

Community Inclusion & Wellbeing Reference Group

Date	6 February 2023	Time	11.00am
Venue	Barrington Room	Note-taker	Lyndie Hepple
Present	Cr Dheera Smith, Alex Mills, Mayor Claire Pontin, Natalie Ridgeway, Felicity Carter, Margaret Guider, Corrina Routh, Melissa Walker, Chris Rowsell, Tim Larritt, Craig Partridge, Steve Prohm, Arthur Chapman, Mydie Keegan, Cr Kathryn Smith, Paul de Szell, Lyndie Hepple		
Apologies	John Temple; Gemma Green		

Meeting items

Item	Key points/actions
1	Acknowledgement of Country by Paul De Szell.
2	Apologies were received from Gemma Green. John Temple has resigned from the committee.
3	<p>Profile.id</p> <p>Lyndie Hepple provided an overview of the .id platform, demonstrating how to navigate the site and extract data. The platform can be accessed through Council's website here.</p>
4	<p>Draft Aboriginal Action Plan</p> <p>The Group had previously received a link to the Draft Aboriginal Action Plan (<i>the Plan</i>) on Council's Have Your Say website page. Hannah Earley (Aboriginal Community Development Officer) and Lillian Moseley (Aboriginal Liaison Officer) attended the meeting to provide background to the consultation that helped to identify the 6 Key Focus areas outlined in the Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Health & Wellbeing • Education & Employment • Justice • Inclusion & Participation • Families & Culture <p>Manager of Libraries & Community Services Alex Mills asked the Group to carefully consider the Objective and Indicators outlined for each of the key focus areas and provide feedback through the Have Your Say page if it was felt that they could be improved, since these objectives are what Council and community groups will be working to achieve once the Plan has been adopted.</p>

	<p>Each focus area includes a Satisfaction Rating from the consultation process. Council will check in with the Aboriginal community every second year to monitor the satisfaction rating to monitor improvements through the 10-year lifespan of the Plan.</p>
5	<p>Accessible Footpath in Harrington</p> <p>Lyndie had circulated a request from a visitor for the Group to advocate for an improved accessible footpath in Harrington from the Big 4 Colonial Holiday Park to the Heritage Riverwalk Pathway, together with a response from the Transport Team that advised that the footpath in question was listed on Council's Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan, and that funding was being sought for the project.</p> <p>The Group agreed that Lyndie Hepple would respond to the customer and advise that funding was being sought for the project.</p>
6	<p>Manning Refuge /Manning Police Partnership - Presentation by Leonie McGuire (guest)</p> <p>Our area is in the top third of 154 local government areas for incidences of violence against children and has seen the steepest rise of 11% over 5 years to 2022.</p> <p>The area has a strong history of community engagement going back to 1981. Former Taree Council Mayor Les Brown identified that there was a domestic violence problem rather than a homeless problem. A steering committee was convened through former Taree Council which resulted in the establishment of the Women's refuge in Taree in 1985.</p> <p>In 1990 funding for a purpose-built refuge was secured. Leonie managed the centre for 12 years. When she left in 2004, the centre was well established and sustained through recurrent funding. At the time, a partnership between the local Police and the community saw several trained crisis workers located at the Police Station to assist with the presentation of women in crisis and assisting them through the reporting and counselling process.</p> <p>In 2014 the NSW Government restructured funding and a tender process saw the refuge move from a community-run facility to an organisation-run operation which is only open during business hours with limited capacity for women in crisis. DV and homelessness is no longer supported in the same way, and the partnership with the Police has fallen away. Leonie is advocating for the partnership to be reinstated.</p> <p>The Mayor has written a letter of introduction to Supt Chris Shilt. Lyndie has put Leonie in touch with Calypso Watson (Community Development Officer) who runs the Community Network/Interagency comprising service providers across the MidCoast area. Leonie will be the guest speaker at the next meeting (21 February).</p> <p>A copy of some material provided by Leonie is attached to these minutes</p>
7	Meeting close

Next meeting

Date	1 May 2023	Time	11am
Venue	Barrington Room, Yalawanyi Ganya	Note-taker	Lyndie Hepple

Manning River Times: Sept 28-29, 2001.

your mirror on the manning

Partners against violence

By **KEN WARREN**

REDUCING repeat offences of domestic violence and providing more support for the victims will be the major aims of a new joint project between Manning Great Lakes police and Manning District Emergency Accommodation women's refuge in Taree.

