

QPS SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESPONSE STRATEGY 2021–2023

Crime and Intelligence Command



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| INTRODUCTION | 2 |
| Scope of the Strategy | 2 |
| Drivers for Change | 2 |
| <i>QPS Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2021-2023</i> | 5 |
| Actions to Date | 5 |
| Relationship to State and National Priorities and Plans | 7 |
| QPS Capability Owner..... | 8 |
| Strategy Development | 9 |
| DEFINING SEXUAL VIOLENCE | 10 |
| SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVALENCE | 11 |
| COLLABORATIVE MULTIAGENCY RESPONSE..... | 12 |
| Our role in the system | 12 |
| PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING OUR APPROACH | 13 |
| STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS | 14 |
| 1. Advance Our People | 15 |
| 2. Enhance Our Response | 17 |
| 3. Empower Our Community | 19 |
| 4. Maximise Our Relationships | 21 |
| TIMELINE..... | 23 |
| CONCLUSION..... | 24 |
| REFERENCES..... | 25 |

INTRODUCTION

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) commitment to deliver a victim-centric, trauma-informed response to sexual violence will protect our community, strengthen public confidence and build on Queensland and National responses to reduce sexual violence. This *Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2021-2023* aims to enhance the Service's capacity to prevent, disrupt, respond and investigate sexual violence, put victims first and hold perpetrators accountable. It is important to note the *Purpose, Vision, Priorities/Objectives* and *Underlying Principles* relate to this Strategy only.

| Purpose | Vision |
|---|--|
| Together we prevent, disrupt, respond to and investigate sexual violence by putting victims first and holding perpetrators accountable. | A victim-centric, trauma-informed sexual violence response that protects the community, strengthens public confidence, and contributes to Queensland and National integrated action plans. |

The QPS has set four strategic priorities to achieve its vision:

- 1. Advance Our People** towards applying a victim-centric, trauma-informed approach when responding to sexual violence.
- 2. Enhance Our Response** by improving our capability to prevent, disrupt, respond to and investigate sexual violence in Queensland.
- 3. Empower Our Community** and reduce community harm through proactive engagement and education, and promoting access to victim support services.
- 4. Maximise Our Partnerships** with government and non-government agencies, and academia to achieve our vision.

Scope of the Strategy

This strategy relates to sexual violence involving victims over the age of consent (16 years of age or older). Refer to page 9 for our working definition of sexual violence.

Drivers for Change

The QPS recognises the importance of its response to victims of sexual violence. Police assume a critical role for victims during a highly traumatic time and within an unfamiliar criminal justice system. Recent reporting revealed a perception within some sectors of our community that police and the justice system are not

uniformly meeting the needs of victims. The QPS has heard these community concerns and is committed to improving its response to victims of sexual violence:

Royal Commission – The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission) gathered research, explored case studies, interviewed survivors and experts in the areas of prevention, support, investigation and prosecution. The Criminal Justice Report, published in August 2017, identified inadequacies in institutional (including police and justice system) responses to victims, such as¹:

- lack of empathy for victims;
- failing to adequately address their needs in a trauma informed way; and
- victims feeling disempowered during investigation and prosecution processes.

Sexual Violence Prevention Framework – In October 2019 the then Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women, and the Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence published the *Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence* (the Framework).² The Framework establishes priorities for action that guide the Queensland Government's approach to preventing and responding to sexual violence. The Framework identified three priority areas: Prevention; Support and Healing; and Accountability and Justice.

The QPS has responsibility for three action items from Priority Three (Accountability and Justice) under the Framework:

- To develop an online reporting form to provide an alternate avenue for victims of sexual assault to report to police;
- To provide victim-centric and trauma-informed training to all police officers; and
- To conduct a pilot program of a dedicated Sexual Violence Liaison Officer (SVLO) within the Townsville District, and to conduct a comprehensive evaluation to determine the feasibility of the model and resourcing needs for expansion across all districts. Logan District was also added as a trial site during implementation.

Media – On 28 January 2020, ABC News published a report outlining its analysis of sexual assaults reported to police in Australia between 2008 and 2017.³ It was generally critical of the national policing response to sexual assault. The findings for Queensland included:

- In 2018, 40% of sexual assault reports were either unfounded or withdrawn;
- In 2018 Queensland recorded the highest rate of reports withdrawn across Australian jurisdictions (33%); and
- The Gold Coast City Council area recorded 44% of reports withdrawn.

Office of Health Ombudsman – On 5 June 2020, correspondence was received from the Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO) raising concerns about the quality of some police investigations into health practitioners accused of sexual offences. The OHO identified two recurrent and related concerns associated with these police investigations:

- Inconsistency in police decision-making whether to prosecute; and
- Victims being discouraged from pursuing a prosecution.

The OHO infers both issues arise from a mistaken belief by some police there is a limited prospect of a successful prosecution based on the uncorroborated testimony of an otherwise credible victim; and, if the practitioner was found guilty, there is a limited likelihood of a sentence of imprisonment being imposed.

The Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce – On 11 March 2021, the Queensland Government announced a wide-ranging review into the experiences of women and girls with the criminal justice system, both as victims and offenders. The Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce (the Taskforce) was established to undertake the review. In June 2021, the Taskforce released its second discussion paper seeking community feedback about women's and girls' experiences with the criminal justice system regarding sexual violence.⁴ The Taskforce specifically references recognising and responding to trauma, including trauma-informed care and practice. Further, the Taskforce indicated they will examine several other themes in the discussion paper including:

- Community understanding of sexual offences and barriers to reporting;

- Community attitudes to sexual violence against women and girls;
- Police response, investigation and charging of sexual offences;
- Legal and court processes for sexual offences;
- Drivers behind women and girls in the criminal justice system and their engagement with police and the legal system; and
- Women and girls experience of imprisonment and release into the community.

Findings and recommendations from the Taskforce may impact the criminal justice system broadly and the QPS specifically, informing responses to women and girls who are victims of sexual violence or who are accused of crimes.

QPS Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2021-2023

The *QPS Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2021-2023* (the Strategy) provides a framework to address the findings of previous and current inquiries to ensure continuous improvement in QPS responses to victims of sexual violence. The Strategy complements the work of the Royal Commission, Taskforce and the Queensland Government Framework while focussing on the role and responsibilities of police to prevent, disrupt, respond to and investigate sexual violence.

Actions to Date

These recent drivers of change reflect comparable insights revealed by the 2003 Crime and Misconduct Commission report *Seeking Justice: An Inquiry into how sexual offences are handled by the Queensland criminal justice system*⁵ (Seeking Justice). As a result of the report, the QPS initiated significant changes in how it responded to sexual violence.

Included in these reforms was improved investigator training to better understand the impacts of sexual violence and enhance investigator responses. The Understanding Sex Crimes Course was created and delivered to all investigators across the then Juvenile Aid Bureau (now Child Protection and Investigation Units - CPIU) and Criminal Investigation Branches (CIB). At the time, this was a standalone course with limited resourcing to reach future investigators, frontline

sworn officers and/or staff members who are potentially the first QPS representatives to have interaction with victims of sexual violence.

In response to the Seeking Justice report, the QPS and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) also formed the Failed Sexual Offence Prosecutions Steering Committee and associated Working Group which included in their terms of reference an assessment of failed sexual offence prosecutions and whether systemic issues existed in the investigation and prosecution of sexual offences. The Steering Committee and Working Group continues to meet as required. To date, no systemic issues have been identified. Practice issues have been identified and action taken to address them.

In 2016, after identifying a need to extend the work started by the Understanding Sex Crimes Course, the QPS commenced delivering the Investigating Sexual Assault – Corroborating and Understanding Relationship Evidence (ISACURE) course to investigators. This course includes presenters with lived experiences, professionals in the field of trauma and supporting victims, and practical training in interviewing victims of sexual violence. ISACURE continues to be delivered to investigators from around the State and has been independently evaluated as improving the police response to sexual violence.

Since 2019, the QPS has continued to build its suite of initiatives to respond to sexual violence including:

- Developed and implemented an online sexual assault reporting form to provide an alternate reporting avenue for victims of sexual violence. This finalised one of the actions under the Sexual Violence Prevention Framework as well as meeting Royal Commission recommendations;
- Conducted a trial of a dedicated Sexual Violence Liaison Officer (SVLO) in Townsville and Logan Districts, in accordance with action 3.2.1 of the Framework;
- Completed a comprehensive evaluation of the SVLO trial with recommendations for enhancing the QPS response to victims of sexual violence, in accordance with action 3.2.1 of the Framework;
- Commenced development and delivery of a QPS state-wide, sustainable, victim-centric and trauma-informed training program in partnership with

the University of Queensland, in accordance with Royal Commission recommendations; and

- Established a Sexual Violence Prevention Working Group to lead and inform the Service-wide response to sexual violence.

While the Service has responded to previous calls for reform of its response to sexual violence, the QPS recognises that sustaining and building improvements requires a coordinated response. This Strategy represents the mechanism through which the Service will harness and coordinate activity to deliver, and continually improve, its professional, victim-centric and trauma informed responses to victims of sexual violence. The Detective Superintendent, Child Abuse and Sexual Crime Group (CASCg), Crime and Intelligence Command (CIC) will assume the role of capability owner for the Strategy to coordinate fit for purpose, agile and flexible strategies supported by clear actionable tasks implemented across the State. This role includes consistent messaging about the Service's commitment to professional, victim-centric and trauma informed responses to sexual violence.

Relationship to State and National Priorities and Plans

The QPS *Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2021-2023* aligns with a broad range of State and National reforms, frameworks, action plans and strategies currently being implemented across Australian jurisdictions (see Figure 1).

