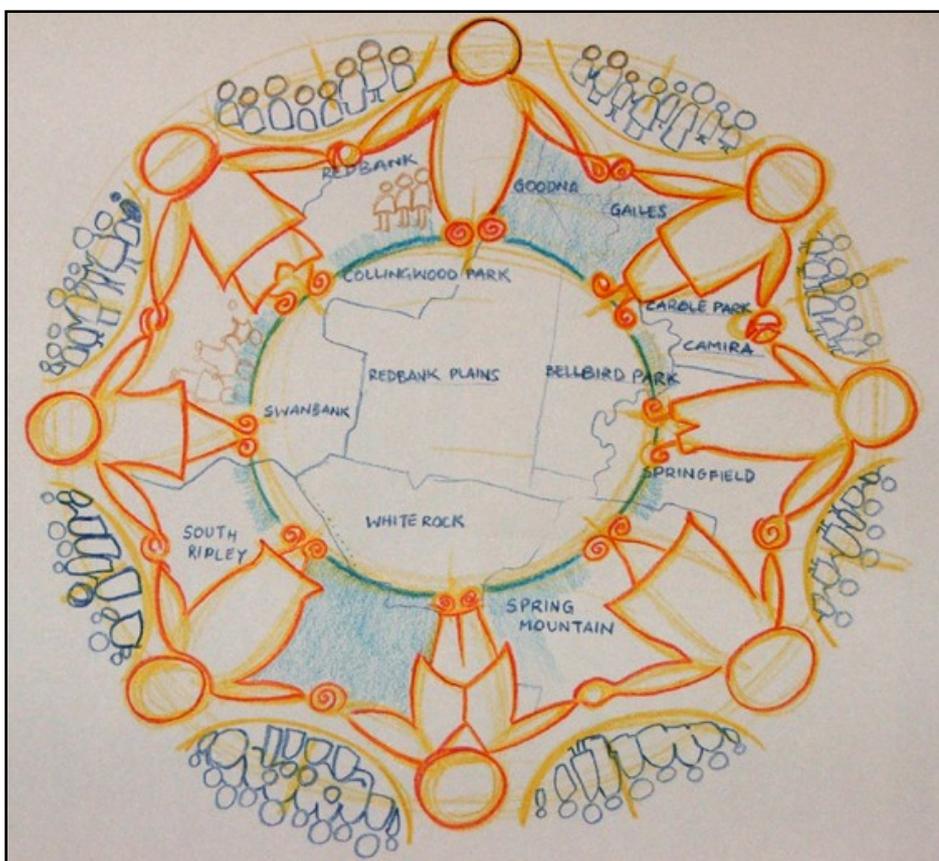


# GARP

Goodna Assisted Referrals Project

# Evaluation Report



An Australian Government Initiative



GARP was funded by the Attorney-General's Department, National Community Crime Prevention Program, Canberra.

# GARP

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# Evaluation Report

The Goodna Assisted Referrals Project was an initiative of the Ipswich Integrated Response to Domestic and Family Violence.

It was auspiced by Ipswich Women's Centre Against Domestic Violence in collaboration with the Queensland Police Service and Dvconnect Mensline.

This report was produced by Anne Elliott



November 2006

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## INTRODUCTION

The Goodna Assisted Referrals Project (GARP) was a joint project of the Ipswich Women's Centre Against Domestic Violence (IWCADV) and the Ipswich District of the Queensland Police Service (QPS). Dvconnect Mensline participated as a service provider for male aggrieved persons. The police referral function of GARP was implemented by the Goodna Police Division

GARP was implemented with the support of the Ipswich Integrated Response to Domestic and Family Violence group ("the Ipswich IRG"), following a feasibility study commissioned by that group in 2004. Non-recurrent funding for the pilot was made available by the National Community Crime Prevention program (NCCP), for a period of twelve months.

The primary aims of GARP were to increase the ongoing safety of victims of domestic and family violence and to decrease repeat victimisation, by following the immediate police response to domestic violence with specialist support and information. The project provided a fax-back service to victims of domestic and family violence in Goodna and other communities serviced by the Goodna Police Division. In brief, the fax-back service involved:

- police attending a domestic violence call-out offered the aggrieved person/s an assisted referral to IWCADV or to dvconnect Mensline
- where the aggrieved person consented, their contact information was faxed to the service
- the service then initiated telephone contact with the aggrieved person and responded to ongoing safety and support needs.

### **GARP objectives**

The project had five core objectives:

- To establish and trial a process of Police Assisted Referral for victims of domestic and family violence to relevant support services
- To increase the safety and support of victims of domestic and family violence through a coordinated Police and support agency response
- To link victims of domestic and family violence who may otherwise not contact services into appropriate supports through a coordinated Police and support agency response
- To reduce the level of repeat victimisation by domestic and family violence in the Goodna region through a coordinated Police and support agency response
- To promote within the community the capacity of Police, community agencies, and community members to respond effectively to the issue of domestic and family violence.

### **Structure of this evaluation report**

Encompass Family and Community Pty Ltd was engaged by the GARP Steering Committee to conduct an independent evaluation of the GARP pilot. Data collected throughout the project has informed quarterly action learning reviews, and is summarised in this report. The report has three main sections:

- Background and methodology
- Project evaluation – were the objectives achieved?
- Future considerations.

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## Background

The process of assisted referrals by police to domestic and family violence services through “fax-back” is well-established in several regions throughout Queensland. Prior to GARP, resources had not been available for such a service to be trialled in Ipswich. The GARP trial was an outcome of planning by the Ipswich IRG, which undertook a feasibility study in 2004. Among other matters, the feasibility study considered means of improving initial referral processes for aggrieved persons and reaching victims of domestic and family violence who were under-accessing services (Encompass Family and Community, 2004).

In recommending a trial of assisted referrals in the Goodna area, the 2004 feasibility study built upon the results of a Research Project initiated by the Goodna Domestic Violence Task Force in 2003. That research report had suggested options for improving inter-agency service delivery in Goodna, including an assisted referrals process (Chauvin, Sullivan, & Woolcock, 2003). The 2004 feasibility study identified the need for a more proactive preventative approach where future domestic and family violence is likely following contact by police, and the need for a better coordinated service response to aggrieved persons to facilitate use of prevention and support services. The decision to seek funding to trial an assisted referral process in Goodna was a response to these issues.

## The needs of the target area

The geographic area of the Goodna Police Division includes the suburbs of Goodna, Redbank Plains, Riverview, Carole Park, Gales, Collingwood Park, Camira and Springfield, on the eastern outskirts of Ipswich. The decision to implement the assisted referral project in the Goodna Police Division was based on this being an area of high need. Within the Ipswich Police District, Goodna Division has the largest numbers of call-outs for domestic and family violence (an unofficial total of 446 in the six months to end June 2004<sup>1</sup>). It was considered important to target the assisted referral process where it may be most effective, ie in the area of highest need in terms of known incidence of domestic and family violence. The limited resources of the IWCADV to respond to the anticipated referrals did not enable a wider implementation of the process.

Community profiling as part of the Goodna Service Integration Project (SIP) in 2003, and research by the Office of Economical and Statistical Research has confirmed the social disadvantage of the Goodna area. These reports (Woolcock & Boorman, 2003; Office of Economical and Statistical Research, 2003) noted that Goodna is characterised by:

- low income households
- a concentration of Government housing and other low cost rentals
- a youth unemployment rate double the Queensland average
- 50% of adults never married, in a defacto relationship, separated, divorced or widowed
- 37% of the population born overseas (including persons born in England and New Zealand), with Samoans and Vietnamese constituting the highest of the non-English speaking cultural groups
- 31% of residents speaking a language other than English at home
- 14.6% of residents identifying as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or Australian South Sea Islander
- 34% of adults with education levels lower than senior high school level
- one third of adults not working full-time (including 15% retired).

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1 Unofficial figures supplied by QPS, Ipswich District.

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Compared to Queensland averages, these statistics point to an area of significant social disadvantage. Anecdotally, police report high levels of alcohol and other drug related issues as factors which impact policing in the area.

Goodna Police Division also services newer “satellite suburb” areas such as Springfield Lakes, with high rates of employment and of mortgaged home ownership. In these areas, social isolation from family supports can be a risk factor in domestic and family violence.

The 2004 feasibility study commissioned by the Ipswich IRG noted that member organisations may not be meeting some of the needs of aggrieved persons from Goodna and surrounding areas, due to social demographic issues and to service responses which were not yet sufficiently coordinated. It was hypothesised that groups who may not be receiving a satisfactory service were persons who were:

- unaware of available services, possibly due to social isolation
- disadvantaged in their capacity to initiate contact, eg due to language difficulties
- socially less likely to seek help outside the family, eg some cultural groups
- lacking in confidence to initiate contact, eg young persons, some CALD groups
- reluctant to contact mainstream services, eg some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons.

GARP aimed to provide a coordinated referral process which would address some of these disincentives to contact with support services, thereby increasing victims’ safety.

## Evaluation methodology

Evaluation activity commenced with the GARP service in September 2005. It included progressive analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, to inform ongoing implementation of the project. There were three broad components to the monitoring and evaluation framework:

- ongoing sharing of data and verbal feedback between the police, IWCADV and dvconnect
- regular action learning reviews, held quarterly
- external evaluation of achievement of project objectives.

The external evaluation was conducted by Encompass Family and Community Pty Ltd, and considered both effectiveness and quality of service delivery.

The following methods of data collection were used:

- Police data about numbers of domestic violence call-outs and the associated rate of GARP referrals
- data from the GARP referral sheet completed by police and collated by IWCADV
- data collected by IWCADV and Mensline workers at the time of their initial contact with aggrieved persons
- an external survey of 23 aggrieved persons who had received GARP referral
- an external survey of 24 police officers of the Goodna Division – this focused on issues of implementation from the police viewpoint
- structured interviews of key personnel of IWCADV and the QPS, after commencement and again near the end of the project.

Quarterly action review meetings were held to reflect on learnings to date, consider the implications of the available data, and plan any necessary changes. These meetings were attended by key persons involved in implementing the project, representing IWCADV, dvconnect Mensline and police of the Ipswich District and the Goodna Division.