Stage one of the police/women's refuge partnership against domestic violence project will soon get underway after an allocation of \$75,000 in government funding.

The local submission was one of just 52 projects to receive funding out of 881 proposals.

The first project of its kind in NSW Police, it aims to reduce the incidence of domestic violence and it is anticipated that it will also be effective in reducing the incidence of repeat offences.

The project was developed in cooperation between Senior Constable Suzanne Newton, domestic violence liaison officer of Manning Great Lakes local area command, and Leonie McGuire,

manager of the Manning District Emergency Accommodation, and included 18 months of meetings and preparation.

It will employ a social worker and a Koori trainee, who will be based at the police station, to address the needs of the local indigenous community.

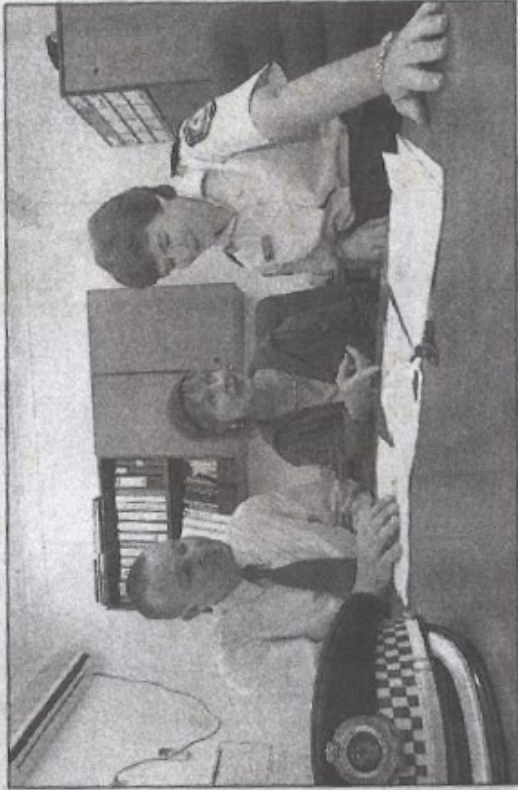
These workers will go with police to the scene of domestic violence crimes, to provide qualified support from the actual time of crisis through to the resolution of legal proceedings.

The workers will also help gain vital information from the victims, which can be used in the early investigations by the police.

There will also be a focus on assisting any children who may be affected.

It was the first time funding had been approved after two previous attempts and the project will act as an important bonding exercise between the police and the community.

Acting commander Tony Day said the presence of trained social workers in scenes of domestic violence would also support officers in



Working to end domestic violence: Acting Commander Tony Day, Leonie McGuire and Senior Constable Suzanne Newton look over stage one of their new partnership.

one of their most problematic, dangerous and time consuming jobs.

He said it was an exciting development to offer a response to these social issues which would provide effective customer service and victim support. The funding has been provided for 12 months, after which it is hoped the initial results will see a continuation of the project.

National

This was published 16 years ago

Flying squad helps women in need help themselves

Paola Totaro

March 11, 2006 – 11.00am

IT IS a poisonous tension that plays itself out all over the state: women ravaged by domestic violence and police officers frustrated by victims who repeatedly refuse to press charges against their assailants.

But in the town of Taree, amid the lush green of the Manning Valley, one tenacious policewoman - and a small army of women - have forged an inventive partnership which appears to be paving the way for a new approach to stemming violence in the home.

The idea was relatively simple: establish a flying squad of specialist, civilian domestic violence workers - both black and white - who would work from the police station and attend the scene as soon as officers declared it safe and offenders had been removed.

Constable Sue Newton, the dynamo behind the plan, spent three years fighting for funding, lobbying for political support and wooing her police colleagues into accepting civilians on their turf, in their cars, using their police radios and living by their safety protocols.

Her vision banked on the belief that intensive, face-to-face support for women victims - from the moment they reported an assault right through to court appearances - could also help improve the quality of policing, allowing officers to focus on law enforcement while providing the opportunity to see, in the long term, the needs of victims.

The experiment has been running for three years and the partnership - between the NSW Police's Manning Great Lakes Local Area Command and the local women's refuge - has been evaluated by the University of Western Sydney.