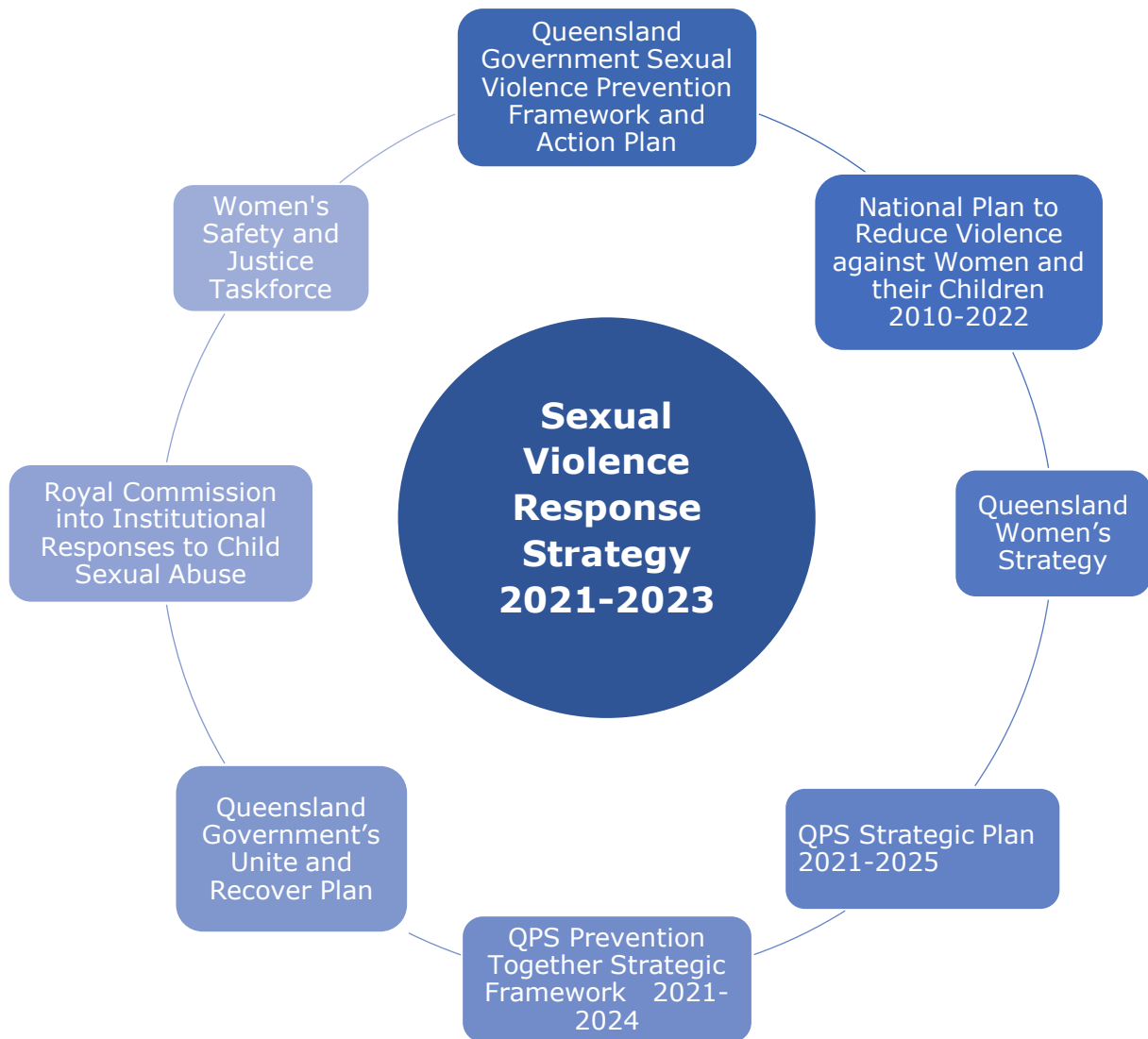


Figure 1. State and National priorities/plans

QPS Capability Owner

The Child Abuse and Sexual Crime Group (CASCg) is a specialist group within the Crime and Intelligence Command (CIC). The CASCg aims to protect children and the community by identifying, responding to and preventing physical and sexual offending. The Sexual Crime Unit, CASCg is responsible for responding to serious or complex cases of serial rape, sexual assault and online sex crimes against adult victims, and providing specialist investigative assistance to regions.

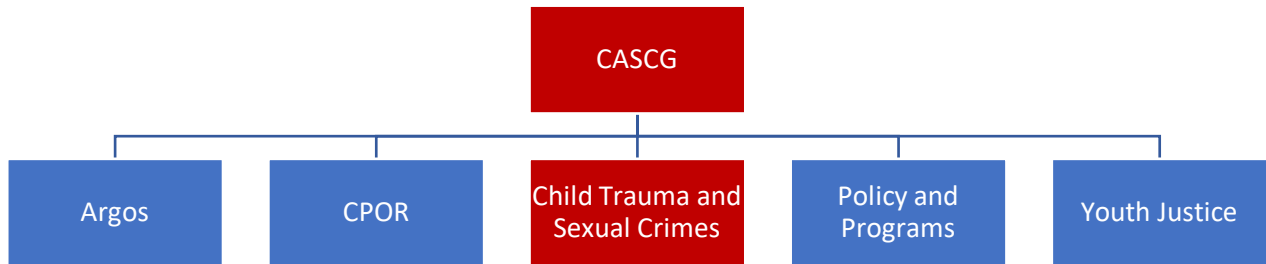


Figure 2. CASCG Organisational Chart

In June 2021, following CIC's Commissioner's Performance Review, CASCG assumed responsibility for the Service's sexual violence capability. This role includes, but is not limited to, coordinating specialist sexual violence advice, training, intelligence and best-practice investigations state-wide, and managing the implementation and monitoring of this Strategy.