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## **Survey of police**

This external survey aimed to gather information from police officers about:

- their reported implementation of GARP in the Goodna Division
- attitudes relevant to responding to domestic violence incidents
- understanding of the GARP partnership between police and IWCADV.

The survey of police was completed anonymously by 24 officers stationed at Goodna, in May 2006. This represents 63% of the 38 operational police stationed at Goodna at that time. These included 17 Constables, 2 Senior Constables and 4 Sergeants of Police. Half of those surveyed had been implementing GARP for the full eight months at that stage; for 8 it had been less than six months.

## **Survey of aggrieved persons**

Survey information was collected by IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline staff from aggrieved persons with whom contact was made. The survey questions related to aggrieved persons' sense of safety as a result of the referral, and to their previous knowledge of domestic violence services. This internal survey was completed for 127 of the 151 aggrieved persons able to be contacted by the domestic violence services, representing an 84% survey rate (however not all questions were answered by all clients).

The external survey collected detailed information from 23 aggrieved persons about:

- their experience of both the police response and the subsequent response of the domestic violence services, ie the quality of the service
- the extent to which their needs, including safety, had been met
- the impact upon their knowledge of domestic violence and of the services available.

The external client survey targeted 100 of the 150 aggrieved persons who were contacted by IWCADV or dvconnect Mensline following GARP referral. Interviews were conducted by telephone by an experienced social worker. The surveys of 23 persons represented 15% of the aggrieved persons who received the full GARP service. These included:

- 2 male aggrieved persons
- 3 Aboriginal persons
- 5 persons born outside Australia, from English/Dutch, Spanish/Italian, Samoan /Tongan, Portuguese/ Dutch and New Zealander backgrounds.

The limitations of the external client survey are noted. The aggrieved persons surveyed were those who had consented to the GARP referral, were able to be contacted by the domestic violence service, and were subsequently able to be contacted by telephone following service provision. There is therefore an inbuilt bias towards persons whose lives were not in acute crisis and who had sufficient stability to maintain a telephone connection (mobile or landline). Some survey questions were answered by only 18 of the 23 clients.

This evaluation is not informed by those aggrieved persons who:

- were not offered GARP referral
- did not consent to GARP referral
- were not able to be contacted by the domestic and family violence service.

## **Structured interviews**

The external evaluator conducted structured interviews with the key organisational stakeholders for the GARP project. These included:

- 
- three QPS representatives – the District Domestic Violence Liaison Officer (DVLO) at two intervals during the course of the project, and each of the two Divisional DVLO's
  - all available staff of the IWCADV, with some key staff including the GARP Project Worker being interviewed at two intervals
  - the dvconnect Mensline project worker for GARP, interviewed at the completion of the project.

## OBJECTIVE 1: To establish and trial an assisted referrals process

*To establish and trial a process of Police Assisted Referral for victims of domestic and family violence to relevant support services.*

The Goodna Assisted Referral Project provided a fax-back referral service. In practice it required that:

- Goodna police at the scene of a call-out to a domestic or family violence incident offered the aggrieved person/s the opportunity of referral for IWCADV or dvconnect Mensline to contact them
- aggrieved persons had the referral explained to them and were encouraged to consent to the referral
- the GARP fax-back form with either a consent or non-consent result was faxed to the District DVLO, who in turn faxed the consent forms to IWCADV
- for male aggrieved persons, the GARP referral was faxed immediately by IWCADV to the dvconnect Mensline
- IWCADV or dvconnect Mensline attempted to make contact with the aggrieved person by the end of the next working day
- when contact was made, the safety needs and other related needs of aggrieved persons were considered and appropriate services offered and/or referrals made.

The organisational work required to implement the project was considerable, and was primarily undertaken by the GARP project worker employed through IWCADV, who commenced work in September 2005. To support an effective fax-back process, these components of the project had to be in place:

- a working agreement between the core partners (Goodna Police and the Ipswich District DVLO, IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline) about referral procedures
- promotion of the project within the Goodna and surrounding communities
- practical resources (eg forms, brochures) and procedural guidelines
- training for officers/staff around their role in implementing the project
- organisational adjustments by Police, IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline to respond to project workload requirements
- ongoing liaison between the project partners to address issues as they arose
- ongoing review to gauge progress and make any necessary adjustments to practice
- data collection for review and accountability purposes.

This evaluation notes that these enabling processes were effectively implemented during the project period. The amount of work involved should not be underestimated and is commented upon on under *Future Considerations* later in the report. In evaluating the extent to which the objective of *establishing a trial referral process* was achieved, this section considers the core fax-back processes.

## Making the referral

Police of the Goodna Division began making assisted referrals to the IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline in September 2005. Data collated by the District DVLO for the twelve month period September 2005 to end August 2006 indicates:

- Goodna Police were called to 697 incidents deemed to be domestic violence matters in the twelve month period
- GARP referral forms consenting to contact were completed for 182 persons, 26% of all relevant call-outs (see Table 1). The consent rate per month varied from 36% in November 2005 to 12% in March 2006.

*Table 1: Police call-out numbers, by whether GARP referral forms were complete, by month.*

	Relevant DV call-outs	Consents (% of call-outs)	Non-consents	Total forms	% of call-outs for which faxback form was completed
Sep	37	9 (24)	10	19	51.3
Oct	57	20 (35)	17	37	64.9
Nov	69	25 (36)	18	43	62.3
Dec	77	21 (27)	12	33	42.8
Jan	58	10 (17)	8	18	31.0
Feb	52	10 (19)	18	28	53.8
Mar	51	6 (12)	24	30	58.8
Apr	57	19 (33)	16	35	61.4
May	59	20 (34)	21	41	69.5
Jun	52	11 (21)	14	25	48.0
Jul	60	19 (32)	15	34	56.6
Aug	68	12 (18)	18	30	44.1
Total (% of total callouts)	697	182 (26)	201 (28.8)	373 (53.5)	

A consent rate of around 30% of call-outs is a solid starting-point towards meeting the support needs of victims for support. This was achieved for five of the twelve months of the project, with an average rate of 26%, and is considered a good result.

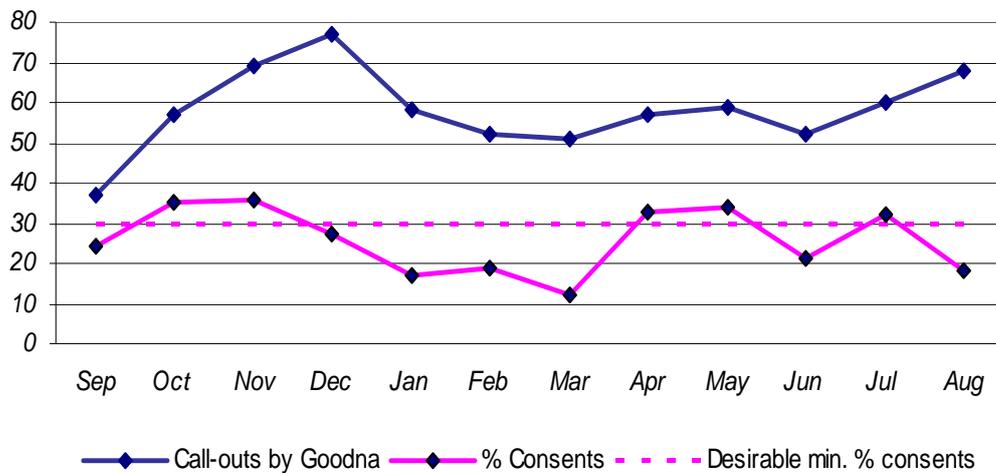
Rates of less than 20%, as occurred for four of the twelve months, with a low of 12% in March 2006, should be a cause for reflection about how well police were implementing the process at those times. These rates may indicate that either referral was not being consistently offered, or sufficient time was not being taken to explain the process and seek aggrieved persons' consents. The relationship between call-outs and consents to contact (see Figure 1, below) requires further exploration. Data for December and August may suggest that, as workload (number of call-outs) increases, attention to obtaining consents declines. However this does not explain low consent rates for the January – March period, when call-outs were comparatively lower.

The role of the Police Divisional DVLO is crucial here, and anecdotal evidence is available that when this role cannot pay attention to monitoring and encouraging police in implementing the project, consent rates will fall. The Divisional DVLO did provide close follow-up in the initial period to ensure implementation by police – this dropped off when other workload demands increased. Further attention by the then Divisional OIC (Officer-in-Charge) resulted in increased referral rates in the April – May period.

A key factor in achieving successful implementation of the referral process is the joint effort of the OIC and the Divisional DVLO of the police. The Divisional DVLO position is a portfolio held by officers who also have other significant roles, and the position may frequently change. The competing demands upon police created considerable workload pressures which impacted upon GARP. Effective implementation requires commitment and capacity on the DVLO's part, in particular, to "drive" the implementation process at the local level, including:

- promoting the value of the referral process for effective policing
- checking that consent forms are consistently completed and faxed
- following up on low referral numbers if necessary.

Fig 1. No. of police call-outs, and % consented to contact, by month



### Recommendation

*That the Police Service notes that achievement of a satisfactory level of consented referrals (30% or more) requires active monitoring by the Divisional DVLO. If an assisted referrals process continues, police in this role must have the capacity and support to promote and monitor referrals.*

### Offering GARP referral

Without police assisted referrals, there can be no fax-back service – how well the police implement core requirements around offering the referral is therefore of interest. The 24 surveyed police officers had all been involved in domestic and family violence call-outs during the GARP period. With only 2 exceptions, all officers self-reported as “always” or “most times” implementing on-the-ground GARP procedures, namely:

- telling the aggrieved person, on their own, about the offer of a GARP referral
- giving them information and advice about the support available from IWCADV and the dvconnect Mensline
- encouraging them to consent to referral.

This self-reporting was supported by the results of the independent client survey, in which the majority of the 23 aggrieved persons surveyed reported that the police did do the above things in their case.

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Police reported these reasons for not fully implementing GARP procedures:

- the need to give priority to dealing with an aggressive respondent, ie on-the-spot safety concerns for officers as well as the aggrieved
- lack of interest by the aggrieved person, including an aggressive response to police by the aggrieved person
- lack of time during a very busy shift.

