

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE
STANDING COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO THE METHODS EMPLOYED BY WA POLICE
TO EVALUATE PERFORMANCE**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
WEDNESDAY, 19 AUGUST 2015**

SESSION TWO

Members

**Ms M.M. Quirk (Chair)
Dr A.D. Buti (Deputy Chair)
Mr C.D. Hatton
Ms L. Mettam
Mr M.P. Murray**

Hearing commenced at 11.07 am**Ms ANGELA HARTWIG****Chief Executive Officer, Women’s Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services, examined:****Ms KEDY KRISTAL****Chief Executive Officer, Patricia Giles Centre, examined:****Ms ANNE MOORE****Chief Executive Officer, Domestic and Family Violence Services, The Lucy Saw Centre, examined:**

The CHAIR: On behalf of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, I would like to thank you for your interest and appearance before us today. The purpose of this hearing is to assist the committee in gathering evidence for its inquiry into the methods employed by WA Police to evaluate performance, specifically the performance measures related to family and domestic violence. I will introduce myself, Margaret Quirk, the member for Girrawheen. On my right is Dr Tony Buti, member for Armadale. On my left is Mick Murray, the member for Collie–Preston. On his left is Chris Hatton, the member for Balcatta. Our other member is absent today. This committee is a committee of the Legislative Assembly of Parliament. This hearing is a formal procedure of the Parliament and therefore commands the same respect given to proceedings in the house itself. Even though we are not asking you to provide evidence on oath or affirmation, it is important that you understand that any deliberate misleading of the committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. This is a public hearing and Hansard will be making a transcript of the proceedings for the public record. If you refer to any document during your evidence, it would assist Hansard if you could provide the full title for the record.

Before we proceed to the questions we have for you today, I need to ask you a series of questions. If you could not just nod, but individually say yes or no. Have you completed the “Details of Witness” form?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: Do you understand the notes at the bottom of the form about giving evidence to a parliamentary committee?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: Did you receive and read the information for witnesses briefing sheet provided with the “Details of Witness” form today?

The Witnesses: Yes.

[11.10 am]

The CHAIR: Thanks very much for coming today. I do not know if any of you want to make an opening statement to the committee.

Ms Hartwig: I just think it is timely that this inquiry is happening, and we are really pleased to be part of it. We are certainly wanting to move forward with some of the recommendations that have been put forward through the Law Reform Commission reports, so we are anxiously awaiting the Attorney General’s deliberations on that. Some very good information has been put forward in that report which would be potentially applicable to some other evidence that you would be hearing today as well.

The CHAIR: Thanks very much. Do either of the other two want say something?

Unfortunately—well, not unfortunately, but our terms of reference are very narrow, so just by way of preamble, we are really looking at how police judges its performance. Obviously, the collective knowledge of you three is helpful for feedback as to what sort of criteria police should measure themselves by: whether there is your clients' satisfaction or whether there are some issues that need to be pursued. Can you first give us an interview about the Coordinated Response Services and how they fit within the family and violence response teams?

Ms Moore: I can probably speak to that a little because I manage three of them: Rockingham, Mandurah and Fremantle. I think how that would probably fit in is that the response teams generally work really well—extremely well. However, now that they have had a change in the police reform there are some questions around that response to DV, which is not really as responsive as it could be.

The CHAIR: Can you be more specific?

Ms Moore: I think when the teams were sitting co-located and they had more officers in there, there was a better response for women there—an instant response often with the CRS, the non-government worker and the police; so there was always two people going out. I think that does not happen now. Very rarely does it happen in the regions that we are in, anyway. I am not sure about you, Kedy, in your region, but our girls have actually said they have seen a huge difference in the way in which the police are working in that space.