Strategy Development

The objectives, strategies and action items that comprise the Strategy were developed in consultation with subject matter specialists from Commands, Regional/District representatives, and a rapid review of internal and external sources. This includes sexual violence strategic plans from other National and international jurisdictions, Queensland and national frameworks, internal evaluations and research evidence.

DEFINING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual Violence is defined as any unwanted sexual behaviour towards another person and encompasses a range of offence types.⁶ The scope of this strategy is sexual violence relating to victims over the age of consent (16 years of age or older), and encompasses the following offence types:

- **Sexual assault**⁷ refers to any unwanted sexual act that is forced on a person without their consent – including where intimidation, physical force, or coercion are involved. Sexual assault includes rape and attempted rape, as well as unwanted sexual touching or groping, or being forced to perform a sexual act on another person. Rape is a term used when sexual penetration is involved.
- **Youth sexual violence and abuse**⁸ is defined as sexual contact between persons where either the perpetrator or the victim is under 18 years of age and where that contact is non-consensual. Such contact is non-consensual if either person is under 16 years of age (out of scope) or lacks the capacity to consent, or if a situation of imbalance of power exists, and if there is the presence of a threat or coercion to either person.
- **Technology-facilitated sexual violence**⁹ is a range of behaviours where digital technologies are used to facilitate both virtual and face-to-face sexually based harms. This can include unwanted sexting, cyberstalking using mobile phones and social media technology, harassing and repetitive text messages or phone calls of a sexual nature, using technology to record sexual activity without consent, creating fake sexual images or videos, and sharing sexual images or video without consent of those involved, often called image-based abuse.
- **Intimate partner sexual violence**¹⁰ refers to the perpetration of sexual acts without consent in intimate relationships (including by cohabiting and non-cohabiting partners, boyfriends/girlfriends, spouses or dates). It may involve physical force or psychological/emotional coercion, unwanted sexual acts, or tactics used to control decisions around reproduction. Intimate partner sexual violence often occurs alongside other forms of domestic and family violence, and puts a victim at much higher risk of being killed.¹¹

SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVALENCE

NATIONAL

27,505

Sexual assault victims
in FY2019/20. This equates to 107
victims per 100,000 population¹

↑ 5%

Average yearly
increase in
victims since
FY2014/15



4 in 5 of
victims are
female²

1 in 3 sexual assaults are
domestic or family violence
related (intimate partner
sexual violence)³



Significantly under-reported
A FY2019/20 survey estimates
62,700 adults experienced sexual
assault. Only **30%** reported the most
recent incident to police⁴



67%
sexual assaults
occur in residential
locations⁵

Note: There is no nationally consistent method of capturing sexual violence.
Therefore these statistics focus on 'sexual assault'.

QUEENSLAND

6,870

**Sexual violence
related offences***
involving victims 16 years
and over in 2020⁶

↑ 16%

Increase
compared to
2017
(n=5,908)



4 in 5 of
victims are
female⁹

96% of offenders
are male¹⁰

35% One of the highest
withdrawn or proportions across
unfounded Australian jurisdictions⁷
in 2020

**Rape myths,
Negative attitudes**

by police are some of the key hurdles that
stop victims feeling believed and supported⁸

**Population groups at a higher
risk of experiencing sexual
violence¹¹:**

- First Nations people
- People with disability
- LGBTIQ+ people
- People from CALD backgrounds
- Sex workers
- People in the custodial system

*Includes all offence codes under 'sexual offences' except online report – sexual assault, indecent treatment of children, and unlawful carnal knowledge.

^ includes rape and attempted rape complaints

1 Australian Bureau of Statistics – Victims of Sexual Assault Australia ABS Recorded Crime Victims 2019 -20

2 Australian Bureau of Statistics – Victims of Sexual Assault Australia ABS Recorded Crime Victims 2019 -20

3 Australian Bureau of Statistics – Victims of Sexual Assault Australia ABS Recorded Crime Report 2019.

4 <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crimeand-justice/crime-victimisation-australia/2019-20#sexual-assault>

5 Australian Bureau of Statistics – Victims of Sexual Assault Australia ABS Recorded Crime Report 2019.

6 Queensland Police Service. Sexual Offences data extract [10 June 2021]

7 Queensland Police Service. Sexual Offences data extract [10 June 2021]; <https://www.abc.net.au/news/202001-28/how-police-are-failing-survivors-of-sexual-assault/11871364>

8 Scott, R., Douglas, H., & Goss, C. (2017). Prosecution of Rape and Sexual Assault in Queensland: Report on a Pilot Study

9 Queensland Police Service. Sexual Offences data extract. Time period: CY2017-2020. [10 June 2021]

10 Queensland Government Statisticians Office – Crime Report 2019

11 Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence

COLLABORATIVE MULTIAGENCY RESPONSE

Due to the often complex nature of sexual violence offences, integrated multi-agency responses are imperative.¹² A broad range of government and non-government agencies assume key roles in responding to sexual violence, including the Queensland Police Service, Queensland Health, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors, Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, and non-government organisations who deliver specialist sexual assault support services.¹³ While each agency has their own role within the system, effective inter-agency partnerships will enable the delivery of a holistic response that supports victims through the criminal justice process, from their first point of contact, to investigation, prosecution and beyond.¹⁴

Our role in the system

The QPS assumes a unique and important role within the multi-agency response, including:

