

FINAL REPORT

**QPS SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESPONSE
STRATEGY (2021 – 2023) EVALUATION**

PREPARED FOR:

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- to evaluate the Strategy, it was not possible to assess changes in victim-survivor experiences over time.

In addition to these limitations, the ability to evaluate trends over time (particularly pre-post Strategy implementation) was hampered by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The key findings should be considered in light of these limitations.

Key Findings

This Evaluation was guided by four Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs):

1. Has the Strategy advanced the QPS workforce towards applying a victim-centric, trauma-informed approach when responding to sexual violence?
2. Has the Strategy improved QPS capability to prevent, disrupt, respond to and investigate sexual violence in Queensland?
3. Has the Strategy empowered the community and/or reduced community harm?
4. How has the QPS enhanced collaboration with partner agencies?

The QPS has made progress in **advancing its workforce towards applying a victim-centric, trauma-informed approach when responding to sexual violence (KEQ1)**. Findings show that, from the perspective of external stakeholders, the QPS has been improving organisational awareness and understanding of a victim-centric, trauma-informed approach to sexual violence. However, capability building towards such an approach, across sworn and unsworn staff and across ranks, currently appears to be higher among sworn and higher ranked officers, compared to unsworn staff and more junior officers. Although awareness of the Strategy was lower among junior frontline officers than more senior officers, there was general support for a victim-centric, trauma-informed approach. However, around half Senior Constables and two-fifths of Constables surveyed reported not feeling well prepared to respond to sexual violence. Given unsworn officers and junior staff frequently form part of the first response to sexual violence victim-survivors, even if the investigation is handed over and subsequently led by more experienced officers, consistency across staff in understanding and applying victim-centric, trauma-informed policing practices must be ensured.

Recognising that building capability takes time, there is evidence that there has also been progress in **improving the QPS capability to prevent, disrupt, respond to and investigate**

sexual violence in Queensland (KEQ2). Findings show that both internal and external stakeholders supported the SVLO role and the reconfiguration of training as key elements in supporting the QPS response. Completion of training does appear to increase officer understanding of trauma-informed practice, however, the findings identified some ongoing training needs across the organisation, as well as an under-use of data to inform proactive approaches. Addressing these gaps would enhance organisational capacity to prevent, respond to and investigate sexual violence. While progress has been made in responding to sexual violence, this progress is uneven. Findings highlight variations in officer and external stakeholder perceptions and experiences across settings and regions, including the outcome of sexual violence cases, the confidence in police responses to sexual violence, access to specialist training and the perceived prioritisation of sexual violence responses as core business.

Assessing the extent to which **the Strategy has empowered the community and/or reduced community harm (KEQ3)** is challenging, complicated by ongoing shifts in the social and political context. Similar to domestic and family violence reporting, the reporting of sexual violence in Queensland has significantly increased in recent years, likely driven by a combination of factors including greater awareness by victim-survivors of what constitutes sexual violence and the reporting avenues available to them, greater confidence of disclosing recent and historical experiences of sexual violence in the aftermath of Australia's #metoo movement, more proactive policing practices of domestic, family and sexual violence and the implementation of wider domestic, family and sexual violence reforms in Queensland, including the Strategy. That said, external stakeholders were supportive of the broadening of options for victim-survivors to report but were still concerned about the impact of literacy and access to technology for some victims' ability to use these alternatives.

Lastly, **the QPS is working more collaboratively with partner agencies (KEQ4).** Improved collaboration with partner agencies could be observed prior to the introduction of the Strategy (for example, the Sexual Assault Response Team or SART model). Existing partnerships have provided a foundation for the building of enhanced collaborations in responding to sexual violence. Collaborative efforts need to be organisational relationships, embedded into core business, rather than dependent on individual champions within particular work units.

Recommendations

The Evaluation led to 16 recommendations:

Education and Training

Recommendation 1: The QPS should more widely circulate the aims and objectives of the Strategy. In doing so they should educate QPS staff about the vision and purpose of the Strategy and associated changes to policy and practice. Education about the Strategy appears to be occurring at the local level; however, a state-wide approach would promote consistency.

Recommendation 2: “Victim-centric” and “trauma-informed” policing responses should be defined and operationalised consistently and clearly so QPS members are aware of how they can put these concepts into practice in a manner that is consistent with their day-to-day operations and job role. This applies to both sworn and unsworn QPS staff. Without clear guidance there is a risk that “victim-centric” and “trauma-informed” philosophies become “buzz words” that lack meaning and practical application.

Recommendation 3: QPS leadership needs to hold accurate and informed understandings about sexual violence and victim-survivor responses to trauma to ensure enhanced practice at all levels of the QPS hierarchy. Specifically, QPS staff at higher ranks should frequently undertake refresher training to ensure an accurate and up-to-date understanding of sexual violence that is compatible with recent innovations and research. This will ensure that QPS cultural beliefs about sexual violence and victim-survivor responses continue to be refreshed, and that cultural change is driven through trauma-informed and victim-centric leadership. (This aligns with Recommendation 28 of the Taskforce Report 2.)

Recommendation 4: The QPS should place particular emphasis on the role of frontline sworn and unsworn QPS staff in responding to sexual violence when seeking to enhance their response. Frontline responders provide the initial response to a victim-survivor reports of sexual violence in a proportion of cases. The initial response of the QPS to a victim-survivor has the potential to either facilitate or discourage the progression of a report of sexual violence. (This aligns with Recommendation 28 of the Taskforce Report 2).

Recommendation 5: The QPS should continue to enhance training in response to sexual violence across all levels of the QPS hierarchy. Both sworn and unsworn staff require training

in how to respond to sexual violence. It is particularly recommended that the QPS review the training that is currently available and consider: 1) whether the training is adequate and up-to-date; 2) whether the training is appropriate for specific job roles; and 3) whether the training can be reconfigured to avoid duplication and training fatigue. (This aligns with Recommendation 28 of the Taskforce Report 2).

Recommendation 6: The QPS should remove barriers for entry into the ISACURE training by considering: 1) the need for prerequisites; and 2) the need for staff to travel to Brisbane to complete the training. ISACURE is considered an important training course by internal stakeholders. (This aligns with Recommendation 28 of the Taskforce Report 2).

Policy and Practice

Recommendation 7: As the SVLO role is crucial to the cultural change management process, making it part of the responsibilities of Officers in Charge (OICs) signals this importance. However, although the SVLO role is viewed positively, the leadership aspect of the role is not well-understood by all QPS members or external stakeholders. To reduce confusion about the nature of the role and how it is assigned, clearer internal and external communication about the role and its key responsibilities in relation to sexual violence is needed. (This aligns with Recommendation 29 of the Taskforce Report 2).

Recommendation 8: The QPS should follow a state-wide and consistent policy to encourage enhanced engagement with key external stakeholders. This will ensure engagement does not come down to individuals. External stakeholder engagement should continue to be improved.

Recommendation 9: The QPS should further explore opportunities to apply a data-driven approach to support prevention of, responses to and investigations of sexual violence, including better use of the Dashboard and other available data.

Recommendation 10: The 14-day policy (regarding the withdrawal of reports of victimisation) should be clearly communicated to relevant QPS staff. It is further recommended that the policy be evaluated for its efficacy and alignment with a victim-centric approach to address concerns by police stakeholders raised in the Evaluation. The Evaluation findings indicate that QPS staff understanding of the 14-day policy varies greatly and that there are some concerns about its alignment with a victim-centric approach. Clarification around the purpose and application of the 14-day framework, while maintaining a victim-centric approach, is required.

Recommendation 11: The wellbeing of QPS staff across all regions and work units is of ongoing concern to the QPS. While QPS frontline staff are frequently exposed to vicarious trauma when responding to domestic, family and sexual violence, child maltreatment, homicide, suicide and road accidents, specialist staff who respond to sexual violence may be at particular risk of poor wellbeing outcomes. The Evaluation did not include data to compare wellbeing across work units but highlighted the need to support officer wellbeing under the SVRS. The QPS should continue to monitor staff wellbeing, taking note of differences across work units and ensuring access to support mechanisms.

Online Reporting

Recommendation 12: The QPS should more widely advertise the availability of the variety of reporting options available (including the Online Reporting Form, Alternative Reporting Options or ARO and Policelink). This can be done via social media and by increasing the awareness of these options among victim-survivor support services. The impacts of advertising campaigns can be analysed using social media impression analyses. Providing a variety of reporting options reduces barriers to reporting.

Recommendation 13: The QPS should make online reporting options available in languages other than English to ensure that access to the Online Reporting Form and to the ARO are made more accessible to those for whom English is not their first language. NSW Police have recently launched online reporting for sexual assault victim-survivors in a dozen languages. The QPS should implement a similar strategy.

Long-term Evaluation

Recommendation 14: To understand the long-term impacts of the Strategy, the QPS should continue to track the percentage of reports of sexual violence that are cleared as solved, withdrawn or unfounded, over time.

Recommendation 15: Victim-survivor complaints (i.e., Ethical Standards) data should be obtained and analysed independently. This data will assist to shed light on client experience. The Evaluation did not include data to assess changes in the number and nature of victim complaints about police.

Recommendation 16: The QPS should implement an ongoing public satisfaction survey. An ongoing survey that occurs annually or quarterly would better equip the QPS to assess the

impacts of changes made to policy and practice over time. Moreover, such a change would better facilitate the alignment of QPS policy and practice with victim-survivor voices. When conducting a post-hoc evaluation of strategy implementation it is not possible to observe change in victim-survivor perceptions and experiences over time without pre-implementation data.

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List of Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ARO	Alternative Reporting Options
BUR	Business Unit Reviews
CASCG	Child Abuse and Sexual Crime Group
CBIAS	Challenging Beliefs, Inferences, Attitudes and Stereotypes
CIB	Criminal Investigation Branches
CPIU	Child Protection and Investigation Units
CSAFE	Child Sexual Abuse Fundamentals Education
ICARE	Interviewing Children and Recording Evidence
ISACURE	Investigating Sexual Assault – Corroborating and Understanding Relationship Evidence
KEQs	Key evaluation questions
M(SD)	Mean (standard deviation)
N	Sample size
OIC	Officer in Charge
OLGR	Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation
OPM	Operational Procedures Manual
PC	Plain Clothes
QPrime	Queensland Police Records Information Management Exchange
QPS	Queensland Police Service
QSAN	Queensland Sexual Assault Network
RMS	Rape Myth Scale
Royal Commission	Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
SAIK	Sexual Assault Investigation Kit
SART	Sexual Assault Response Team
S/Constable	Senior Constable
S/Sergeant	Senior Sergeant
SVLO	Sexual Violence Liaison Officer
The Strategy	Sexual Violence Response Strategy
TMS	Trauma Misperceptions Scale
Taskforce	Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The Sexual Violence Response Strategy (2021-2023) (the Strategy) is the first strategy developed by Queensland Police Service (QPS) which focuses on enhancing organisational capacity to prevent, disrupt, respond to and investigate sexual violence. The Strategy was introduced in October 2021. This strategy, and its accompanying actions to change how the QPS responds to sexual violence, resulted from ongoing concerns emerging in inquiries, media reports and other forums about how institutions (including the police) interact with victim-survivors of sexual violence.

For example, the 2017 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission, 2017) identified inadequacies in institutional responses, including police responses, to victims of child sexual abuse. These included lack of empathy for victim-survivors, failing to adequately address victims-survivors' needs in a trauma-informed way, and victim-survivors feeling disempowered during the investigation and prosecution process. A similar finding—the need for a more victim-centric, trauma-informed response to sexual violence—was highlighted by the ABC News analysis of sexual assault data within all Australian police jurisdictions from 2008 to 2017 (Ting, Scott & Palmer, 2020). More recently, the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce (the Taskforce) examined the experience of girls and women throughout the criminal justice system, including with the police. The Taskforce found that there was inconsistent, and at times poor, treatment of victims by police which had led to victims withdrawing their complaints (Taskforce, 2022, pp.160-161). However, the Taskforce recognised (and were encouraged by) recent QPS initiatives, recommending the continued state-wide implementation of the Strategy (2022, recommendation 22), the ongoing roll-out of trauma-informed training to a broad range of QPS staff who may have contact with victims (recommendation 28), and the clarification of roles and responsibilities of Sexual Violence Liaison Officers (SVLOs) (recommendation 29).

Considering these concerns, the Strategy was designed to build capacity within the QPS to deliver a victim-centric, trauma-informed sexual violence response. To achieve this, the Strategy set out four strategic priorities:

- advancing the QPS workforce towards applying a victim-centric, trauma-informed approach when responding to sexual violence
- enhancing the QPS response by improving their capability to prevent, disrupt and respond to, and investigate sexual violence in Queensland
- empowering the Queensland community and reduce community harm through proactive engagement and education, and promoting access to victim support services
- maximising their partnerships with government and non-government agencies, and academia to achieve this vision.

1.2. The Evaluation

The Taskforce recommended an independent evaluation of the Strategy, particularly on the impacts and outcomes for victims (2022, recommendation 25). In July 2022, the Griffith Criminology Institute at Griffith University (the Griffith Research Team) was contracted by the QPS to evaluate the Strategy. The Evaluation was primarily a process evaluation, focusing on:

- assessing the ongoing implementation of the Strategy
- examining its short-term¹ outcomes.

Aligning with the definition of sexual violence in the Strategy, the Evaluation focused on incidents, where the victim-survivor is 16 years and older (the legal age of consent in Queensland), of:

- sexual assault
- youth sexual violence and abuse where the victims are 16 years and older

¹ Given the timeframe for the evaluation and its proximity to the commencement of the implementation of the Strategy, short-term outcomes will be the primary focus of the evaluation, as longer-term outcomes cannot yet be validly assessed. We anticipate that an evaluation of these longer-term outcomes will include the voices of victims.

- technology-facilitated sexual violence
- intimate partner sexual violence.

The Evaluation will inform the next iteration of the Strategy by considering whether the current content/activities of the Strategy meet its intent and issuing recommendations for future iterations of the Strategy. A key element of assessing progress on the Strategy's implementation and early outcomes was to understand *how* the QPS has enhanced its response to victims of sexual violence, in regard to the four strategic priorities noted above.

2. Methodology

2.1. Overview

This chapter sets out the design for the Evaluation of the Strategy, based on the Evaluation Framework (2022) previously accepted by QPS. The chapter begins with the key evaluation questions, then moves on to describe the approach taken to conduct the Evaluation.

At this stage, it should be noted that the Evaluation was constrained by the short timeframe between implementation and evaluation, as well as the short evaluation timeframe itself. These constraints have resulted in two key limitations:

1. longer-term outcomes could not be validly assessed and, importantly,
2. given the scope of the Evaluation, the direct voices of victim-survivors were not included.

To address these limitations the Evaluation focussed primarily on assessing the Strategy implementation and preliminary outcomes and giving voice to victim representatives in the form of key external stakeholders from the sexual violence service sector².

2.2. Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs)

The Evaluation and methodology were guided by four key evaluation questions (KEQs). The KEQs and sub-questions were developed by the QPS in their initial Evaluation Framework. Key evaluation questions and sub-questions are provided in Table 2.1 below.

² Representatives from the sexual violence service sector were well placed to report on the holistic impacts of the Strategy on the experiences of victim-survivors.

Table 2.1 Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs)

KEQs	Sub-questions
1 Has the Strategy advanced the QPS workforce towards applying a victim-centric, trauma-informed approach when responding to sexual violence?	<p>What internal practices have been implemented to enhance support in the workplace, or influence cultural change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are QPS members more aware of the Strategy? • Do QPS members feel more supported as a result of wellbeing initiatives? <p>How has enhanced sexual violence training improved the QPS's response to victims?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have QPS members completed the specialist sexual violence training? • Has there been a reduction in the complaints against police officers about the QPS response to victims? • Has there been a reduction in withdrawn and unfounded victim complaints (i.e., reports of sexual violence/offences)? • Have (and in what way) QPS members changed their approach when responding to victims?
2 Has the Strategy improved QPS capability to prevent, disrupt, respond to and investigate sexual violence in Queensland?	<p>What activities have been undertaken and what capabilities have been developed to facilitate an enhanced response?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have organisational capabilities been enhanced to support service delivery and QPS members responding to sexual violence? • Has the appointment of a capability owner contributed to a more coordinated response to sexual violence? • To what extent is there an integrated response (both at the commencement and during) in a sexual violence investigative process? (e.g., enhancement of communication) • To what extent do SVLOs understand their responsibilities in ensuring an integrated response? • Have there been changes in referral rates to victim support services? <p>How have changes to capturing data/information practices enhanced QPS's capability to respond to sexual violence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has Strategy-related analytical support (e.g., sexual violence dashboard) assisted in District decision making and investigative responses?
3 Has the Strategy empowered the community and/or reduced community harm?	<p>How has the QPS increased community awareness of the Service's role, reporting avenues and alternative reporting options?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the perspective of victim support services, has there been more communication about the ways in which victims can report and be supported? • To what extent has the volume of, and the use of different avenues for, reporting sexual violence changed? <p>What prevention strategies aimed at diverse populations have the QPS supported?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of prevention activities have been implemented by the Strategy? • To what extent are QPS members involved in these prevention activities?
4 How has the QPS enhanced collaboration with partner agencies?	<p>How has the QPS enhanced collaboration with partner agencies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What activities has the QPS undertaken in maintaining and enhancing existing relationships with key stakeholders? • What activities has the QPS undertaken to identify and establish partnerships with other stakeholders? • How has integration with partner agencies been facilitated to provide specialist support to victims and offenders?

Source: QPS Sexual Violence Response Strategy (2021-2023) Evaluation Framework

2.3. Evaluation approach

The Evaluation was conducted in three stages. The first stage involved the confirmation of the Evaluation Framework, setting out the Evaluation approach and methods, as well as obtaining Griffith University Human Research Ethics and Queensland Police Service (QPS) Research Committee Approvals. The second stage focused on assessing the progress of internal outcomes (KEQs 1 and 2). The third stage examined if and how the Strategy has impacted on QPS engagement and relationships with partners and key stakeholders external to the QPS (KEQs 3 and 4). The current document (Final Report) combines the findings of stages two and three and concludes the Evaluation. The Evaluation drew on numerous data sources including secondary analyses of:

- QPS Data Analytics QPrime data for reported sexual violence offences for the period January 2018 to September 2022
- QPS Data Analytics victim referral data for the period January 2018 to September 2022
- QPS Online reporting form data for the period January 2021 to September 2022
- QPS Alternative Reporting Options (ARO) data for the period January 2018 to September 2022
- QPS Policelink telephone call data for the period January 2021 to September 2022
- QPS Media and Public Affairs data on the web traffic for the Adult Sexual Assault sections of the QPS website for October 2019 to September 2022

And collection and analyses of:

- an online survey of front-line QPS members
- focus groups or interviews with QPS personnel
- focus groups or interviews with external stakeholders.

Appendix A provides a map of key data sources to the KEQs.³

³ For further details on the evaluation design and methods, see the *Evaluation Framework (2022)*.

2.3.1. Stage 1: Evaluation Framework Confirmation and Project Planning

In Stage 1, the Evaluation Framework, scope, data, and data collection methods were confirmed. A draft Evaluation Framework was provided by the QPS during the tender process. The Griffith Evaluation Team drew on this initial framework to propose the final methodology to the QPS in the form of a finalised Evaluation Framework. This stage was informed by a stakeholder workshop including the Griffith Evaluation Team and key representatives from the QPS and sexual assault service providers. The workshop provided an opportunity for senior police officers to understand the scope and the timings of the Evaluation and to identify data sources and key contacts to facilitate data collection.

Also, at this stage, research ethics applications were submitted to the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (GU ref 2022/683, see Appendix B), and the QPS Research Committee (QPSRC) (QPSRC-0922-3.02), see Appendix C). Both were approved. This stage culminated in the delivery and QPS acceptance of the Final Evaluation Framework.

2.3.2. Stage 2: Preliminary Report

The Preliminary Report was delivered to the QPS on 15 November 2022. This report provided progress to date on data collection, and findings of preliminary analyses of available data. These included reported sexual violence offences recorded in QPrime, and web traffic on the Strategy-related QPS website.

2.3.3. Stage 3: Final Report

The current document (Final Report) summarises the findings from all stages of the Evaluation. Findings are presented thematically to triangulate data sources.

2.4. Data sources

This section of the report describes the data sources utilised in the Evaluation in more detail. In summary, a mixed methods approach was adopted to answer the agreed KEQs. All elements of the Evaluation were drawn on to identify recommendations.