Police reported anecdotally that a common challenge in implementing the police end of the referral process in the Goodna area was the impact of alcohol and other drugs, with both respondents and aggrieved persons affected at the time of a domestic or family violence incident.

Some police saw the GARP procedures as an imposition on policing:

*“We already have a lot to do. It should be the aggrieved’s responsibility to contact GARP, not the other way round. They should be responsible for their own lives”*

*“It can be seen as ‘just another piece of paperwork’ that gets in the way of dealing with the situation at hand”*

However the majority view was that GARP is not difficult to administer, other than when containing a violent offender must take precedence:

*“Police just have to be more diligent”*

While stating that the paperwork side of offering GARP was something of an imposition (*“the forms can be a hassle to carry, particularly if you are in a high risk situation”*), police have been proactive in suggesting alternatives for recording consents in the future.

*Box 1: Some demographics of the 182 aggrieved persons who consented to referral*

- ⇒ the majority of aggrieved persons were female
- ⇒ 22 (12%) were males
- ⇒ 21 (11.5%) of persons identified as Indigenous
- ⇒ 63% were living with the respondent at time of the DFV incident

The relationship categories between aggrieved persons and respondents were:

- ⇒ 78% spousal
- ⇒ 10% family
- ⇒ 7% intimate personal
- ⇒ 5% not known

Children were present at time of the DFV incident in 65% of cases, a total of 264 children

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## Safety assessments

The procedures where Police compliance has been less clear are:

- providing the Victim Safety Card

On GARP referral forms, 73% of police stated that they had provided a Victim Safety Card to the aggrieved person. About 50% of the surveyed Police self-reported that they did not always remember to provide a Victim Safety Card, some citing reasons such as running out of cards or forgetting.

- conducting a safety assessment

On GARP referral forms, 64% of police stated that they had conducted a safety assessment. The matter of conducting a safety assessment remains one where the understanding of police and of IWCADV is not yet shared. Police argue that they inevitably conduct a safety assessment in all cases when deciding the best way to respond to an incident; IWCADV understand the assessment to be a more specific procedure focused on the aggrieved person's sense of safety for the immediate future – they noted that some referred women were clearly unsafe in current circumstances but police had provided no details of risks/safety issues on the GARP form. Reflection on the usefulness of this section of the GARP referral form has suggested that, rather than a blank space for recording safety assessment information, police should be prompted to answer tick-box questions.

- asking about a safe time to phone.

Of the aggrieved persons surveyed, slightly more than 50% reported that the police had not asked about a safe time to phone, and staff of the IWCADV reported their concern that this information was often missing from the GARP referral form. This can impede making contact with the aggrieved person, particularly if another person, potentially the respondent, intercepts the call.

### *Recommendation*

*That if an assisted referrals process continues, the Police Service ensures that police are actively reminded to record a 'safe time to phone' on the referral form.*

## Completion of GARP non-consent forms

The GARP non-consent forms were a means of collecting data about aggrieved persons who did *not* consent, towards a holistic view of the referral process for GARP. As indicated by Table 1 (page 6), non-consent forms were faxed for 28.8% of aggrieved persons, some 3% more than the number of consents. For just under half the call-outs, 46.5%, no GARP form was completed – police have reported that this figure does not include any consented referrals.

In general, given their workloads, police did not consider completion of the non-consent form as important. Police cite time constraints and other priorities as reasons for non-compliance with this aspect of the GARP process:

*“...operational difficulties – the paperwork sometimes adds up and getting the DV application done can become more important”*

The outcome of this evaluation in relation to the non-consent form is consistent with other fax-back projects – police are reluctant to complete non-consent forms and will give time and attention primarily to completing the consent form. It is considered that the emphasis should be upon offering referral in all cases and upon the consent form being completed with attention to detail in all consented cases, with non-consents recorded on the QPS DV Index.

*Recommendation*

*That if an assisted referrals process continues, there is no requirement of Police to complete non-consent forms, with non-consents being noted in other ways.*

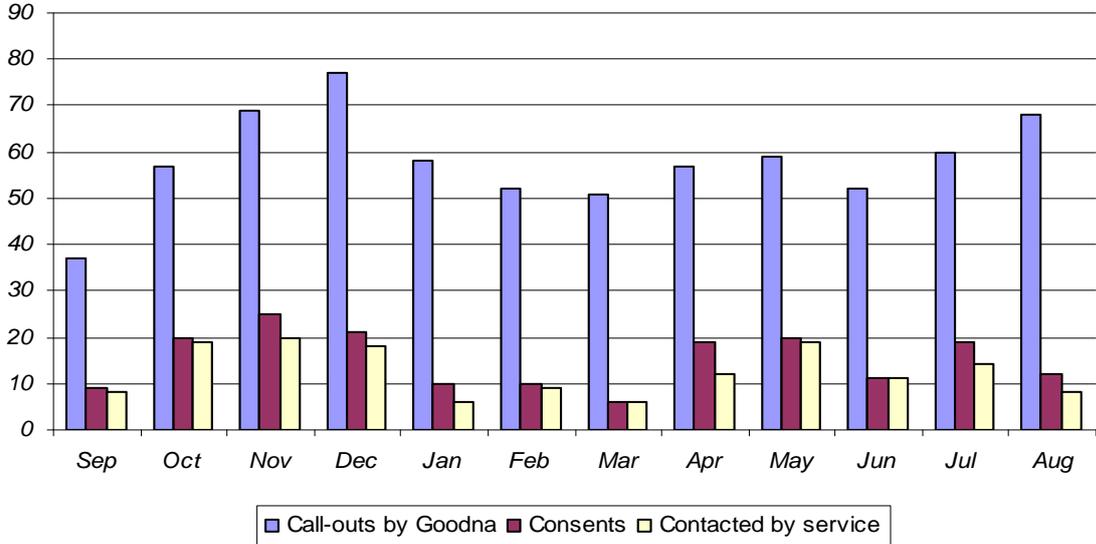
**Making contact following referral**

Coordination of the referral process between Police and IWCADV worked well – all consent forms were received by IWCADV, and forwarded to dvconnect Mensline if the aggrieved person was a male.

IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline attempted contact with all aggrieved persons who consented. The overall rate for achieving contact for the period September 2005 to August 2006 was 82% of consented referrals, a total of 150 aggrieved persons or 21.5% of all call-outs (see Figure 2). This is considered a very good result.

For approximately 30 women and 3 men, no contact was achieved, despite up to nine calls being made by IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline at varying times. This attrition rate of 18% of referred persons (those unable to be contacted at the phone number provided) is comparable with other services. It remains important to consider ways in which this might be improved, including care by police in recording safe contact times and alternative phone numbers, and the capacity and flexibility within IWCADV to attempt contact at various times.

*Fig. 2: Police call-out, by consent, by support service contact Sep 05 to Aug 06.*



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The services have identified the reliance of individuals upon mobile phones as both an advantage (in terms of mobility and private access) and a disadvantage (in terms of likely disconnected numbers and other outages). The need for referring police to record both mobile numbers and an alternative contact number was highlighted.

#### *Recommendation*

*That if an assisted referrals process continues, the referral form is amended to prompt police to record an alternative number, if available, in addition to any mobile number.*

#### **Timeliness of contact**

A goal of GARP was to respond by attempting contact with aggrieved persons as soon as possible after referral, not later than the next working day after receipt of the referral. This was achieved for 80% of referred women, with 10.5% of contact attempts the same day as the referral was received. Dvconnect Mensline reports that this objective was achieved for all male aggrieved persons, ie contact was attempted within one working day of receipt of the referral.

For 43% of referred women, contact was made by IWCADV on the first attempt; most required 2 to 4 calls to achieve contact, with some up to 8 calls. This factor added to the workload implications of the project (discussed later in the report).

#### **Coordination of responses**

A core objective of the project was to increase the safety of aggrieved persons, and reduce repeat victimisation, through a *coordinated* response. It is considered that this has been largely achieved, within the limitations of this being a very new partnership and a short project time-frame.

The funding of a project worker position (located at IWCADV) was integral to achieving coordination. This person did the proactive work in seeking to build a working partnership with the Goodna Police. The GARP project worker and the District DVLO of the police were the organisational lynch-pins of the project, with other essential personnel being the Officer in Charge and Divisional DVLO of the Goodna Police, the IWCADV Manager, and the dvconnect Mensline project worker. At times when the Goodna OIC and/or the Divisional DVLO were not able to give attention to GARP, the project suffered (as discussed above, in relation to referral numbers).

At the commencement of the project it was apparent that, while both the Goodna Police and IWCADV exhibited goodwill towards each other, there was an underlying tension based upon a history of limited communication and such communication often being about negative issues. It is apparent that the GARP trial has significantly improved the level of knowledge of each service about the other, and has led to greater understanding. This was evident in the interviews of staff carried out during the project and at its end. Police are now more aware of the existence of IWCADV and its support role; for their part, IWCADV workers have increased understanding of the complexities of policing in the Goodna area.

The partnership between Goodna Police and IWCADV is still very young. It should be noted that well-functioning collaborations between service providers such as this, who have different roles which intersect, take some years to mature. A very promising start has been made in this case.

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In this partnership, the police role in on-the-spot promoting of domestic and family violence services is crucial. This requires accurate information held by police about the agencies – there are indications of room for improvement still in this area. There has been a minority police view that IWCADV, as a feminist service, takes a “radical” approach in responding to women victims of domestic violence, or that they are “used” by victims to simply get “a handout”. These sorts of views are built on misunderstandings of the role and modus operandi of the service, as well as assumptions about the motives of aggrieved persons in seeking help. A number of the aggrieved persons who were surveyed felt that police needed to more accurately promote IWCADV:

*“They (the police) made it sound as if it wasn’t a very good place, ‘You don’t have to put up with their crap’ kinda place; got my back up about it. Women’s refuge, dorm type situation, I imagined”*

*“Don’t tell them it’s a bad place - it’s not. They (IWCADV staff) are not going to make you do anything or hound you”*

*“I think they should say there is a facility that can help – just make people aware”*  
(male victim, speaking of Mensline)

It should be noted that the people who made these suggestions had, nevertheless, been actively referred by Police to the IWCADV or Mensline.