Ms Kristal: I manage Mirrabooka and Joondalup—Joondalup is probably the second highest DV area. Previous to the reform, they were in two separate police stations, so one CRS group was in Joondalup and one was at Mirrabooka. They have now been united at Warwick for the moment and then both CRSs will go to Mirrabooka when it is finished. I think having the two together in the police station has actually been of some benefit. Both CRSs work quite differently. One of the biggest problems that we have found is that the department for child protection's desire to standardise the response is very difficult to implement, and so you have got CRSs that work quite differently across the state and it is quite difficult to compare which ones are doing well and which ones are not doing so well.

The CHAIR: And that is appropriate because obviously the demographics are different and the issues—the drivers of the violence are different.

Ms Kristal: Yes; and the demand, the workload of DVIRs can be quite huge in some areas; particularly like Cannington and Joondalup are particularly difficult. They are very dependent on the actual people; so whether the co-located police and the co-located DCP worker are actually strong, committed workers makes a huge difference to how the coordination actually happens. One of the things that it does show up on the DVIRs is that the actual police on the ground—it is quite —

The CHAIR: Just for the purposes of *Hansard*, I know there are a lot of acronyms, so it would be really good if you could —

Ms Kristal: Domestic violence incident reports—so when the police attend domestic violence they fill out the one to nine. That comes through. That is a very good tool to see where individual police are not coming up to scratch, and for us at Joondalup we have got a very active police sergeant who can then go back straight to those individual officers and say, “You're not putting in phone numbers. The language you're using on the DVIR is victim blaming. You're missing out on important information.” So that in itself I think is a useful way to start an evaluation of individual police response, because if you read some of the accounts of how police have described victims and what has happened, they can be truly disgraceful—some of the language that they use.

Ms Moore: I think also they have written and recognised that there has been a serious assault but actually no charges have been laid. I think that happens—and that shows up in those DVI incident

reports as well. I think the role that we play is that we send those back and we say, you know, more needs to be done. But we feel then that we should not have to do that; that should have been done at that very first time. So we are seeing quite a lot of that, but it is a good way of capturing what is not happening, really.

The CHAIR: But that has been the initiative of that individual at the station; it is not universally done, as I understand it?

Ms Kristal: I think the idea of the DV police unit now is that they are taking some responsibility for the local policing teams to come up to scratch.

Ms Moore: And I think the sergeant in our area—I can absolutely say—that she will go through all of that and it will be dealt with, and she will make account of whichever officer or whatever is happening, she does deal with that; so in that space we are really quite happy with that. But I am not sure that is the same—as Kedy said, I think it is all about the personnel and whoever is there.

The CHAIR: You have thrown up something here, about the language used in those reports. Does that suggest there needs to be better training of officers?

Ms Moore: Yes.

The CHAIR: What would you suggest needs to be done in addition?

Ms Kristal: I go into the police academy to train all the recruits as they go through. I have been doing that for about 10 years.

The CHAIR: How much time are you allocated?

Ms Kristal: I get 45 minutes.

The CHAIR: Okay.

Ms Kristal: The police get four days of domestic violence training in a 26-week course. In my opinion and my knowledge, domestic violence is the biggest thing they are going to respond to as soon as they are out there on the streets. They are getting four days of training. In my understanding on one day they get the police trainers to do the general, “This is domestic violence, this is what it looks like, this is what we can do and cannot do as police officers.” I go in for 45 minutes and talk to them about the relationship between police and women’s refuges, and I try to cram in as much information as I can around victims and the importance of how they work with victims and respond to victims. They get a representative from Breathing Space, which is the men’s therapeutic residence for perpetrators. They get Roia Atmar, who is a DV survivor who talks about her experience, who had a very good outcome because of police. She is a very impactful speaker, because her experience is quite extreme, but she also recognises the role police played in her survival. I am not quite sure but I think on the fourth day they get some role play.

The CHAIR: Role play, yes.

Ms Kristal. And that is it. I think they need a huge amount more, but fundamentally they actually need to look at their own attitudes. I can go into a class of 30 recruits, and I will get questions from a range of them—predominantly the women—and usually men from CALD backgrounds or Aboriginal men that might be in the class, I can guarantee there is —

The CHAIR: One or two, I think.