2.4.1. QPS Administrative Data

The first data source utilised was QPS administrative data. This data was used to determine the nature and extent of reports of sexual violence, the proportion of reports that were

solved, withdrawn and unfounded during the evaluation period, victim-survivor referral data, online reporting data and calls made to Policelink related to sexual violence offences. More specifically a data extract of the following was provided by QPS Data Analytics:

- QPS QPrime data for reported sexual violence offences for the period January 2018 to September 2022
- QPS victim-survivor referral data for the period January 2018 to September 2022
- QPS online reporting form data for the period January 2021 to September 2022
- QPS Policelink call data (telephone reporting of sexual assault incidents) for the period January 2021 to September 2022
- QPS Alternative Reporting Options (ARO) data for the period January 2018 to September 2022

This data is limited in several ways. First, as with all administrative data, this data may be subject to data entry error (i.e., human error). Second, QPrime data were analysed at the unit of the “offence”. It is important to acknowledge that there can be multiple offences clustered within an occurrence. These results must therefore be interpreted at the level of the offence only. Third, data on reports of sexual violence made to the police do not provide a clear indication of the actual incidence of sexual violence in the community. Fourth, there is only a short window of time between the implementation of the Strategy and the analysis of this data; however, at the same time, reports of sexual violence can take months or years for police to clear/solve. Therefore, changes brought about by the Strategy may not necessarily be observable at the current point in time – a long term evaluation will be necessary to draw any definitive conclusions about the effect of the Strategy on the outcomes of reports of sexual violence. QPS administrative data were analysed using specialist statistical software (StataSE 17).

2.4.2. QPS Media and Public Affairs Web Traffic Data

The second data source utilised was web traffic data provided by QPS Media and Public Affairs. The data was used to supplement the analysis of sexual violence reporting data (as above). An extract of web traffic data (i.e., number of page views) was provided for the Adult Sexual Assault sections of the QPS website. These pages provide a guide for victims of sexual

violence, including information on how to report online. To contextualise this data further, screenshots of the content of the homepage are included in Appendix D. To examine public use of the webpages, web traffic data were obtained for these pages for the period October 2019 (date of the installation of the webpages) to September 2022 (date of data extraction). QPS media and public affairs web traffic data were analysed using specialist statistical software (R; StataSE 17).

2.4.3. Survey with Frontline QPS Members

The third data source was an online survey of QPS frontline responders. Specially the target sample was frontline QPS staff including, for example, general duties officers, front counter staff and Policelink operators. The survey instrument included 18 questions, designed to measure QPS demographics, staff awareness of the Strategy, participation in training and attitudes toward the policing of sexual violence. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete.

The survey was deployed on 11 November 2022 and closed on 12 December 2022. The survey was administered by the Griffith Evaluation Team through LimeSurvey. A link to the survey was provided to the participant pool by the Child Abuse and Sexual Crime Group (CASC). The survey was voluntary and anonymous, and no identifying information was collected. In total, 1,470 QPS staff members opened the survey link and 675 participants submitted completed surveys resulting in a response rate of 45.9%.

Survey participants were distributed fairly evenly across regions, with a larger proportion of participants from the Brisbane Region (27.6%) and smaller proportions of participants from Central (8.9%) and Northern Regions (8.2%), as might be anticipated based on the expected population distribution. The sample primarily comprised sworn officers (80.2%), most sworn participants were at the rank of Constable, Senior Constable, or Sergeant (95.2%) with a small proportion of survey participants reporting a rank of Senior Sergeant (4.1%) and Inspector or above (0.8%). Participants were also asked to indicate their role within the QPS (select all that apply) with 3.6% of the sample identifying as Policelink staff, 3.8% as a Client Services Officer, 3.5% as a Police Liaison Officer, 4.8% as Front Counter staff and 67.8% identifying as a General Duties Officer. Most of the survey sample were under the age of 45 (55.3%), 43.2% were female, and 8.3% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. A codebook showing

the survey instrument, informed consent information, and a summary of survey responses, is included in Appendix E. Survey responses were analysed using specialist statistical software (StataSE 17).

2.4.1. Interviews and Focus Groups with QPS Members and External Stakeholders

The fourth data source comprised interviews and focus groups with key police and external stakeholders. To recruit internal stakeholders, all Sexual Violence Liaison Officers (SVLO) were emailed and asked to circulate an expression of interest to participate in the Evaluation. These expressions of interests were then provided to the Griffith Evaluation Team, who contacted those interested in participating. All persons on the list were investigators assigned to duties in the Criminal Investigation Branch (CIB) or Child Protection and Investigation Unit (CPIU).

To recruit external stakeholders, an email was sent out through the Queensland Sexual Assault Network (QSAN). Details of all participants that expressed an interest to participate were then provided to the Griffith Evaluation Team. At the same time the Griffith Evaluation Team drew from their own network and asked the QPS to provide a list of relevant key stakeholders.

All potential focus group participants were contacted by email with an invitation to participate in a focus group. Participation was voluntary. All participants were provided with written information about the purpose of the Evaluation and the nature of their involvement. Those officers who were keen to participate, but were unable to contribute to a focus group, were invited to participate in a one-on-one interview. All officers who participated in an interview or focus group provided their informed consent to participate (see Appendix F and G). The interviews and focus groups were guided by a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix H and I). The same schedule was used across all participating QPS stakeholders (Appendix H) and external stakeholders (Appendix I). The schedule was informed by the KEQs as set out in the Evaluation Framework.

All focus groups and interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams. With consent, interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed. All transcripts were de-identified. The transcripts were subjected to qualitative inductive thematic analysis using specialist qualitative analysis software (NVivo).

In total, seven focus groups were conducted, 4 focus groups with police officers (coded as QPFG1 to QPFG4); and 3 focus groups with representatives of 12 agencies (coded as EXFG1 to EXFG3), including sexual assault service providers, domestic and family service providers, and legal practitioners. A total of 34 participants attended the focus groups, 14 police officers and 20 representatives of external stakeholders. In addition, 2 interviews with officers were conducted (coded as QPI1 and QPI2). The years of service with the QPS of the participants ranged from 8 to 32 years. A total of 8 SVLOs participated, 6 investigators from CIB and 10 from CPIU.

3. Defining Sexual Violence Offences

3.1. Overview

This chapter defines and describes sexual violence and reports of sexual violence. Aligning with the definition of sexual violence in the Strategy, this Evaluation focuses on incidents of:

- sexual assault
- youth sexual violence and abuse
- technology-facilitated sexual violence
- intimate partner sexual violence
- where the victim-survivor is 16 years and older (the legal age of consent in Queensland).

Before addressing the key evaluation questions (KEQs), it is necessary to outline the nature and extent of reports of sexual violence to police during the Evaluation period (2018-2022). This Evaluation period was selected as it facilitates the analysis of sexual violence offences reported to the police in the three years prior to the introduction of the Strategy (i.e., 2018-2020), as well as during the Strategy's implementation to date (i.e., 2021-2022). During this period there were 18,911 reports of sexual violence offences recorded by the QPS in QPrime where the victim-survivor was aged 16 years and older. These offences were nested within 17,475 occurrences. This chapter describes this data in more detail, reporting at the level of the offence.

3.2. Time to Reporting

To understand the context of reports of sexual violence it is necessary to overview time to reporting. Table 3.1 shows the time between the incident occurrence and the incident report for sexual violence offences reported between 2018 to 2022. As shown in this table, just over half of the offences during this period were reported within one month of the occurrence (55.6%), with about one-third reported within one day (34.5%). A further 14.9% of the offences were reported between one month and one year after the occurrence; 9.9%

between one year and five years after the occurrence; and 19.6% greater than five years after the occurrence. The “oldest” historical offence reported during this period occurred in 1950.

Table 3.1 Time from Occurrence to Report, Sexual Violence Offences Reported to QPS, 2018-2022 (Victim-survivor Aged 16 Years and Older)

Time from Occurrence to Reported	% (n)
1 day	34.5% (6,532)
>1 day to 1 week	13.2% (2,486)
>1 week to 1 month	7.9% (1,487)
>1 month to 1 year	14.9% (2,825)
>1 year to 5 years	9.9% (1,879)
> 5 years	19.6% (3,702)
Total	100.0% (18,911)

Source: QPrime data

Note: Percentages rounded to 1 decimal place, and thus may not add up to 100%.

3.3. Types of Reported Sexual Violence Offence and Clearance Status

During the Evaluation period, the most reported sexual violence offence was rape (46.0% of reports), followed by “other” sexual assault (13.7%) (see Table 3.2). Together, these types of offences make up over half (59.7%) of the sexual violence offences reported.

Table 3.2 Type of Sexual Violence Offences Reported to QPS, 2018-2022 (Victim-survivor Aged 16 Years and Older)

Offence	% (n)
Rape	46.0% (8,702)
Sexual assaults not classified elsewhere	13.7% (2,585)
Indecent assaults on adults	11.1% (2,103)
Indecent treatment of children	10.8% (2,044)
Sexual offences (other) 18 and over	5.8% (1,101)
Indecent acts	3.1% (589)
Wilful obscene exposure	2.7% (507)
Sexual offences (other) child under 18	2.5% (467)
Unlawful carnal knowledge	1.4% (268)
Rape - attempted	1.3% (252)
Assault with intent to commit rape	0.5% (92)
Incest	0.5% (91)
Sexual offences - consent prescribed (other)	0.4% (69)
Bestiality	0.2% (36)
Failure to report child sexual offence	>0.1% (5)
Total	100.0% (18,911)

Source: QPrime data

Note: Types reported in order of count, not seriousness of offence type. Percentages rounded to 1 decimal place, and thus, may not add up to 100%.

The current clearance status (at the time of data extraction) of sexual violence offences reported during 2018 to 2022 is shown in Table 3.3. Of the 18,911 reported offences, 37.6% were recorded as solved, 26.9% as withdrawn, 9.4% as unfounded and 26.1% as unsolved.

Table 3.3 Clearance Status, Sexual Violence Offences Reported to QPS, 2018-2022 (Victim-survivor Aged 16 Years and Older)

Clearance Status	% (n)
Solved	37.6% (7,108)
Withdrawn	26.9% (5,091)
Unsolved	26.1% (4,944)
Unfounded	9.4% (1,768)
Total	100.0% (18,911)

Source: QPrime data

Note: Clearance statuses provided are as defined by QPS. Percentages rounded to 1 decimal place, and thus, may not add up to 100%.

3.4. Victim-survivor and Offender Gender in Reported Sexual Violence Offences

The recorded gender of victims and offenders for reported offences cleared as solved is shown in Table 3.4. Of the 18,911 sexual violence offences reported between 2018 and 2022, the victim-survivor was recorded as female for 86.5% of offences, male for 12.0% of offences, and gender was not recorded, unknown or indeterminate for 1.5% of offences. During this period, the number of female victims was seven times that of the number of male victims. The percentage breakdown for the gender of the offender is most accurately captured for incidents where the offence was solved. As shown in Table 3.4, most known offenders were recorded as male (96.8%), with 3.1% recorded as female, and 0.1% recorded as unknown or indeterminate gender.

Table 3.4 Sexual Violence Offences Reported and Reported Offences Solved, 2018-2022 by Recorded Gender of Victim-survivor and Offender, (Victim-survivor Aged 16 Years and Older)

Gender	% (n)	
	Victim	Offender
Female	86.5% (16,361)	3.1% (216)
Male	12.0% (2,273)	96.8% (6,846)
Indeterminate	>0.1% (2)	>0.1% (1)
Not known	1.5% (275)	0.1% (8)
Total	100.0% (18,911)	100.0% (7,071)

Source: QPrime data

Note: Of the 275 cases where *victim-survivor gender* was not known, 257 was due to non-recording. Percentages rounded to 1 decimal place, and thus, may not add up to 100%.

Table 3.5 provides a crosstabulation of the recorded gender of the offender by the recorded gender of the victim-survivor for reported sexual violence offences cleared as solved. Across all categories of recorded gender of the victim, the offender is most likely to be male.

Table 3.5 Crosstabulation of Recorded Gender of Victim, Reported Sexual Violence Offences Solved, 2018-2022 by Recorded Gender of Offender (Victim-survivor Aged 16 Years and Older)

Recorded Offender Gender	Recorded Victim-survivor Gender			
	Female	Male	Not Recorded	Unknown
Female	1.9%	10.3%	9.4%	14.3%
Male	98.0%	89.6%	90.6%	85.7%
Unknown	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Indeterminate	>0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: QPrime data

Note: Where percentage appears as 0.0%, this indicates that it is less than 0.1% of the reported offences solved. Percentages rounded to 1 decimal place, and thus, may not add up to 100%.

Now that sexual violence has been defined and the context of reports of sexual violence understood, the following chapters present key findings of the Evaluation addressing the four key evaluation questions (KEQs).

4. Awareness and Understanding of the Strategy

4.1. Overview

This chapter primarily focuses on addressing KEQ1:

KEQ 1: Has the Strategy advanced the QPS workforce towards applying a victim-centric, trauma-informed approach when responding to sexual violence?

To address this question the current chapter draws on data collected from the focus groups and interviews with key QPS and external stakeholders and the survey of QPS frontline staff. The chapter outlines awareness and understanding of the Strategy among key QPS and external stakeholders and frontline QPS staff and considers the embeddedness of victim-centric and trauma-informed responses to sexual violence within the QPS.

4.2. Awareness of the Sexual Violence Response Strategy (2021-2023)

This section considers awareness of the Strategy drawing first on the focus groups and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders and second on the frontline QPS staff survey.

4.2.1. Awareness of the Strategy among key stakeholders

Within the focus groups with key police stakeholders, participants believed that they were aware of the strategy, however when the participants were asked to explain the Strategy, the discussion tended to focus on the Sexual Violence Liaison Officer (SVLO) role (QPFG1, QPFG3).

For example:

I'm aware of the reporting obligations in the SVLO role, as to the strategy I was largely unaware of it prior to this yeah (QPFG1); and

I first became aware of it probably around that 12 months ago, but that was probably more so by virtue like I said so the SVLO's role (QPFG4).

While the police participants indicated limitations to their awareness of the specifics of the Strategy⁴, they believed that they were more aware of it than general staff, such as general duties officers and front counter staff (QPFG1, QPFG2, QPFG3, QPI1). For example:

the plain clothes officers here are aware of it, their depth of understanding I couldn't comment on at this point. I've found that the other first response units – so the general duties etc – aren't as aware and we do try and promote that with them (QPFG2); and I don't think it's probably has been high on the radar and probably until this sort of winding up of the Commission of Inquiry and obviously the subsequent sort of escalated sort of media and then obviously the press release by the Premier. But I think that – well I don't think for other sections it's probably resonating very much (QPFG3).

Police participants suggested that awareness of the Strategy has been growing because of increased “messaging” or communication by the QPS around sexual violence and police responses to sexual violence (QPFG1). For example, in some districts, SVLOs have been making efforts to raise awareness by sending out regular updates to staff (QPFG1, QPGF3, QPFG4, QPI1). Awareness had also recently been heightened due to the Business Unit Reviews (BUR):

with the district Business Unit Reviews, they've had recently, that's increased awareness, because they invited officers in charge and counter [staff], they had a diverse [range of] people around, that has raised the profile so to speak. Yeah, I think gradually it's increasing. I mean the initial roll out I would say no, but over time it's, the messaging is increasing (QPFG1).

Becoming aware of the Strategy because of the BUR, was also mentioned by a few external stakeholder participants (EXFG3). Among the external stakeholders, awareness of the Strategy was mixed. Some external stakeholders described very little awareness of the Strategy (EXFG1, EXFG3), while some described a greater level of awareness (EXFG1). The timeframe for becoming aware ranged from a very small amount of time to up to six months (EXFG1). Some stated that they only became aware of the Strategy because of the invitation to participate in the current Evaluation (EXFG3), whereas others described their awareness

⁴ While QPS stakeholders who participated in the focus groups tended to have gaps in their awareness of the specifics of the Strategy, it is important to note that this does not mean they were not knowledgeable about responding to sexual violence more broadly.

as related to their involvement in the Women's Safety and Justice Task Force (the Taskforce) (EXFG3). Overall, external stakeholder awareness tended to be more recent than for police participants (EXFG1, EXFG2, EXFG3). For example:

this purported Strategy and its existence is I've probably only come into its knowledge through my work as a member of the Women's Safety Justice Taskforce and looking specifically at the issues that we considered in our second report on women and girls experience in the criminal justice system through sexual violence lens (EXFG3); and

I had no idea that that Strategy existed before I got that email from you (EXFG3).

Some external stakeholders felt that awareness may be equally limited among police officers (EXFG3), as expressed in these two quotes:

that we just participated in a business unit review meeting only last month, but I think I was aware of the Strategy before that. I was aware of the Sexual Violence Liaison Officers, maybe it's just through QSAN membership and just hearing about what's coming out, there's been a lot of strategies, I didn't take it as like wow this is really brand new and interesting, it was more what are they doing in terms of the big picture (EXFG3); and

there seems to be a lot of strategies and a lot of plans – all these best laid plans and strategies. But what? Where are they going to? Because we're still not seeing an improvement in service quality or quality of service provision – it's absent and if you're finding with respect that officers don't even know of its existence – that says to me that it's not widely trained within the organization itself and it's not widely known within the wider sector (EXFG3).

This last quote highlights that some external stakeholders have questioned whether the Strategy itself is making a difference or meeting its objectives or whether recent improvements in responses to sexual violence have been the result of wider reforms or other policy and practice changes introduced in recent years.

In summary, focus groups and interviews with key QPS and external stakeholders suggest that awareness of the Strategy remains somewhat limited. Key QPS stakeholders seem more aware of the Strategy in comparison to other QPS members and external stakeholders.

4.2.1. Awareness of the Strategy among Frontline QPS Staff

Awareness of the Strategy was also measured in the survey of frontline QPS staff⁵. Specifically, survey participants were asked to report on their level of familiarity with the Strategy. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1= “not at all familiar” to 5 = “very familiar”). Results are presented in Table 4.1. Most participants surveyed (63.8%) reported being either “not at all familiar” or “slightly familiar” with the Strategy, with only 2.5% reporting that they were “very familiar” with the Strategy.

Table 4.1 Frequency Distribution of Participants’ Description of Familiarity with the Strategy(n=654)

Familiarity with the Strategy	%
Not at all familiar	34.71
Slightly familiar	29.05
Somewhat familiar	21.41
Moderately familiar	12.39
Very familiar	2.45
Total	100.00

Source: Survey data

Note: Based on Q8 “How would you describe your familiarity with the QPS Sexual Violence Response Strategy (2021-2023)?”. Percentages rounded to 2 decimal places, and thus may not add up to 100%.

When broken down by sworn/unsworn staff, rank and region, a higher proportion of unsworn staff (compared to sworn officers) reported that they were “not at all familiar” or “slightly familiar” with the Strategy, while a higher proportion of sworn officers (compared to unsworn staff) were “moderately” or “very familiar” with the Strategy (see Table 4.2), although this relationship was not statistically significant.⁶

⁵ Recall, the survey was targeted at general duties police and other customer facing front-line staff including Policelink and front counter staff.

⁶ A chi-square test did not find a relationship between the two variables. ($\chi^2(2, n=646) 5.240, p>.5$).

Table 4.2 Crosstabulations of Familiarity with the Strategy by QPS Staff Sworn/Unsworn Status, Rank and Region

Sworn/Unsworn (n=646)	Not at all/slightly (%)	Somewhat (%)	Moderately/very (%)	Total (%)
Unsworn	72.44	17.32	10.24	100.00
Sworn	61.85	21.97	16.18	100.00
Rank (n=501)				
Constable	68.61	21.17	10.22	100.00
S/Constable	65.43	19.34	15.23	100.00
Sergeant	50.00	27.08	22.92	100.00
≥S/Sergeant	32.00	36.00	32.00	100.00
Region (n=637)				
Brisbane	61.36	21.59	17.05	100.00
Central	65.52	24.14	10.34	100.00
Far Northern	73.75	16.25	10.00	100.00
North Coast	61.11	24.44	14.44	100.00
Northern	65.38	23.08	11.54	100.00
South Eastern	64.56	18.99	16.46	100.00
Southern	60.78	22.55	16.67	100.00

Source: Survey data

Note: Based on Q8 “How would you describe your familiarity with the QPS Sexual Violence Response Strategy (2021-2023)?”. Rounded to 2 decimal places and thus may not add up to 100%, rank of Inspector or greater combined with S/Sergeant in Officer Rank analyses due to low sample size.

For sworn staff, familiarity with the Strategy varied by officer rank. Higher ranks were more likely to be more familiar with the Strategy and lower ranks are less likely to be familiar with the Strategy.⁷ The proportion of familiarity also appears to be similar across regions.⁸ However, of the survey participants, the Far Northern Region had the highest percentage of frontline staff who were “not at all familiar” or “slightly familiar” with the Strategy and the Brisbane Region had the highest proportion of frontline staff who report being “moderately” or “very familiar” with the Strategy.