If frequent feedback can be provided by IWCADV staff to police officers about the outcomes of GARP referrals, officers will gain understanding about how the agency assists aggrieved persons. Similarly, a two-way flow of information will increase understanding of IWCADV staff about policing issues in responding to domestic and family violence on Goodna.

#### *Recommendation*

*That the Police Service and IWCADV note the need for ongoing relationship-building between their agencies, to ensure coordinated service delivery. Core aspects of this are liaison between the Project Worker and the District and Divisional DVLO’s, joint training of police, and a mechanism for feedback about individual cases.*

## Client satisfaction

Client satisfaction could be gauged only through the 23 aggrieved persons who were independent surveyed. While taking into account that this sample includes only persons who received the service and were subsequently able to be contacted, it nevertheless provides some useful feedback to police and the domestic violence services – the interviews provided a rich source of client views.

Aggrieved persons were asked how they rated:

- the action taken by the police and by IWCADV / dvconnect Mensline
- the way they were treated by police and by the domestic violence service
- the advice or support provided to them.

### **Service provided by Police**

20 (of 23) aggrieved persons rated the police *action* as “excellent” or “good”. This result was very similar for questions about the Police *treatment* of the aggrieved persons, and the *advice or support* provided:

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*“They came straight away, they immediately helped, no doubts – they conveyed they believed me”*

*“They were helpful – concerned about (helping me) meet with other people, with a similar situation. They gave a whole heap of information about supports” (an Aboriginal woman)*

*“Excellent. They got me away to do an assessment – got me away from him”*

Some of the aggrieved persons who rated the service “good” nevertheless had some complaints, particularly about lack of information:

*“All they did was come inside, grab me and take him to the station. They didn’t explain anything, they just took him away”*

*“Good at the time but they still haven’t done anything about it – he’s still scot free. They didn’t follow up that I know of”*

### **Service provided by IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline**

20 aggrieved persons (of 21 who answered this question) rated the manner in which they were treated by IWCADV or by dvconnect Mensline as “excellent” or “good”:

*“I was going into shock and they calmed me down, took me out of shock and depression”*

*“Awesome – she wasn’t just doing her job – she was concerned for me genuinely – wasn’t just a two minute conversation – she explained everything”*

*“Manner very good, like a normal person, I was pleased with what he said – spoke to him for some time” (male aggrieved person, about Mensline)*

Concerns raised by aggrieved persons about IWCADV related primarily to access difficulties (phoning the Centre) and the lack of immediately available counselling and other services:

*“(After they contacted), me trying to get in contact with them was difficult. Better if there was no answering service and if calls were answered it would help. Tried to call early morning 10am and just after 10am – not answered. Tried three times with no success”*

*“The only frustrating thing was there were waiting lists – they were full. That was the only thing I found disheartening. Also I couldn’t build up a rapport with one worker – had to talk to whoever I got on the day, which can be intimidating”*

Issues arising from this feedback relate to the capacity of IWCADV and to the service model which might best suit providing a fax-back service. These are discussed later in the report.

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### Key findings - objective 1

- An assisted referrals process was successfully implemented with effective coordination between police and the domestic and family violence support services
- A referral rate of over 30% of all aggrieved persons, considered quite reasonable for a new project, was achieved for 5 of the twelve months. This could be seen as a minimum rate to build upon
- A follow-up contact rate of 82% by the domestic and family violence services is considered a very good achievement
- The Project Worker position was crucial to the success of the project at all levels
- The Divisional DVLO position, supported by the Divisional OIC, is critical to successful referrals. The inability of this position to give priority to monitoring GARP implementation by police affected the rate of referrals during some of the project period
- Improved understanding between Goodna Police and IWCADV was a significant outcome of the project. There is still room for improvement in building accurate knowledge about how each organisation operates in practice
- Feedback from surveyed clients (who had received the GARP service) indicated generally high levels of satisfaction with the Goodna Police and with IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline.

## OBJECTIVE 2: Increased safety and support

*To increase the safety and support of victims of domestic and family violence through a coordinated Police and support agency response.*

The achievement of increased safety and support may be indicated by:

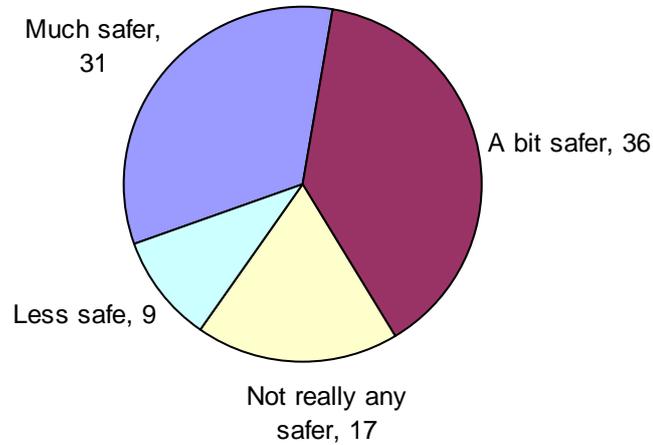
- what aggrieved persons report about their (short term) safety
- on a community level, the percentage of aggrieved persons who are linked to a support service, with the resultant opportunity for increased safety and support.

IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline have contacted 21.5% of all aggrieved persons with whom Goodna Police had contact during the GARP project. This has ranged from 33% of all aggrieved persons in October 2005, to 10% in January 2006 reflecting the low referral rate for that month. Achievement of this objective is closely tied to police referral rates. A contact rate of 33% of all aggrieved persons is commendable and can be assumed to result in increased safety for some. This is a good example of the *coordinated* response of this objective – the police achieving a 36% referral rate in October 2005 with IWCADV subsequently achieving contact with 19 of the 20 persons referred.

### Increased sense of safety

A majority (72%) of 93 aggrieved persons, asked by IWCADV whether they felt safer as a result of the police action and of the GARP referral, have stated that they felt “much safer” or “a bit safer” (see Figure 3). The results for the question around “safety as a result of police contact” and “safety as a result of GARP referral” were very similar, indicating that aggrieved persons did not differentiate between these activities. However a small number of women stated they felt less safe as a result of the police action, presumed to relate to the respondent’s reaction to police contact.

Fig. 3: How much safer did you feel as a result of the police contact ? (IWCADV survey) N = 93



The 23 aggrieved persons independently surveyed were asked about their sense of safety following contact with the domestic violence services (IWCADV or dvconnect Mensline). Most of these persons reported feeling safer (see Box 2). The inbuilt bias of this sample should be noted, with those aggrieved persons who had not achieved safety being less likely to be available for interview. Nevertheless it is an indicator that GARP did enable some aggrieved persons to move from feeling unsafe to feeling totally safe or safer after contact with the domestic violence services as a result of police assisted referral.

*Box 2. Sense of safety before and after contact with the support service*

Of **18** aggrieved persons who answered this question in the independent survey:

⇒ **9** said they felt *unsafe before* contact with the DV service

Of these:

⇒ **7** felt *safer after* contact with the DV service

⇒ **0** felt less safe

⇒ **8** said they would **not** have felt safer now, without contact from IWCADV or dvconnect

**All 18** said they felt **totally safe** now, or **safer** now, compared to their situation at the time of contact from the police and IWCADV / dvconnect Mensline.

Women who felt unsafe before contact from IWCADV expressed the benefit of talking with a knowledgeable person about achieving greater safety:

*“I didn’t initially know how the system worked, until I spoke to them (IWCADV). Helped me clear my mind – when you’re in the situation your mind is all over the place – it’s a shock to the system – they helped me face reality about what was happening and what could happen”*

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*“I felt kind of a little (unsafe) but it empowered me having someone contact me – just them caring made me a little stronger”*

Those women who acknowledged still feeling unsafe, because of unpredictable respondent behaviour, nevertheless spoke of being reassured by contact from the domestic violence service:

*“If he ever finds out where I am I can ring them and they’ll help”*

*“If anything else happened, I had their (IWCADV’s) phone number – I kept it in my purse. Even if I didn’t think I’d need it, I didn’t throw it away”*

## Increased support

In 21.5% of all relevant police call-outs, GARP resulted in contact from a domestic and family violence service. IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline offered a safety assessment and support service to each of the 150 aggrieved persons contacted. Anecdotally, calls were generally brief, with most aggrieved persons no longer feeling in crisis and being satisfied with information and an opportunity to consider future safety strategies

Of 132 aggrieved persons reported upon by the IWCADV data collection, 99 received the initial phone call and required no further contact. However at least 33 (22% of persons contacted) received follow-up services provided by IWCADV or another service, such as court support or counselling. Dvconnect Mensline reported male aggrieved persons being surprised and pleased that a support service for men was available.

The aggrieved persons who participated in the independent survey generally did identify a need for advocacy and/or support at the time of contact with IWCADV or dvconnect Mensline. These needs were met in the majority of cases (see Box 3).

### *Box 3: Follow up services required and provided*

Of **18** aggrieved persons who answered this question in the independent survey:

- ⇒ **13** felt the need for advice/support at the time of contact from the DFV service.
- ⇒ a total of **34** services were identified as required (by 22 aggrieved persons)
- ⇒ of these **26** of the required services were identified as having been received.

Services included: *counselling (10); legal advice and/or court support (6); children’s needs (6); housing (5); income support (3); help with moving (3); medical (1).*

*“They (IWCADV) covered all these (housing, income, moving, counselling, children’s needs) – basically said not to put myself in the situation, especially with the children – looking out for the children’s protection. .... I found out all I needed/wanted to know”*

*“I got a plan for safety once they left (adult grandsons, one the respondent) – don’t allow them to come back, keep calm, if trouble building re-contact the Centre”*

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*“I worry about my son’s behaviour – you don’t know how the kids are affected. They’re scared of him now”*

All women who identified a need for legal services or court support had received this – in some cases this referred to police applying for a DVO. The request for counselling was the most common unmet need:

*“Tried to get counselling, to try to talk about what’s going on – still waiting, been four months or so”*

Consideration of whether aggrieved persons have experienced increased support as a result of GARP has produced mixed results:

- both staff of IWCADV and some surveyed clients have identified the frustration of lack of timely counselling services for women. Staff have considered this one of the negative aspects of GARP, ie raising expectations of counselling or other supports that may not be able to be immediately met
- however, most of the surveyed clients *did* receive the services they felt they needed (it is acknowledged that this may be a sample of clients in more stable circumstances)
- IWCADV staff reported their perception that many aggrieved persons who were contacted required only information, or required advocacy services but were not receptive to the offer of counselling
- however, more than half the women surveyed nominated counselling services among those they required (not necessarily from IWCADV).