Ms Kristal: But up the back there will be a few men that will just be sitting back, young and older, absolutely not wanting to hear a single thing I am saying; absolutely made up their minds there and then about their attitude to domestic violence.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Changing attitude is a very difficult thing and there might be tools to do that, but is there any test done on their performance in the four days plus your input. Do they do a test?

The CHAIR: No.

Ms Kristal: I am not aware of that. I do not have the answer to that.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Okay. Because, just suggesting that a test would say, “You have to comply to what you’ve been taught, and this is the way we operate.” It is just another tool.

The CHAIR: And the corollary of that, of course, is that predominantly they are younger, so these things are easier to address with a bit more life experience. So you are dealing with, in some cases, individuals who are under 25, and again, from your experience, probably the older police officers might have a better appreciation of some of the complexities; or is that a generalisation?

[11.20 am]

Ms Hartwig: When I did go up a couple of times as well to the academy and did some training with the detective sergeants, one of them did comment that our young recruits, the new ones that come in, do not like attending domestic violence incidents, and I said, “Oh, why would that be?” And they said, “Oh, they’re a bit worried, a bit scared, a bit frightened.” And I said, “Why is that?” They said, “Well, you know, it can be very intimidating for a police officer.” And I said, “But hang on a minute, they are armed, they go in pairs and they have the force of the law behind them. The woman is defenceless and a victim and often been assaulted by the perpetrator, so how do you think she sort of feels?” So, I guess it is that, one, understanding how to respond is really important; and I think the point about the language, there is specific training around that, where people like Allan Wade have come to Australia and we have sort of been, I guess, trained up a bit to look at this sort of use of language around violence so that you are not neutralising, you are not victim blaming, and that you are clearly and accurately recording information that gives a good description of the violence that took place.

The CHAIR: In an objective way.

Ms Hartwig: Not saying it was a dispute or a disagreement; that is not domestic violence. Anyone can have a dispute or a disagreement, but it is when Bob hits Sue, when you are accurately describing what happened, then you get a better picture of the violence that took place. So I would suggest, and we think that having specific modules that police needed to complete in any one year that was specifically designed and that sort of had a continuum of learning.

The CHAIR: Like a refresher. Like their gun training or whatever they have got to do every —

Ms Hartwig: Yes, and they got points, or whatever it might be, but that they have to attend it and they have to have some test embedded into it, where they can sort of demonstrate, so you have got practical workshops potentially happening as well. It is very difficult to just go up there and talk at people, maybe answer a few questions, but you need much more interactive sort of workshop-type training where they can ask questions: “Actually, I was not sure about that. What would I do if the perpetrator told me this?” I mean, Victoria’s No To Violence group are actually training judiciary and court workers around how not to use language that colludes with perpetrators. That is sometimes unconsciously being used, but they are actually drilling down to that level of detail so that you can actually go, “No, well this is about some accountability and responsibility and this is the sort of language and this is how we respond if the perpetrator says something to us.”

The CHAIR: Is it your experience that police are responding in a timely fashion?

Ms Moore: No.

Ms Hartwig: I have got a bit of a paper that you are welcome to have, and some of that is part of some research that I have been doing with my masters at Curtin, where I interviewed 16 women who had been participants of Safe at Home in the first couple of years. And they have got varying comments about it, particularly in the rural areas, where they say it was not timely. In fact, in one case, they had been to the woman’s house and left, and then he came back too and was assaulting her again, and they took a long, long time to come back again. So they treated it quite punitively, “Oh, well, it is just them having a row again.” But it was quite serious violence that was

going on; he had her down on the floor trying to strangle her in front of the children and things like that. So, timeliness can be really important—life or death. We know how many fatalities happen in the state and around the nation. We have got twice as many women being killed every year, in this year, than there has been in any other year in the nation.

Dr. A. D. BUTI: Two a week, I notice.

Ms Hartwig: Two a week, and it is a damned disgrace and it needs to be dealt with and so —

Ms Kristal: There were statistics coming out yesterday where they were saying three women a week are receiving serious brain injuries.