In summary, the survey with front-line QPS members suggests that awareness of the Strategy is low. For sworn officers, awareness increased with rank such that officers at a higher rank tended to be more aware of the Strategy.

⁷ A chi-square test ($\chi^2 (6, n=501) 21.173, p\leq.01$) indicates that this association is statistically significant

⁸ A chi-square test confirming that there are no significant differences across regions ($\chi^2 (12, n=637) 7.04, p>.05$)

4.3. Understanding the Strategy

When combining results from the focus groups/interviews and the survey, it appears that awareness of the Strategy was low among frontline QPS staff and external stakeholders but somewhat higher among the QPS stakeholders. This section examines understanding of the Strategy. First, understanding of the Strategy was explored among key QPS and external stakeholders. Second, understanding of the Strategy and its core philosophy was examined among frontline QPS staff.

4.3.1. Understanding of the Strategy among Key Stakeholders

The focus groups and interviews show that for those who were aware of the Strategy, there were also varying levels of understanding and interpretation across QPS and external stakeholders. Overall, three common themes emerged from the key stakeholder reflections (primarily from the QPS stakeholders as external stakeholders tended to have limited awareness of the Strategy), namely that the purpose of the Strategy was to: ensure the police response is “victim-centric and trauma-informed”; promote greater engagement with external stakeholders, including specialist sexual violence support services; and ensure greater transparency of police actions. For example, police participants described the Strategy as follows:

it's pushing that greater engagement externally, it's the auditing processes across all of our files as they come in, withdrawn, unfounded, and it's the oversight over what still sits there as unsolved and what still needs to be done to ensure what should be done is being done (QPFG1);

[it] definitely promotes more transparency and through the investigation and you know oversight of how the complaint's being dealt with. Obviously, the best interest for the victim is being put forward, the reporting to the SVLO and review of the files themselves yeah is just enhancing that capacity to hopefully deal with victims better and their complaints (QPFG1); and

[the Strategy is] pushing out that message to the district, not just the investigators, but about that sort of victim-centric and trauma-informed response and I guess trying to give some insight into people about how to actually do that as opposed to just using those sort of catchphrases (QPFG2);

An external stakeholder participant described the impact of the Strategy on policing as:

well how they respond and investigate, engage or not engage, communicate – with complainants from point of contact through the process of the criminal justice system and also to elevate some of their training and capacity in the area that would enhance their responses (EXFG1).

In summary, focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders revealed the Strategy was understood as: 1) ensuring police responses are victim-centric and trauma-informed; 2) promoting increased engagement with external stakeholders (including specialist sexual violence support services); and 3) ensuring greater transparency of police actions in response to sexual violence.

4.4. Victim-centric and Trauma-informed Responses to Sexual Violence

One of the common understandings of the Strategy is that it aims to instil a victim-centric and trauma-informed response to sexual violence. To further probe key stakeholders' understandings of the Strategy, interview and focus group participants were asked to define "victim-centric and trauma-informed" police responses to sexual violence. Frontline QPS staff were also surveyed about their alignment with trauma-informed and victim-centric responses to sexual violence. Results are reported below.

4.4.1. Understandings of Victim-centric and Trauma-informed Policing Responses among Key Stakeholders

Interviews and focus groups revealed that key stakeholders' understandings of victim-centric and trauma-informed policing responses tended to be multi-faceted. For example, police defined victim-centric and trauma-informed policing as:

- understanding that every victim-survivor and every circumstance requires an individualised approach (QPFG1, QPFG2),
- building rapport and allowing the victim-survivor the time to decide of whether to make a formal complaint (QPFG1, QPFG2),

- ensuring victim-survivors are supported throughout the whole criminal justice process, linked in with relevant support services and regularly updated on the progress of an investigation (QPFG2, QPFG3, QPFG4),
- treating victim-survivors with respect and without judgement, allowing victim-survivors time to tell their story, consider their personal background and circumstances and involve them in the decision-making process about whether to make and proceed with a criminal complaint and go to court (QPFG3), and
- minimising harm (QPFG1).

To explain further, two QPS focus group participants described victim-centric and trauma-informed responses as follows:

it's being aware of how the things that have happened to them have impacted them in the past but currently in going into the future in terms of being aware of not expecting too much for them at one point in terms of recalling information and giving them that time and space and the environment with which they need to recall the information that we as police want them to recall and allowing them to be in charge of the process, where traditionally police would take it complaint and then we make all the decisions for what we do and when we do it, but it's involving them in that decision-making process and allowing them to remain in control of what we do to a certain degree and how far we take their complaint and different things like that (QPFG3); and

actually, looking at what the victim needs from making this statement to us and looking at in the future what will the victim gain or what's the best outcome for this victim instead of just going, let's go to court and get the offender (QPFG4).

While police stakeholders were quite articulate about their work being victim-centric and trauma-informed, external stakeholder participants expressed concerns that police may describe their approach to policing sexual violence as victim-centric and trauma-informed, without necessarily demonstrating such approaches consistently in their everyday responses (EXFG1, EXFG2, EXFG3):

"What does that look like on the ground?" "What action will you be doing that tells us that you're trauma-informed?" And I think that knowledge base is really missing and that understanding (EXFG2);

what the document probably lacks though is some clear definition around what they mean by trauma-informed, victim-centric, they seem like a lot of buzzwords that I'm not really sure what that means coming from a QPS lens (EXFG3); and

how do we actually inform that framing for the QPS, so that we have a meeting of minds on these two key terms, because this is - it goes to service delivery, and you want a continuum of service delivery that victim-survivors are accustomed to and feel safe within (EXFG3).

One external stakeholder focus group participant used the more specific example of the “language” police use in interactions with victim-survivors of sexual violence:

the use of language is really important with our clients and to make that when the police are being victim-centric they realise by initiating and conducting their investigations, they have to be really careful around how they use language that people don't feel and victims don't feel that they're on the back foot, they're not being believed, they're not going to be taken seriously that they've done something wrong, because they won't come back for that second round of the formal reporting and things like (EXFG3).

While numerous external stakeholders noted the importance of ensuring that victim-centric philosophies translate into practice, external stakeholders questioned whether a victim-centric approach was possible within the constraints of an investigative system that is offender focused:

every police officer you speak to says “trauma-informed, victim-centric” and they're trying to make the police system victim-centric. It's never going to be victim-centric, it's a defendant centric institution - we're holding offenders accountable, the criminal justice system is defendant centric (EXFG1).

The same participant highlighted the need to rethink how the needs of victim-survivors can be best met within a system response that is primarily charged with offender accountability and punishment:

What we need to do is we need to find ways to respectfully engage victim-survivors in a defendant centric system, just re-labelling it victim centred doesn't make it so. And just saying trauma-informed doesn't mean you're trauma-informed. It means you might be informed about trauma, but let's have a demonstration of how you apply it to your practice (EXFG1).

This statement was supported by police participants, who similarly spoke about the way that the investigative process and court-system can be oppositional to a victim-centric, trauma-informed approach:

[the] investigative process isn't victim focussed or trauma-informed, because there's some things that we need to do that we require for court. Remember these investigations are gathering evidence with a view of presenting that in court later on. And sometimes we're asking things of victims that may not be trauma-informed or victim focussed, but we need to try and communicate why we do things (QPGF1); and

*we're putting the supports in play, we still have to understand that we've got a role as investigators to have sufficiency of evidence to have successful prosecution before the courts, so that's still a consideration and that's certainly not taking away or saying that this hasn't occurred, but you know we still have to meet our threshold and obligation for the minimum *prima facie* case and then beyond a reasonable doubt ultimately, so that's still our role as investigators as I see to ensure that we do have sufficiency of evidence (QPGF4)*

The limits of the application of victim-centric and trauma-informed practices in day-to-day policing was a sentiment shared by multiple external stakeholders who felt that while police “language” has changed under recent DFV and sexual violence policy reforms, this was not consistently reflected in policing practice on the ground. Community empowerment and partnership engagement are discussed further in Chapters 7 and 8.

In summary, focus groups and interviews with key QPS and external stakeholders suggest that even as “victim-centric and trauma-informed” policing is understood in theory, there may be some gaps between theory and practice.

4.4.1. Victim-centric and Trauma-informed Attitudes and Beliefs about Victims among Frontline QPS Members

As explained above, frontline QPS staff were surveyed about their awareness and understanding of the Strategy. Results (reported above) show that participants tended to have limited familiarity with (and therefore limited understanding of) the Strategy directly. To examine attitudes that provide some insight into the cultural change underlying the Strategy, the survey also captured QPS frontline responders’ beliefs about victim-survivor

credibility, as well as their understanding of trauma-informed and victim-centric policing responses.

Believing Victim-Survivors

First, frontline responders surveyed were more likely to believe that victim-survivors of sexual violence falsely report to police, compared to victims of property crime. When asked to estimate the percentage of cases of sexual violence and break and enters that they believed are falsely reported to police, on average, participants estimated a higher proportion of sexual violence cases are falsely reported, compared to break and enter cases. Although the mean estimated proportion of falsely reported cases is relatively low (19.3% for sexual violence vs 14.1% for break and enter⁹), this difference was statistically significant.¹⁰

Supporting a Trauma-Informed and Victim-Centric Approach

Support for a trauma-informed and victim-centric policing approach was examined, using three items. Survey participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following: “I have a good understanding of trauma-informed practice for sexual violence victims”; “I am dedicated to increasing my awareness and understanding of sexual violence”; and “addressing the needs of sexual violence victims should be a key part of the mission of the Queensland Police Service”.¹¹ Responses could range from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating stronger agreement.¹² Results are presented in Figure 4.1.

While the frontline QPS staff surveyed tended to be ambivalent about having a good understanding of trauma-informed practice ($M=3.03$), on average, there was agreement that they were dedicated to increasing [their] awareness/understanding ($M=3.93$) and that “addressing the needs of sexual violence victims should be a key part of the [QPS] mission” ($M=4.10$). Thus, while participants generally supported a victim-centric and trauma-informed approach, they appeared less confident in their understanding of what trauma-informed policing entails.

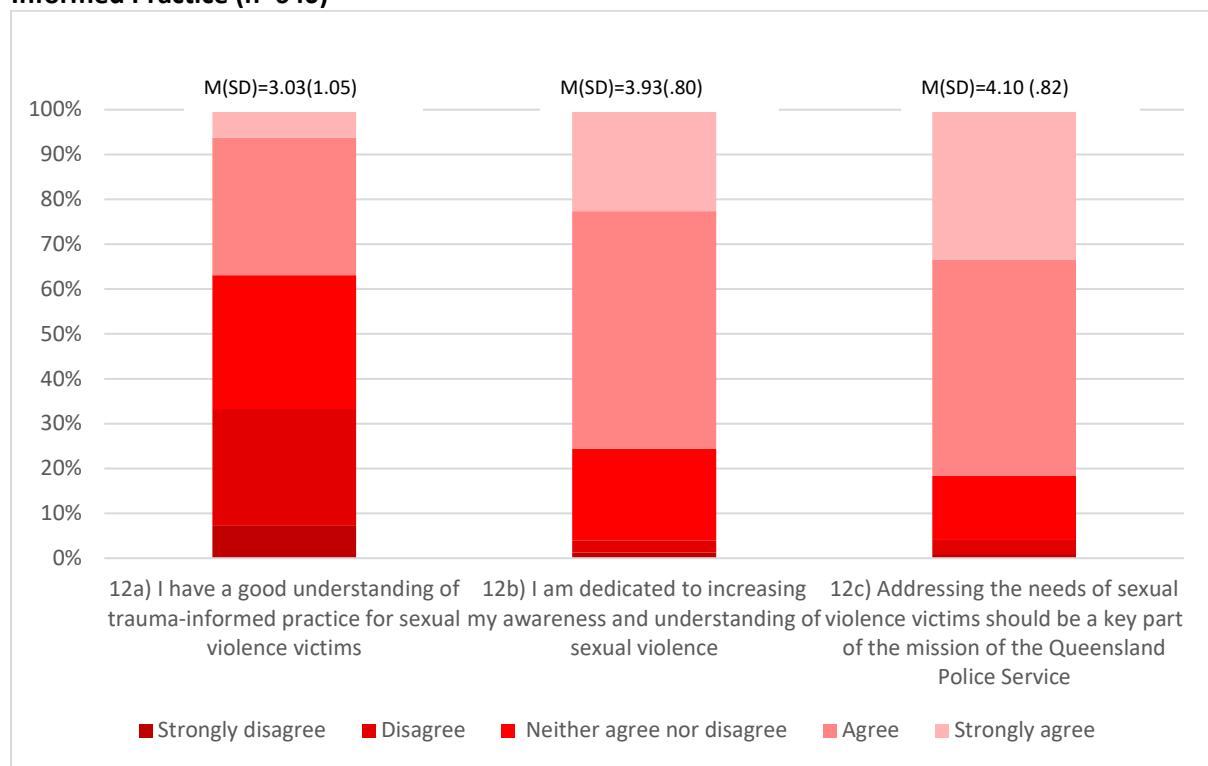
⁹ SD=20.5 and 14.5, respectively.

¹⁰ $t=6.63$, $p\leq.001$.

¹¹ These survey measures were designed by the Griffith Evaluation Team for the purpose of the evaluation.

¹² A 5-point Likert scale was used (from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5= “strongly agree”).

Figure 4.1 Distributions and Summary Statistics of Attitudes Toward Victim-Centric and Trauma-Informed Practice (n=640)



Source: Survey data

Note: Rounded to 2 decimal places.

Table 4.3 looks at levels of support for trauma-informed and victim-centric policing responses broken by sworn/unsworn status. There were no significant differences between sworn and unsworn staff, except for “understanding of trauma-informed practice”.¹³ Sworn staff were more likely than unsworn staff to have a good understanding of trauma-informed practice.¹⁴

¹³ Variable categories were collapse for the purpose of this analysis. There were significant differences between sworn and unsworn staff in levels of agreement that they were dedicated to “increasing my awareness and understanding of sexual violence” ($\chi^2 (2, n=632) 2.420, p>.05$) or that addressing the needs of sexual violence victims should be a key part of the mission of the Queensland Police Service” ($\chi^2 (2, n=633) 4.562, p>.05$).

¹⁴ $\chi^2 (2, n=632) 18.830, p\le.001$.

Table 4.3 Crosstabulations of Support for Trauma-Informed and Victim-Centric Policing by QPS Staff Sworn/Unsworn Status

Sworn/unsworn	Strongly disagree or disagree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Agree or strongly agree (%)	Total (%)
"I have a good understanding of trauma-informed practice for sexual violence victims" (n=632)				
Unsworn	45.69	34.48	19.83	100.00
Sworn	30.81	28.29	40.89	100.00
Total	33.54	29.43	37.03	100.00
"I am dedicated to increasing my awareness and understanding of sexual violence" (n=632)				
Unsworn	4.31	25.00	70.69	100.00
Sworn	3.88	18.80	77.33	100.00
Total	3.96	19.94	76.11	100.00
"Addressing the needs of sexual violence victims should be a key part of the mission of the Queensland Police Service" (n=633)				
Unsworn	4.96	8.26	86.78	100.00
Sworn	3.71	15.63	80.66	100.00
Total	3.95	14.22	81.83	100.00

Source: Survey data

Note: Based on Q12(a) "I have a good understanding of trauma-informed practice for sexual violence victims"; Q12(b) "I am dedicated to increasing my awareness and understanding of sexual violence"; and Q12(c) "Addressing the needs of sexual violence victims should be a key part of the mission of the Queensland Police Service". Percentages rounded to 2 decimal places, and thus may not add up to 100%.

Table 4.4 shows items measuring general alignment with trauma-informed and victim-centric policing responses, broken down by officer rank for sworn officers. Notably, those at the level of Senior Sergeant and above were more likely to "agree" or "strongly agree" that they had a good understanding of trauma-informed practice for sexual violence victims compared to the lower ranks¹⁵. Regarding the remaining two items (dedicated to increasing awareness/understanding and QPS mission), most participants "agree" or "strongly agree" with these two items, indicating similar levels of agreement across these sub-samples.¹⁶

¹⁵ The chi-square test indicates that this association is significant ($\chi^2 (6, n=498) 13.561, p \leq .05$).

¹⁶ Chi-square tests could not be computed for other two items by rank due to low expected cell counts.

Table 4.4 Crosstabulations of Alignment with Trauma-Informed and Victim-Centric Policing by Officer Rank

Rank	Strongly disagree or disagree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Agree or strongly agree (%)	Total (%)
“I have a good understanding of trauma-informed practice for sexual violence victims” (n=498)				
Constable	30.88	36.03	33.09	100.00
S/Constable	33.74	23.46	42.80	100.00
Sergeant	26.32	28.42	45.26	100.00
≥S/Sergeant	16.67	20.83	62.50	100.00
“I am dedicated to increasing my awareness and understanding of sexual violence” (n=499)				
Constable	2.21	13.97	83.82	100.00
S/Constable	4.94	19.75	75.31	100.00
Sergeant	2.08	23.96	73.96	100.00
≥S/Sergeant	4.17	20.83	75.00	100.00
“Addressing the needs of sexual violence victims should be a key part of the mission of the Queensland Police Service” (n=494)				
Constable	2.27	12.88	84.85	100.00
S/Constable	4.94	15.23	79.84	100.00
Sergeant	2.11	15.79	82.11	100.00
≥S/Sergeant	4.17	29.17	66.67	100.00

Source: Survey data

Note: Based on Q12(a) “I have a good understanding of trauma-informed practice for sexual violence victims”; Q12(b) “I am dedicated to increasing my awareness and understanding of sexual violence”; and Q12(c) “Addressing the needs of sexual violence victims should be a key part of the mission of the Queensland Police Service”. Percentages rounded to 2 decimal places, and thus may not add up to 100%. Rank of Inspector or greater combined with S/Sergeant in Officer Rank analyses due to low sample size.

Table 4.5 shows items measuring general alignment with trauma-informed and victim-centric policing responses, broken down by region. Overall, there were few differences in these attitudes across regions.¹⁷ Interestingly, over 90 per cent of participants from Central and Northern Regions supported the inclusion of victim-survivor needs in the QPS mission.

¹⁷ Chi-squared tests showed that there was no association between region and understanding of trauma informed practice for sexual violence victims ($\chi^2 (12, n=623) 6.581, p>.05$). For the other items, across the regions, most participants “agree” or “strongly agree”; moreover, chi-square tests could not be computed for these items by region due to low expected cell counts.

Table 4.5 Crosstabulations of Region by Items Measuring General Alignment with Trauma-Informed and Victim-Centric Policing with Means and Standard Deviations

Region	Strongly disagree or disagree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Agree or strongly agree (%)	Total (%)
"I have a good understanding of trauma-informed practice for sexual violence victims" (n=623)				
Brisbane	32.20	33.33	34.46	100.00
Central	32.14	23.21	44.64	100.00
Far Northern	40.26	28.57	31.17	100.00
North Coast	29.07	32.56	38.37	100.00
North	31.25	27.08	41.67	100.00
South Eastern	34.62	25.64	39.74	100.00
Southern	33.66	28.71	37.62	100.00
"I am dedicated to increasing my awareness and understanding of sexual violence" (n=623)				
Brisbane	4.55	22.16	73.30	100.00
Central	0.00	19.30	80.70	100.00
Far Northern	1.32	23.68	75.00	100.00
North Coast	5.62	17.98	76.40	100.00
North	6.52	8.70	84.78	100.00
South Eastern	6.49	19.48	74.03	100.00
Southern	1.96	21.57	76.47	100.00
"Addressing the needs of sexual violence victims should be a key part of the mission of the Queensland Police Service" (n=624)				
Brisbane	4.47	15.08	80.45	100.00
Central	1.72	5.17	93.10	100.00
Far Northern	2.63	18.42	78.95	100.00
North Coast	5.81	15.12	79.07	100.00
North	0.00	2.08	97.92	100.00
South Eastern	6.67	18.67	74.67	100.00
Southern	2.94	18.63	78.43	100.00

Source: Survey data

Note: Based on Q12(a) "I have a good understanding of trauma-informed practice for sexual violence victims"; Q12(b) "I am dedicated to increasing my awareness and understanding of sexual violence"; and Q12(c) "Addressing the needs of sexual violence victims should be a key part of the mission of the Queensland Police Service". Percentages rounded to 2 decimal places, and thus may not add up to 100%.

Understanding of Trauma

With the move to a victim-centric, trauma-informed response to sexual violence, it is useful to measure frontline responders' understanding of how trauma may present in victim-survivors. Participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with items describing common misperceptions about how trauma might be expressed by victim-survivors, using a 5-point Likert scale (from 1= "strongly disagree" to 5= "strongly agree"). The items are shown in Table 4.6 below. These items were combined to form an overall measure of the extent to which trauma may *not* be recognised, known as the *Trauma Misperceptions Scale (TMS)*¹⁸¹⁹. Higher scores on the scale indicate greater misperceptions about trauma.