Lack of immediately available support services for aggrieved men was also identified by dvconnect Mensline as a gap. Again, timeliness is an issue here – persons who are experiencing crisis may be receptive to engaging with immediately available programs, with this opportunity being lost if they must wait for services which seem less relevant by the time they become available.

It is considered that the core issue is that of engaging with aggrieved persons around their immediate requirements (crisis theory suggests that these are likely to be practical), with a view to providing other support services when timely. Follow-up calls may be important here.

#### *Recommendation*

*That if an assisted referrals process continues, strategies are put in place to collect data about whether the demand for support services arising from the referrals process is being met in a timely way.*

#### Perpetrator needs

GARP was not able to offer a referral service to perpetrators. However it highlighted the need for a holistic response to domestic and family violence. Some male aggrieved persons self-identified as being in both aggrieved and perpetrator roles. Some of the female aggrieved persons spoke of male partners motivated to seek help, and of being open to couple counselling where safe and appropriate:

*“Now we’re both aware that it’s not OK and there are other ways of coping; he’s been to jail. We were in the country – here there are different services .... Our situation was because of drug addiction”*

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*“We are talking a lot more if having problems, rather than getting in a bad mood. He changed his job.....less stress in general. Feel more like wanting to talk to fix problems or resolve them. Have thought carefully about what we want out of marriage”*

*“(Police) had spoken to my partner, opened his eyes. He took the initiative himself – followed up to get counselling and anger management”*

Goodna Police identified that the opportunity to refer respondents to suitable programs, in particular drug and alcohol counselling and treatment, would be useful. Dvconnect Mensline identified that the availability of perpetrator group programs, including, for example, anger management and men’s awareness of domestic and family violence issues, would supplement the response to aggrieved persons.

### *Recommendation*

*That the Ipswich IRG notes that GARP has reinforced the need for a perpetrator program in the Ipswich area, and that if an assisted referrals process continues, a parallel process for referring perpetrators to a group program or similar service is explored.*

## Safety through coordination

One of the aims of GARP was to ensure a *coordinated* approach by Police and domestic and family violence services, to maximise the safety of victims of domestic and family violence and reduce re-victimisation. Partnership issues between the core stakeholders are considered elsewhere in the report – this section comments on the demonstrated value to clients of a coordinated approach.

The aggrieved person quoted below reported feeling ‘totally safe’ following police action and GARP referral:

*“The first time (experience of police contact re DV before GARP) was worse than this. This time I could tell they were genuinely concerned. They were spot on – told me everything I needed to know – it wasn’t just a two minute conversation and ‘see you later’ – they explained you don’t have to get your head cut off for it to be domestic violence and I didn’t feel bad talking about it – with the others, if you didn’t have a black eye they weren’t interested”*

This client experienced a congruence between the response from the police and the subsequent response from IWCADV (“They were awesome – they helped me with the next biggest step, the next day – to think “what do I do?”). This is an excellent example of this objective of safety being achieved through a coordinated approach.

*“I think I would have kept thinking negative thoughts; I think they (IWCADV) put me at ease and helped me see a different view – I felt more comfortable knowing they were there. Basically, I respect all the work the police and women’s service do – they do a wonderful job. If it wasn’t for them, people would be in deep water because you feel you are at a dead end. I feel more confident now I know the choices I can make”*

For the GARP referrals made, the objective of coordination was achieved. As a direct result of GARP, 21.5% of all Goodna Police call-outs resulted in contact with the aggrieved person by a domestic and family violence service. However this figure could be improved with a higher rate of referral.

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## Key findings - objective 2

- There are clear indications that for many of the aggrieved persons who consented, the combination of police action and GARP referral (or, more specifically, contact by a domestic and family violence service) did increase their sense of safety
- The coordinated approach was effective in achieving an increased sense of safety, with police activity being 'built upon' by the subsequent domestic and family violence agency response
- Beyond the provision of information, further support services were provided to at least 22% of the aggrieved persons contacted
- The lack of timely counselling and other support services (eg for children) has been identified as a problem in fully implementing the intended service
- All surveyed persons who identified the need for legal and court support services had received these services
- The desirability of an assisted referrals program for perpetrators, to refer perpetrators to group work or similar resources, has been highlighted.

## OBJECTIVE 3: Victims who may not otherwise contact are linked to supports

*To link victims of domestic and family violence who may otherwise not contact services into appropriate supports through a coordinated Police and support agency response.*

It is clear that GARP has been successful in linking aggrieved persons to support services when this would not otherwise have occurred. Of approximately 100 aggrieved persons surveyed by IWCADV, the majority (86%) had experienced prior domestic and family violence, however 77% had not had contact with a domestic violence service before, and 68% reported they would not have had contact without GARP referral (see figure 4). For 16 of the 20 women who answered this question in the independent survey the findings were the same.

Many of these aggrieved persons did not know of the existence of this type of help (see *Objective 5: Capacity to respond*). Importantly many have stated that they would not have made the phone call themselves, ie the police making the GARP referral was what enabled the contact to occur:

*“It never crossed my mind (to contact the IWCADV, despite knowing about it). I didn't think I needed help. But you really do; this (DV) has happened 3 or 4 times before”*

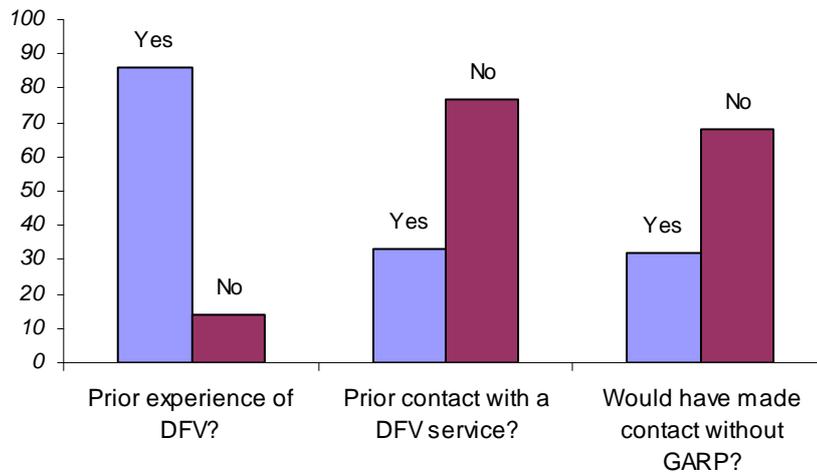
*“I didn't feel I needed it but it was great to get it – I would have felt like a dick if I had to ask because I wouldn't know what to say”*

Other responses by aggrieved persons also indicated that the GARP referral by police made the difference, in their having contact with support services this time despite past experience of domestic and family violence:

*“The police didn't tell me about the women's centre last time”*

*“There was no referral that time – (even though) he was pushing and yelling, punched two holes in the door”*

Fig. 4: Responses of 100 aggrieved persons



## Reaching disadvantaged groups

It is not possible to assess whether GARP referrals have catered well for some groups who are disadvantaged in terms of likely contact with support services, for example non-English speaking persons.

Of the 182 referrals:

- data is not available about the ethnicity and/or cultural background of the majority of those referred
- 21 aggrieved persons identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander persons
- only 3 were identified by Police as requiring an interpreter (IWCADV suggest that the number was actually higher).

Of the 23 aggrieved persons independently surveyed:

- the 3 Aboriginal persons indicated their satisfaction with the police and with the support services
- the one Samoan woman expressed her view that police had limited understanding of cultural issues influencing her experience of family violence. Paradoxically, her view was the Police did not understand the 'normality' of domestic violence in her community.

No information is available about how often GARP referral was offered to persons of other CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) groups. Similarly, it is not known how many young persons (25 and under) were offered assisted referral.

### *Recommendation*

*That, if an assisted referrals process continues, specific attention is paid to strategies to ensure isolated and/or disadvantaged groups receive the service, and data (about ethnicity, language spoken, etc) is collected to help gauge the success of any such strategies.*

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## Engagement strategies

Feedback from staff of IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline has indicated that strategic approaches to engagement of clients may be required, to encourage aggrieved persons who may otherwise opt out of the contact when phoned. Clients who are no longer in crisis when contacted may, despite having consented to it, no longer see a need to receive information and advice. In this, they will often present differently from the 'voluntary' clients who initiate contact themselves. This requires a framework and approach on the part of the agency which are different from those used with self-referred clients.

For at least 65% of the 150 aggrieved persons contacted, "no further follow up" was required after the initial phone call. IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline staff report many of these as being quite brief calls, of perhaps 10 minutes, suggesting limited engagement. Given the GARP objective of increasing safety by reaching persons who may not otherwise engage with support services, this figure (65%) should be viewed as a benchmark to improve upon.

In some cases, a lack of take-up by clients of further assistance may have been a factor of the approach and experience of staff. Feedback from IWCADV staff indicates that, generally, staff initially lacked awareness of the differences between working with self-referred and 'assisted referral' clients:

*"This has been a big shift for myself as a worker"*

Interviews with IWCADV staff have indicated differing attitudes, and possibly skill levels, in engaging with this type of client. Any tendency to take what clients say at face value (eg about not needing help or information) should be carefully considered in the context of these generally being clients who have not been able to self-refer, and may similarly not admit to needs. An open approach which balances self-determination with persistent outreach is often required to overcome barriers to engagement by phone.

