionality for Womensline. What initially began as a pandemic-driven solution has since become an integral and enduring component of DVConnect's support services.

One of the most significant advantages of DVConnect's Womensline webchat is its ability to enhance accessibility for those seeking help. The discreet availability of webchat helps to address the needs of individuals who may have reservations or limitations related to making phone calls, ensuring inclusivity for a broader range of people who need assistance.

Individuals seeking support can connect with trained professionals, gaining access to crucial information, and guidance precisely when they need it most.

Webchat is accessible through our website:  
[www.dvconnect.org](http://www.dvconnect.org)



**2375** webchats  
hosted by **Womensline**



# Pets in Crisis

**Since 2005, we have partnered with the RSPCA QLD to deliver the Pets in Crisis Program that provides a safe home and veterinary care for the pets at serious risk of domestic violence, while their families are in refuge.**

Pets are an important part of the family giving unconditional love, security, and emotional support. For people living in unsafe homes, the bonds they have with their pets are intensified, making them inseparable. People using violence know this and will often threaten to harm and abuse pets to gain control.

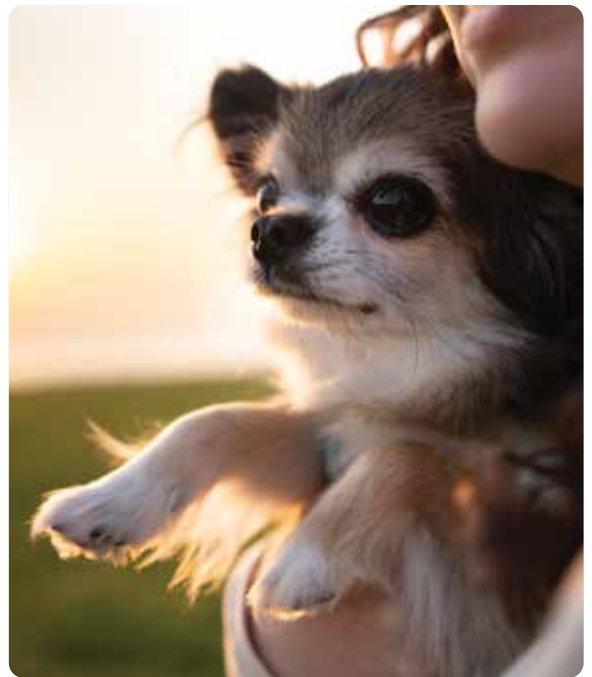
In far too many instances' pets are often themselves victims of violent and abuse.

Leaving pets behind in a violent home is just not an option for the families we support. Even if that means remaining in an unsafe home.

People fleeing violence need to know that their pets will be safe too. This is where the importance of our Pets in Crisis partnership comes in. Continued investment in specialist domestic and family violence services and key partnerships like the Pets in Crisis Program gives more women and children options.

Options to help them escape violence and abuse. One of our clients Amara\* had called DVConnect many times before for counselling and information. She feared that getting support beyond this would mean having to leave her Chihuahua, Bella\* behind with her abusive partner

who often tormented and threatened to kill Bella. One day, Amara called DVConnect needing immediate assistance to get her and her dog to safety. Amara went into safe accommodation while Bella went into foster care through the Pets in Crisis program. They were later reunited. Without Pets in Crisis, Amara and Bella could still be living in that unsafe home.



# Bella's Sanctuary

A common pathway for women and children leaving a violent home is to access safe refuge in a shelter. However, when it is time to leave, options can be limited due to a critical lack of affordable housing. This can reinforce the fear that often a women's only housing option after leaving refuge is returning to their abuser or face homelessness.

Bella's Sanctuary is a safe place for women and their children to heal and rebuild after violence, providing independent, medium-term accommodation for up to five families at a time.

Women and their children often reside here for up to 12 months after they leave refuge. Bella's Sanctuary also

aims to assist women to transition into independent housing, while supporting residents to be close to family, schools, and employment on the Gold Coast.

Bella's Sanctuary works in collaboration with Horizon Housing who provides property management services in line with RTA requirements. It is important to note that the duration of stay within this financial year was prolonged due to the current housing crisis in Queensland and cost of living pressures. This is a concrete example of how the cost of living and housing availability directly impacts.