The CHAIR: It is a bit like the road toll, is it not? You have the fatalities and you have the serious injuries. Serious injuries can be incredibly serious.

Ms Moore: But, women are telling me and my service—we are hearing this regularly—that when they ring the 131 444 number, that that is just not adequate for a DV response. They spend too much time on that phone, and then it is another 45 minutes to an hour before anyone gets to them, and I think given those stats, you know, with women dying, I think that is really not acceptable at all.

The CHAIR: Has there been any discussions with police about what priority these calls are given? Over various roles that you have had over the years, is there any issue about allocation of priorities?

Ms Hartwig: They are supposed to be on a priority 1; that is our understanding, and they have also set up a specific 1800 number that overrides 000 that is given to some women who have been identified as fairly high risk and extreme risk cases.

The CHAIR: Does that work?

Ms Hartwig: It has only started last year. The police black boxes that used to be installed in a room, which they said were not adequate, because women had to be in the room to be able to push the bleeding alarm, so they have now got this where they can have it on a mobile phone and put in the 1800 —

Dr. A. D. BUTI: But that is for an already identified—is it not?

Ms Hartwig: Yes.

Dr. A. D. BUTI: A few things: you mentioned in your submission to the Law Reform Commission that police are not following their own procedures and practices. Can you elaborate on what you mean?

Ms Moore: I did not write that —

Ms Hartwig: Inconsistencies, I think is the thing. You will get police who respond very well, and as I say, there is some of that in this paper as well, but they are not, again, taking it seriously and following even the DVR 1 to 9, filling that out properly, so you are not getting —

The CHAIR: So the DVR is a domestic violence report?

Ms Hartwig: Sorry, incident report. So, refuges may have to follow up because there are bits of information missing. Even at that level, you are not getting probably the information that you really need to follow up as a support service.

Dr. A. D. BUTI: And has the inconsistencies become greater since the demise of the specialised police family violence unit?

Ms Moore: Absolutely.

Dr A.D. BUTI: In response to that change, were you consulted and do you know the reason behind the change?

Ms Moore: No, there was no consultation. There was information, and I remember hearing that. It is my understanding that it was something that had been trialled in the UK as being the way to go, and it was rolled out. So there was not really any consultation as far as I am aware.

Ms Kristal: It was rolled out in the Armadale area, and was then rolled through everywhere else.

Ms Moore: I would just like to say that I think since it has changed that I have seen it going backward—it is a backward step—instead of moving forward like it was before. It was moving at a really good pace before to not only educate officers with all these other people sitting around the table and working with them, but it was also giving confidence to women that there was this specialised unit there that was really going to follow up with everything that they needed following up.

Dr A.D. BUTI: So the demise of those specialised units, you think has been a retrograde step? Is that because now you do not have a specialised unit, you do not have that group of police officers that have experience and commitment with expertise in the area now that it is a general thing? You mentioned that you thought that with the system we have now—we have one person in control at the main station for that district and they are trying to bring the general police unit up to scratch, but is that really possible without a specialised commitment?

Ms Hartwig: It takes leadership it has not. A lot of those sergeants that were in place were great leaders and they got the troops going so to speak and followed up on things. But with that sort of lack of leadership, it is very unlikely that things are going to improve. I think with the new model, what they should have really done was built on it and kept those things in place and still have that triage model going alongside it, rather than throwing the baby out with the bathwater. This is what we see a lot with initiatives. It may be well-intentioned, but I think rather than take something fully away first, let us add on to it and build on to it.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Was it well-intentioned or do you think it was a reaction to resources?

Ms Hartwig: It could have been, but we do not know. We were not told that.

Ms Moore: I think in the area that I am working now, yesterday I had a meeting over there where they sit together and in that one area they do not even have a car to go out and visit, they have to ring up the local policing team if they have one available and it could be three days before they have something available to go out. It has happened, and that is not acceptable in domestic violence.