One woman independently surveyed expressed her appreciation of the persistence of the worker who rang her:

*"First of all, they made sure it was the right time to talk. Kept me on the phone a lot longer than I expected – wanted to make sure I was OK. The worker kept asking me things – she just knew how to get me to talk – it was good to have the conversation – I now have more of an understanding"* (woman who rated IWCADV response as 'excellent')

By contrast, the report of another does not suggest a concerted effort to engage:

*"She wasn't on the phone for long – "if you need anything give me a call" – I was happy enough with it. She was neutral"*

One aspect of follow-up mentioned by a number of the aggrieved persons was the desirability of a follow-up phone call after the initial contact. As part of a response model for assisted referrals, this is worth considering further.

*"The people (IWCADV) were going to call back, but they never, just sent me an envelope with pamphlets. I would have liked them to call. They could have at least rang me back and talked to me and asked how I felt – at the time I was devastated"*

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*“Next day they contacted again – that was really good. They didn’t give up and they helped. (Client suggested:) hang in there and let the woman be negative and express her feelings”*

### *Recommendation*

*That if an assisted referrals process continues, IWCADV considers the framework, approach and skills required to successfully engage by phone with assisted referral clients, with a view to maximising the take-up of support services by this group.*

*That in considering a fax-back service model, IWCADV considers the need for follow-up contact with aggrieved persons after the initial contact, with a view to increasing the timeliness of such offers for individual clients.*

### **Key findings - objective 3**

- GARP has been successful in linking aggrieved persons with domestic and family violence services which they otherwise would not have accessed
- Insufficient data is available to gauge how successful GARP was in reaching aggrieved persons from disadvantaged and/or isolated groupings.

## **OBJECTIVE 4: Reduced level of repeat victimisation**

*To reduce the level of repeat victimisation by domestic and family violence in the Goodna region through a coordinated Police and support agency response.*

This is a key objective, but a difficult one to report upon. A reduced level of victimisation can be inferred rather than proven, by considering data about how the coordinated response of police and support services can prevent violence which would otherwise be likely to recur.

### **Reduced repeat call-outs**

Data is not yet available to determine the potential impact of assisted referral in reducing repeat call-outs (where Police are called repeatedly to domestic and family violence incidents involving the same couple or address). The District DVLO has collated some information about the possible impact of GARP referral in these cases – however as this data must be manually extracted, it is limited. A further limitation is that twelve months is too short a time to build useful data for this indicator.

Information collated to date does not suggest any trends – ‘repeat call-out’ cases include those where aggrieved persons have:

- refused GARP referral twice and consented on the third police attempt (recent, outcome unknown)
- consented to GARP referral, since which there has been no further call-outs (for seven months to date)
- consented to referral, unable to be contacted, and have since refused consent several times
- a pattern on non-consent, consent, followed by further non-consent.

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A selective audit of cases identified as “repeat call-outs” between September 2005 and January 2006 indicated that:

- in 12 cases, initial consent had been followed by further consent at the time of subsequent call-out
- in another 12 cases, initial consent had been followed by non-consent at subsequent call-out.

For these 24 cases, initial consent had not averted further call-outs. However these data do indicate that repeat cases should not be “written off” by police – that there is value in persistently offering GARP referral, as occurred for this woman:

*“With reporting to the Women’s Centre, the Police said ‘We can do it again’. Didn’t take the position ‘Done it once, no more’”*

It is clear that more detailed data analysis is required to better evaluate how best to target assisted referrals in these cases, while acknowledging the complexity of issues faced by many of these families.

#### *Recommendation*

*That, if an assisted referrals process continues, and if practicable, the Ipswich Police District conducts an ongoing audit of a sample of defined “repeat call-outs” to help evaluate the impact of fax-back contacts upon the repeat incidence of domestic or family violence.*

## Early intervention in DFV history

When a successful referral to a support service occurs early in the possible ‘history’ of a victim of domestic and family violence, it can be reasonably claimed that repeat occurrences may be avoided. For a significant 19% of approximately 100 women surveyed by IWCADV, the domestic violence which resulted in the referral was the first episode of such violence. The timeliness of such referrals is potentially empowering for women and male aggrieved persons, and may help reduce repeat victimisation, including when partners remain together.

The anecdotal information of women participating in the independent client survey reinforces the assumption that timely provision of support can avoid further victimisation:

*“It (contact with IWCADV) opened my eyes to a few things – that this (the DV) wasn’t just a one-off thing. Now I know what to look for, and I won’t be so gullible in the future”*

*“... this (DV) was something that had never come up; had never happened to me before” (a woman who felt safe after contact with police and IWCADV)*

As indicated by these quotes, increased awareness and knowledge is also likely to help reduce repeat victimisation. This outcome is reported on below.

## Reduction in domestic violence

The achievement of reduction in repeat victimisation across a community requires change within the lives of individuals and families. This has occurred following GARP referral for

a majority of the persons independently surveyed (see Box 4). While this is a biased sample (noted on page 4), the reality is that change has occurred for these 19 persons.

*Box 4: Reduction in domestic and family violence incidence*

Of 20 aggrieved persons who answered this question, about whether they had experienced domestic and family violence since GARP referral:

- ⇒ 19 stated there had been no further incidents
- ⇒ 7 were still living with the same partner
- ⇒ all these 7 reported feeling 'totally safe' or 'safer' now.

The time frames since receiving GARP referral ranged from 1 month to 6 months.

While the catalyst for change cannot be assumed to be the police response and GARP referral, anecdotal information indicates that for some this has been the case:

*“The DVO is in place; I know that there is back-up if I need it. His behaviour has changed a bit.... we haven’t had any more episodes. He is scared of me leaving him now”*

In general, and given the multifaceted nature of domestic and family violence, a one-year project is far too short an intervention to expect change across a community or to begin to gather evidence of change. However these individual results auger well for cumulative longer-term impacts if the GARP process is able to continue.

**Key findings - objective 4**

- It is not possible to conclude whether GARP has had an impact on repeat victimisation in the Goodna area, ie whether there has been a reduction of 'repeat call-outs'. Better data collection about this indicator is required
- There are indications that for some people, GARP referral has been a timely intervention against further violence, particularly for those who received referral in response to a first incidence of domestic or family violence
- It is clear that for some aggrieved persons GARP referral has been followed by a cessation of the domestic violence.

## **OBJECTIVE 5: Promoting capacity of Police and agencies to respond**

*To promote within the community the capacity of Police, community agencies, and community members to respond effectively to the issue of domestic and family violence.*

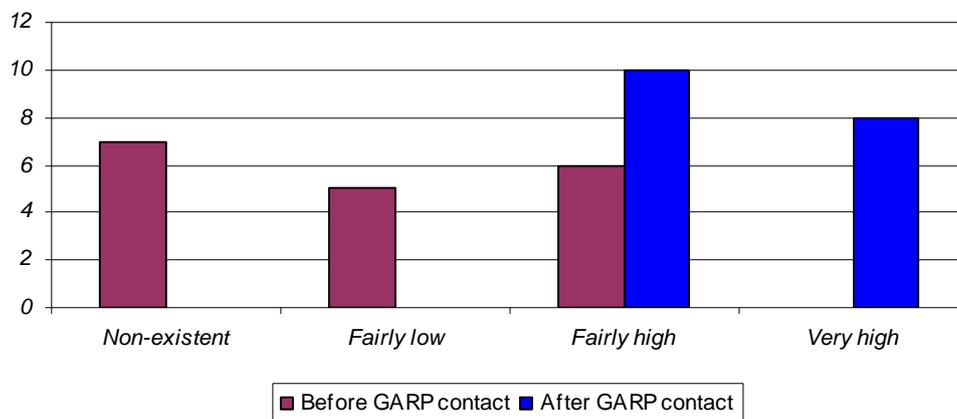
This objective refers to an increased community awareness that effective responses are available to domestic and family violence, through Police and community agencies. It also refers to promoting the capacity of the Police and of community agencies to respond.

Increased community awareness takes time, particularly in a very mobile population such as Goodna and surrounding areas. However during the one year of the GARP trial, a start was made towards achieving this objective.

## Increased awareness

In a community such as Goodna, where some tight-knit ethnic groupings exist, word-of-mouth is an important means by which information about personal issues is disseminated. This evaluation has not been able to assess the degree to which the community as a whole has become better informed about domestic and family violence. However there are clear indicators that individuals who have been offered a GARP referral have become much more aware of the services available to them (see Figure 5). It can be argued that better informed individuals leads to a better informed community.

Fig. 5: Level of knowledge about relevant services, before and after GARP referral and contact. N = 18



The independent survey of 23 aggrieved persons pointed to a marked lack of awareness of services such as IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline prior to GARP:

*“Didn’t have a clue about that it (IWCADV) was even there”*

*“Didn’t know it existed. If I did need to contact it now, I would”*

While this may indicate a need for greater promotion by IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline of their services, it is relevant to note that:

- a directly targeted way of promoting the availability of the services, the Victim Safety Card, is already in use but is dependent upon Police to disseminate
- the active referral of victims through GARP has been effective in raising awareness, as it removes the barrier of requiring the victim to be proactive:

*“I knew about the centre but I didn’t have the phone number until the police gave me the pamphlet”*

*“I wouldn’t have known about it until they (police) turned round and told me. I would have been a wreck”*

IWCADV staff report that some word-of-mouth self-referrals have occurred as a result of GARP. The client survey also indicated that GARP has spread information further afield:

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*“Now I notice information (about DV). I never knew – just thought you see a psych – never knew there were free services. Actually I have friends from where I was (Aboriginal woman previously living elsewhere) and they were surprised that there were services. I sent Expect Respect books to friends in a similar situation”*

Finally, there is evidence of increased awareness about domestic and family violence among the referred clients, with many making statements such as

*“I didn’t think it was DV, but the police officer explained it was – and the brochure explained – I thought it (DV) had to be hitting”*

*“They (IWCADV) made me see a lot of things weren’t right – not only physical things, also emotional things. Did an ‘overhaul’ of the whole situation”*

*“I just thought that’s how families go sometimes – didn’t know DV exists at all – very naïve”*

### GARP community information booklet

The GARP community information booklet *An invitation to help build a safer community* was distributed to community organisations, Government agencies, medical centres and schools within the project area. The booklet provided information about:

- what domestic and family violence is
- GARP and how it works
- how the community can assist victims of violence and abuse
- phone numbers of police and crisis support and counselling services.