Bella's was home to **seven families** including

  
**13 children**



Bella's Sanctuary is  
**100% funded by**  
**community**  
**donations**







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**"I will be forever grateful to everyone who made Bella's possible. Bella's is so much more than a house. To me it is a big, safe and supportive hug. Living with others who had similar experiences to mine helped me see that I'm not alone. I never once felt judged. Thank you to the staff who helped me believe in myself again".**

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# Engaging Men





# Mensline

Mensline offers free and confidential support to men in Queensland who are either experiencing or using abuse in their intimate partner or family relationships.

Our service, available seven days a week, also provides an invitation for men seeking assistance in healing, changing their behaviour, and addressing their use of violence. We recognise the importance of supporting men to take responsibility for their actions and offering them the tools to make positive changes.

Our specialist counsellors are dedicated to facilitating positive change and empowering individuals to build healthier relationships.

Mensline can provide:

- Support for men to change their abusive behaviour
- Referrals to specialist behavioural change programs
- Safety planning for men experiencing abuse
- Emergency transport and accommodation
- Information and referral options
- And more.



*Two mates were concerned for their friend, Tom. They couldn't ignore the signs of trouble in Tom's relationship with his partner. So, they made a call to Mensline, seeking advice on how to talk to him about it.*

*Shortly after, it was Tom's turn to pick up the phone. He'd just had a heart-to-heart with his housemates, who had courageously talked to him about his behaviour and handed over the Mensline number. Tom was at a crossroads; he had to confront the truth. He realized he'd been verbally and psychologically abusive towards his partner.*

*Through the first conversation with a Mensline Counsellor, Tom began realizing that he'd been carefully crafting an image to control how others saw him. This facade had not only strained his relationship but also kept him from seeking help. He wanted to change, but he feared the consequences - what would his friends think, and would he end up alone?*

*Together with the support of our Mensline Counsellors, Tom continued to explore his behaviour, its impact, and alternative choices to using violence and abuse. They also talked about the importance of seeking ongoing support, and keeping connected with his mates, as a crucial step in Tom's journey towards change.*

*After some time and guidance, Tom had newfound knowledge about domestic and family violence and he began to understand how and why he'd used his actions to control his partner.*

*Tom stayed in contact with Mensline, recognizing he needed more help. Together, we worked on building Tom's motivation for change, identifying his strengths, and developing strategies for personal growth and accountability. Tom expressed gratitude for the help and showed a strong willingness to stay engaged with the support that Mensline offered.*





# Raise Awareness

Ending violence in a generation, requires dedicated effort in primary prevention. While DVConnect's vision includes ultimately providing services in prevention and early intervention, our current work is primarily in response and accountability, recovery, and healing programs and services.

We utilise our social media and media presence to build awareness, inspire community conversations and offer clear and accurate education about interpersonal violence and our collective role in ending violence.

**117,700**

USERS ACCESSED THE WEBSITES FOR

**DVCONNECT & VICTIMCONNECT**

**3,072 followers**  
on DVConnect's Instagram page

**3,862 followers**  
on DVConnect's LinkedIn page

**12,000**

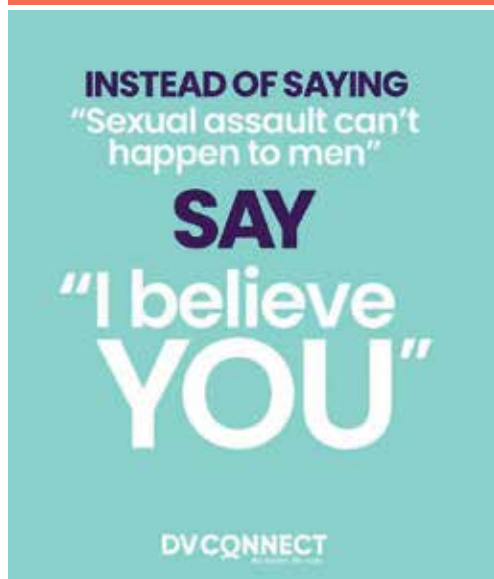
**followers**

on DVConnect's Facebook page



DVConnect tells Inquiry of examples of QPS cultural issues

DVConnect Website – News Page, 7 September 2022







## Unprecedented': domestic violence shelters reach capacity amid Queensland housing crisis

The Guardian, 27 March 2023



## SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

### Behind The Doors of Domestic Violence Podcast

Support Services and Seeking Help Episode, 31 May 2023



## IDAHOBIT

### 4 Ways to Get Involved



**EXPLAINER:**  
WHAT IS A  
TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED  
GENDER-BASED  
VIOLENCE?

IT CAN BE UNDERSTOOD AS  
ANY ACT OF VIOLENCE  
COMMITTED, ASSISTED  
OR AGGRAVATED BY THE  
USE OF ICT ON THE BASIS  
OF GENDER.