The results show some dramatic improvements in policing of domestic violence. The benefits range from big increases in the rate at which apprehended violence orders are

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/flying-squad-helps-women-...0WuqfeJ7IrucSjeyWqyd1r6Lk6iIL4hKwnwqxpGufVWwneaCo>

24/1/2023, 21:14
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granted (from a quarter to two-thirds) to significant drops in the rate of repeat offending - 295 less in the two years studied. The rate of AVO breaches dropped by a quarter.

Police working with the project reported a big improvement in the evidence and reliability of witnesses and better communication with and understanding of victims. Women were even more enthusiastic of the benefits to them. The project - funded under the NSW Community Solutions program - is being considered for use at other police commands.

Kirsty, 21, the mother of a baby, told the *Herald* she has been helped to stop the violence in her home. She was able to pursue supervised access for her child so he could retain a relationship with his father.

Another mother, Kelly, 36, said the project had helped her get on with her life. She separated from her abusive partner and father of her first child 15 years ago and not only remarried, happily, but has a stepson and three other children. Incredibly, her former partner has continued to pursue and attack her. "There would have been a time when the police would have been sick of seeing me ... but now, because of these people, if he says 'boo' I'm down here. They've given me the strength and the support to get on with it," she said defiantly.

For Constable Newton, and Aboriginal domestic violence support worker Trish Ping and her team, the project gives a glimmer of hope to those in despair.



Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse

Record #147

Manning Police/Women's Refuge Partnership Against Domestic Violence (Manning partnership)

Agency/Agencies: Manning Great Lakes LAC ; NSW Police ; Manning District Emergency Accommodation Inc (Taree Women's Refuge)

Programme details (click on the hyperlinks to see similar programmes)

Location: New South Wales – Taree

Target group: children and adolescents ; women ; indigenous communities

Duration: 2002

Status: ongoing

The following program demonstrates good practice for these reasons:

√	based on good practice principles and definitions
√	meets diverse needs
√	demonstrates potential adoptability
√	aims to reduce violence or enhance safety
√	development of consultative processes
√	includes good governance, planning and policy making
√	represents multi-agency service integration

Abstract:

The Manning Police/Women's Refuge Partnership Against Domestic Violence Project is a partnership between Manning Great Lakes Local Area Command and the local Women's refuge, to provide civilian support to selected victims of domestic violence incidents. The project involves the location of support workers at the Taree police station, who receive referrals from either the General Duties police or the Domestic Violence Liaison Officer (DVLO), and occasionally from external agencies. Four workers are involved with the project – two Indigenous and two non-Indigenous workers. The support workers are employed by the local refuge under the project. They provide assistance with protection order (ADVO) applications, support at court, referrals to other

agencies and general information on domestic violence. Support may include home visits, with the project having use of a police provided vehicle.

Description:

Background

The Manning Police/Women's Refuge Partnership Against Domestic Violence Project (Manning Partnership) was developed by Snr Const. Sue Newton, who on commencement as Domestic Violence Liaison Officer (DVLO) in the region, identified a number of difficulties in the policing of domestic violence in the area. In particular, she was concerned with the police response to incidents, including the low rate of AVO (Apprehended Violence Order) applications. Snr Const Newton was concerned that victims' needs were not always addressed and that there was a need for an incident-linked support service for women, tied to the policing response but not provided by police. In November 1999, a community meeting was held, where the DVLO established links with the local Koori community and Women's refuge. The project developed following this meeting and was funded after several years of lobbying.

Aims

- The Manning partnership project aims to:
- Reduce the trauma of domestic violence incidents
- Assist victims to make constructive decisions to ensure their protection
- Reduce likelihood of repeated violence by linking women to support services
- Address domestic violence in the Aboriginal community.

Philosophies and Principles

The Manning partnership project aims to provide a service which is cross culturally appropriate, delivered within a welfare paradigm, with a feminist perspective. The service provided needs to be consistent with the protocols and policies of both Manning District Emergency Accommodation Inc. and NSW Police.

Methods

The Manning partnership project provides enhanced support to victims of domestic violence who call police for assistance, by providing referrals to project support workers. The support workers then follow-up with women and respond to identified needs; including providing information, preparation of ADVO (Apprehended Domestic Violence Order) applications, court support, referrals for legal support for related matters such as family law, and assistance with accommodation and material issues. Support workers receive referrals from the DVLO or the General Duties police who have attended incidents. Referrals are made on the basis of assessed seriousness, and this is overseen by the DVLO. The following criteria are used in assessing referrals to the project support workers:

- Provisional Order (Ex Parte) ADVO (or telephone interim orders)
- Physical injuries
- Repeat Offenders/Incidents, especially when no action was taken
- Threats of further violence
- Incidents following separation or separation attempts
- Aboriginal women.