- **Identify** – Provide avenues for victims to report sexual violence;
- **Investigate** – Investigate allegations, identify the suspect/offender, gather evidence;
- **Protect** – Protect the victim from further harm;
- **Prosecute** – Prosecute the offender;
- **Support** – Support the victim through the investigation and court process, refer victim to appropriate external support services, keep the victim informed, provide safety advice as appropriate;
- **Educate** – Deliver community education and awareness campaigns, as well as inform and promote partner agency information and education campaigns;
- **Prevent** – Leverage intelligence and research to promote primary, secondary and tertiary prevention messages and strategies to promote community safety; and
- **Disrupt** – Develop targeted strategies to interrupt facilitators of crime and/or patterns in offending to promote the safety of identifiable populations in defined situations and/or at risk of victimisation.

PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING OUR APPROACH

The principles underpinning this strategy align with the QPS purpose, “*Together we prevent, disrupt, respond and investigate*” (see Figure 3 below).

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Prevent</p> <p>Work together to reduce harm, trauma and crime to enhance community safety.</p> | <p>Disrupt</p> <p>In collaboration, conduct intelligence-led, early intervention activities to reduce crime opportunities that harm our community</p> |
| <p>Respond</p> <p>Provide timely and coordinated interventions to address real or perceived issues to protect our community.</p> | <p>Investigate</p> <p>Objectively and impartially examine and analyse an event or crime to achieve a just outcome in service of our community.</p> |

Figure 3. Principles underpinning our approach

Translation of these principles is informed by the following practice orientation:

- **Victim-centric** – prioritisation of victim needs using methods designed to reduce ongoing trauma.¹⁵
- **Trauma-informed** – a strengths-based framework grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, emphasising physical, psychological, and emotional safety for everyone; and one that creates opportunities for victims to build a sense of control and empowerment.¹⁶
- **Evidence-informed** – approaches that combine researched/evaluated interventions to guide, inform and build on responses and services for victims.¹⁷
- **Consideration of human rights** – respect, protect and promote the human rights of individuals in alignment with the *Human Rights Act 2019*.¹⁸

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

| Purpose | Vision |
|---|--|
| Together we prevent, disrupt, respond to and investigate sexual violence by putting victims first and holding perpetrators accountable. | A victim-centric, trauma-informed sexual violence response that protects the community, strengthens public confidence, and contributes to Queensland and National integrated action plans. |

The Queensland Police Service has established four interconnected strategic priorities to achieve this purpose and vision:

| Advance Our People | Enhance Our Response | Empower Our Community | Maximise Our Relationships |
|---|---|---|--|
| Advance our workforce towards applying a victim-centric, trauma-informed approach when responding to sexual violence. | Improve our capability to prevent, disrupt, respond to and investigate sexual violence in Queensland. | Empower the Queensland community and reduce community harm through proactive engagement and education, and promoting access to victim support services. | Maximise partnerships with government and non-government agencies, and academia to achieve our vision. |

Priorities, Strategies, Action Plan & Success Measures

The strategies, action items, and success measures underpinning each objective/priority area are outlined in the following section (refer to Appendix A for this information presented in a table format).

1. Advance Our People

Advance our workforce towards applying a victim-centric, trauma-informed approach when responding to sexual violence.

Advancing the Service's workforce towards applying a victim-centric, trauma-informed approach¹⁹ when responding to sexual violence represents a key priority and aligns with the QPS' *Prevention Together Strategic Framework 2021-2024*, as well as national and international best-practice. The Queensland Government Sexual Violence Prevention Framework identified the need for the broader justice system, including police, to improve responses to victims.²⁰ This starts with the first point of contact with a victim through to the investigation and prosecution processes. A key opportunity exists for the QPS to enhance the training of members when interacting with victims, conducting sexual violence related investigations and responding to vulnerable victims. This also includes addressing any perceived beliefs about prospects for successful prosecution for sexual violence offences.²¹ Advancing the Service towards a victim-centric, trauma-informed response to sexual violence will enhance our response to victims, break down barriers to reporting,²² and address concerns regarding withdrawn and unfounded complaints.²³ This strategic priority will be achieved through the following strategies.

We Aim To

- 1.1. Drive cultural change regarding sexual violence responses through leadership and victim-centric, trauma informed practices.
- 1.2. Develop, implement and evaluate specialist sexual violence training that is consistent with best-practice and evidence informed.
- 1.3. Continually review and benchmark sexual violence training needs of QPS members to remain current with evidence-informed responses and State/National frameworks.
- 1.4. Promote strategies consistent with the QPS Our People Matter Strategy to support the wellbeing of our members responding to sexual violence.

What Success Looks Like

- ✓ An increase in frontline QPS members completing victim-centric, trauma-informed training.
- ✓ An increase in frontline QPS members applying a victim-centric, trauma-informed approach in responding to sexual violence.
- ✓ An increase in investigative skills for responding to sexual violence.

- ✓ QPS members responding to sexual violence are supported.

Action Plan

The following section details actions the QPS has already progressed, as well the next steps to be taken in order to realise this strategic priority. The following action items align to the strategies detailed in this section.