THIS KIND OF VIOLENCE  
DOESN'T END WHEN WOMEN  
LOG OFF:  
IT RESULTS IN TANGIBLE  
PHYSICAL, SEXUAL,  
PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL,  
POLITICAL AND/OR ECONOMIC  
HARM.

ONLINE VIOLENCE FORCES  
WOMEN AND GIRLS  
TO SELF-CENSOR  
AND DEPLATFORM, LIMITING  
THEIR ABILITY TO ENGAGE  
AND PARTICIPATE  
VIRTUALLY.

### Go Rainbow

Whether it's with your school,  
workplace or by yourself, go  
rainbow to signal your stance  
against LGBTQ+ discrimination.

### Host an Activity

Get together and host an  
event for LGBTQ+ inclusion.  
Big or small, your event will  
make a difference.

## Women's Sector Response to Forensic DNA Testing in Queensland

DVConnect Website – News Page,  
23 September 2023





# Public Policy



**DVConnect is a proud founding partner to the Town from Nowhere Campaign**

We are in a housing crisis. More than 300,000 Queenslanders have unmet housing needs. They are either homeless or are on low incomes and paying more than 30% of that in rent.

The Town of Nowhere has a population almost double the city of Cairns. Everyone should have a safe place to call home, but our current reality means entire families are living out of tents, in their cars, couch surfing, or sleeping rough.

The Town of Nowhere campaign brings together a coalition of community organisations and everyday Queenslanders dedicated to ending our state's housing crisis.

## What we are calling for:

1. Increased supply targets for social and affordable housing, to be delivered across Queensland in accordance with modelling of demand, including a focus on accelerating delivery.
2. Deliver more supportive housing.
3. Review and increase funding for Specialist Homelessness Services to ensure the service system is adequately resourced to connect people into permanent housing options as quickly as possible.
4. Provide housing support – payments, housing, and services – to young people.

Accommodation/emergency housing access is absolutely core to the work of DVConnect. The situation we are facing is critical and has been increasing in severity for many years. It is our number one risk factor in terms of pathways to safety for people escaping violence and is also a mounting cost for our organisation in terms of direct funding allocation and staff well-being.

Importantly domestic and family violence is the main reason women and children leave their homes in Queensland and for many, this leads them to homelessness.



**For people who have  
escaped violence:**

- There simply aren't enough safe, affordable, and secure transitional and long-term housing options particularly for larger numbers of children.
- Social housing is like winning the lottery and one that is not even on the table if you hold a temporary visa.
- There are very few options for children and young people who are independently fleeing violent homes (this is particularly relevant for young LGBTQIA+ people).
- Inadequate income and rental support is leaving women and children in poverty.
- There is very real threat of child safety intervention if you cannot get a house to live in.
- All of this often forces people to accept unsafe accommodation or in many cases, no option but to return to a violent home.

The reality is... until we have all levels of government prioritising housing security, the safety of women and children will not be assured.

We also need to support and recognise our teams who work tirelessly, compassionately, professionally and creatively, with little resources in a big complex system, to get people safely into homes. We can improve this by adequately investing in better integration between housing and DV services.

While the Queensland Government have now prepared a draft 20-year QHP, our advocacy must continue as the unmet need for housing is yet to improve and the crisis continues to impact people and families.

# Law Reform



## Formal Submissions and consultations

- Stage 2 of the review of the Model Defamation Provisions (MDPs), Part A: liability of internet intermediaries for third party content.
- Community feedback on proposed changes to laws which will allow police to "wand" people in Safe Night Precincts or public transport for weapons without reasons.
- Victims of Crime Assistance Act review including improving responses to financial assistance offered, scope of inclusion under the act and accountability for all parts of the justice system to victim/survivors.
- Progress previously explored committee report topics about changes to the Act and inclusion of hate symbols.
- Input on pilot structures for improved federal legal responses to sexual violence victims.
- Changes to online same day delivery process of delivering alcohol.
- Feedback on draft actions for the National Plan.
- Crimes Amendment (Strengthening the Criminal Justice Response to Sexual Violence) Bill 2023.
- Justice and Other Legal Amendments Bill – identify defendant of Sexual Violence.
- Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023.
- Input into the comprehensive domestic and family violence training framework that will underpin all government and non-government service training around responding to domestic and family violence.
- Steerage to the Workforce Capability Framework for Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence and Women's Health and Wellbeing Sector in Queensland.