The project employs two Indigenous and two non-Indigenous workers. The Indigenous workers also assist Indigenous and non-Indigenous women.

Staff are employed by the MDEA, who manage administrative matters associated with project staffing and are the signatories to the funding agreements. The day-to-day supervision of staff is carried out by the DVLO. Staff are required to comply with police protocols and procedures and are accountable to police in regard to the police information to which they have access.

The project is managed by the project Management Committee, comprised of police and refuge representatives. An Advisory Committee (formerly a Steering Committee), which also includes the local Court Assistance Scheme Coordinator, the Department of Housing Domestic Violence Specialist Worker and the NSW Area Health Service Domestic Violence worker, provides input on service provision issues and assists in developing interagency cooperation. Where there are differences between the policies or philosophies of project partners, mediation processes have been successfully engaged.

Publications

Domestic Violence: Improving Police Practice (December 2006)

Working With Local Aboriginal Communities: Audit of the implementation of the NSW Police Aboriginal Strategic Direction (2003 -2006) (April 2005)

Evaluation:

The project was evaluated in 2005 by Armstrong and Mercer. Interviews with project participants show women felt supported, validated and better informed of their legal rights. Project workers were seen as important mediators between victims and police. In particular, the evaluation suggests a positive impact on policing of Indigenous family violence.

Intervention mode: policing; crisis intervention & support; multi-agency responses and co-ordination

References:

- Armstrong H , & Melser, P, 2005, 'Report of the Evaluation of the Police/Women's Refuge Partnership Against Domestic Violence Project', University of Western Sydney, School of Psychology.

Funding source(s): Funding for the first year of the Partnership was obtained from the Casino Community Benefit Fund. Since then, the project has been funded by the NSW Premier's Department Community Solutions Fund. Funding has been obtained until June 2007

Contact details

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Taking a stand

🔍 [click image to enlarge](#)

Led by determined policewoman Suzanne Newton, an amazing group of women from the country town of Taree have come together to provide support and protection for women in distress. Together, they are bringing about lasting change.

After almost three hours' negotiation with a frightened client, a harried hospital social worker and a busy magistrate, Senior Constable Suzanne Newton is mentally drained. But the domestic violence liaison officer has achieved what she set out to do: get a Taree magistrate to approve her application for an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (a type of restraining order) against a father of two who poses a serious threat to the life of his family and himself.



The man, who has a long history of drug abuse, psychotic behaviour and domestic violence, was discharged from a Sydney psychiatric ward that morning and was expected to head to the town of Taree, where he lives. On hearing the news of his release, the man's mother-in-law called the Taree Police Station as her daughter (the man's wife) fled with her children to a safe place where they could hide. During the man's latest spell in hospital, his wife informed him she wanted a separation – the woman, her mother and Senior Constable Newton were acutely aware that this announcement could trigger more alarming behaviour from the aggrieved and disturbed man. "All the statistics show that the most dangerous time in familial homicides is when the woman raises the possibility of separation," Sue explains.

Alas, the domestic violence liaison officer knows what she's talking about. She's been to houses, time and again, where she's found frightened women and children in distress. Sometimes a mother will have locked herself in a bedroom with her children to escape a man's blows; other times, a woman in a pristine house will conceal cuts and welts, and vehemently deny her partner's abuse – despite having called 000 only a few hours before.

Sue has been in the police force for almost 20 years. She started her career in Newcastle, where she was one of two women in a station of more than 50 men. There, she performed general duties and worked in the child mistreatment unit. During this time, the policewoman saw things that tested her mental strength far more than her colleagues' patriarchal attitudes. "When you witness systematic abuse by a man who trained his greyhound dogs to penetrate a young girl for years, it turns your stomach," she says grimly. "You know nothing will shock you as much again."

By the time Sue was assigned to Taree in 1996, she had also experienced the frustration many police feel when dealing with victims of domestic violence. Inevitably, women are so cowed by years of being told they're 'worthless sluts' and worse, it's a long journey before they are emotionally strong enough to defend themselves and take control of their lives.