Table 4.6 Trauma Misperceptions Scale (TMS) Items ($\alpha = .708$)

Survey items
Q12d) A victim's display of emotions when telling about the crime is generally an indicator of the truth of their statement.
Q12g) A victim's inability to report details about the event shortly after the crime (less than a day), is generally reason to question the truth of their statement.
Q12h) Details that appear in a victim's memory after a period of time are generally less reliable than those that the victim can report right from the start.
Q12i) A victim's reluctance to give a detailed account of the crime is generally an indicator of the truth of their statement.

On average, survey participants had neutral to low scores on the TMS ($M=2.44$, $SD=.66$). This indicates that the frontline QPS staff surveyed had low misperceptions about how victim-survivors respond to trauma in the context of the criminal justice system response (i.e., <2.5 on a scale of 1-5).

To explore this further, Table 4.7 presents means and standard deviations for the TMS broken down by sworn/unsworn status, rank and region. *T*-tests indicate that there were no significant differences between sworn and unsworn staff trauma misperceptions.²⁰ Spearman's correlation coefficient (used due to the type of data) also suggests that relationship between rank and trauma misperceptions was not statistically significant.²¹ Finally, a chi-square test found that there was no association between region and trauma

¹⁸ The TMS is a multi-item scale adapted from Ask (2010) and Franklin et al., (2020). It has been used in prior research to measure misperceptions about how trauma presents in victim-survivors and has been often used to measure the efficacy of police training in trauma-informed practice.

¹⁹ Following factor analysis and item-reduction, four items were retained, and the mean score computed to construct the TMS.

²⁰ $t=.876$, $p>.05$.

²¹ $p=-.003$; $p>.05$.

misperceptions.²² Overall, the average ratings on the TMS do not appear to vary by sworn/unsworn status, officer rank or region.

Table 4.7 Trauma Misperceptions Scale (TMS) Means and Standard Deviations by Sub-sample

Sworn/unsworn (n=636)	M(SD)	Region (n=627)	M(SD)
Unsworn	2.49(.70)	Brisbane	2.38(.72)
Sworn	2.43(.66)	Central	2.36(.61)
Rank (n=500)	M(SD)	Far Northern	2.66(.73)
Constable	2.42(.68)	North Coast	2.29(.57)
S/Constable	2.44(.64)	Northern	2.43(.68)
Sergeant	2.38(.58)	South Eastern	2.49(.58)
S/Sergeant	2.50(.67)	Southern	2.54(.60)
≥Inspector	2.13(.32)	<i>Intentionally left blank</i>	

Source: Survey data

Note: TMS relied on participant responses to Q12(d), (g), (h) and (l). Percentages rounded to 2 decimal places, and thus may not add up to 100%.

The Rape Myth Scale (RMS)

Similarly, it is useful to assess frontline responders' attitudes toward victim-survivors of sexual violence. To do so, the *Rape Myth Scale* (RMS) was employed.²³ Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree") for each of 5-items (see Table 4.8). Participant responses to these items were combined into a single mean score (ranging from 1 to 5), with higher scores indicating stronger support for rape myths. Scores below 2.5 suggest low agreement with rape myths.

Table 4.8 Rape Myth Scale (RMS) Items ($\alpha = .865$)

Survey items
Q15a) A lot of times, women who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regret it.
Q15b) Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men.
Q15c) A lot of times, women who say they were raped often led the man on and then had regrets.
Q15d) A lot of times, women who claim they were raped just have emotional problems.
Q15e) Women who are caught cheating on their boyfriends sometimes claim that it was a rape.

²² A one-way ANOVA could not be performed to examine variations in trauma misperceptions across regions as the data violate Bartlett's equal-variance test. The data was subsequently transformed as a bivariate measure representing low or high trauma misperceptions and a chi square test showed that the two variables were independent ($\chi^2 (6, n=627) 12.308, p>.05$).

²³ This scale has been used in prior research to measure the efficacy of trauma-informed, victim-centric training (McMahon & Farmer, 2011). For the purposes of this Evaluation, we adapted five items from the original scale.

Overall, frontline QPS staff indicated average to low agreement with rape myths ($M=2.40$). Table 4.9 presents means and standard deviations for the RMS broken down by sworn/unsworn status, rank and region. Like the TMS, there were no significant differences in the mean score on the RMS between for sworn and unsworn staff²⁴ or across the regions.²⁵ However, tests revealed that there was a significant difference on the RMS by officer rank²⁶ with middle ranks reporting the highest scores (i.e., heightened beliefs in rape myths) compared to Constables and senior ranks (Inspector and above).²⁷

Table 4.9 Rape Myth Scale (RMS) Means and Standard Deviations by Sub-sample

Sworn/unsworn (n=636)	M(SD)	Region (n=626)	M(SD)
Unsworn	2.41(.73)	Brisbane	2.32(.71)
Sworn	2.40(.71)	Central	2.35(.78)
Rank (n=499)	M(SD)	Far Northern	2.43(.72)
Constable	2.24(.68)	North Coast	2.33(.76)
S/Constable	2.48(.72)	Northern	2.29(.62)
Sergeant	2.40(.71)	South Eastern	2.57(.66)
S/Sergeant	2.34(.67)	Southern	2.50(.68)
\geq Inspector	2.25(.19)	<i>Intentionally left blank</i>	

Source: Survey data

Note: The RMS relies on items Q15(a), (b), (c), (d) and (e). Percentages rounded to 2 decimal places, and thus may not add up to 100%.

In summary, survey results suggest that QPS front-line responders generally support a victim-centric and trauma-informed approach, but they are less confident in their understanding of what this approach entails. Survey results also suggest that QPS front-line responders have neutral to low trauma misperceptions and beliefs in rape myths. However, beliefs in rape myths appear to vary across rank for sworn officers.

²⁴ $t=.130$, $p>.05$.

²⁵ Results of a one-way ANOVA show that there is no statistically significant mean difference by region: $F(6,619) = 1.87$, $p>.05$.

²⁶ $F(4,494) = 2.57$, $p\leq.05$.

²⁷ $F(6,619) = 1.87$, $p>.05$.

5. Police Response to Sexual Violence

5.1. Overview

This chapter focuses primarily on further addressing KEQ 2:

KEQ 2: Has the Strategy improved QPS's capability to prevent, disrupt, respond to, and investigate sexual violence in Queensland?

To examine this question, the chapter draws on QPrime data, the interviews with key stakeholders and the survey of frontline QPS staff. The chapter first overviews the key role of Sexual Violence Liaison Officers (SVLOs) in responding to sexual violence. Second, withdrawn and unfounded reports of sexual violence are discussed. Third, prevention strategies are considered, followed by the impact, workload and capability of frontline QPS responders and the QPS more broadly.

5.2. The Key Role of Sexual Violence Liaison Officers (SVLOs) in Responding to Sexual Violence

A key mechanism of police response capability to respond to reports of sexual violence is the SVLO. The SVLO role is an action point of the Strategy and was rolled out state-wide in January 2022. In the focus groups with key QPS stakeholders, the role of the SVLO was perceived as central to the Strategy and to police capability to respond to reports of sexual violence. While the level of awareness of the Strategy varied amongst the participants as discussed in Chapter 4, most participants were aware of the SVLO role, with some participants understanding that the SVLO role was implemented as part of the Strategy (QPFG2, QPFG4), or as a pre-cursor to the Strategy (QPFG3).

So did the SVLO's role come and the Strategy did that come out together? That's another... I don't remember. Yeah, same again sorry I sort of can't exactly remember but I think was it around October 2021 around about then, but I think you're right I think it's been going for about 12 months and the Strategy was released in addition to the instruction that the SVLO's received in relation to the roles and responsibilities and additional requirements for overview. And you know risk management ultimately within that role. Yeah, I thought we'd been doing it about 12 months, maybe a bit longer, I just couldn't remember (QPFG4)

The SVLO role is outlined in the Operational Procedures Manual (OPM) s2.6.3. The participants considered that one of the roles of the SVLO was creating awareness of the Strategy across the service (QPFG2, QPFG4). Participants also commented that part of the SVLO role was to:

- ensure matters are investigated properly (QPI2)
- improve consistency across the State (QPI1, QPFG3)
- manage risk (QPFG4)
- comply with the OPM (QPFG4)
- overview and audit withdrawals (QPFG4)

Participants across focus groups commented that the implementation of the SVLO role was not new (EXFG1), but rather that it was something they were mostly doing already (QPI1). The SVLO role had just formalised the process (QPFG3). For example:

it's been there in different elements of what they've already done already, and I think it's just formalised and put a structure around something that maybe was a little bit disjointed (QPFG3).

Some participants suggested that formalising the SVLO role allowed for a step-up in responding to victim-survivors and engaging with stakeholders (QPFG3):

I probably see it as a bit of another level up from there to sort of help other staff sort of maybe try and connect a bit better with the victims or offer some advice on sort of how they should be sort of trying to deal with the matter or equally if there's some complaints or issues around sort of how the victim feels that they have initially been received well I'll try and step into that space and either talk with them and try and reassure them or try and touch base and liaise with our counterparts in sexual assault service and sort of work with them to try and sort of get a better outcome or improve the outcome for the victim (QPFG3).

While there was significant understanding of the SVLO role amongst QPS investigators, there was reported to be little awareness of the role across other frontline staff (QPFG3), as expressed by this external participant:

experience with someone ringing up police station actually asking for the SVLO and the police obviously or not obviously - I shouldn't say obviously, police having no idea what an SVLO, the

person on the phone having no idea what an SVLO was, even though it was explained to them who that person was (EXFG2).

Most of the external stakeholder participants commented positively regarding the SVLO role, however quite a few external participants were concerned that it was an “add-on” role, rather than a new role (EXFG2, EXFG3):

my concern with the whole model is that it's now in [DEIDENTIFIED] particularly, it sits with the head of CIB and CPIU and they're overworked enough as it is (EXFG2); and

they're responsive, but the reality of I think what they potentially can do I'm not sure of because of their workloads (EXFG3)

External stakeholder participants further expressed concerns that the role was automatically given to the OIC of CIB or CPIU, without having regard for whether that person was the “right” person for the job, as expressed here:

why there were so many male officers on the list? (EXFG1); and

it was just whoever was the most senior detective on that team at that station was allotted that, whether they were the best person for that role or not. And that was concerning to me, because obviously in small towns that's not always the best person for that role (EXFG1).

The above quote reiterates the feedback provided by QPS focus group participants who described the need to select “the right people” into roles tasked with improving, overseeing or managing responses to sexual violence to ensure the policing of sexual violence is enhanced.

Despite some of the concerns raised around the SVLO role, external stakeholder participants felt that the role was highly beneficial to victim-survivors and external services (EXFG3):

having that one direct person to liaise with would be fantastic and having that direct link, we have it as a direct link to kind of those senior detectives and we have a good system where we can kind of counteract having conversations with general duties police and just go straight to CIB and speak with some of those more senior ones (EXFG3).

However, key external stakeholders also suggested that there was a lack of consistency across the State in terms of how the SVLOs fulfill their role, as provided in these two examples:

[what] we're trying to sort out in [DEIDENTIFIED region] is what's the interplay between the role of the SVLO and perhaps some other inter-agencies that are at work (EXFG2); and

I think in [DEIDENTIFIED] we're not quite sure where we're going with that (EXFG2).

Ensuring that victim-survivors are offered a referral to an appropriate support service is another responsibility that falls under the SVLO role (OPM s3.6.2). These referrals should occur through the *Redbourne*²⁸ referral system. While police participants did not discuss this in detail, external stakeholder participants did. They suggested that referrals are getting better, but that there are still some hiccups in the process. For example:

our Redbourne referrals are certainly much more relevant these days - we used to get many, many that had nothing to do with us and I don't know whether that's as a result of that feedback or it's also a result of police awareness of services (EXFG1); and

their [police] frustration can be that referrals are going to services that aren't specialist sexual assault services because they have ticked on their proforma with Redbourne that they can address sexual assault - we've had them coming to us saying we need help, we need you to kind of partner with us to give that feedback to Redbourne that that system is not working, that victim-survivors aren't getting the adequate support that they need after we've been to see them and things like that (EXFG1).

This last quote also suggests improved partnership engagement between the police and service providers. This, as well as the rate of referrals, is further discussed in Chapter 8.

In summary, focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders suggest that the SVLO role is considered a key element of improving processes to respond to sexual violence. Despite this, not all stakeholders within (i.e., general QPS staff) and external to the QPS are aware of/or have a clear understanding of the SVLO role.

5.3. Withdrawn and Unfounded Reports of Sexual Violence

Examining sexual violence clearance rates and, specifically, the proportion of reports that are withdrawn and unfounded is crucial to evaluating the Strategy. Rates of withdrawn and unfounded reports of sexual violence have produced concern around how police are responding to and interacting with victims of sexual violence. The ABC News analysis of sexual

²⁸ Referrals are undertaken using the Redbourne Referral system:
<https://redbourne.com.au/government/police/>

assault data found that in 2018 in Queensland, 40% of reports were “unfounded” or “withdrawn” (Ting, Scott, & Palmer, 2020). This section draws on QPrime data to examine percentages of reports unfounded and withdrawn over time.

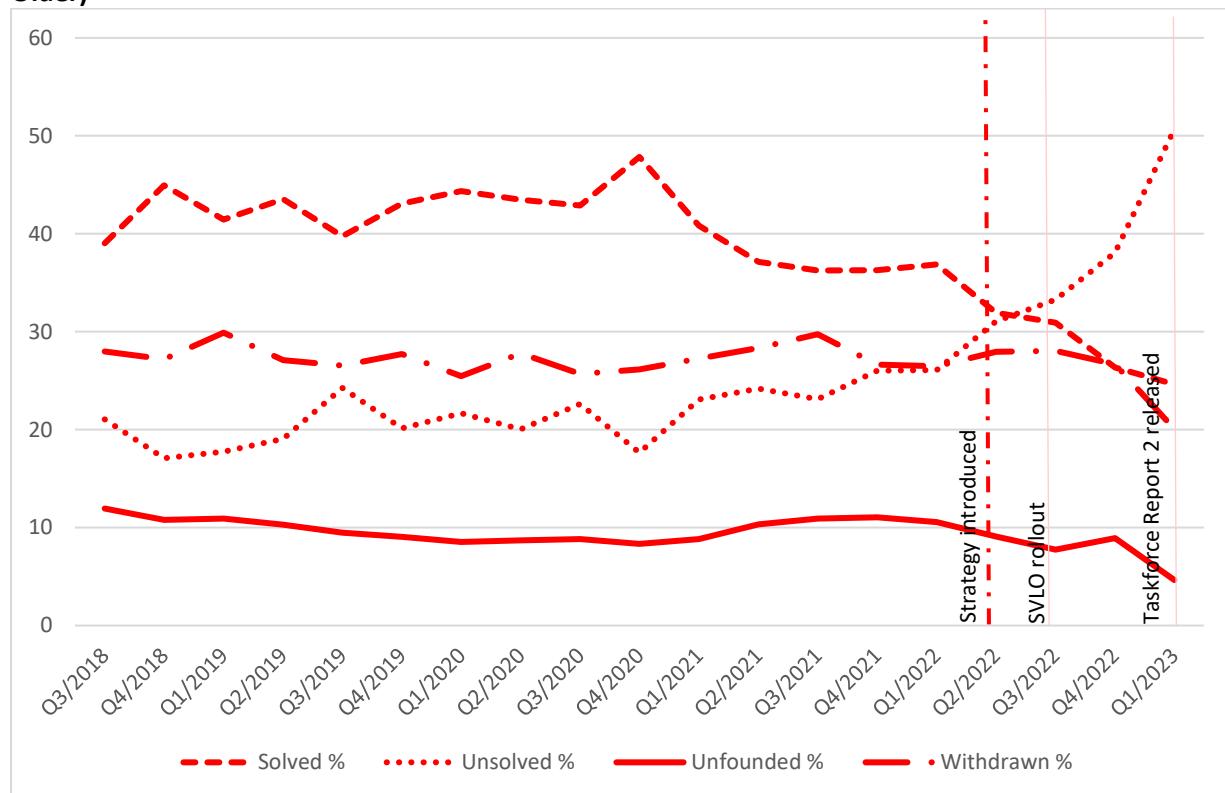
5.3.1. Has the Strategy Impacted on the Proportion of Withdrawn and Unfounded Reports of Sexual Violence?

To observe trends in sexual violence offence reports that were withdrawn and unfounded, the percentage of offences reported that were solved, unsolved, withdrawn and unfounded were examined over time (2018-2022). Results are presented in Figure 5.1 and are reported by fiscal quarter/fiscal year for comparative purposes. A table mapping the QPS fiscal quarters to calendar month and year can be found in Appendix J. Since Q3/2018, the proportion of withdrawn and unfounded reports has remained relatively stable at around 10% and 30% (respectively), with a reduction in the fiscal year of 2022/early in the fiscal year of 2023. This reduction corresponds with a significant²⁹ upward trend in the proportion of unsolved reports, and a corresponding significant³⁰ downward trend in the proportion of solved reports over time. The time between offence report to clearance, as shown in Table 5.1, helps to explain this pattern of results. Specifically, given that a large proportion of offences are solved between 1 month and 1 year following the sexual violence incident being reported (36.6%), it is difficult to draw valid conclusions about the impact of the Strategy on any potential changes in proportions of unsolved, solved, unfounded and withdrawn reports of sexual violence over time. Changes over time are also likely impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which further impedes the validity of trend-over-time analyses in the current Evaluation.

²⁹ $r=.789$; $p\leq.001$.

³⁰ $r=-.781$; $p\leq.001$.

Figure 5.1 Clearance Status of Sexual Violence Offences as a Percent of Total Reported Sexual Violence Offences by Fiscal Quarter and Fiscal Year, 2018-2023 (Victim-survivor Aged 16 Years and Older)



Source: QPrime data

Table 5.1 Sexual Violence Offences Cleared by Time Reported to Clearance (2018-2022) (Victim-survivor Aged 16 Years and Older)

Time reported to clearance	Solved	Unfounded	Withdrawn	Total cleared
1 day	27.5%	15.6%	23.8%	24.6%
>1 day to 1 week	13.1%	14.5%	11.7%	12.8%
>1 week to 1 month	17.4%	23.5%	22.9%	20.2%
>1 month to 1 year	34.6%	41.9%	37.9%	36.7%
>1 year to 5 years	7.4%	4.5%	3.7%	5.7%
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total number	7,085	1,767	5,074	13,926

Source: QPrime data

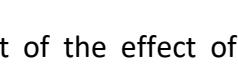
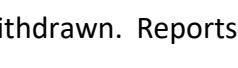
Note: Percentages rounded to 1 decimal place, and thus, may not add up to 100%.

5.3.2. Does Region Impact on the Likelihood a Case will be Withdrawn or Unfounded?

Although conclusions cannot be drawn about changes in the proportions of unfounded or withdrawn reports over time, the likelihood a sexual violence report will be withdrawn or unfounded was examined by region in the current Evaluation. This analysis helps to shed light on the factors that may lead to reports being withdrawn or unfounded.

The percentage of reports that were withdrawn (of the total reports) by calendar year³¹ and region is presented in Table 5.2. Across the four calendar years³² in the Evaluation period, the Northern Region had the lowest percentage of reports withdrawn (17.0% in 2020) and the North Coast Region had the highest percentage of reports withdrawn (33.2% in 2020). In 2021 the South Eastern Region had the highest percentage of reports withdrawn (32.6%), and the Far Northern Region had the lowest percentage of reports withdrawn (18.1%). Overall, the Central, Northern, South Eastern and Southern Regions show recent increases, while the Brisbane, Far Northern and North Coast regions show decreases in the proportion of reports withdrawn.

Table 5.2 Percentage of Sexual Violence Offence Reports Withdrawn, by Calendar Year of Report and Region, 2018-2021 (Victim-survivor Aged 16 Years and Older)

Region	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Brisbane	26.1%	28.6%	29.6%	28.5%	
Central	31.6%	27.4%	22.0%	24.1%	
Far Northern	27.2%	18.4%	21.5%	18.1%	
North Coast	31.0%	28.7%	33.2%	27.9%	
Northern	22.1%	20.8%	17.0%	21.7%	
South Eastern	31.4%	29.7%	28.1%	32.6%	
Southern	26.6%	25.1%	26.9%	31.3%	

Source: QPrime data

Note: Percentage rounded to 1 decimal place.