[11.30 am]

Dr A.D. BUTI: Are the local policing teams now supposed to take up the role that the specialised domestic violence units took up?

Ms Kristal: They are supposed to have that relationship on the streets with the victims and the perpetrators and the families. They are supposed to be out there in the community doing that engagement work with those families.

Dr A.D. BUTI: But they have all the other issues to deal with, whereas the specialised units were able to specialise in DV stuff.

Ms Moore: Absolutely. I think there was a call made just recently and of course another call came in about a robbery at a garage, so that all got left because they had to go to that. It did not mean that one was any worse than the other really in terms of that woman, because she could have ended up dead. It concerns me that there is not a dedicated response to domestic violence.

Mr C.D. HATTON: With the new frontline police model and the local police teams, when the transition came to change, starting this year, but trialling last year, I believe, in some districts, were you brought in on that? Were you addressed and contacted?

Ms Hartwig: No. We were informed right at the end.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Not directly, like: “We want to talk to you.”

The CHAIR: After the start of these trials, did you have any opportunity to input, after the Armadale one?

Ms Moore: No, we were just told that that was working wonderfully and that is what it was going to be.

Ms Hartwig: It was basically moving towards that. There was no opportunity to sit down and talk through anything.

Ms Kristal: The only opportunity was when they asked Angela and I at different times to come and talk to the detectives who were part of rolling it out further down the line. That was an English copper who was doing that, and it was already underway.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Have you had any response from the victims of family violence that have engaged with the specialised units and unfortunately are still being victims of family violence under the new system? Have you had any feedback from the victims in trying to contrast the two systems now?

Ms Moore: We are continually getting comments from victims who are not happy with the service they are getting, but I do not know that I could honestly speak to whether it was before or after anyway. I do know that previously we had better reports and women were much happier to be involved with that. Again, back to the language, when you are given the figures of how many women end up seriously injured or who die in domestic violence, that very first response is the most important, as we all know. Sadly, we lose a lot of women to services because that response was not adequate enough or welcoming enough, really, and about their position. I went to the police station with one woman who had a broken arm and her face was all black and blue, she had been to hospital following the violence, and the sergeant at the front desk said, "Who've you been letting beat you up?" That woman was just devastated and of course we said that she did not let anybody, she did not ask for it. But that is the kind of thing that we need to really change and make sure that everyone that is working in that space understands about DV.

Ms Kristal: There is the culture there that we have tried to address. There are a number of things apart from individual attitudes; there is a culture in the police hierarchy around power and authority as well. We currently have running this ad that they have got up at every police station that if you go into a police station and report a domestic violence incident, you should get a number and you should be taken seriously. We have had recent experience where one of my counsellors took a victim of domestic violence in because she wanted to make a statement about what had happened, and the police officer that dealt with that so undermined her and basically dissuaded her from making a statement about what had happened. His finishing words were, "Well, you go away and have a coffee and have a think about it. You can come back and make a statement if you really want to." That was after having spent 45 minutes persuading her that she really did not want to make a statement and it was not going to be of any use. So we have a number of police who are doing what they are supposed to be doing, but their attitude and the way that they do it dissuades women from going ahead. This woman had a support worker with her; I dread to think about women going in there on their own thinking they are going to have a good response from particular police if they do not have a support worker there that can actually step up and advocate for them.

The CHAIR: Have you got any mechanism to give feedback?

Ms Kristal: Yes, we reported it.

The CHAIR: Do you do that to the local superintendent?

Ms Kristal: I do that to the local sergeant who I know will get onto it straightaway. But if I did not have a good sergeant, I would then go up the line.

The CHAIR: But you have the problem of talking the victim around again.

Ms Kristal: Yes, she is just like, "No." She has lost all faith.

Dr A.D. BUTI: There is a cultural thing, but is there also a possible resourcing issue here, where the police officers are under the pump and they do not want to take this forward because it is going to eat up on their resources?