# Memberships and Partnerships

Ending violence is a long-term effort that requires the commitment of individuals, communities, corporates, and governments. It's important to work together, raise awareness, and continuously push for change to create a safer and more supportive environment for everyone.

DVConnect recognises the importance of seeking partnerships and collaborative opportunities with other organisations to ensure that we are providing best practice integrated responses to diversity across our community.

We are actively involved in presenting at conferences and sector forums, specialist responses to inquiries, submissions, and co-design as part of major government reform and working with large groups of stakeholders across government, non-government, industry, academia, community, and those with lived experience of violence.



- Domestic and Family Violence and Housing Roundtable – Member
- Domestic and Family Violence Prevention for CALD Communities Advisory Group – Member
- Ending Violence Against Women Queensland (EVAWQ) – Secretary
- LGBTQ DV Awareness Foundation – Director/Member
- National Queer Family Violence Network – Member
- National Victims of Crime Network – Member
- National Women's Safety Alliance – Member
- No to Violence – Member
- Office for Women & Violence Prevention - DFSV Sector Working Group – Member
- QCOS Women's Equality Policy Network – Member
- Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOS) - Member
- Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network (QDVSN) – Co-Convenor
- Queensland Housing Summit 2022 – Participant
- Queensland Police Service DFV Advisory Board – Co-Chair
- Queensland Sexual Assault Network (QSAN) – Member
- SafeNet Australia
- Services and Practitioners for the Elimination of Abuse Queensland (SPEAQ) – Committee Member
- Stopping Gender Violence Advisory Board, QUT Centre for Justice – Member
- WorkUP! Queensland – Reference Member

# Research and Data Collection

## ARC Centre of Excellence for The Elimination of Violence Against Women (CEVAW)

**Eliminating violence against women is one of the major challenges of the 21st century. Awareness of the problem has grown exponentially, but solutions to it have not.**

This Centre aims to transform our understanding of the problem by examining the structural drivers that cause and compound violence against women, and pioneering new, evidence-based approaches to radically improve policy and practice across Australia and the Indo-Pacific.

The Centre mobilises survivor-centric and Indigenous methodologies, interdisciplinary collaborations, and Indo-Pacific partnerships to deliver scalable approaches to eliminate violence against women across the legal, security, economic, health, and political systems of Australia and the region.

As this Centre provides one of the greatest contemporary opportunities to facilitate real and sizable impact on eliminating violence against women, DVConnect felt compelled to support the Centre. DVConnect are custodians of a database rich in domestic, family, and sexual violence specialist information. To date, we have not partnered with external researchers to explore how this data could ethically be used for maximum benefit and at a large scale. We see CEVAW as an appropriate avenue to progress this discovery through collaboration and partnership over the next seven years.

**Funding:** \$34.9m over seven years

**Centre Director:** Prof Jacqui True

**Administering Organisation:** Monash University

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## Building quality, managing risk

**DVConnect has consistently delivered high-quality services characterised by exemplary clinical practices and provided by well-supported and qualified staff.**

Through this financial year DVConnect has been able to advance this dedication to excellence in clinical practice through the implementation of a clear and dedicated Clinical Governance Framework underpinned by a Clinical Governance Committee. With the key purposes of, ensuring frameworks and systems support trauma informed domestic, family, and sexual violence and other interpersonal violence specialist services that are effective and safe; accountability for Service Delivery that complies with legislative and professional standards and community expectations; as well as ensuring we maintain a positive work climate where our clinical workforce have access to ongoing professional development, consistently exhibit excellence in their roles and receive robust support.

This framework is the system by which DVConnect, Board, Executive, Managers and Practitioners share responsibility and accountability for quality care, continuous improvement, risk mitigation, and an environment of clinical excellence.

In recognition of our internal and external clients, the Clinical Governance Committee has representative and inclusive membership and connects seamlessly with other elements of DVConnect such as Operations and People Engagement and Wellbeing.