Logistic regression³³ analysis was employed to provide a statistical test of the effect of calendar year and region on the likelihood of a report having been withdrawn. Reports withdrawn were regressed on region, adjusting for calendar year. Results indicate that, on average, calendar year³⁴ did not have a significant effect on the likelihood a report was withdrawn, but there were some significant effects for region (results of the logistic regression analysis are provided in Appendix K). To explore the effect of region in more depth, odds ratios were computed, adjusting for year, and region pairs were compared. These results are presented in Table 5.3 below. For ease of review, only significant differences are included in the Table, and results are shown in terms of percentage change in the odds between the

³¹ This analysis is conducted by calendar year, therefore data from 2022 is incomplete and excluded from the analysis.

³² Analysis by year excludes 2022 as complete data for 2022 were not within the evaluation period.

³³ Logistic regression is employed for this analysis given the outcome variable of interest (withdrawn or not) is binary.

³⁴ $b=-.006$; $p \geq .05$.

specified regions. For example, adjusting for the effect of year, reports in the Far Northern region had a *decreased* odds of being withdrawn by 31%, compared to the Brisbane Region.

Table 5.3 Odds Ratios of Likelihood of Reports Withdrawn for Regional Pairs, Adjusting for Calendar Year (2018-2021) (n=15,241)

Regional Pair	% Change in Odds
Less likely to withdraw	
Far Northern vs Brisbane	-31%
Northern vs Brisbane	-35%
Far Northern vs Central	-23%
Northern vs Central	-26%
Northern vs North Coast	-40%
More likely to withdraw	
South Eastern vs Northern	+71%
Southern vs Northern	+51%
South Eastern vs Brisbane	+12%
North Coast vs Central	+23%
South Eastern vs Central	+26%
North Coast vs Far Northern	+59%
South Eastern vs Far Northern	+63%
Southern vs Far Northern	+44%

Source: QPrime data

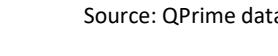
Note: Only statistically significant results are presented. Results are statistically significant at $p<0.05$.

Overall, the largest absolute difference reported in Table 5.3 above was between the South Eastern and Northern Region, where the South Eastern Region was 71% *more* likely to have had a report withdrawn compared to the Northern region. The results also suggest that the Far Northern and Northern Regions were *less* likely to have reports withdrawn, compared to other regions. Regions in the south-east corner (Brisbane, South Eastern and North Coast Regions) had smaller differences in the odds of withdrawn reports, with either small significant percentage change or no significant difference. Similarly, Far Northern and Northern Regions were not significantly different. One trend to observe is the performance of the Northern Region. This may be due to the impact of the SART (in Townsville). The SART is discussed further in Chapter 8.

The analytic strategy utilised above was replicated for reports of sexual violence offences that were cleared as unfounded. Table 5.4 reports the percentage of reports of sexual violence offences that were cleared as unfounded from 2018 to 2021 by region. Across the period, the Northern Region had the highest percentage of unfounded reports in 2018 (14.6%) and the lowest percentage in 2020 (6.2%). In contrast to withdrawn reports, the Brisbane, Far

Northern, North Coast, Northern and South Eastern Regions showed recent increases in unfounded reports while the Central and Southern Regions had recent decreases.

Table 5.4 Percentage of Sexual Violence Offence Reports Unfounded, by Calendar Year of Report and Region, 2018-2021 (Victim-survivor Aged 16 Years and Older)

Region	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Brisbane	9.3%	9.4%	9.5%	11.1%	
Central	12.7%	7.9%	7.2%	7.6%	
Far Northern	12.5%	11.0%	8.0%	10.2%	
North Coast	11.3%	7.8%	8.6%	9.6%	
Northern	14.6%	8.5%	6.2%	10.6%	
South Eastern	8.9%	9.5%	10.5%	13.1%	
Southern	11.2%	8.7%	12.3%	8.7%	

Source: QPrime data

Note: Percentage rounded to 1 decimal place.

To provide a statistical test of the effect of calendar year and region on the likelihood of a report being unfounded, logistical regression analyses were undertaken.³⁵ The results show that region did not appear to explain why a report of sexual violence may be unfounded, after adjusting for year of report during the evaluation period (see Appendix K).

In summary, due to data limitations, the effect of the Strategy on the percentage of reports withdrawn or unfounded is inconclusive at this time. There were however variations across regions between 2018 and 2021, specifically the Northern Region tended to show fewer withdrawals compared to some other regions.

5.3.3. Further Insight into Reports Withdrawn

There are likely many reasons why victim-survivors may withdraw a report of sexual violence. To ensure the victim-survivor has time to decide on whether to proceed with a complaint, the OPM has been amended to stipulate that a complaint should not be withdrawn within 14 days, unless under extenuating circumstances (OPM s2.6.3.). This topic was explored in the focus groups with key QPS stakeholders.

Participants noted that this renewed process has provided investigators the opportunity to “check-in” with the victim-survivor to discuss the investigative process and has allowed

³⁵ Logistic regression was conducted due to the binary nature of the dependent variable (report unfounded). Again, analyses were restricted to 2018-2021 period.

victim-survivors more time to make an informed decision (QPFG4). Participants also noted that it has allowed SVLOs to audit withdrawals in more depth, ensuring referrals have been completed, and ensuring that the victim-survivor has been fully informed (QPFG4). However, some focus group participants commented that this process may not be implemented consistently across the QPS (QPFG4):

if it is a victim-centric approach, and you're respecting the victim's wishes, then that may mean withdrawal in the first couple of days (QPFG1);

if we're not going to take a withdrawal for 14 days, is the obligation is that we pursue that investigation until we get to the 14 days, and that may mean that hey we may have to take out crime scene warrants, we may have to secure CCTV, we may even have to take up a suspect and get a medical examination, because there's all that potential evidence to be lost if we don't. Now if we do all that sort of stuff and the victim's clear from the start 'no I don't want to make a complaint', but we go and secure all that evidence, and we may be interfering with people's rights as well detaining them their liberties or doing things that are locking down public spaces (QPFG1); and

I got back from senior police was oh well you're going to have to really get a firm decision from the victim about what they think they want to do, and I said 'well hang on, that goes against what the policy says, it says we have to give them time'. So, it's this real big grey area for 14 days, well what is the expectation that I have of my constables working on the weekend about how far do they push that investigation (QPFG1).

It is possible that these inconsistencies help to explain the regional differences observed in Section 5.3 above.

Some of the police participants queried the 14-day policy, suggesting it has complicated matters and, moreover, that it is not victim-centric but rather about compliance and risk management (QPFG1, QPFG2). Some police participants expressed concerns about how this policy may affect the prosecutorial process (QPFG1), while others commented that officers would complete the withdrawal within the 14 days but would simply not finalise the matter on the system (QPI1):

the error they were trying to get over is that police were putting undue pressure on victims to withdraw the complaint, and that if we record that withdrawal then we'll show transparently that the police aren't putting undue pressure. But that's a compliance thing about police, it is not victim focussed, it's not trauma-informed, and I disagreed with it (QPFG1)

Another police participant suggested that, rather than the need to finalise a matter for statistical purposes, there could be a QPrime entry option to leave these matters open:

there does need to be some context around ok well the victim hasn't withdrawn the complaint but they're also not wanting to proceed to a point where we can act and arrest and solve that occurrence (QPFG4)

Further concerns were raised during the police focus group discussions about the requirement to keep regular contact with victim-survivors (QPFG1, QPFG2). Not all police participants considered this approach was victim-focused, given that each victim-survivor is different and not all victim-survivors seek out regular contact:

it's as basic as sometimes the victim doesn't want us to be contacting them unless there's potentially a development that we've got to give them, or we talk about that trauma-informed process, and if that is really just bringing things to the forefront for them every 28 days for instance, when there's really nothing that we have to report or nothing we need to clarify – then I mean I don't think that that's of any benefit to them either (QPFG1)

Police participants acknowledged that sometimes contact "falls through the cracks", because of heavy workloads, but that officers usually encourage victim-survivors to keep in contact (QPFG2, QPFG3). Police participants also acknowledged that victim-survivors may have different preferences regarding mode of contact, for example a preference for updates via an external service provider (QPFG2, QPFG3):

so, we have good contacts with the counselling service, and they can sometimes ring us and say "hey the victim just wants a bit of an update" or something like that, so it's a little bit of both (QPFG2).

In summary there was some concern about whether the 14-day policy was compatible with a victim-centred and trauma-informed approach. This appears to be, in part, due to misunderstandings about the policy and/or the need for clarification about the way the policy should be implemented. Some of the feedback also indicates that the policy should be reviewed.

In summary, focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders suggest the 14-day withdrawal process may need clarification. The 14-day policy should be implemented in a manner that is consistent with a victim-centric and trauma-informed approach.

5.1. Prevention Strategies

While the key focus of the Strategy is on improving responses to sexual violence, the Evaluation briefly considered prevention. It should also be noted that prevention activities are the responsibility of multiple agencies reflected in the Queensland Government (2019) *Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence*.

In the interviews/focus groups, external stakeholder participants commented that they had not really seen a difference in prevention as part of the Strategy (EXFG1). Police participants commented that preventing sexual violence is difficult for police, as offences are often opportunistic and perpetrated by a person the victim-survivor knows (QPI1). However, most police participants saw that there was an opportunity to do more (QPFG2); and some were undertaking prevention initiatives. These initiatives tended to focus on respectful relationships, consent and peer-based sexual offending, especially in schools (QPI2, QPFG3, QPFG4).

Relatedly, one of the elements of the Evaluation was to review the use of the Dashboard. From the police interviews and focus groups it appeared that only SVLOs have access to the Dashboard (however this was later identified as a misconception). Moreover, knowledge and use of the Dashboard was described as limited (QPFG2, QPFG3, QPFG4). Those who had accessed the Dashboard found it useful to understand where referrals are going (QPI2), as well as when needing to brief someone (QPFG1, QPFG3, QPFG4), or for the Business Unit Reviews (BUR) (QPFG4). There may be some utility of statistics, such as those reported via the Dashboard, in informing prevention strategies.

In summary, focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders suggest there is an opportunity to implement proactive approaches to prevent sexual violence. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that prevention activities in this area are often outside of the direct reach of the police. The Dashboard is underutilised and may prove useful in informing prevention. At this stage, the Strategy does not appear to have specifically contributed to the prevention of sexual violence.

5.2. The Impact of Frontline QPS Staff

In the focus groups with key stakeholders, police identified gaps in the QPS frontline response that provide room for improvement. Below is a scenario reported by a police participant of a QPS response to a victim-survivor reporting an incident of sexual violence:

we had a recent episode up here where one of the victims fell through the cracks sadly... for whatever reason the first response officer didn't contact CIB, they had an assumption that it was an assault. That GDs (general duties) officer is taking a statement and gets to a point where she [the victim] then discloses that she was raped, it was 10:00 o'clock at night, so for whatever reason the GD officer just pushed on with the statement and then went days off. She just sent an email and said this needs following up, when in fact CIB should have been called out that night: 1) to sort of take over the statement because the statement was probably not up to standard of what we would require and 2) then obviously then make sort of determinations around SAIK (sexual assault investigation kits) and stuff like that. And just and through that officer's lack of knowledge and experience in those investigations we just missed a lot, we then had to try and catch up later (QPFG3).

As indicated by another police participant, this is not an isolated incident:

part of our [DEIDENTIFIED] one looked at the quantity of sexual assaults which are being looked at by uniform and not even coming to CIB, and it's surprising how many don't even reach our in-trays before uniform have done the initial actions, decided on it and unfounded or withdrawn it before we even see it. So, there is a gap there definitely (QPFG1).

That first response to a victim-survivor of sexual violence is where “we [the QPS] succeed or fail” (QPFG1, QPFG2, QPFG3). In accordance with OPM s2.6.3 first response officers should

consider contacting the relevant SVLO; however, they still have the responsibility to obtain significant detail, such as:

- identifying the offence to be investigated
- completing a brief account of the occurrence, including location, time, injuries, conversations, indicia, sequence of events, etc.
- obtaining sufficient information to assist in identifying the suspect.

A few police participants raised concerns that there is a significant gap in the QPS response when victim-survivors attend the front counter and/or report the offence to general duties officers. The response victim-survivors receive at the front counter is often not victim-centric or trauma-informed. This was further highlighted by external stakeholder participants (EXFG1, EXFG2, EXFG3, QPFG4):

what we hear from our clients often is that first response from police isn't great and a lot of people are discouraged and feel quite unsafe to report and come forward (EXFG3); and

obviously the barriers for victims sometimes is just literally walking through the front doors of a police station you know to make a make a report and it's quite confronting and to then show up at a counter where you know it might be 10 deep with multiple other persons making different types of complaints and they're reporting something that's such a sensitive matter (QPFG4).

However as already indicated above, general duties officers and front counter staff receive limited training in relation to responding to victim-survivors of sexual violence (QPFG1) and are often junior in service (QPI2). Some police focus group participants questioned the level of awareness and understanding of sexual violence and related reporting behaviours held by frontline responders (which is supported by survey data) (QPFG2, QPFG4). The participants felt that training should be provided to all frontline staff (including those at the front counter), and that it should be a state-wide response to ensure consistency rather than pushing it down to district level (QPFG1). Sexual violence was described by participants as not just an investigator's job, but everybody's job (QPFG2):

really everyone's job to some extent, just because the plainclothes group owns investigations, the interactions with victims and managing those responses is really the role of all police, so I think that might be one thing, it's not just a CIB or CPIU problem (QPFG2); and

we've run some awareness sessions in relation to the SVLO role of requirements now for an investigator to take up with the victim at the first available opportunity. So, we ran some sessions with the client service officers, so the people at the front counter that take initial reports from victims. We've done some training with some of the uniformed officers, some of the other outlying sections they've started to do that training, so we're trying to raise awareness just in relation to this is the SVLO role, this is the expectation now, this is the changes that are happening (QFPG4).

External stakeholder participants went further than that, commenting that to improve responses to victim-survivors, it is important that a victim-survivor gets to speak to the correct person on the first occasion (EXFG2), to reduce trauma and the need to tell their story multiple times (EXFG2). Some service providers described accompanying the victim-survivor to the police station to overcome that barrier, or contacting the relevant SVLO or a detective directly, prior to referring a victim-survivor to the station to report the incident (EXFG1, EXFG2). This practice was reported to vary across the State, as shown in these quotes from one external stakeholder focus group:

there have been occasions you know where we have accompanied women to the police station for that reason (EXFG2); and

we recently had cause to just ring and try and get a detective straight up as a person making a report and you're told that 'oh no you have to speak to the uniformed officer first' and then it gets tasked up (EXFG2)

External stakeholders further reported that there was a distinct difference between reporting a recent act of sexual violence versus an historical complaint. Here, they raised concerns that reporting of historical offences has not been met with urgency by police, which can further traumatisise victim-survivors and deter their engagement with police:

in regard to the length of time for police to respond and take statements for historical crimes. If a victim goes into to talk about or they're brave enough to advise police of a historical crime and we know that most crime, most sexual crime goes unreported anyway, that the police sometimes only have a snippet of time for that person to feel confident. If that person doesn't hear back from the police for a long period of time they often will just withdraw that complaint or not move forward with it. So, it's around being responsive at the time (EXFG3).

QPS and external stakeholders also commented that the actual location where statements are taken is not always victim-centric or trauma-informed. Police stations are not necessarily victim-survivor friendly (QPGF2). Participants discussed that wherever possible a “soft room” (e.g., a warm, welcoming and trauma-informed environment as opposed to a sterile interview room) should be created/utilised:

our station for example is not very friendly environmentally - our statement rooms are - they make you feel claustrophobic, a lot of people don't like coming into a police station (QPGF2).

External stakeholders further expressed that police can sometimes appear to be insensitive of the appropriateness of the location of the statement and the impact this has on victim-survivors. For example:

we don't want to see victims having statements taken at hospitals either. They're often in shock and they've been violated, they're experiencing adverse impacts of trauma, it's not the most appropriate time to be conducting a formalised report that can then be used in court. Those recordings can be used there. So, victims really need information around you know if a police officer is recording, when do they start? What does that mean for them? They need to know the process of taking those notes or doing that formal statement and looking at the most appropriate place to be doing it. Often bedside at a hospital is not the most appropriate place for someone in shock (EXFG3).

In summary, focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders suggest there is a significant gap in QPS response to reports of sexual violence at the point of first contact. Specifically, not all frontline staff are aware of the Strategy or applications of victim-centric and trauma-informed policing responses to sexual violence. (This aligns with Recommendation 28 of the Taskforce Report 2).

5.3. Frontline Workload and Capability

To examine the role of frontline QPS staff in responding to sexual violence, the survey asked frontline QPS members about their workload and preparedness to respond to reports of sexual violence. Participants were asked: “Over the past 12 months, approximately what percentage of your workload has involved reports of sexual violence?” and could enter a number between 0 and 100. The distribution of responses to this question are presented in

Figure 5.2 below. On average participants indicated that reports of sexual violence comprised approximately 9 percent of their workload ($M=8.97$, $SD=14.54$). The median and most common response was 5 percent. These lower figures are not surprising given the heavy role that specialist police officers (rather than frontline officers or front counter staff) play in the investigation of sexual violence reports. However, as noted in the focus groups, even a small amount of contact with a victim-survivor of sexual violence can have an impact (see Section 5.2 above).

To further investigate the role of frontline QPS staff in responding to reports of sexual violence further, Table 5.5 provides means and standard deviations for the percentage of workload involving reports of sexual violence by sworn/unsworn status, rank and region.³⁶ Unsworn staff in the sample reported a higher workload responding to reports of sexual violence ($M=11.36$, $SD=19.28$) compared to sworn staff ($M=8.42$, $SD=13.13$), although this difference was not statistically significant.³⁷ When comparing survey results for sworn officers by rank, there was a negative and significant association between workload and rank, such that those at the lower ranks were more likely to report a higher percentage of workload attributed to sexual violence reports than those at the higher ranks (at least within this sample of frontline responders).³⁸ Given the structure of police work, this is not surprising. Lastly, reported workload was examined by region. Participants in the Central Region reported the lowest average workload, while participants in South Eastern Region reported the highest average workload. To test for differences across regions, responses were recoded to represent low/high workloads.³⁹ Workload and region were independent, indicating no significant difference in workload across regions.⁴⁰

³⁶ A *t*-test was employed to examine differences between sworn/unsworn staff workload and a Spearman's correlation coefficient was computed to test for a significant relationship between workload and rank.

³⁷ *T*-test with unequal variances; $t=1.65$, $p>.05$.

³⁸ $p=-.098$; $p\le.05$.

³⁹ This was computed via a median split. Low workloads were coded as less than 5 percent of sexual violence reports and high workloads were coded as 5 percent or greater.

⁴⁰ $\chi^2 (6, n=651) 5.635$, $p>.05$.

Figure 5.2 Distribution of Estimated Percentage of Workload Involving Reports of Sexual Violence Over the Past 12 Months (n=669)



Note: Based on Q1 "Over the past 12 months, approximately what percentage of your workload has involved reports of sexual violence?".

Table 5.5 Workload Involving Reports of Sexual Violence Over the Past 12 Months, Means and Standard Deviations by Sub-sample

Sworn/unsworn (n=660)	M(SD)	Region (n=651)	M(SD)
Unsworn	11.36(19.28)	Brisbane	9.85(15.24)
Sworn	8.42(13.13)	Central	5.22(8.41)
Rank (n=511)	M(SD)	Far Northern	9.71(15.22)
Constable	8.74(11.84)	North Coast	7.89(12.66)
S/Constable	8.97(15.11)	Northern	8.33(14.62)
Sergeant	7.02(8.93)	South Eastern	10.63(17.75)
S/Sergeant	6.10(11.10)	Southern	8.86(14.54)
≥Inspector	1.50(2.38)	<i>Left intentionally blank</i>	

Source: Survey data

Note: Based on Q1 "Over the past 12 months, approximately what percentage of your workload has involved reports of sexual violence?". Rounded to 2 decimal places.

Survey participants were asked to estimate future workload with the question: "how likely are you to communicate with a victim of sexual violence in the next month?". Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1= "not at all likely" to 5 = "very likely"). Crosstabulations of the likelihood of communication⁴¹ by sworn/unsworn status, rank and region are presented in Table 5.6 below. Although the result suggests that there is a statistically significant⁴² association between staff sworn status and the likelihood of communication, the pattern is difficult to interpret. Unsworn staff are more likely to report

⁴¹ The variable has been recoded into three categories for analytic purposes.