Ms Kristal: There is absolutely a resourcing thing, but there is the resourcing thing in refugees as well and we are all under the pump. This work is difficult and it is frustrating and it is much easier to deal with a straightforward burglary or something else. It is really difficult, frustrating work and that is why it comes back to that continual training, because it is easy to get a little bit blasé about it, it is easy to say to a woman, “Just go and get a VRO” and send her off to the Magistrates Court without investigating whether there has been an incident and asking: Should I be taking a statement? Should I be taking action?

The CHAIR: While we are on violence restraining orders, talk to us about their enforcement, follow up, breaches and your current experience?

Ms Moore: My experience is that it is very poor. Unless it is absolutely that somebody has witnessed it and seen her being seriously injured, it hardly ever goes any further. We are now following up continually, we are ringing the police and the women will go there. I think one woman the other week had 40 text messages from him, and because it was kind of, a bit, you know, they went, “Well, that would not actually go through in court.” I think the police do not need to make a decision whether the courts will view that as that; I think they need to breach and let the court deal with it.

The CHAIR: Does there need to be some improvements in the law in terms of phone and internet harassment, is that discounted?

Ms Moore: Absolutely.

Dr A.D. BUTI: And also hearsay.

Ms Moore: And hearsay, yes.

Dr A.D. BUTI: From what I understand—and I should know—a lot of women are complaining they cannot get a VRO because the cops are saying, “It’s your word against his” and hearsay is not being allowed, but of course, under sexual assault, it is allowed, but often domestic violence is going to involve sexual assault anyway. Would you be able to cater for an evidentiary change in the law to make it easier for women to sustain VROs?

Ms Hartwig: Absolutely. We want to see something like I think it is in New South Wales; they can give interim orders for up to 28 days in circumstances.

Dr A.D. BUTI: What about the police instigating the VRO rather than making the victim be able to do it?

Ms Moore: That hardly ever happens.

Ms Hartwig: They hardly ever do that.

Dr A.D. BUTI: But you think they should be doing it?

Ms Moore: Yes.

Ms Hartwig: Absolutely.

Ms Kristal: I sit as a JP and hear VRO applications. I have probably had two police officers come before me to make applications and in both cases there were very specific reasons why they did that. As a general thing, they could do it much more—so could DCP, and they never do it.

Dr A.D. BUTI: You know the specialised police units, how many were there? Do you know how many there were in WA?

Ms Kristal: Seventeen in the regions at that time.

The CHAIR: Then, obviously, the abolition of the specialised court—what impact has had on police operations?

Ms Moore: I am not aware of —

Ms Kristal: Nothing yet because we do not really know what is happening with the court.

Ms Hartwig: In terms of the breaches, women are just not taken seriously. Multiple breaches—if, say, 10 breaches happened in one day, that is all bundled up into one breach before the court, so someone can breach, say, 30 times over a three-day period and it is deemed as three breaches of a restraining order. You get minimal penalties like \$500 fines and community service orders. It is treated with leniency and that whole bundling-up of events is nonsense. If you have breached, you have breached. You cannot just keep breaching and if it is on the same day it is deemed as one breach before the court.

The CHAIR: I have just two questions before I let my colleagues have a decent go: the crime statistics suggest that domestic and family violence is escalating quite substantially. I think there was a 10 per cent increase last year and 20 per cent, or something, this year. What do you attribute that to? Have you got any ideas? And the sanction rate seems to have gone down.

[11.40 am]

Ms Hartwig: Historically, it has been a 10 per cent increase over the last eight or nine years. It is hard to say: is that more domestic violence out there or do victims have more faith in reporting and does it involve multiple reports of the same sort of case? I guess that data is hard to unpack to give a definitive answer around whether the level of domestic violence is increasing or whether people are having more faith in contacting the police.

Ms Moore: I think what we have noticed in this space is that the types of injuries are much worse and there is more physical violence, and I think it is with amphetamine use, for sure. I think those will then be reported and those will then get something done about them. I know we have seen women with horrific injuries where, in the past, it might have been a bit less.