This framework will also evolve DVConnect's research and evaluation and how research and evaluation methodologies alongside academia and evidence-based practice can build our quality and risk management. Collectively this generates a stronger service and furthers evidence about of working with men women and children who experience interpersonal violence in Queensland and nationally.

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# Training and Community Education



## Workplace Training

**DVConnect is a trusted partner for professional training services that empower individuals and organisations to make a meaningful impact in addressing domestic, family, and sexual violence. As one of the largest specialist response services, we bring decades of expertise to the table.**

As the only state-wide specialist domestic, family, and sexual violence response service for Queensland that works with individuals who experience as well as individuals who perpetrate violence, DVConnect is in a unique and privileged position where we have practice wisdom, sector-wide knowledge, and best practice guidelines that inform how we deliver our training.

Our professional training sessions are versatile, available in workshop or information session formats, and can be conducted in-person or virtually. The primary objective of these workplace training sessions is to facilitate in-depth discussions and cultivate an understanding of the complexities surrounding experiences of domestic, family, and sexual violence within group settings.

DVConnect's training caters to a wide range of organisational and community needs. This includes assisting organisations in supporting their staff members who may be living with or recovering from domestic, family, or sexual violence. Such training proves invaluable for individuals in leadership or supervisory roles, especially when staff members confide in them about their experiences. In these critical moments, DVConnect's training equips leaders and organisations with the tools to offer meaningful and effective support to their employees.

DVConnect also provides training and information on how organisations may respond to customers and clients who are experiencing or using domestic family and sexual violence, including safe referral pathways and how to support staff after such interactions.

As our training practitioners have excellent clinical knowledge about domestic, family and sexual violence and current service knowledge from working across all parts of Queensland and Australia bespoke training is able to be developed in consultation with organisations to ensure high quality and focused learning environments.









# Celebrating Our Exceptional Team

At DVConnect, our team embodies unwavering passion, resilience, and mutual support. We continue to provide vital services in the domestic, family, and sexual violence sector across Queensland and Australia.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the DVConnect team for their dedication, empathy, and ongoing support as we navigate the growth of our organisation.

We honour and thank the individuals who have shaped DVConnect's journey over the years. Your contributions have played a crucial role in shaping our organisation.

Our deepest gratitude goes to our current and former colleagues, whose unwavering dedication drives our

impact. We recognise your passion, intelligence, and commitment to creating a world where all individuals can lead safe, fearless lives.

We farewelled Vicki Fairhall, our incredible Business Support Manager, into her retirement after 15 years, having commenced with the organisation in 2007! Vicki has seen and led so much change and will have touched everyone at some point in their working life here at DVConnect. We have a saying here, that if we are not sure about something 'check with Vicki' that is the depth of knowledge she holds and the respect she is held in and deserves. We are so very grateful to Vicki for her unparalleled contribution to the organisation!



**CARLA**  
CALL COORDINATOR

"The courage, strength and resourcefulness of the women that we help is what motivates me. They make these really hard decisions to get them themselves to safety – often by having to uproot their entire life – and that makes my role in supporting them and supporting counsellors a real honour and a privilege."

FRONTLINE HERO

qcooss

# Strong Governance

DVConnect is a charitable, non-profit company limited by guarantee. It is governed by a professional, skills based volunteer Board of Directors.

The organisation is led by a highly experienced Executive Leadership Team:

- Beck O'Connor (CEO)
- Candice Alvaro (Director, Operations)
- Tracey Makoni (Director, Client Services – Response & Accountability),
- Dr Kelly Dingli (Director, Clinical Governance)
- Rhea Mohenoa (Director, Client Services – Recovery & Healing)

DVConnect has an existing organisational structure, governance and leadership model that provides strong clinical oversight and clear accountability into service performance, quality assurance, financial and risk management, which ensures we deliver on our Service Strategy and provide a consistent, timely and high-quality services across Australia.

DVConnect is independently audited against the Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) and has achieved 100% compliance against the standards within the 2022-2023 audit cycle.

DVConnect also complies with the practice principles, standards and guidance as set out by the Department of Justice & Attorney General and the Domestic & Family Violence Investment Specifications as it relates to existing funding contracts.