Importantly, the messages of the booklet were translated into the Vietnamese and Samoan languages as well as English. Some 3,700 booklets were distributed.

The booklet was distributed in April 2006 and it is too early to assess its possible impact. However its very wide distribution and its accessibility to the major non-English speaking groups are likely to result in some members of the target groups becoming better informed of the help available to victims of domestic violence.

## Supporting Police capacity

This refers to increasing Police capacity to respond to domestic and family violence through better understanding and awareness on the part of the police themselves (rather than purely financial resources).

As noted earlier in this report, it is important that, when making referrals, police convey an accurate message about IWCADV. The two ways in which most police have gained information about the role and approach of IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline are:

- participation in GARP training at which IWCADV and Mensline staff are co-presenters
- some feedback from IWCADV about the outcomes of specific referrals.

Eight training sessions for police occurred during the GARP project period, delivered jointly by IWCADV, dvconnect Mensline when available, and Police DVLO’s, with a total of 40 police trained. In March 2006, 88% of the 32 officers stationed at Goodna had completed training. Considering turnover of police, this is a good result.

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These training sessions enabled direct discussion between staff of IWCADV and many operational police for the first time. Building on this personal contact, case-specific feedback can help bring a reality base to police understanding of the services. This feedback (emailing police to let them know the outcome of a GARP referral) has been patchy, and inhibited by lack of access by individual police to email. It has been assessed in other places as a useful communication mechanism which increases trust and mutual understanding between fax-back partners.

#### Understanding of and response to domestic violence

It is difficult to assess at this stage whether GARP has increased police knowledge and awareness of the dynamics of domestic violence, and the implications of this for policing. The feedback from the majority of the 23 aggrieved persons independently surveyed indicated that these aggrieved persons felt understood by the police:

*“I felt like I had their protection – they didn’t just go ‘You’ll be right’ – they dealt with the situation and dealt with him – didn’t fob it off and I felt I had police support”*

*“They handled the whole situation well – supportive and understood what I was telling them and concerned for me and my child. Very professional”*

Some of the aggrieved persons who felt they had received a good service from police nevertheless had complaints about the police manner in responding to them:

*“It felt like they were trying to push me to the side – they didn’t really want to deal with it – like it was taking them away from something else”*

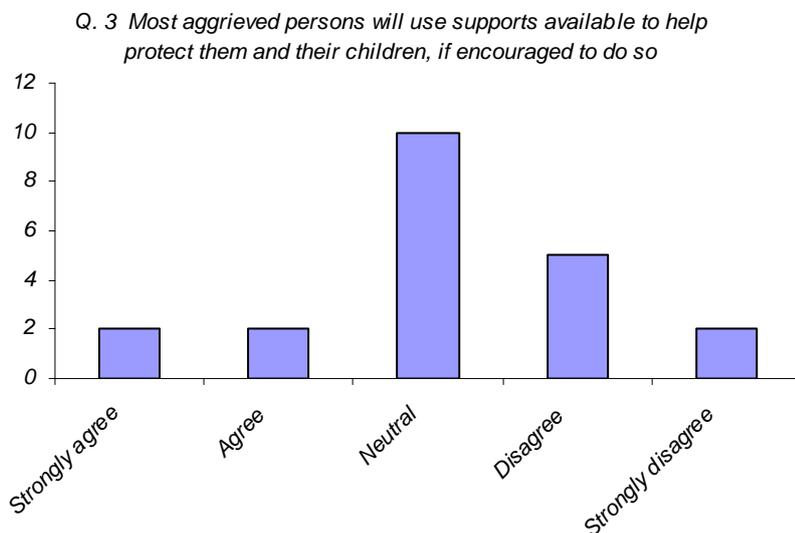
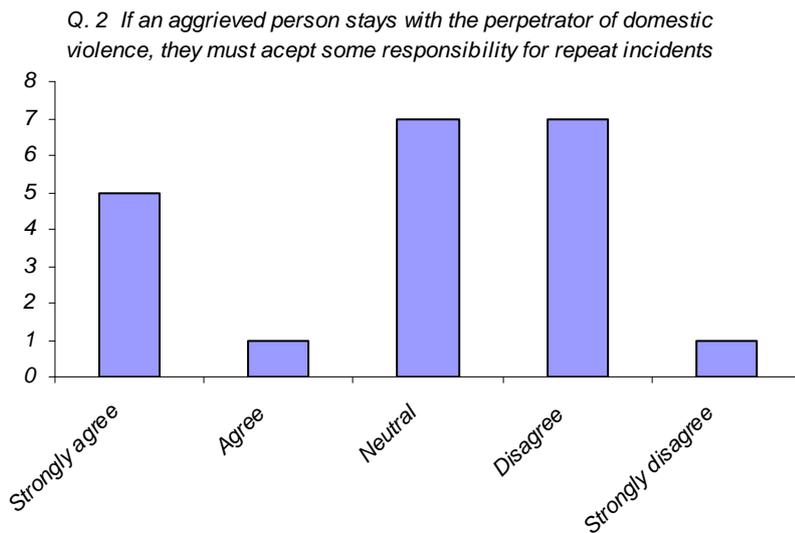
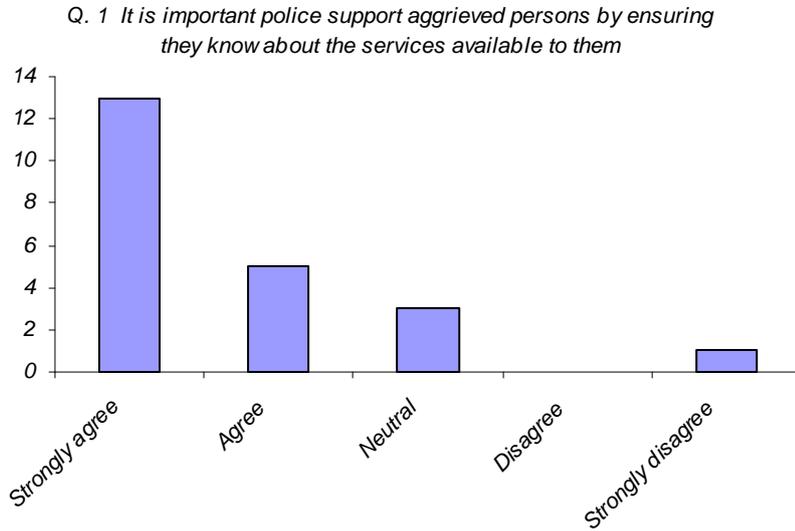
*“Very disappointed when I went to the station. I didn’t understand what needs to happen to do something. I got a black eye, but they weren’t very willing to say what needs to happen. Then I got conflicting statements. I didn’t want to be treated as a number”*

The aggrieved persons surveyed were those who did receive GARP referral. More information is required, if possible, about police interaction with persons who do not consent to referral.

When surveyed, the 24 Police stationed at Goodna placed emphasis on an active policing response to domestic and family violence, in line with operational procedures. This included police applications for DVO’s rather than private applications, arrest for breach of DVO’s, and detaining perpetrators under the Act rather than ‘softer’ options. The actions taken in relation to the 182 GARP call-outs are indicated in Box 5. Information is not available to allow further analysis, eg which responses occurred concurrently or the number of cases for which none of the listed actions occurred. However, in relation to DVO’s (domestic violence orders) the data does indicate a fairly high level of proactivity by Police in responding to breaches of the orders.

Indications of relevant Police attitudes (survey of 24 Goodna police) are summarised in Figure 6. These data suggest a strong commitment by police to making information about support services available to aggrieved persons. This is reinforced by the surveyed police attitude to the GARP project – 50% believed that GARP has improved their ability to respond to domestic violence incidents, with most agreeing that GARP has enabled “a better understanding of referral services to help the aggrieved”. Others have expressed the view that GARP project has not changed their focus which was always on making referral where possible.

Fig. 6: Survey of Goodna police views (N = 24)



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*Box 5: Police responses - data collated from the 182 GARP referral forms*

56 cases had an existing DVO

Action in response to presenting situations included:

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| ⇒ 43 breaches | 44 detentions |
| ⇒ 36 summons  | 19 arrests    |

In 34% of cases, no action was taken under the Act  
(*Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989*)

(These may be under-estimations, taking into account that some forms were incomplete)

Other police views indicated by the survey (see Figure 6) are:

- a scepticism by some about whether aggrieved persons will generally make use of support services, even if encouraged
- a view by some that aggrieved persons should shoulder some responsibility (for domestic violence) if remaining with a perpetrator.

These views are not shared by workers of the domestic and family violence services, and point to the need for ongoing dialogue about values in domestic violence policing and support work, with sharing of experiences from both sides. Involvement by IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline in joint training of police officers provides an opportunity for this.

The data collected during the GARP project and this evaluation, such as that in Figure 6, provides baseline information against which Goodna Police awareness and understanding can be measured in the future.

### Resources - police

While GARP may assist with responsive policing, it is clear that implementing a fax-back process adds to the administrative workload. The low return rate for non-consents is an outcome of this. Police have been proactive in designing a 'sticker' consent label which is able to be inserted in police notebooks, alleviating the need to always have the GARP consent form available. The advantage is the possibility of recording more consents for contact. A disadvantage is that, without the prompt of the form, some information (eg safe time to ring) may be omitted. It is considered reasonable to streamline the process for taking consents (eg through use of 'stickers'), so long as important safety considerations are not overlooked. Police have also argued against requiring the non-consent form to be completed, should GARP continue.

### *Recommendation*

*That Police continue to use 'consent stickers' when in the field, followed by completion of the referral form for faxing, but ensure that key information (phone number and safe time to ring) is included on the sticker.*

## Supporting IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline capacity

This refers to whether GARP has increased the capacity of IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline to respond to domestic and family violence (rather than financial capacity, which is discussed below).