In progress

- ✓ Continue to drive cultural change through the QPS Sexual Violence Working Group.
- ✓ Drive change through the QPS and ODPP Failed Sexual Offence Prosecutions Steering Committee and Working Groups.
- ✓ Continue delivering ISACURE training to investigators across the State.

Next Steps

- ☐ Develop internal communication products and resources to increase awareness of QPS members in relation to our response to sexual violence.
- ☐ Support District Officers to drive cultural change within their areas.
- ☐ Deliver mandatory trauma-informed, victim-centric training to all frontline QPS members.
- ☐ Evaluate mandatory trauma-informed, victim-centric training at each phase (2021-2022), to inform enhancements as required.
- ☐ Engage with the Safety & Wellbeing Group (OCC) to promote wellbeing initiatives for QPS members responding to sexual violence.

2. Enhance Our Response

Enhance our capability to prevent, disrupt, respond to and investigate sexual violence in Queensland.

Delivering consistent professional responses to sexual violence across the State will be achieved by designating the Detective Superintendent, CASCg as the Service's capability owner for sexual violence. This capability will enable central coordination of the Service's professional and evidence-informed response to sexual violence; support QPS members to build and apply their responses to sexual violence; promote victim-centric trauma-informed practice; and expand innovative QPS-led victim support models. The QPS is committed to enhancing its data capture of sexual violence offences to build its evidence base, inform insight and foresight of sexual violence issues, and produce evidence-based and intelligence-based responses to sexual violence. Enhancing our capability to prevent, disrupt, respond to and investigate sexual violence will be realised through the following strategies.

We Aim To

- 2.1 Designate the CASCg as the organisation's capability owner for specialist sexual violence advice, training, intelligence and investigations.
- 2.2 Expand the Sexual Violence Liaison Officer (SVLO) capability or other innovative victim support models across QPS regions.
- 2.3 Provide leadership and support to areas undergoing thematic Sexual Violence Commissioner Performance Reviews, and future Business Unit Reviews.
- 2.4 Develop and continually review organisational capabilities and processes to enhance service delivery and support QPS members responding to sexual violence.
- 2.5 Establish consistent and high quality data recording practices for sexual violence occurrences to support decision making and evaluate service delivery.
- 2.6 Utilise research and intelligence to inform prevention, disruption, response and investigation by QPS.

What Success Looks Like

- ✓ Designation of CASCg as the QPS capability owner for specialist sexual violence advice, training, intelligence and investigations.
- ✓ An improvement in understanding of, and ability to effectively respond to, sexual violence.
- ✓ The expansion of the SVLO or other innovative victim support model across QPS regions.
- ✓ QPS members have access to current data to inform decision making and investigative responses.
- ✓ Commissioners Performance Reviews and Business Unit Reviews drive continuous improvement across the Service.

Action Plan

The following section details the actions that the QPS has already progressed, as well the next steps to be taken in order to realise this strategic priority. The following action items align to the strategies detailed in this section.

In progress

- ✓ Designate CASCg as capability owner for the organisation's sexual violence response.
- ✓ Establish a SVLO implementation plan across QPS regions.

Next Steps

- ☐ CASCg to engage with and support Regions participating in thematic Sexual Violence Commissioner Performance Reviews, and future Business Unit Reviews.
- ☐ Develop a dashboard to assist Districts in monitoring sexual violence reports and outcomes.
- ☐ Review data relating to sexual violence offences to gauge progress of the Strategy.
- ☐ Review data capture of sexual violence offences, including finalisations; internet-facilitated offences; and national data recording consistencies.
- ☐ Develop evaluation framework for the Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2021-2023.
- ☐ Evaluate the Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2021-23.
- ☐ Develop the next Sexual Violence Response Strategy.
- ☐ Engage with Commissioner's Performance Review Unit to develop thematic reviews on sexual violence.

3. Empower Our Community

Empower the Queensland community and reduce community harm through proactive engagement and education, and promoting access to victim support services.

The Queensland Framework highlights the important role the community assumes in preventing sexual violence, particularly in changing attitudes that enable the behaviour.²⁴ This includes perceptions of gender equality, tolerance of aggression and violence, and treating sex and sexual violence as taboo and secret.²⁵ Empowering the community represents a key opportunity for the QPS, in partnership with key stakeholders, to develop and implement prevention strategies tailored towards keeping communities safe, and reducing harm and victimisation; awareness of our role in responding to sexual violence; and options for reporting offences.²⁶ This strategic priority will be realised through the following strategies.

We Aim To

- 3.1 Increase community awareness of the QPS role as part of an integrated system response to sexual violence.
- 3.2 Support tailored strategic and evidence-informed prevention activities for diverse population groups in collaboration with government and non-government agency partners.
- 3.3 Increase awareness of identified and anonymous reporting avenues, and alternative justice options.

What Success Looks Like

- ✓ An increase in reporting of sexual violence in Queensland through identified and anonymous avenues.
- ✓ An increase in victim satisfaction with the QPS.
- ✓ A reduction in revictimisation, particularly those at higher risk of experiencing sexual violence, including First Nations people, people with disability, LBGTIQ+ communities, CALD communities, sex workers, and people in custody.
- ✓ An increase in community engagement and education activities.

Action Plan

The following section details the actions that the QPS has already progressed, as well the next steps to be taken in order to realise this strategic priority. The following action items align to the strategies detailed in this section.