⁴² χ^2 (2, n=655) 15.613, $p \leq .001$.

being “moderately likely” or “very likely” to have contact, and also more likely to report being “not at all” or “slightly likely” to have contact with a victim-survivor of sexual violence in the next 12 months, compared to sworn staff. There was also a significant association between rank and likelihood of communication.⁴³ Those at the lower ranks appear to be more likely to communicate with a victim-survivor of sexual violence over the next 12 months than those at higher ranks. However, there was no association between region and likelihood of communication.⁴⁴

Table 5.6 Crosstabulations of Likelihood of Communicating with a Victim of Sexual Violence in the Next 12 Months by QPS Staff Sworn/Unsworn Status, Rank and Region

Sworn/unsworn (n=655)	Not at all or slightly (%)	Somewhat likely (%)	Moderately or very likely (%)	Total (%)
Unsworn	55.56	9.52	34.92	100.00
Sworn	49.91	25.14	24.95	100.00
Rank (n=511)				
Constable	47.14	24.29	28.57	100.00
S/Constable	45.97	26.21	27.82	100.00
Sergeant	55.56	24.24	20.20	100.00
≥S/Sergeant	95.83	4.17	0.00	100.00
Region (n=647)				
Brisbane	51.11	21.11	27.78	100.00
Central	52.54	25.42	22.03	100.00
Far Northern	54.32	16.05	29.63	100.00
North Coast	54.44	24.44	21.11	100.00
Northern	51.92	23.08	25.00	100.00
South Eastern	47.50	23.75	28.75	100.00
Southern	48.57	22.86	28.57	100.00

Source: Survey data

Note: Based on Q2 “In your role, how likely are you to communicate with a victim of sexual violence in the next month?”. Rounded to 2 decimal places and therefore may not add up to 100%. Rank of Inspector or greater combined with S/Sergeant in Officer Rank analyses due to low sample size.

After gauging workload, capability to respond to reports of sexual violence was examined. To assess capability, participants were asked “How prepared do you feel to respond effectively to sexual violence reports?”. Responses were again measured on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = “not at all prepared” to 5 = “very prepared”). Table 5.7 reports participants’ preparedness to respond⁴⁵ by sworn/unsworn status, rank and region. Overall, the results suggest that there is an association between reported feelings of preparedness and staff

⁴³ χ^2 (6, n=511) 24.300, p≤.001.

⁴⁴ χ^2 (12, n=647) 5.005, p>.05.

⁴⁵ The variable has been recoded into three categories for analytic purposes.

sworn status, officer rank and region. Sworn staff appear more likely to report being “moderately” or “very prepared” to respond to victim-survivors of sexual violence, compared to unsworn staff.⁴⁶ Moreover, sworn officers at the higher ranks reported feeling more prepared to respond to a report of sexual violence than those at the lower ranks.⁴⁷ Reported feelings of preparedness also varied by region.⁴⁸ For example, the North Coast Region had the highest proportion of staff surveyed who reported feeling “moderately” or “very prepared” and the lowest proportion who reported feeling “not at all” or “slightly prepared”.

Table 5.7 Crosstabulations of Preparedness to Respond to Sexual Violence Reports by QPS Staff Sworn/Unsworn Status, Rank and Region

Sworn/unsworn (n=641)	Not at all or slightly (%)	Somewhat (%)	Moderately or very (%)	Total (%)
Unsworn	33.93	25.00	41.07	100.00
Sworn	16.07	27.79	56.14	100.00
Rank (n=511)				
Constable	23.24	33.80	42.96	100.00
S/Constable	15.73	29.03	55.24	100.00
Sergeant	8.25	18.56	73.20	100.00
≥S/Sergeant	8.33	16.67	75.00	100.00
Region (n=632)				
Brisbane	16.85	29.78	53.37	100.00
Central	18.52	31.48	50.00	100.00
Far Northern	31.65	26.58	41.77	100.00
North Coast	6.74	31.46	61.80	100.00
Northern	18.37	22.45	59.18	100.00
South Eastern	25.32	18.99	55.70	100.00
Southern	23.08	26.92	50.00	100.00

Source: Survey data

Note: Based on Q3 “How prepared do you feel to respond effectively to sexual violence reports?”. Rounded to 2 decimal places and therefore may not add up to 100%. Rank of Inspector or greater combined with S/Sergeant in Officer Rank analyses due to low sample size.

Finally, preparedness was correlated with workload and the likelihood of communicating with a victim-survivor of sexual violence in the next 12 months. Those who reported a higher workload of sexual violence reports in the past 12 months reported greater preparedness to respond to a report of sexual violence⁴⁹ and those who were more likely to communicate with

⁴⁶ χ^2 (2, n=641)19.553, p≤.001.

⁴⁷ χ^2 (6, n=511)26.1635, p≤.001.

⁴⁸ χ^2 (12, n=632)23.707, p≤.05.

⁴⁹ $r=.136$, p≤.001.

a victim-survivor of sexual violence in the next 12 months were also more likely to feel prepared to respond to a report of sexual violence⁵⁰.

In summary, the survey of frontline QPS staff suggests that responding to sexual violence comprises, on average, 9% of their workload. Unsurprisingly, those who were more likely to respond to sexual violence generally reported feeling more prepared. However, those of higher rank also felt more prepared, despite being less likely to respond to sexual violence.

5.4. Frontline Attitudes Toward QPS Response to Sexual Violence

To further examine cultural attitudes and responses to sexual violence, frontline QPS staff attitudes toward the QPS response to sexual violence were surveyed. The *QPS Response Scale* was created combining 4 survey items (see Table 5.8) to represent an overall assessment of the QPS response to sexual violence. Items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”). Scores on the QPS response scale represented a mean score on these items, with a score of 5 representing agreeable views about QPS response. Overall, participants held ambivalent to agreeable views about the QPS response to sexual violence ($M=3.63$, $SD=6.73$).

As with previous analyses, to explore this scale further, attitudes toward the QPS response to sexual violence were compared by sworn/unsworn status, rank and region. Results are presented in Table 5.9. Results show that average participant attitudes did not significantly vary between sworn and unsworn staff⁵¹, or by officer rank⁵². However, results from a one-way ANOVA supported a significant relationship between region and attitudes, indicating that attitudes did vary depending on one’s region.⁵³ Table 5.9 shows that the region with the most positive attitudes about the QPS response to sexual violence was the Northern Region, while the Brisbane Region had the least positive attitudes.

⁵⁰ $r=.251$, $p\leq.001$.

⁵¹ T -test: $t=1.61$, $p>.05$.

⁵² Spearman’s correlation: $p=-.013$, $p>.05$.

⁵³ $F(6,615) =3.14$, $p\leq.05$.

Table 5.8 QPS Response Scale Items ($\alpha = .772$)

Survey items
Q16a) The Queensland Police Service has policies and procedures in place to effectively respond to victims of sexual violence.
Q16b) I believe the Queensland Police Service is working to improve policy around responding to sexual violence
Q16c) In my opinion, sexual violence cases are handled very differently now compared to 2 years ago
Q16f) The Queensland Police Service adequately considers the needs of victims of sexual violence

Table 5.9 Attitudes Toward the QPS Response Scale (QRS), Means and Standard Deviations by Sub-sample

Sworn/unsworn (n=630)	M(SD)	Region (n=622)	M(SD)
Unsworn	3.72(.06)	Brisbane	3.50 (.74)
Sworn	3.61(.03)	Central	3.75 (.68)
Rank (n=490)	M(SD)	Far Northern	3.65 (.56)
Constable	3.73 (.59)	North Coast	3.63 (.73)
S/Constable	3.53 (.69)	Northern	3.92 (.58)
Sergeant	3.60 (.60)	South Eastern	3.57 (.63)
S/Sergeant	3.99 (.44)	Southern	3.67 (.63)
≥Inspector	4.00 (.46)	<i>Left intentionally blank</i>	

Source: Survey data

Note: The QRS relies on items Q16(a), (b), (c), and (f). Rounded to 2 decimal places.

In addition to this attitude scale, two further items were included to assess frontline staff perceptions of the QPS response to sexual violence. The first item measured peer attitudes (“Some of my fellow officers make negative comments about victims of sexual violence”) and the second item measured the willingness to refer a friend or family member to the police (“If a friend or family member were a victim of sexual violence, I would encourage them to report to the police”). On average ($M=2.54$, $SD=1.09$), survey participants tended to “disagree” to “neither agree nor disagree” with the statement “Some of my fellow officers make negative comments about victims of sexual violence”, while they tended to “agree” ($M=4.29$, $SD=.86$) with the statement “If a friend or family member were a victim of sexual violence, I would encourage them to report to the police”.

Table 5.10 presents crosstabulations of perception of peer attitudes⁵⁴ by sworn/unsworn status, rank and region.⁵⁵ Results show no significant relationship between sworn/unsworn status⁵⁶ or officer rank⁵⁷ and perceived peer attitudes. However, a significant relationship was

⁵⁴ The variable has been recoded into three categories for analytic purposes.

⁵⁵ Chi-square tests were used to detect significant relationships between variables.

⁵⁶ χ^2 (2, n=610)0.714, $p>.05$.

⁵⁷ χ^2 (6, n=479)10.135, $p>.05$.

observed for region.⁵⁸ That is, participants were either more likely or less likely to indicate that some of their peers make negative comments about victims of sexual violence, depending on their region. For example, 30.2% of participants located in North Coast Region agreed or strongly agreed with the statement compared to 12.5% in South Eastern region.

Table 5.10 Crosstabulations of Peer Attitude by QPS Staff Sworn/Unsworn Status, Rank and Region

Sworn/unsworn (n=610)	Strongly disagree or disagree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Agree to strongly agree (%)	Total (%)
Unsworn	53.04	27.83	19.13	100.00
Sworn	54.55	24.24	21.21	100.00
Rank (n=479)				
Constable	61.79	24.39	13.82	100.00
S/Constable	49.58	23.33	27.08	100.00
Sergeant	58.95	23.16	17.89	100.00
≥S/Sergeant	57.14	23.81	19.05	100.00
Region (n=602)				
Brisbane	56.21	20.12	23.67	100.00
Central	61.40	26.32	12.28	100.00
Far Northern	52.17	27.54	20.29	100.00
North Coast	48.84	20.93	30.23	100.00
Northern	53.19	23.40	23.40	100.00
South Eastern	44.44	43.06	12.50	100.00
Southern	58.82	21.57	19.61	100.00

Source: Survey data

Note: Based on Q16(d) "Some of my fellow officers make negative comments about victims of sexual violence". Rounded to 2 decimal places and therefore may not add up to 100%. Rank of Inspector or greater combined with S/Sergeant in Officer Rank analyses due to low sample size.

Table 5.11 presents crosstabulations of the likelihood to refer a family or friend⁵⁹ by sworn/unsworn status, rank and region.⁶⁰ The vast majority of participants (80%+) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with this survey question, regardless of rank, region or sworn/unsworn status. Results indicated no relationship between likelihood to refer and sworn/unsworn status⁶¹ and there appears to be limited variation across region and rank⁶².

⁵⁸ χ^2 (12, N=602)24.018, p≤.05.

⁵⁹ The variable has been recoded into three categories for analytic purposes. It should be noted that this measure does not refer to QPS specifically however participants were guided to reflect on the QPS response when answering questions in this section of the survey.

⁶⁰ Again, chi-square tests were used to examine associations between variables.

⁶¹ χ^2 (2, n=625)5.621, p>.05.

⁶² Chi-square tests could not be computed for analyses by rank or region due to low expected cell counts.

Table 5.11 Crosstabulations of Likelihood to Refer a Friend/Family Member by QPS Staff Sworn/Unsworn Status, Rank and Region

Sworn/unsworn (n=625)	Strongly disagree or disagree%	Neither agree nor disagree%	Agree to strongly agree%	Total%
Unsworn	0.84	5.88	93.28	100.00
Sworn	5.73	7.51	86.76	100.00
Rank (n=489)				
Constable	3.10	5.43	91.47	100.00
S/Constable	7.82	8.64	83.54	100.00
Sergeant	4.17	8.33	87.50	100.00
≥S/Sergeant	9.52	4.76	85.71	100.00
Region (n=617)				
Brisbane	4.07	8.14	87.79	100.00
Central	8.62	6.90	84.48	100.00
Far Northern	1.37	4.11	94.52	100.00
North Coast	10.34	8.05	81.61	100.00
Northern	4.00	4.00	92.00	100.00
South Eastern	2.67	8.00	89.33	100.00
Southern	3.92	10.78	85.29	100.00

Source: Survey data

Note: Based on Q16(e) "If a friend or family member were a victim of sexual violence, I would encourage them to report to the police". Rank of Inspector or greater combined with S/Sergeant in Officer Rank analyses due to low sample size. Rounded to 2 decimal places and therefore may not add up to 100%.

In summary, the survey of QPS frontline responders found participants tended to hold ambivalent to agreeable views about the QPS response to sexual violence. These attitudes varied by region. Most participants (80%) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that "If a friend or family member were a victim of sexual violence" they would, "encourage them to report to the police".

6. Training and Support to Respond to Sexual Violence

6.1. Overview

This chapter focuses on further addressing KEQ 1 as well as KEQ 2:

KEQ1: Has the Strategy advanced the QPS workforce towards applying a victim-centric, trauma-informed approach when responding to sexual violence?

KEQ2: Has the Strategy improved QPS's capability to prevent, disrupt, respond to, and investigate sexual violence in Queensland?

To address these questions this chapter draws on data collected from the survey of QPS frontline responders and the focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders. The chapter examines frontline responders' participation in training, the impact of training on attitudes toward victims, and key QPS stakeholders understanding and participation in training to respond to sexual violence. The chapter also discusses the topic of QPS staff wellbeing.

6.2. QPS Frontline Staff Participation in Training and Attitudes Toward Policing Sexual Violence

QPS frontline staff participation in training was measured as part of the survey. Participants were asked "Have you participated in any training on responding to sexual violence in the last 12 months?". Given the overlap between sexual violence and domestic violence, and their shared need for victim-centric, trauma-informed approaches, participants were also asked "Have you participated in any training on responding to domestic (intimate partner) violence in the last 12 months?". Overall, 26.3% of participants had completed sexual violence training in the last 12 months while 59.4% of participants had completed domestic violence training in the last 12 months. Table 6.1 shows percentages broken down by sworn/unsworn status, officer rank and region.⁶³ These results show that the proportion of participants who had completed sexual violence training in the last 12 months differed by sworn/unsworn status⁶⁴, with sworn officers being more likely to have completed sexual violence training in the last

⁶³ Chi-square tests were used to examine the relationships between variables.

⁶⁴ χ^2 (1, n=616) 5.801, p≤.05.

12 months. The same pattern was found for domestic violence training⁶⁵. Although there was no significant association between officer rank and training completion for sexual violence training⁶⁶, there was an association between rank and training completion for domestic violence training⁶⁷. The relationship between officer rank and completion of domestic violence training appears to be largely related to the larger proportion of constables, and the lower proportion of senior constables, who have completed this training in the past 12 months. Interestingly, there is no association between region and training completion in the past 12 months for either sexual violence training⁶⁸ or domestic violence training⁶⁹. This may be because the training offered to frontline QPS staff on these topics has been more likely to be offered online or at one's home station, rather than face-to-face in Brisbane.

⁶⁵ χ^2 (1, n=628)=14.43, p≤.001.

⁶⁶ χ^2 (4, N=478) 7.031, p>.05.

⁶⁷ χ^2 (1, n=488)=11.234, p≤.05.

⁶⁸ χ^2 (6, n=607) 12.096, p>.05.

⁶⁹ χ^2 (6, n=619) 7.224, p>.05.

Table 6.1 Sexual Violence Training Completion by Sworn/Unsworn Status

	No (%)	Yes (%)	Total (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	Total (%)	
Sworn/Unsworn	Completed sexual violence training in the past 12 months (n=616)				Completed domestic violence training in the past 12 months (n=628)		
Unsworn	82.11	17.89	100.00	55.20	44.80	100.00	
Sworn	71.40	28.60	100.00	36.58	63.42	100.00	
Rank	Completed sexual violence training in the past 12 months (n=478)				Completed domestic violence training in the past 12 months (n=488)		
Constable	69.53	30.47	100.00	26.98	73.02	100.00	
S/Constable	74.35	25.65	100.00	42.68	57.32	100.00	
Sergeant	71.58	28.42	100.00	37.76	62.24	100.00	
S/Sergeant	47.62	52.38	100.00	33.33	66.67	100.00	
≥ Inspector	75.00	25.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	
Region	Completed sexual violence training in the past 12 months (n=607)				Completed domestic violence training in the past 12 months (n=619)		
Brisbane	77.19	22.81	100.00	42.70	57.30	100.00	
Central	78.18	21.82	100.00	28.57	71.43	100.00	
Far Northern	82.05	17.95	100.00	39.19	60.81	100.00	
North Coast	73.81	26.19	100.00	42.05	57.95	100.00	
Northern	64.71	35.29	100.00	34.62	65.38	100.00	
South Eastern	75.00	25.00	100.00	38.89	61.11	100.00	
Southern	63.04	36.96	100.00	48.48	51.52	100.00	

Source: Survey data

Note: Based on Q9 “Have you participated in any training on responding to sexual violence in the last 12 months?”; and Q11 “Have you participated in any training on responding to domestic (intimate partner) violence in the last 12 months?”. Rounded to 2 decimal places and, therefore, may not add up to 100%.

Table 6.2 presents results comparing mean scores on measures of participants’ understanding of trauma-informed policing, by training completion. As explained in Chapter 4, five key survey measures were used to gauge alignment with trauma-informed and victim-centric:

- Three measures were designed to capture general alignment with trauma-informed and victim-centric policing:
 - “I have a good understanding of trauma-informed practice for sexual violence victims”
 - “I am dedicated to increasing my awareness and understanding of sexual violence” and
 - “Addressing the needs of sexual violence victims should be a key part of the mission of the Queensland Police Service”
- And two scales measured trauma misconceptions and rape myths:

- The Trauma Misperceptions Scale (TMS)
- The Rape Myth Scale (RMS).

Table 6.2 Mean Differences in Alignment with Trauma-Informed and Victim-Centric Policing Responses by Training Completion, M(SD)

Completed in past 12 months	Good understanding	Increasing awareness/understanding	Key part of QPS mission	TMS	RMS
Sexual violence training					
No	2.77 (1.02)	3.87 (.84)	4.08 (.84)	2.48 (.67)	2.42 (.71)
Yes	3.63 (.88)	4.04 (.70)	4.12 (.83)	2.34 (.66)	2.30 (.72)
	n=594	n=595	n=597	n=599	n=599
Absolute difference	.86***	.17*	.039	.14*	.13
Domestic violence training					
No	2.61 (.98)	3.91 (.85)	4.03 (.82)	2.55 (.69)	2.47 (.71)
Yes	3.30 (1.02)	3.93 (.79)	4.15 (.84)	2.37 (.63)	2.34 (.71)
	n=607	n=607	n=608	n=611	n=611
Absolute difference	.69***	.03	.12	.18***	.14*

Source: Survey data

Note: Based on Q12(a) "I have a good understanding of trauma-informed practice for sexual violence victims"; Q12(b) "I am dedicated to increasing my awareness and understanding of sexual violence"; and Q12(c) "Addressing the needs of sexual violence victims should be a key part of the mission of the Queensland Police Service". Items in the TMS and RMS scales can be found in Section 4.4.1. Rounded to 2 decimal places. Significant levels are *p≤.05, **p≤.01, ***p≤.001.

Overall, results support the utility of both the current sexual violence and domestic violence training in increasing participant alignment trauma-informed and victim-centric policing approaches. Those who had completed either sexual violence or domestic and family violence training in the past 12 months scored higher, on average, on the three measures of general alignment with trauma-informed and victim-centric approaches, and scored lower on the TMS and the RMS. These results point to the role of the current training in terms of changing perceptions. However, it should also be noted that views on these measures are not, on average, strong positive (for general alignment with trauma-informed and victim-centric policing) or strong negative views (for the TMS and RMS) suggesting that there remains room for improvement in participants' understanding of trauma-informed and victim-centric policing and reducing misperceptions about victim-survivor trauma and its presentations.

In this vein, survey participants were also asked: "What training would assist you when responding to victims of sexual violence?". Specifically, participants were asked if they would

benefit from training in four key areas: “knowledge about sexual violence”, “how to better respond to victims of sexual violence”, “trauma-informed policing practices” and “current procedures for responding to sexual violence”. Results are presented in Table 6.3 and are broken down by whether participants had completed the sexual violence training in the 12 months prior to the survey. This assists to establish what additional training is considered of benefit for those who have completed training recently. Overall, participants were most interested in training about “current procedures” (66.0%) followed by “how to better respond to victims of sexual violence” (63.8%) and “trauma-informed policing practices” (55.3%) with “knowledge about sexual violence” receiving the least amount of interest (45.2%). When comparing those who had and had not completed sexual violence training in the last 12 months, there was a significant association between training completion (or lack of) and the desire for training about “knowledge about sexual violence”⁷⁰, and “how to better respond to victims of sexual violence”⁷¹ but not for “trauma-informed policing practices”⁷² or “current procedures for responding to sexual violence”⁷³. These results indicate that the current training somewhat addresses “knowledge about sexual violence” and “how to respond to victims of sexual violence” but that frontline QPS staff may be particularly assisted by new or further training on “trauma-informed policing practices” and “current procedures for responding to sexual violence”. Viewed differently, these results show that for those who had completed sexual violence training in the past 12 months, further training in “knowledge about sexual violence”, “better responding to victims of sexual violence”, “trauma-informed policing practices” and “current procedures for responding to sexual violence” was deemed to be of assistance for 37%, 57%, 50% and 62% of participants respectively, indicating gaps in the current training available.