# Board of Directors



**Trina Hockley**  
**AM FAICM BHMS GMQ**  
CHAIR

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**Fiona Maxwell**  
DEPUTY CHAIR



**Carly Jacobitz**  
**AHPRA GAICD**  
DIRECTOR



**Ben Bjarnesen**  
DIRECTOR

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**Enid Hughes**  
DIRECTOR



**Fatima Deen**  
DIRECTOR



**Linda Dreghorn**  
COMPANY SECRETARY

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**Naomi Meade**  
DIRECTOR



**Professor Patrick O'Leary**  
**BSW(Hons) PhD**  
DIRECTOR



**Sarah McAlister-Smiley**  
DIRECTOR



# Acknowledging the contributions of many

In our 24/7 high demand state-wide response services, DVConnect's principal role is to facilitate pathways to safety for people, often in active high-risk situations. We cannot do this in isolation and rely heavily on effective and well-established partnerships in every community across Queensland.

We express our sincere gratitude to the incredible network of services, community partner organisations, local businesses, corporate sponsors, and government agencies that consistently provide generous support, energy, and resources.

Thank you to every specialist regional DFV service, women's shelter and sexual assault support service across Queensland.

Thank you to the network of services who work with men who use DFV to end their use of violence.

Thank you for the emergency first responders, health workers, justice and victims services, housing provider partners that work so closely with us every day.

**DVConnect plays a central role in Queensland's family violence sector, working with our colleagues in many other networks and committees to achieve a more integrated and coordinated response. We would like to acknowledge in particular the incredible work of these specialist DFSV and Victims of Crime networks who make this work possible. Thank you for all you do every day.**

- Ending Violence Against Women Qld (EVAWQ)
- Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network (QDVSN)
- Queensland Sexual Assault Network (QSAN)
- Services and Practitioners for the Elimination of Abuse Queensland (SPEAQ)
- State-wide Refuge & Shelter Provider Networks
- Victims Support Services Network



# Financial Report

## Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2023

DVConnect Limited ABN 66 101 186 476

### DVConnect Limited:

Is a Registered Charity (Public Benevolent Institution entity subtype) with the ACNC has been endorsed by the ATO as a Deductible Gift Recipient has authority to fundraise in Queensland under Charity Number CH1459

## Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
REVENUE	24,608,726	12,303,095
Other income	-	750
Employment expenses	(13,910,723)	(9,203,650)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(728,095)	(540,196)
Administrative expenses	(6,825,373)	(853,670)
Client related expenses	(1,443,784)	(1,221,488)
Property expenses	(260,079)	(191,640)
Finance costs	(107,509)	(47,958)
CURRENT YEAR SURPLUS (LOSS)	1,333,163	245,243
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:		
Total comprehensive income / (losses) for the year	1,333,163	245,243



## Statement of Financial Position

for the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
<b>ASSETS</b>		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	5,747,067	4,672,861
Trade and other receivables	120	55,255
Financial assets	1,010,490	1,000,407
Other current assets	68,647	32,291
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>6,826,324</b>	<b>5,760,814</b>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	2,063,286	2,116,895
Right of use assets	1,610,181	2,040,938
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>3,673,466</b>	<b>4,157,833</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>10,499,790</b>	<b>9,918,646</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	3,086,219	3,490,888
Lease liabilities	379,983	349,123
Provisions	797,498	752,514
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>4,263,701</b>	<b>4,592,525</b>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Lease liabilities	1,220,985	1,600,968
Provisions	162,443	205,655
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>1,383,428</b>	<b>1,806,623</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>5,647,128</b>	<b>6,399,148</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>4,852,661</b>	<b>3,519,499</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
General Reserve	4,852,661	3,519,499
Accumulated surplus	-	-
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>4,852,661</b>	<b>3,519,499</b>





### **Womensline**

1800 811 811 | 24 hours, 7 days

### **Mensline**

1800 600 636 | 9am – 12am midnight, 7 days

### **Sexual Assault Helpline**

1800 010 120 | 7.30am – 11.30pm, 7 days

### **VictimConnect**


1300 318 940 | 24 hours, 7 days

### **1800RESPECT**

1800 737 732 | 24 hours, 7 days

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## **DVConnect Contact Details**

 PO Box 10575, Adelaide Street,  
Brisbane QLD 4000

 07 3156 2323

 [mail@dvconnect.org](mailto:mail@dvconnect.org)

 [www.DVConnect.org](http://www.DVConnect.org)

 @DVConnect

 @dvconnectqld

 @qldsexualassaulthelpline

 @DVConnect

