

MEDIA RELEASE

Virtual Candle Light Vigil held to remember the 38 Queenslanders who lost their lives as a result of domestic violence over the past 12 months

Every year on the first Wednesday of May, a Candle Light Vigil is held Nation-wide to remember those who have lost their lives as a result of domestic and family violence the 12 months prior.

This year, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the Brisbane event was virtual and livestreamed on Facebook. On Wednesday 6 May at 6pm, Queenslanders watched a livestream where they were asked to participate by lighting a candle, taking a photo and uploading it to their social media platforms with the hashtags #EndDV and #LightACandle2020.

Data from the Coroners Court of Queensland shows that 38 Queenslanders lost their lives as a result of domestic and family violence between 1 April 2019 and 30 April 2020. This included 15 apparent intimate partner homicides (4 male, 11 female), 23 apparent family homicides (17 children, 4 male, 2 female). This is 17 more than the same period 12 months prior.

Various Candle Light Vigils are held across Australia on the first Wednesday of May each year. Members of the Queensland Domestic Violence Service Network (QDVS) organise and participate in vigils within their regions, coming together in solidarity of those who have lost their lives from domestic and family violence. The Brisbane event was brought together by DVConnect, Australia's CEO Challenge, Red Rose Foundation, Queensland Police, Immigrant Women's Support Service, Brisbane Domestic Violence Service, and supported by QSuper.

Chair of the Queensland Domestic Violence Service Network Amanda Lee-Ross says "We first started this vigil 15 years ago and despite COVID-19 the QDVS network members felt it was imperative to still provide a vigil to remember those who had lost their lives as a result of domestic and family violence over the past 12 months. This is especially important given that COVID-19 isolation restrictions can make home an unsafe environment for some Queenslanders. We want everyone to know that help is available for them, even during the pandemic."

Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence Di Farmer said tackling domestic and family violence in the COVID-19 pandemic was a high priority for the government and the focus of the COVID-19 Domestic and Family Violence Virtual Summit held on 6 May.

“Unfortunately home is not a safe place for everyone and while people are isolating at home we need to make sure now, more than ever before, that they know where to get help and that service providers are adapting to these new conditions,” she said.

“That’s why yesterday we announced a further \$2 million would be made available for domestic and family violence service providers to cope with increased demand, and of course this is on top of the \$5.5 million we announced in April.”

If you or someone you care about is experiencing domestic, family or sexual violence, DVConnect can help find pathways to safety including crisis counselling, referrals, safety planning and emergency transport and accommodation. Call 1800 811 811, anytime, 24 hours, 7 days.

ABOUT QDVSAN

Queensland Domestic Violence Service Network is a network of Queensland regional Domestic Violence Services, the Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research, DVConnect and the Immigrant Women’s Support Service. QDVSAN works collaboratively and strategically to advance understanding of, and works to eliminate gender, structural, political, economic, legal and cultural inequalities and inequities which result in gender based violence in all its forms. QDVSAN provide peer support, information sharing and debriefing within our membership and is a change agent by providing education, a reference point and a collective voice to Government, non-government and member services on State and National issues relating to domestic and family violence.

ENDS.

For more details contact: media@DVConnect.org