⁷⁰ Chi square test (χ^2 (1, n=624) 6.654, p≤.01).

⁷¹ Chi square test (χ^2 (1, n=624) 4.025, p≤.05).

⁷² Chi square test (χ^2 (1, n=624) 2.517, p>.05).

⁷³ Chi square test (χ^2 (1, n=624) 1.955, p>.05).

Table 6.3 Crosstabulations of Completion of Sexual Violence Training by Suggested Type of Training

Completed sexual violence training in past 12 months?	No, would not assist (%)	Yes, would assist (%)	Total (%)
<i>Knowledge about sexual violence (n=624)</i>			
No	51.74	48.26	100.00
Yes	63.41	36.59	100.00
Total	54.81	45.19	100.00
<i>How to better respond to victims of sexual violence (n=624)</i>			
No	33.91	66.09	100.00
Yes	42.68	57.32	100.00
Total	36.22	63.78	100.00
<i>Trauma-informed policing practices (n=624)</i>			
No	42.83	57.17	100.00
Yes	50.00	50.00	100.00
Total	44.71	55.29	100.00
<i>Current procedures for responding to sexual violence (n=624)</i>			
No	32.39	67.61	100.00
Yes	38.41	61.59	100.00
Total	33.97	66.03	100.00

Source: Survey data

Note: Based on responses to Q10(a), (b), (c), (d) "What training would assist you when responding to victims of sexual violence?". Rounded to 2 decimal places and, therefore, may not add up to 100%.

In summary, the survey of front-line QPS staff indicated that approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of survey participants had completed some form of sexual violence training in the past 12 months (relatedly, $\frac{1}{2}$ of survey participants had completed domestic violence training in the same period). Sworn staff were more likely to have undertaken training than unsworn staff. Survey results indicate that completion of training does appear to increase understanding of trauma-informed practice. Of those who had completed sexual violence training in the past 12 months, further training in knowledge about sexual violence, better responding to victims of sexual violence, trauma-informed policing practices and current procedures for responding to sexual violence was deemed to be of assistance for 37%, 57%, 50% and 62% of participants respectively, indicating gaps in the current training available.

6.3. Key QPS stakeholders' Understandings and Experiences of Training

When discussing training in the police focus groups and interviews, three themes emerged: the use of the “Investigating Sexual Assault – Corroborating and Understanding Relationship Evidence” (ISACURE) training, including course content and barriers to completing the course; the “Child Sexual Abuse Fundamentals Education” (CSAFE) course; and suggestions for further training.

6.3.1. ISACURE

Most police participants who had completed the ISACURE course commented that it was a good course (QPI1, QPI2, QPFG1, QPFG2, QPFG3, QPFG4), and that it assisted them in gaining a better understanding of trauma-informed and victim-centric approaches (QPI1, QPI2, QPFG1, QPFG4):

[the] biggest takeaway I had from the course was understanding how trauma works, how it affects the brain and understanding that just because not everything is done then and there doesn't mean necessarily the victim is ready to move on from it, it just means that it's just you know on that day the trauma is a bit too acute and we'll have to revisit it at a later date (QPI2)

While the contents of the course were deemed beneficial, eligibility criteria to undertake the course, as well as course availability (i.e., only available as a face-to-face, two-week, Brisbane-based training course only), were considered significant barriers to completion. To be eligible to undertake ISACURE, an investigator must have completed “Phase 2 Detective Training”⁷⁴ (which covers investigating sexual offences). However, participants reiterated that to complete “Phase 2 Detective Training” takes considerable time (on average 2-3 years) and that it is often junior investigators who investigate sexual offences, and therefore require the ISACURE training (QPFG2, QPFG4):

you can enrol, but you've got to have done Phase 2, so you're looking right - we've got very junior officers, a lot of our PC⁷⁵s haven't done Phase 2 yet so that's an issue (QPFG2); and

⁷⁴ Police officers in the role of investigator enrol in the detective training program, which consists of 3 phases. Each phase takes on average 12 months. Once they have completed detective training, officers can apply to be appointed as a detective.

⁷⁵ PC is short for plain clothes officers. Plain clothes officers are assigned duties as investigators however have not been appointed as detectives.

I can understand their reasoning behind it, but the truth of the matter is they (junior investigators) investigate, we have PCs (plain clothes officers) who haven't even done Phase 1 still investigate sexual offences. So, to me that doesn't make logical sense (QPFG4); and

in the CPIU space again they're dealing with these matters on a day-to-day basis and yeah exactly that – we expect our PCs to be doing this without having done Phase 1. So really, I mean they go on the ICARE (Interviewing Children and Recording Evidence) course and then the CPIU course, so I don't really see there to be a barrier that they need to have Phase 2 completed prior to doing ISACURE and that's my personal opinion, so I think we should remove that as an eligibility criteria (QPFG4).

The need to travel to Brisbane to complete the ISACURE training face-to-face was considered another barrier to completion for participants living and working outside Brisbane. Participants described that most investigators have family commitments, and being away for multiple weeks for a course is difficult (QPFG3, QPFG4); moreover, to have an officer away from their station for multiple weeks poses a significant impost on the roster (QPFG3):

the requirements of the office in terms of rostering staff and availability and whether that marries up with the course and positions on the course firstly and then secondly the willingness and availability of the staff to be able to sacrifice that period of time and go away (QPFG3).

However, participants reflected that online learning was not considered an option for the ISACURE course:

the trouble with online training is that people just go through the motions, whereas the difference with ISACURE is you're actually dealing with actors that are playing victims and you're actually role-playing that incident not just clicking your button going next, next, next, watching it. I don't think it really for that type of training in particular is beneficial (QPFG2).

Some districts had reviewed the ISACURE course and made a condensed version for counter staff and general duties officers to increase specialist training access for a broader range of staff likely to come into contact with victim-survivors (QPFG2, QPFG4):

it ran a like a one-hour information session locally to all our general duties first response officers and my thought is it's only one hour not trying to sort of increase expectations of that, but it was just to kind of give some concepts (QPFG2); and

while it's not a one stop fix for everything, it just had enough information in there that they could draw upon to go 'yeah these are the things that we need to you know tweak in our

approach and responding to people', particularly people who attended the counter, in that scenario where you do have a victim who's come through the doors wanting to disclose this horrific incident, you know they don't want to have that discussion in an open forum, taking them aside and just those tips and tricks that go (QPFG4).

In summary, focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders indicated that the ISACURE course is an important training mechanism in responding to sexual violence, however there are significant barriers to participation.

6.3.2. CSAFE and suggestions for further training

A few police participants commented on the CSAFE training, describing it as a good course (QPFG4). However, its online delivery self-learning mode was viewed as problematic by some, given it may mean officers just go through the motions of yet another online training module amidst a large workload (QPFG1; QPFG2).

In addition to the two main specialist training options available relating to sexual violence, (namely ISACURE and CSAFE), some participants articulated the need for further training to be offered, especially for very junior officers. Ensuring access to broader specialist training was seen as beneficial for everyone: responding and investigating officers, victim-survivors and the QPS more broadly, as expressed by this officer:

training earlier in the career with how trauma affects the victim, different types of sex offences, even just acclimatising them so that they don't find sex offence investigations so off-putting from a complexity issue, they always view them as very complex and I try to explain that a sexual offence is no different than an assault in that you've got someone applying some sort of force or threat to a person without their consent, it's the same as a common assault or an ABH it's just the mechanics of the offence are a little bit different. I think more training early in a constable's career would be beneficial in not only how they treat sex offences, but offences generally and understand how trauma affects victims in certain ways and why it makes them do certain things and if your victim goes hot or cold or whatever it's not necessarily anything to do with the investigation other than how the trauma has affected them, so that definitely would be beneficial because the solutions that we have at the moment are very dependent on our availability (QPI2)

Other officers, however, commented that more training might not be the answer. It was noted that there was already a lot of compulsory training, and together with their high workloads there is often little time available to commit to further training (QPFG1, QPFG2).

they've all got a caseload as well, they're lucky to get through their compulsory training and a lot of the response is just more training more training more training, that has impact on staffing models, on response models, and all that sort of stuff. And with the DV training, my guys are trained out. It's a great training, but what file am I going to tell them not to do to do that training (QPFG1).

However, as some participants suggested, there appear to be significant overlaps between courses, therefore streamlining the contents of these courses would save time (QPFG1, QPFG2). For example:

they could probably do a little bit better in terms of having, streamlining the training more, because a lot of these concepts overlap and it can sometimes cause confusion about you know, because it's not a different way to talk to a DV victim than there is to a rape victim, like it's, I think they could probably redo that and perhaps lessen the total amount of training if it was structured differently (QPFG2).

Despite increased training options, gaps remain in terms of victim-centric training, especially for frontline responders and front counter staff (QPFG1, QPFG2), as mentioned in the quote above and further strengthened here:

the reality is at least for us in [DEIDENTIFIED] it's not possible to have plain clothes officers as the first point of contact all the time ... so we need our counter officers⁷⁶ to be able to have good first contact and first interaction with the victim and get that balance right between not taking full statements from them or anything like that but getting enough information so that we can then ascertain that is a real priority response right now, or whether it's something that can be followed up, still important, but not something that needs a priority response right now and managing those - I guess the interaction with the victims so that when we speak to them they're not already got a negative impression of police (QPFG2).

⁷⁶ Front counter staff are generally civilian/unsworn members or junior General Duties police officers.

In summary, focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders indicated that the CSAFE course is a useful resource however the online mechanism may lead to reduced engagement with the content. It is particularly recommended that junior officers and frontline staff receive adequate training in victim-centric, trauma-informed policing.

6.3.3. Training Overlap and Ensuring the “Right People”

In addition to, and perhaps more critical than training, participants commented that it is important to ensure the “right” people are assigned to responding to and investigating sexual violence offences (QPI2, QPFG1, QPFG3) as well as ensuring that the workload is balanced (QPI2):

you can provide all the training in the world, but unless you have the right person for the job it's not going to make any difference... we have to be recruiting the right people for this type of work and I think that's the main thing that I see is you know you can provide the same training to two different personalities and have two different outcomes at the end of the training. So, we need to be trying to recruit the right people who have the right attitude to begin with and then yes provide them that training I think that's probably more suitable than just providing all of this training to everyone. I think you have to target those people who have the aptitude for this work and increase their skills and training rather than just trying to make everyone, mould everyone to be the same (QPFG3);

that initial communication, and having the right people with those communication skills, and I tend to agree that you'll get diversity across the QPS, some people are really good at it, some people it's not their preferred area to work (QPFG1); and

however, if you're really going to do these victims the justice they need - at the moment in [DEIDENTIFIED], we've got some staff that are trying to juggle 16 to 20 of these investigations simultaneously (QPI2).

This sentiment was equally shared by external stakeholder participants (EXFG1, EXFG2, EXFG3). Whether a victim-survivor gets a good response was noted to depend on the police officer (EXFG1, EXFG2, EXFG3), and the wording and language they use (EXFG2):

it comes down to individual police officers only, there have been some really positive responses, but it's driven by individual police officers who drive it, and it's not reflected across the system generally and it's those individual police officers that I take my hat off to (EXFG3); it's a postcode lottery and it's an individual lottery and until - and some officers are really great, and some should never be let near a victim-survivor. So, we need to get to, you know, move from the individual to the institution, so that when you go to that institution you get the same, consistent, appropriate, ethical, respectful response (EXFG1); and

I have seen a little shift, a tiny little shift, but its individual officer driven, it is not across the board - which is really sad, but you know I'm hopeful with the implementation of these reforms that we get a system-wide shift and you will then see that reflected in each of our communities (EXFG3).

The above findings highlight that upskilling officers, across the board, is critical in achieving an organisation wide improved response to sexual violence. However, both QPS and external focus groups participants suggested that some officers are better suited to investigating sexual violence offences than others. In particular, the police focus group findings suggest that improved police responses to sexual violence require more than professional development around sexual violence. Specifically, careful selection of staff at different career stages is critical to ensure officers operating in roles tasked with responding to highly vulnerable and traumatised victim-survivor populations are victim-centric and trauma-informed in their everyday practice.

In summary, focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders pointed to saturation and overlap of training courses. At the same time, additional training on victim-centric and trauma-informed policing practice should be provided to frontline responders within QPS. It was also noted that training can only go so far, it is most important to have staff with the right aptitude for the job.

6.4. Officer Wellbeing

In addition to training support, policing sexual violence requires wellbeing support. Responding to and investigating sexual violence takes its toll (QPI2, QPFG2), and some officers expressed that this is sometimes forgotten:

people don't always think that responding to sexual violence is necessarily traumatic for the police, but it can be if you're listening to stories time after time after time, same as when you're being exposed to DV all the time or reading or whatever about DV jobs all the time. It all does take an effect on a person's mental health at the end of the day (QPGF2)

Participants of the police focus groups commented that there are measures in place to ensure the wellbeing of officers is at the forefront. However, most of the participants commented that these programs are not sufficient for a variety of reasons and that the risk is high that officers "continue to be burnt out" (QPI2). While there are programs readily available to seek mental health assistance, and that these are being promoted within the QPS (QPI2, QPGF2), there remains a stigma that goes with utilising these services:

we have a lot of programs in place and our executive leadership is constantly reminding officers to step forward and if you have any concerns by all means speak up. But there's definitely that stigma that by speaking up, you're going to get your firearm double padlocked and shifted on to light duties, so that's definitely still there (QPF2)

One officer commented that the workload is so high, that there is just no time to consider one's own wellbeing or to seek help:

if you're on shift you don't know when a job's going to come in, so there could be job after job after job and you just you have to deal with that because you're on shift, so you might have a really busy weekend, you've got heaps of sexual assaults or rapes that come in that has to be dealt with, so I think sometimes that could be better managed (QPGF2).

Some participants raised the issue that the onus to seek help is often left to the individual, which, as shown above, might be difficult. One participant suggested that it should be a more structured response:

there needs to be something more structured in terms of how that's managed with people rather than it just being a voluntary thing to some extent (QPGF3)

However, participants emphasised that police officer wellbeing is not only a matter for those members responding to sexual violence, but also an issue for all staff members responding to traumatic incidents; it is an organisational issue, rather than a Strategy-specific issue (QPGF2). Despite this, some of the SVLOs had taken their own measures to contribute to the ongoing wellbeing of their officers, ranging from regular check-ins with their staff (QPGF2, QPGF3,

QPFG4), rotating staff through other police units to give them a break (QPFG3, QPFG4) or dividing their unit into teams, and rotating members through the teams (QPFG4).

The importance of officer and staff wellbeing is recognised by the QPS senior executive. This concern extends beyond the impact of dealing with victim-survivors of sexual violence, to the wider regular exposure to vicarious trauma in the work of officers and staff (such as other violent crimes, traffic accidents and child victims). Consequently, there is work in progress to assist the QPS to enhance its strategies to support staff wellbeing, including the development of a new early warning system (Drew et al., 2022-24). Trauma-informed supervision, easy access to counselling and other resources, as well as regular monitoring of staff wellbeing will be vital to enhancing strategies to support wellbeing.

In summary, focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders suggest that the QPS should do more when it comes to ensuring the wellbeing of staff. However, this matter is not specific to the Strategy and responses to sexual violence.

7. Community Empowerment

7.1. Overview

This chapter focuses primarily on further addressing KEQ 3:

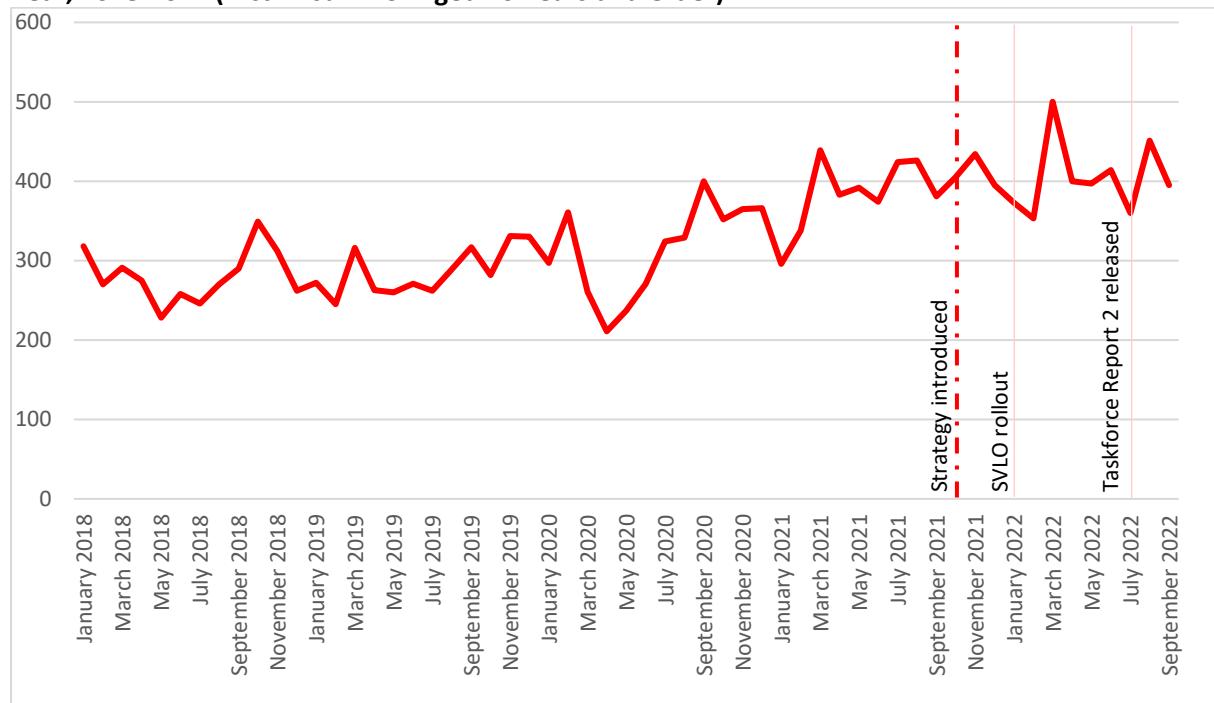
KEQ 3: Has the Strategy empowered the community and/or reduced community harm?

To address this question, this chapter draws on QPrime data, QPS administrative data on alternative reporting, QPS web traffic data, the qualitative interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders and the survey with frontline QPS staff. The chapter first overviews reports of sexual violence. Second, alternative reporting options and their use are discussed. Third, police responses to victim-survivors of sexual violence are considered from the perspective of external stakeholders. The chapter concludes with police perceptions of victim satisfaction with the investigation process.

7.2. Reports of Sexual Violence

As outlined in Chapter 3, between January 2018 and September 2022 there were 18,911 reports of sexual violence offences recorded by the QPS in QPrime where the victim-survivor was aged 16 years and older. These offences were nested within 17,475 occurrences. Figure 7.1 depicts the number of reported offences by month and year from January 2018 to September 2022. These statistics indicate an increase in the number of reported sexual violence offences during the Evaluation period. Of note is the dip in the number of reported offences between March and July 2020. This dip is likely due to the increase, and subsequent decrease, of Queensland government COVID-19 restrictions during this time. These restrictions included border and school closures, as well as amendments to the *Public Health Act 2005* that introduced home confinement, and movement and gathering restrictions. These restrictions eased between May and July 2020 (Storren & Corrigan, 2020).