In progress

- ✓ Implement the sexual violence prevention communication strategy (see appendix C).
- ✓ Engage with stakeholders to provide information about reporting options, sexual violence prevention and personal safety.

Next Steps

- ☐ Enhance profile during Sexual Violence Awareness Month (October) in collaboration with partner agencies.
- ☐ Community engagement with the CALD community, vulnerable persons (including people with disabilities, mental health and the elderly) and sex workers.

4. Maximise Our Relationships

Maximise partnerships with government and non-government agencies, and academia to achieve our vision.

Responding to sexual violence requires a holistic approach involving multi-agency collaboration.²⁷ The effective response to sexual violence involves leveraging the expertise of a range of government and non-government agencies in relation to community prevention, providing support to victims, investigating reported offences and prosecuting offenders.²⁸ Research evidence indicates an integrated system response facilitates shared knowledge and communication of a victim's context and needs.²⁹ To assist the QPS in carrying out its role within an integrated response (i.e. supporting victims and holding perpetrators to account), the QPS will maximise relationships with relevant stakeholders by undertaking the following strategies:

We Aim To

- 4.1 Maintain our relationships with:
 - government and non-government agencies to discuss and address issues regarding responses to sexual violence.
 - internal, State, and national working groups to remain current with sexual violence responses and emerging issues
 - universities and other research institutions to drive innovative research and development of evidence-based responses
 - national and international law enforcement partners to enhance cross-jurisdictional response capabilities.
- 4.2 Enhance collaboration and integration with partner agencies to provide specialist support to victims and offender, including through police referrals.

What Success Looks Like

- ✓ A more holistic response to sexual violence.
- ✓ Promotion and implementation of multi-agency models across QPS regions as a result of effective relationships (e.g. Sexual Assault Response Team).
- ✓ An improvement in responses to victims through the investigation and prosecution processes as a result of maximising partnerships with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Action Plan

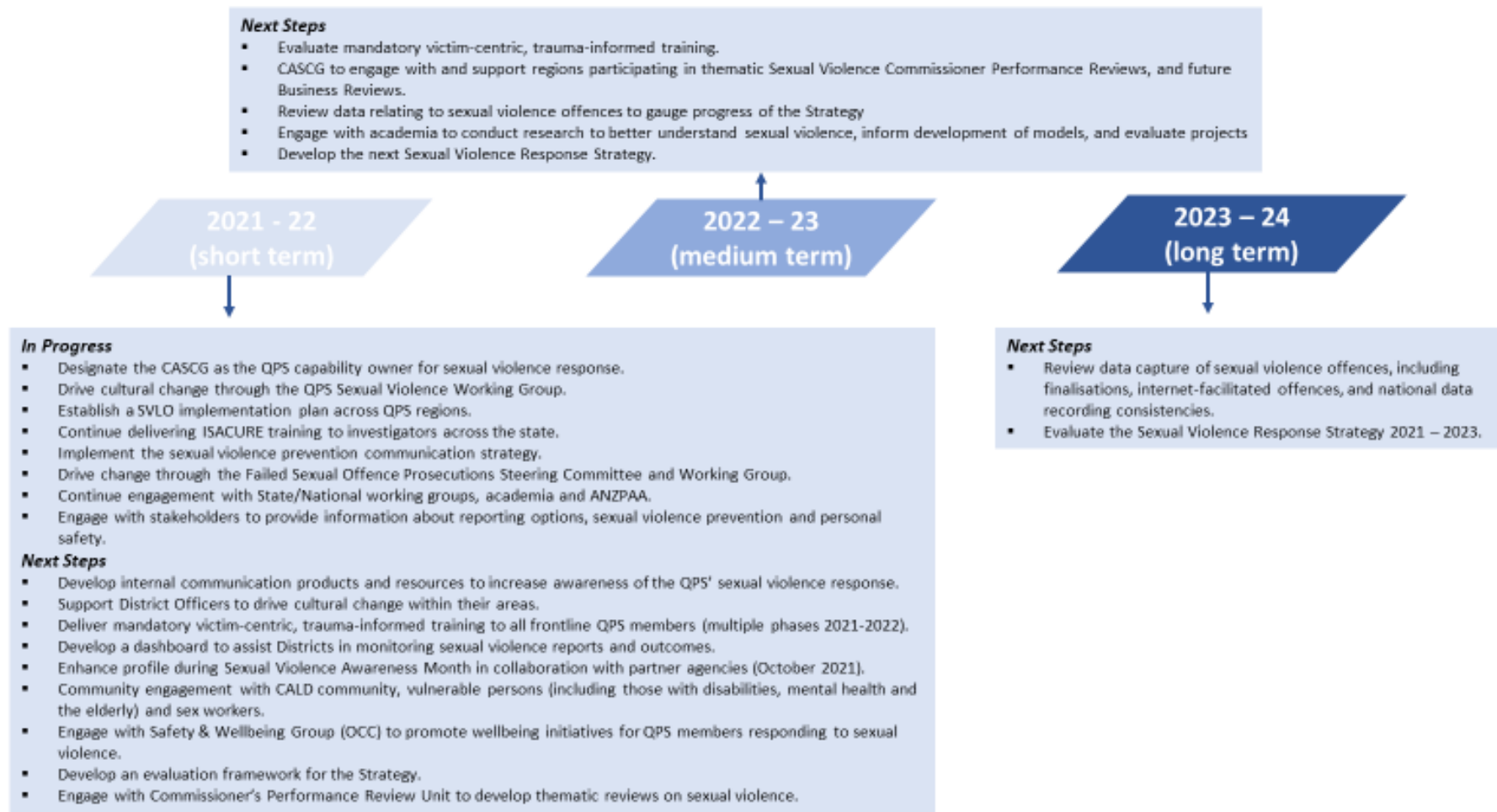
The following section details the actions that the QPS has already progressed, as well the next steps to be taken in order to realise this strategic priority. The following action items align to the strategies detailed in this section.