The CHAIR: Do you think because the injuries are more graphic—graphic is not the right word, but more serious; obviously something has happened—that gives the police some confidence in pursuing the matter?

Ms Moore: Yes, and there is usually a weapon used so there will be a knife, or a hammer or something of that nature so they will be quite serious injuries.

Ms Kristal: My guess on that would be that that is usually the end result of a lot of other events that police have not pursued and we do not really want to wait until it becomes a cut and dry case that they are going to get through court. We want them to act much sooner.

The CHAIR: The other question before I give my colleagues a go: in your submission to the Law Reform Commission, you recommended adopting the UN handbook recommendation for how police should investigate family and domestic violence. How likely do you think something like that would be adopted by WA Police?

Ms Hartwig: Our submission was joint with DV Legal Workers' Network and I do recall I think that was something they put forward and we supported. I guess that allows to create a cultural shift and it gives a framework from which to look at this—that it is not only gendered crime, but it is a crime against humanity. I think looking at it as a human rights issue and being able to channel the responses accordingly is important because it is at that level that this is an issue. It is not specific to WA or Australia; it is global and we know that women are the majority of victims. So I think it is a good place to start, but how likely is it? It will take leadership.

The CHAIR: That is probably a good segue to—I lied when I said it was my last question. If you were Karl O’Callaghan for the day, what would be the one thing you would do in terms of family and domestic violence—their role in enforcing laws in family and domestic violence?

Ms Kristal: I think you would encourage a new wave of recruits into the police service of women, CALD men, Aboriginal women, older recruits—people with some life experience, I think, would be useful. But also, the police operate as the police—whatever they want to call themselves as the police force. I guess if we can widen their response to involve some actual community engagement so they are not just there to enforce the law. That is what so many of them get hung up on. They will say they cannot deal with that because that is dealing with community stuff, or people’s relationships, or I am not a social worker; I am just here to enforce the law. Somehow we have to meld those two attitudes together so they are more than just people who enforce the law.

Ms Moore: I would like to see the strengthening of the specialised DV units, and give it much more power in terms of even taking the statements and following through with victims. I think at the moment that is just not happening. I think, definitely, the ongoing training—strengthening that and making sure that it is a specialised unit and is actually treated as a criminal act and taken seriously because sometimes that does not happen.

Ms Hartwig: I would probably like to see a no tolerance, proactive approach. I think a lot more commentary by our police commissioner and presence. I mean, we have invited him to the domestic violence memorial march for I do not know how many years, and he has never been available. He might have commitments, we know that, but to be at events where you are seen publicly and proactively speaking out against the issue would be a great help. I also think that initiatives like the no tolerance campaign that New Zealand ran under Barry Matthews was magnificent and had some really good outcomes. The crime rate did triple and he got heavily criticised over that but when you run mass media campaigns on football fields, billboards and buses telling people to get help, yes, you are going to get people wanting the help so you have got to have the resources to match it. So I guess I would be thinking about a multi-pronged approach: legislative program, policy and resources that have to match that. Then we are getting serious about tackling the issue, otherwise we are just always going to tinker around the issue and it is always going to be the poor cousin of all the other issues the Parliament addresses, and this state and nation address.

Dr A.D. BUTI: You mentioned about Karl O’Callaghan, and I think *The Guardian* newspaper did a series on family violence last year or the year before and they asked all the police commissioners around Australia for a response. I think he was the only police commissioner who did not respond.

The CHAIR: I think it was *The Age*, was it?

Dr A.D. BUTI: No, it was *The Guardian*. Angela, you mentioned that there had been an annual 10 per cent increase. I think it is much more; I thought the reports into domestic and family violence said it had been something like 70 per cent in last three years.

Ms Hartwig: Yes; if you look at each year, the statistics we get from the police department generally show about a 10 per cent increase. But, yes, over the last three years, if you add that up I guess, there has been quite a significant —

Dr A.D. BUTI: And, just quickly, the question: is it due to increased reporting or increased—probably a combination of both, but it is a bit counterintuitive to say that people are more competent at reporting. What we are hearing from you is that police are not actually providing the satisfactory service for whatever reason, so I am not sure how people are more confident. Anne, are you saying that the demise of the specialised units have been a complete retrograde step in fighting family violence in WA?