In Taree, Sue became frustrated by the time spent on many of these cases; in the Aboriginal community especially, she found it almost impossible to build a rapport with women, who distrusted anyone in a police uniform. "It was clear the Koori community was wary of police. I realised it was going to take years to build relationships with victims as a result." Sue was also dissatisfied with the time lag between police intervention in a domestic-violence incident and any follow-up by welfare agencies. "The twenty-four-hour period following a domestic-violence incident is critical; it's during this time that you can bring about change," she says.

So, in November 1999, Sue invited her network of community representatives to a public meeting and outlined a bold plan to change the way victims of domestic violence were supported in the Manning/Great Lakes area. Her vision was for civilian staff and police to work together under one roof. These welfare workers would use unmarked police cars and police radios, have access to police records and would step in immediately after police had responded to a crisis and filed the paperwork. "We needed people working within the police system to provide the kind of specialist support that domestic violence cases required. We needed to do things differently to obtain better outcomes for victims, the community and police."

The solicitors, psychologists, social workers, and representatives from the court, local women's refuge and Koori community who attended Sue's meeting were inspired by her proposal and gave it a unanimous thumbs-up. "I was encouraged by the support I was shown," Sue recalls. "But I knew this wasn't going to happen overnight and it would take a lot of hard work."

However, the policewoman was persistent. She knew her vision challenged police protocol and practice, and sensed she would have to work hard to make the hierarchy take notice. Fortunately, Sue had sympathetic station commanders who were also keen to improve support for domestic-violence victims in the area.

She realised the police authorities would not fund her idea, so she turned to Leonie McGuire, who at the time was manager of Lyn's Place, Taree's only women's refuge. Together they penned many funding applications for a proposed Police/Women's Refuge Partnership Against Domestic Violence Project, and for two years collected nothing but rejection slips.

Undeterred, the pair struck gold in late 2001 with a \$75,000 commitment from the Casino Community Benefit Fund. "We were pleased, but I knew it wasn't enough," Sue says. "I went to my commander and told him we'd have to give the money back because the strategy wasn't going to work without a police car and radio back-up."

But Sue and Leonie are not women who give up easily. Thanks to the support of a five-person committee which did a lot of legwork and paperwork, and ceaseless lobbying and networking by everyone concerned, the team made a breakthrough. A cheque from the NSW Police Minister's Discretionary Fund enabled them to lease a police car for the project and, after persistent lobbying by Sue, the NSW Premier's Department offered funding for two years. The domestic violence project could now afford to employ additional staff, including another Koori representative. "We were given the opportunity to show what we could achieve," says Sue.

The Police/Women's Refuge Partnership Against Domestic Violence Project finally kicked off in May 2002. Sue says the project would not have worked if all the parties involved didn't have a common goal: helping women in distress and reducing the incidence of domestic violence in the Manning Valley district. "Police work in a paramilitary organisation; refuge workers come from a strongly feminist background. You couldn't get two more different bedfellows!"

Beyond the pretty sun-kissed countryside and sparkling tributaries that wind their way through Manning Valley to NSW's mid north coast, there are alarming statistics about domestic violence in the community. According to a 2005 Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research report, on average between six and nine per cent of women over the age of 18 are physically assaulted each year. Most victims of domestic violence are aged between 20 and 39, while the assailant is typically a current or former partner. In the Greater Taree/Manning Valley area, which has a population of 42,838, the domestic-violence project currently has 1,200 clients on its books. On average, the domestic-violence project processes 30 new clients a month – about one new case each day.

Sue says she initially thought four staff members would be plenty to tackle domestic assaults in the region – "overkill even," she laughs mirthlessly – but she's since realised the extent of need. "We couldn't deal with our client caseload without the four workers we have now," she says.

If you are a victim of domestic violence in need of help, call 1800 200 526.

Break the cycle

Both men and women caught in the vortex of domestic violence find it difficult to grasp the fact physical and emotional abuse is inexcusable.

An Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (a type of restraining order) can break this cycle. Senior Constable Michelle Gray, a domestic violence liaison officer explains: "Restraining orders are a civil matter between two people, not a criminal matter as many women believe. It's important women know their rights. An ex-boyfriend who harasses a woman with abusive text messages can be stopped with a restraining order, as can a man who constantly threatens to belt a woman and her children. If a man breaks the court order, it becomes a criminal matter, which means the police can step in."

By Josephine Brouard. Photography: Scott Hawkins. Styling: Nicholas Shoff. Hair & make-up: Jay Jay Rauwenhoff.