In progress

- ✓ Maintain stakeholder engagement through State and national Working Group meetings.
- ✓ Engage with academia to conduct research to better understand sexual violence, inform development of models, and evaluate projects.
- ✓ Continue engagement with ANZPAA in relation to national sexual violence responses and other vulnerable person action plans.

TIMELINE

The successful delivery of the *QPS Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2021-2023* will involve a phased approach. The following timeline presents short, medium and long-term action items that will be implemented across the four strategic priorities.



CONCLUSION

The importance of responding effectively to sexual violence within our community cannot be overstated. The lasting impact, trauma and devastation of this crime is well-established – for victims, their families and communities. The *QPS Sexual Violence Response Strategic Plan 2021-2023* will enhance the organisation's collective capacity to prevent, disrupt, respond to, and investigate sexual violence. The four strategic priorities/objectives and their relevant strategies in this document establish a coordinated framework for the QPS to advance improvements in the way it responds to victims of sexual violence. Importantly, the QPS cannot address sexual violence in isolation; other government and non-government agencies, and the community share this responsibility. This document also serves as a platform for working in collaboration to address this complex crime and protect the Queensland community.

REFERENCES

- ¹ <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/media-releases/report-criminal-justice-released>
- ² Queensland Government. (2019). Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence.
- ³ ABC News. (2020). Rough justice: How police are failing survivors of sexual assault. Retrieved from <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-28/how-police-are-failing-survivors-of-sexual-assault/11871364?nw=0>
- ⁴ https://www.womenstaskforce.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/687614/wsjt-discussion-paper-2-final.pdf
- ⁵ https://www.womenstaskforce.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/687614/wsjt-discussion-paper-2-final.pdf
- ⁶ <https://www.ccc.qld.gov.au/publications/seeking-justice-inquiry-how-sexual-offences-are-handled-queensland-criminal-justice>
- ⁷ Queensland Government. (2019). Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence.
- ⁸ Queensland Government. (2019). Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence.
- ⁹ Queensland Government. (2019). Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence.
- ¹⁰ Queensland Government. (2019). Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence.
- ¹¹ Queensland Government. (2014). Response to sexual assault: Interagency guidelines for responding to people who have experienced sexual assault; Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. 2019. *Intimate partner sexual violence: research synthesis*. 2nd Ed. ANROWS Insights. 08/2019
- ¹² ANROWS. (2015). Meta-evaluation of existing interagency partnerships, collaboration, coordination and/or integrated interventions and service response to violence against women: State of knowledge paper. Retrieved from <https://www.anrows.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Integrated-Responses-Meta-Evaluation-Landscapes-State-of-knowledge-Issue-Eleven.pdf>
- ¹³ Queensland Government. (2014). Response to sexual assault: Interagency guidelines for responding to people who have experienced sexual assault.
- ¹⁴ Queensland Government. (2014). Response to sexual assault: Interagency guidelines for responding to people who have experienced sexual assault.
- ¹⁵ <https://communitysafety.vic.gov.au/putting-victims-first/>
- ¹⁶ Queensland Government. (2019). Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence.
- ¹⁷ Queensland Government. (2019). Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence.
- ¹⁸ <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/your-rights/human-rights>
- ¹⁹ Quadara, A., (2015). Implementing trauma-informed systems of care in health settings: The WITH study. State of knowledge paper. Sydney: ANROWS
- ²⁰ Queensland Government. (2019). Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence.
- ²¹ Queensland Government. (2019). Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence; Queensland Police Service Sexual Violence Prevention Working Group. Terms of Reference; Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.
- ²² Scott, R., Douglas, H., & Goss, C. (2017). Prosecution of Rape and Sexual Assault in Queensland: Report on a Pilot Study.
- ²³ ABC News. (2020). Rough justice: How police are failing survivors of sexual assault. Retrieved from <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-28/how-police-are-failing-survivors-of-sexual-assault/11871364?nw=0>
- ²⁴ Queensland Government. (2019). Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence.
- ²⁵ Queensland Government. (2019). Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence.
- ²⁶ Queensland Government. (2019). Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence.
- ²⁷ Queensland Government. (2019). Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence; Australian Government. (2010). National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children.
- ²⁸ Queensland Government. (2014). Response to sexual assault: Interagency guidelines for responding to people who have experienced sexual assault.
- ²⁹ ANROWS. (2015). Meta-evaluation of existing interagency partnerships, collaboration, coordination and/or integrated interventions and service response to violence against women: State of knowledge paper.