Ms Moore: I think it has actually put a dent in it. I think there is still some value in it as it is now. But I do think that it needs to be strengthened again, I definitely do. I am not sure, Kedy, if you feel

the same but I know there are three regions. It certainly does suggest that it is really people driven rather than a system driven that is in there at the moment.

Ms Hartwig: With regard to that reporting, I have had another thought too, because family and neighbours have a lot to do with calling the police. They also have a lot to do with the disruptive behaviour management policy that Homeswest has in place. There is a large number of women who get evicted from their homes because of so-called disruptive behaviour, which is actually domestic violence. I think some of those calls would be coming from neighbours and those who want to keep the peace, so to speak.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Probably to finish off from me, the new police teams and the frontline policing is about those teams knowing their neighbourhoods and knowing, I suppose, what are called dysfunctional families who have perpetrators who repeat crime and trying to work through those to make them better. Do you know your police teams at all?

[11.50 am]

Ms Moore: I know some of the officers in the teams because they have been in the police family violence unit previously, so I knew that. One of the biggest criticisms I have around DV and the police also is that they move around. All of that intelligence goes with them about those high-risk families and the same with the local policing team. They have only a very short time there and then they move on. I mean, we were absolutely across the road from the police station and when we have rung, they have asked us: "Where are you?" We have had to give them directions. It is kind of something that the local police station should know, where the women's refuge is in the town or close by, but that is how it is. They move around a lot. A lot of police are just moved around so they lose that local —

For the reason they are there, that is really not a valid reason why they should have local policing teams, because they do not really know them.

Ms Hartwig: I think what we do not know a lot about is the responses that victims get. As I say, the stats might be going up but we do not know. Are the responses negative, or are they positive? What sort of responses? Trying to get some sort of satisfaction survey from victims to find out how it was for service from the police.

The CHAIR: Do you think that would be a good measure of police performance?

Ms Hartwig: Well, it might help. If we just go on data, it is not telling us much in a sense, and we are trying to unpack what that means, but if we are actually looking at the responses from the police, what are they; what have they been?

The CHAIR: Presumably, the sanction rate going down, one would suspect the satisfaction might. Just finally, there was a much publicised Pickett case 18 or so months ago and there was the *Four Corners* program, I think, on it. A lot of the authorities had their hands on their hearts after that and said, "Well, we're going to make things better and we're going to change this, that and that." What changes have you seen since that time, that you believe have been helpful?

Ms Kristal: That *Four Corners* report is used in the recruit training for the recruits. The only one I am really aware of is the DCP one that has affected refugees in response to Andrea Pickett not being able to get into a women's refuge. That change is about to start on 1 October. I am not sure that the police would warm to anything to do with responding better to Andrea Pickett. I do not know what corrections has done because they played a significant part in what happened as well.

Ms Hartwig: It would be good to find out the coroner's recommendations for what actually has come out of that because we know that the psychological assessment used on Kenneth Pickett was inadequate. They deemed him low risk and yet, he told them before he got paroled that he could not guarantee her safety. All sorts of things really need to change. As we have said, if anyone else had

assessed his situation, a DV specialist would have gone, “No chance, mate; you can’t be released if you’re going to speak like that.”

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for your time and your frank and, I think, very valuable evidence for this inquiry. A transcript of the hearing will be forwarded to you for correction of minor errors. Any such corrections must be made and the transcript returned within 10 days from the date of the letter attached to the transcript. If the transcript is not returned within this time, it is deemed to be correct. New material cannot be added via these corrections and the sense of your evidence cannot be altered. Should you wish to provide additional information or elaborate on particular points, please include a supplementary submission for the committee’s consideration when you return your corrected transcript of evidence. Thank you very much for attending.

The Witnesses: Thank you.

Hearing concluded at 11.53 am