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Three impacts are apparent:

- as noted above, GARP has increased community awareness of the existence of these agencies – it has been a useful mechanism for targeted awareness raising
- the capacity of IWCADV to work in partnership with the Goodna Police has been increased through improved communication
- the knowledge of IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline about the needs of this group of clients, who may not self-refer, has been enhanced.

Each of these impacts are in the beginning stages, a start to be built upon by the agencies. While some IWCADV staff have stated that “a good publicity campaign might have been just as effective” (in increasing client awareness), this is doubtful. Publicity still relies upon self-referral – GARP has provided a service to women who would not otherwise have identified as victims of violence and/or contacted IWCADV:

*“You see the ads on TV – you don’t think about it. You don’t think it’s about you. Now I have spoken to them (IWCADV) and they have explained.”*

Increased understanding by IWCADV staff about the Goodna Police is just as important as police understanding of the DFV service. Clients benefit from increased collaboration, which in turn is dependent on mutual understanding. While some IWCADV staff commented that in their view the relationship with police has not improved, this was a minority view. In general, an increased recognition of the complexities of the police role was apparent, with acknowledgment that it is sometimes impossible for Police to negotiate a referral at the time of a domestic violence incident.

*“GARP has helped reconfigure both the Police response to us and our response to them. We have a better understanding of the problems faced by Police in Goodna. We are all (Police and IWCADV) dealing with trauma. We all interact in different ways, and having a more open dialogue has helped”*

The capacity of both IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline to respond to the presenting needs of fax-back referred clients will benefit from the learnings of the GARP project. This has enabled beginning consideration of a model of response based on understanding of:

- the crisis needs of women and men victims
- the typical dynamics of relationships impacted by domestic violence
- the implications of the above for:
  - timing of initial and follow-up response
  - the types of support required
  - the challenges of engagement.

### Key findings - objective 5

- There is clear evidence that GARP has increased the awareness of the aggrieved persons who have received the service, both in understanding the nature of their experience as domestic and family violence and in knowledge of support services available
- The one-year time frame of the project is considered too short to assess the impact on the wider community – however there are some indicators of increased community awareness
- There are some indications that GARP has assisted the capacity of Goodna Police (in terms of understanding and awareness) to respond to domestic violence incidents. Half the surveyed police believe GARP has improved their ability to respond, and a majority has participated in joint GARP training. Baseline data is now available
- Consultation with staff of IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline has indicated that learnings from GARP will assist with further development of an effective model of response should an assisted referrals process continue.

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## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

1. An assisted referrals process was successfully implemented with effective coordination between police and the domestic and family violence support services
2. A referral rate of over 30% of all aggrieved persons, considered quite reasonable for a new project, was achieved for five of the twelve months. This could be seen as a minimum rate to build upon
3. A follow-up contact rate of 82% by the domestic and family violence services is considered a very sound achievement
4. The Project Worker position was crucial to the success of the project at all levels
5. The Divisional DVLO position, supported by the Divisional OIC, is critical to successful referrals. The inability of this position to give priority to monitoring GARP implementation by police affected the rate of referrals during some of the project period
6. Improved understanding between Goodna Police and IWCADV was a significant outcome of the project. There is still room for improvement in building accurate knowledge about how each organisation operates in practice
7. Feedback from surveyed clients who had received the GARP service indicated generally high levels of satisfaction with the Goodna Police and with IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline
8. There are clear indications that for many of the aggrieved persons who consented, the combination of police action and GARP referral (or, more specifically, contact by a domestic and family violence service) did increase their sense of safety
9. The coordinated approach was effective in achieving an increased sense of safety, with police activity being 'built upon' by the subsequent domestic and family violence agency response
10. Beyond the provision of information, further support services were provided to at least 22% of the aggrieved persons contacted
11. The lack of timely counselling and other support services (eg for children) has been identified as a problem in fully implementing the intended service
12. All surveyed persons who identified the need for legal and court support services had received those services
13. The desirability of an assisted referrals program for perpetrators, to refer perpetrators to group work or similar resources, has been highlighted
14. GARP has been successful in linking aggrieved persons with domestic and family violence services which they otherwise would not have accessed
15. Insufficient data is available to gauge how successful GARP was in its first year in reaching aggrieved persons from disadvantaged and/or isolated groupings who faced particular difficulties in accessing support services

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16. It is not possible to conclude whether GARP has had an impact on repeat victimisation in the Goodna area, ie whether there has been a reduction of 'repeat call-outs'. Better data collection about this indicator is required
  17. There are indications that for some people, GARP referral has been a timely intervention against further violence, particularly for those who received referral in response to a first incidence of domestic or family violence
  18. It is clear that for some aggrieved persons GARP referral has been followed by a cessation of the domestic violence
  19. There is clear evidence that GARP has increased the awareness of the aggrieved persons who have received the service, both in understanding the nature of their experience as domestic and family violence and in knowledge of support services available
  20. The one-year time frame of the project is considered too short to assess the impact on the wider community – however there are some indicators of increased community awareness
  21. There are some indications that GARP has assisted the capacity of Goodna Police (in terms of understanding and awareness) to respond to domestic violence incidents. Half the surveyed police believe GARP has improved their ability to respond, and a majority has participated in joint GARP training. Baseline data is now available
  22. Consultation with staff of IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline has indicated that learnings from GARP will assist with further development of an effective model of response should an assisted referrals process continue.

## FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

This section considers issues relevant to the future of the GARP and/or other assisted referral processes in the Ipswich district. It briefly discusses resource issues which need to be considered by decision-makers, and summarises the process recommendations arising from the evaluation.

### Capacity and resources

The summary of key findings suggests that GARP has been successful in achieving most of its objectives. The following resource issues have also been highlighted by the evaluation:

- The position of Project Officer was crucial to the success of GARP and would continue to be essential for any ongoing fax-back program

Without a funded Project Worker position, to support partnership development, training, community liaison, data collection and fax-back administration, it is unlikely that an ongoing GARP or extended referrals process would succeed. This is because fax-back processes are grounded in active positive partnerships, and such partnerships require more developmental input than managers or OIC's can sustain as part of normal workloads.

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- In any Police Division in which an assisted referrals process is implemented, time is required within the workload of the divisional DVLO to encourage a reasonable rate of referrals by police

This evaluation has confirmed existing knowledge that it is not possible to implement a successful fax-back process simply through directing police to offer referrals. Given the complexities of demands upon police officers, the required procedures for fax-back must be reinforced and monitored, particularly during early years of implementation in any Division.

- Regular joint training of Police, involving DVLO's and domestic and family violence service workers, is important to the success of any assisted referral process

Again, existing knowledge about the importance of joint training has been confirmed. For police facilitating referrals, this provides a fast-track to understanding the domestic and family violence services and to further awareness around domestic and family violence which builds on Police Service training. Without joint training, a collaborative approach which benefits aggrieved persons is very difficult to achieve

- The capacity of IWCADV to ensure timely responses and follow-up for any ongoing assisted referral process is currently limited. Some increased capacity within the support roster would be required

Consultation with IWCADV staff has indicated that current support roster arrangements to cater for GARP are not sustainable in the long-term, particularly if referrals increase. There were already indications that the demands of the GARP follow-up timeframe *versus* the demands of the normal support roster work were causing compromise in maintaining high standards in both areas. It should be noted that for IWCADV a successful fax-back process increases the client base

- The capacity of IWCADV and/or other services to provide follow-up services after initial contact must be taken into account

For reasons discussed above, consideration should be given to a model of response which includes follow-up after the initial contact and attention to helping victims engage with various support services. Such a model may require dedicated staffing by IWCADV. Even without this emphasis, the 'normal' flow-on demand for services must be catered for, by IWCADV and other agencies.

- The capacity of dvconnect Mensline to cater for ongoing fax-back referrals of male aggrieved persons depends upon funding to ensure back-fill.

Only one Mensline worker is rostered at once – this catered for GARP follow-up calls without difficulty but necessitated back-fill when the rostered worker was out of the office for GARP purposes, ie involvement in joint training, liaison meetings, etc. This participation would continue to be important if dvconnect Mensline was involved in ongoing fax-back processes.

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## Summary of recommendations

The following lists process and programmatic recommendations which are relevant if GARP or other assisted referrals processes are implemented in the Ipswich area. These recommendations are conditional upon the resource issues noted above.

### **Interagency**

That the Police Service and IWCADV note the need for ongoing relationship-building between their agencies, to ensure coordinated service delivery. Core aspects of this are liaison between the Project Worker and the District and divisional DVLO's, joint training of police, and a mechanism for feedback about individual cases.

### **Program development**

That strategies are put in place to collect data about whether the demand for support services arising from the referrals process is being met in a timely way.

That specific attention is paid to strategies to ensure isolated and/or disadvantaged groups receive the service, and data (about ethnicity; language spoken, etc) is collected to help gauge the success of any such strategies.

That, if practicable, the Ipswich Police District conducts an ongoing audit of a sample of defined "repeat call-outs" to help evaluate the impact of fax-back contacts upon repeat incidence of domestic or family violence.

That the Ipswich IRG notes that GARP has reinforced the need for a perpetrator program in the Ipswich area, and that if an assisted referrals process continues, a parallel process for referring perpetrators to a group program or similar service is explored.

### **IWCADV and dvconnect Mensline**

That IWCADV considers the model, approach and skills required to successfully engage by phone with assisted referral clients, with a view to maximising the take-up of support services by this group.

That in considering a fax-back service model, IWCADV considers the need for follow-up contact with aggrieved persons after the initial contact, with a view to increasing the timeliness of such offers for individual clients.

### **Police procedures**

That the Police Service notes that achievement of a satisfactory level of consented referrals (30% or more) requires active monitoring by the Divisional DVLO. Police in this role must have the capacity and support to promote and monitor referrals.

That the Police Service ensures that police are actively reminded to record a 'safe time to phone' on the referral form.

That there is no requirement of Police to complete non-consent forms, with non-consents being noted in other ways.

That the referral form is amended to prompt police to record an alternative number, if available, in addition to any mobile number.

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That Police continue to use 'consent stickers' when in the field, followed by completion of the referral form for faxing, but ensure that key information (phone number and safe time to ring) is included on the sticker.

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