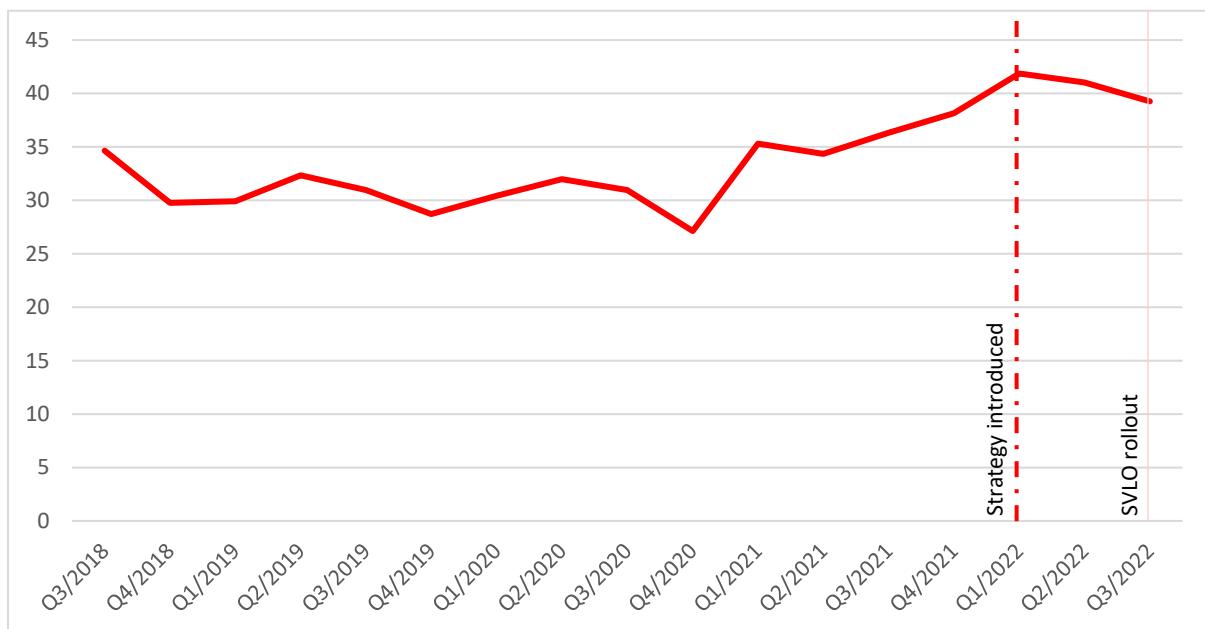
Figure 7.1 Number of Sexual Violence Offences Reported to QPS by Calendar Month and Calendar Year, 2018-2022 (Victim-survivor Aged 16 Years and Older)



Source: QPrime data

While the offence counts shown in Figure 7.1 above indicate an increase in reporting of sexual violence offences, it is necessary to ensure that the increase is not solely accounted for by Queensland population growth. To explore this, Queensland population estimates by fiscal quarter were obtained from the Queensland Government Statisticians Office (2022). These population estimates were available through to the fiscal quarter Q3/2022. These estimates are useful as they assist to determine whether increases in reporting over time are solely due to population increases. Given population estimates are not available by age range (i.e., 16 years and older), rates of reporting were computed per 100,000 in the Queensland population. However as noted above these rates are only available until March 2022 (i.e., fiscal Q3/2022). Results are presented in Figure 7.2.

Figure 7.2 Rate of Sexual Violence Offences Reported to QPS by Fiscal Quarter and Fiscal Year, per 100,000 in the Queensland Population (All Ages)



Source: QPrime data

These results show that, even when considering population growth, there remains a strong and statistically significant linear increase in rates of reporting over time ($r=.730$; $p\le.001$). These results are consistent with recent findings of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2022) that the rate of sexual assault reported to police in Australia has steadily increased over the past 30 years. While these results provide useful contextual information, given that these estimates are only available to March 2022 they are not as useful in assessing the impact of the Strategy on reporting rates.

Based on the available data, the cause of the increase over time cannot be determined. This trend may be attributable to a combination of factors, such as:

- Rates of sexual violence offending may be increasing. There is some support for this in self-reported victimisation findings from the ABS 2016 Personal Safety Survey. The ABS (2021, n.p.) found that between 2014 and 2016, “the rate of sexual assault [as self-reported by victims] increased between 2012 and 2016 for women but not for men”. Future waves of the Personal Safety Survey may help shed light on whether this trend over time in victimisation is persisting.
- The decrease in reporting during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown may have resulted in a subsequent upswing in reporting.

- Recent events suggest that there may be cultural shifts in attitudes toward the reporting of sexual violence (e.g., the #MeToo movement, Grace Tame's campaign to give voice to victim-survivors of sexual violence), which may drive the increase in reporting. NSW for example recorded a 61% increase in reported sexual violence in the immediate aftermath of saturation media coverage of the Brittany Higgins case and the peak of Chanel Contos' consent education campaign (Sydney Morning Herald, June 2021)

In summary, QPrime data indicates that reports of sexual violence have increased over time. It is, however, unclear as to whether this is the result of: 1) an increase in sexual violence offences; 2) the effects of COVID-19 lockdowns; 3) QPS practices; and/or 4) cultural shifts in attitudes/other factors.

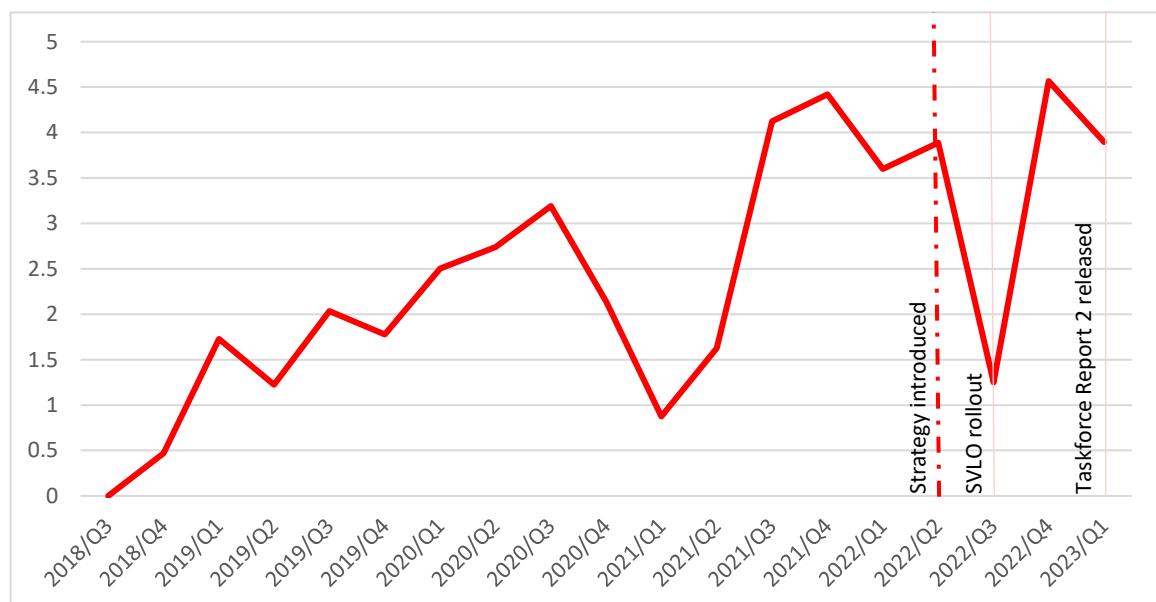
7.3. Alternative Mechanisms to Report Sexual Violence

Alternative mechanisms of reporting sexual violence to the police include Alternative Reporting Options (ARO), online reporting via the Online Reporting Form and calls to Policelink. These reporting options aim to increase the accessibility of reporting for victim-survivors. Before discussing these options in more detail, it is important to clarify the distinction between the ARO and the Online Reporting Tool. The QPS has provided the following definition: "The difference in the question types from Online Reporting and ARO exist as the pathways are for different purposes. An Online Report is a complaint that will be investigated for the purposes of endeavouring to prosecute an offender. For this reason, a small number of open questions are used to initiate the complaint and allow officers to make an initial [assessment of the] complaint. Online Reporting will involve an officer speaking with the victim-survivor and obtaining more details from them. The ARO form has been designed on the basis that it is likely to be the only time to gather information and intelligence from the victim-survivor. This means that some very direct questions are asked and are used to assist in behavioural analysis in an attempt to identify offending patterns of behaviour."

7.3.1. Alternative Reporting Options (ARO)

The ARO provides victim-survivors of sexual assault an alternative to *making a formal complaint to police*⁷⁷. It provides victim-survivors the opportunity to provide police with the full circumstances of the incident with the option to remain anonymous. Victim-survivors do not have to attend the police station or ring the police to complete the ARO, instead they can either complete the form online or download the form and mail or email it to police. ARO statistics were provided by the QPS and are presented as a percentage of the total reports of sexual violence in Figure 7.3. As shown, ARO reports have gradually increased over time. This trend is statistically significant; however it is not clear whether this trend is a function of the Strategy.⁷⁸

Figure 7.3 Alternative Reporting Options (ARO) by Fiscal Quarter and Fiscal Year, as a Percentage of the Total Sexual Violence Offences Reported, 2021-2023 (All ages)



Source: QPS Data Analytics

⁷⁷ The QPS Website (2023) defines ARO as follows: "Alternative Reporting Options (ARO) exists for victim-survivors of a sexual assault. ARO (formerly Project USA – Unreported Sexual Assault) provides the victim-survivor of a sexual assault an alternative to making a formal complaint. Many victim-survivors have reasons for not officially reporting the crimes of sexual assault or rape. ARO gives the victim-survivor the opportunity to provide police with the full circumstances of their assault with the option of remaining anonymous if they wish. ARO does not involve any judicial process. ARO can be a useful healing strategy for the victim-survivor and an effective investigative strategy for law enforcement agencies. Victim-survivors can feel empowered by knowing that the information they possess and provide could be used to solve reported offences of a similar nature. Police can use this information to: assist other prosecutions against an offender; and protect the community by enabling police to devise intelligence driven strategies designed to target an offender and reduce repeat offending. When completing the form, an option is provided to have a police officer contact the victim-survivor and discuss their situation."

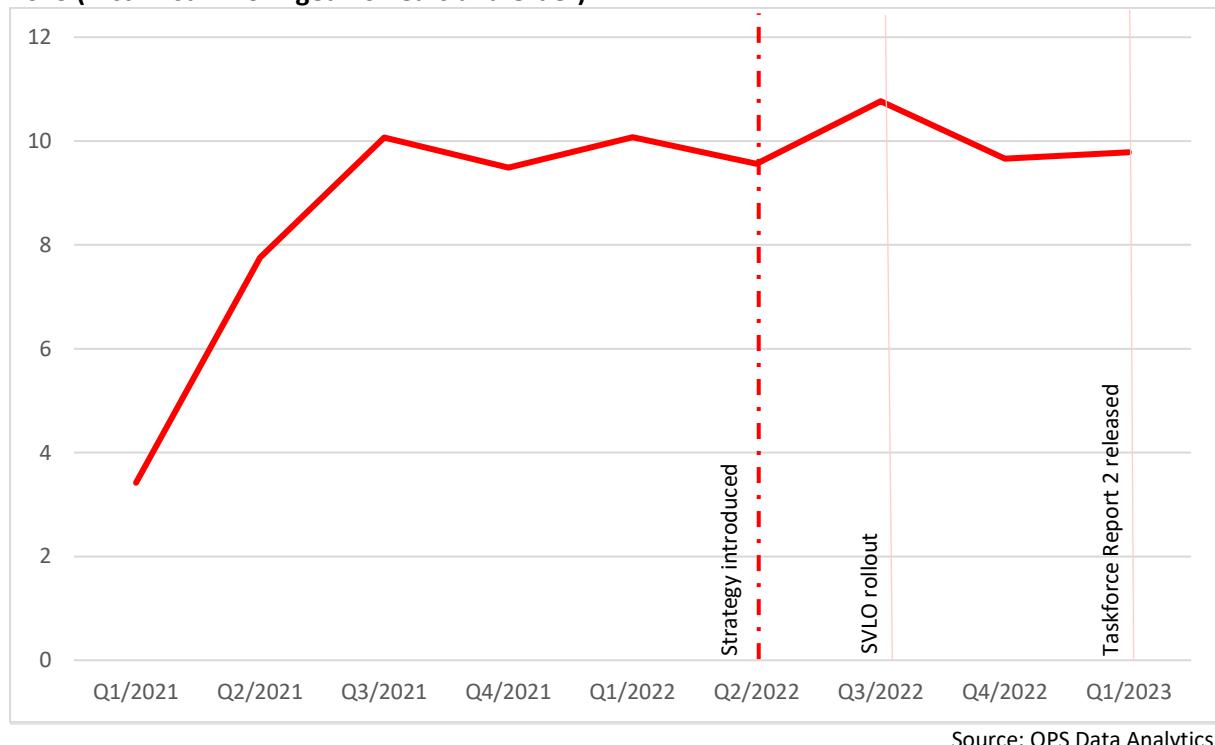
⁷⁸ $r=.707$, $p\leq.001$.

In summary, the rate of ARO reports have increased over time, although there have been some fluctuations. The rate of increase is not necessarily a function of the Strategy.

7.3.2. Online Reporting Form

Victim-survivors can provide an official report of sexual violence via the Online Reporting Form. To examine whether the use of online reporting for sexual violence offences has increased over time, data were provided by QPS Data Analytics. Figure 7.4 shows online reports as a percentage of the total number of sexual violence offences reported over time for victims aged 16 years and older.⁷⁹ There is a significant increase in the percentage of sexual violence reports being made online over time⁸⁰, although this effect appears to have plateaued with the current figure sitting just below 10% of all reports. This rate appears to have remained relatively stable since the introduction of the Strategy.

Figure 7.4 Sexual Violence Offences Reported to QPS using the Online Reporting Form by Fiscal Quarter and Fiscal Year, as a Percentage of the Total Sexual Violence Offences Reported, 2021-2023 (Victim-survivor Aged 16 Years and Older)



⁷⁹ Population estimates were also available but only through to fiscal quarter Q3/2022. We have included online reporting per population in Appendix L.

⁸⁰ $r=.669$; $p\le.05$.

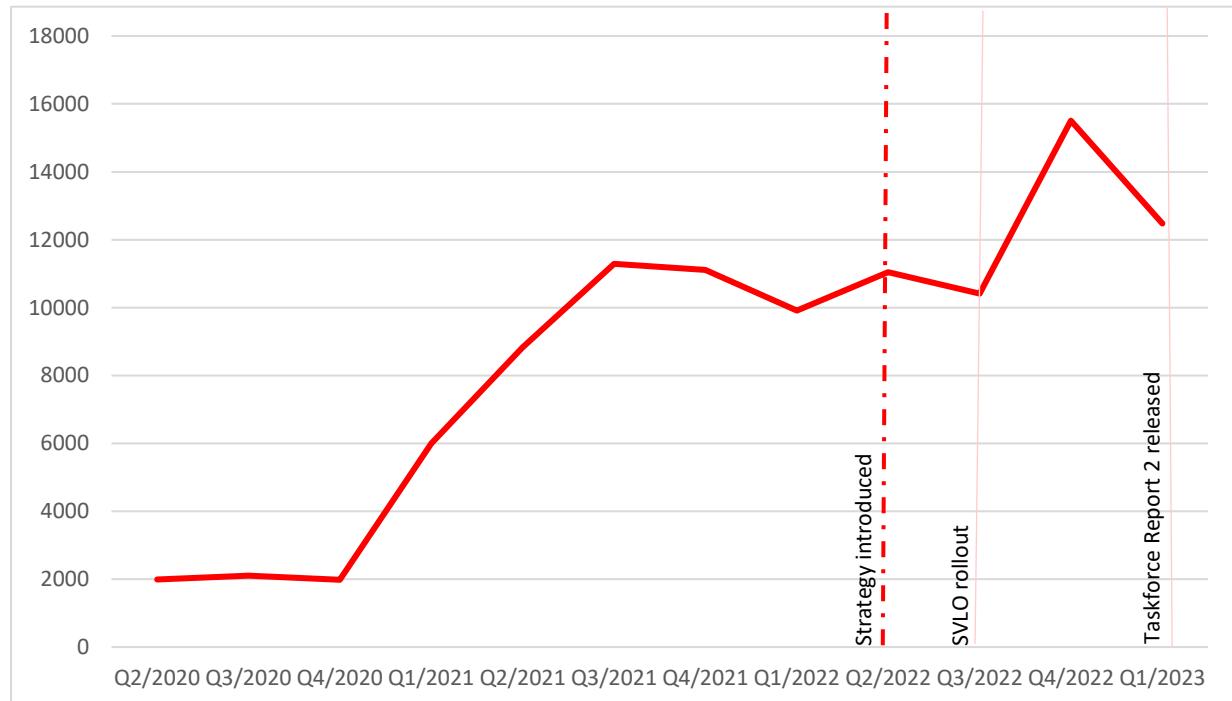
In summary, QPS administrative data indicates that the rate of Online Reports has increased over time, however rates have plateaued and remained relatively stable since the introduction of the Strategy.

7.3.3. QPS Webpage Traffic

Analysis of the QPS Adult Sexual Assault webpage provides supplementary information about online reporting. The webpage includes a guide for victim-survivors of sexual violence, including definitions of sexual assault and how to report via the ARO and the Online Reporting Form. Screenshots of the content of the webpage are included in Appendix D. To examine the use of the webpage, web traffic data were obtained from QPS Media and Public Affairs for October 2019 to September 2022.

Figure 7.5 shows the number of page views over time by fiscal quarter. Results show a statistically significant⁸¹ upward trend over time, from 1,990 in Q2/2020 to 12,480 in Q1/2023.

Figure 7.5 Number of Visits to the “Adult Sexual Assault” Webpage by Fiscal Quarter and Fiscal Year, 2020-2023



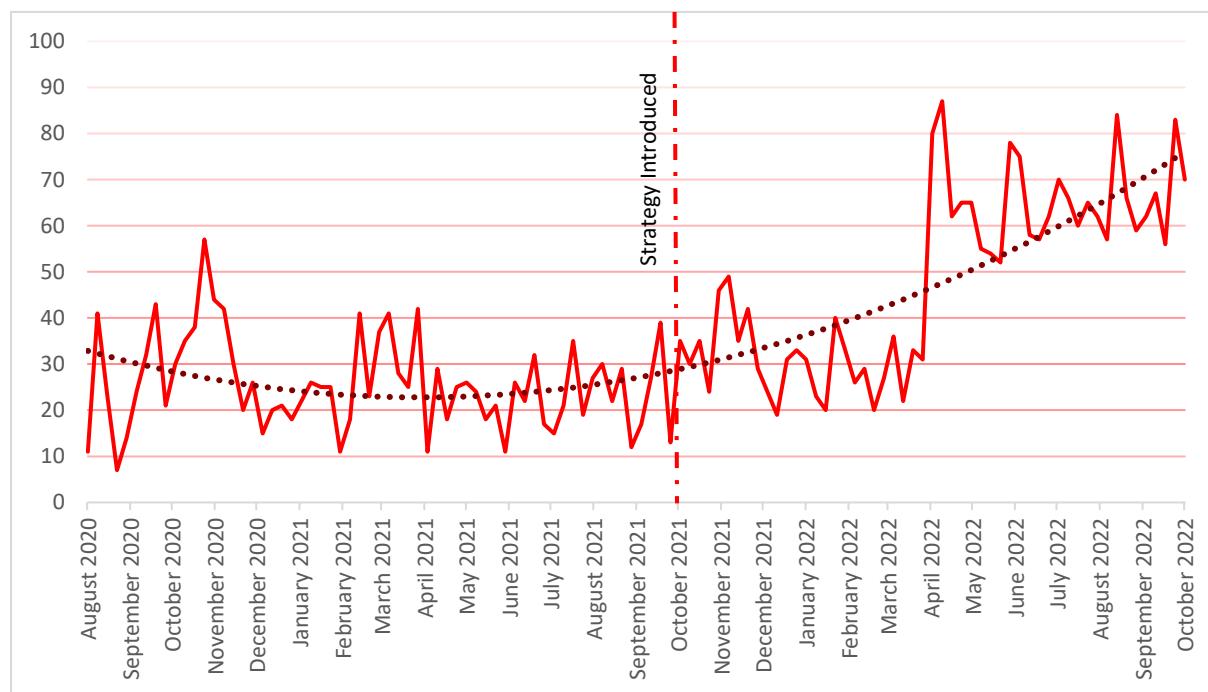
Source: QPS Media and Public Affairs

⁸¹ $r=.904$; $p\le.001$.

The steady increase in webpage views from Q2/2020 aligns with the introduction of the Online Reporting Form. This trend also suggests increased public awareness of these webpages. Peaks in page views in early mid-2021 and 2022 do not appear to align neatly with other measures of reporting presented earlier in this chapter (at least the peaks and troughs are not as dramatic). However, heightened webpage views at these times may be the result of media scrutiny of the issue of sexual violence (such as the media reporting about Brittany Higgins, Christian Porter, Grace Tame and Jarryd Hayne). Of note, webpage views have continued to increase since the introduction of the Strategy.

Further information on access to the website is provided in Figures 7.6, 7.7, and 7.8 below. As shown in Figure 7.6, since August 2020, there has been an increase in people querying the definition of a sexual assault by visiting the “what is a sexual assault” webpage. Applying a polynomial trendline (best fit), visits to this page are steadily increasing since the introduction of the Strategy.

Figure 7.6 Number of Visits to ‘What is Sexual Assault?’ Webpage by Month and Year



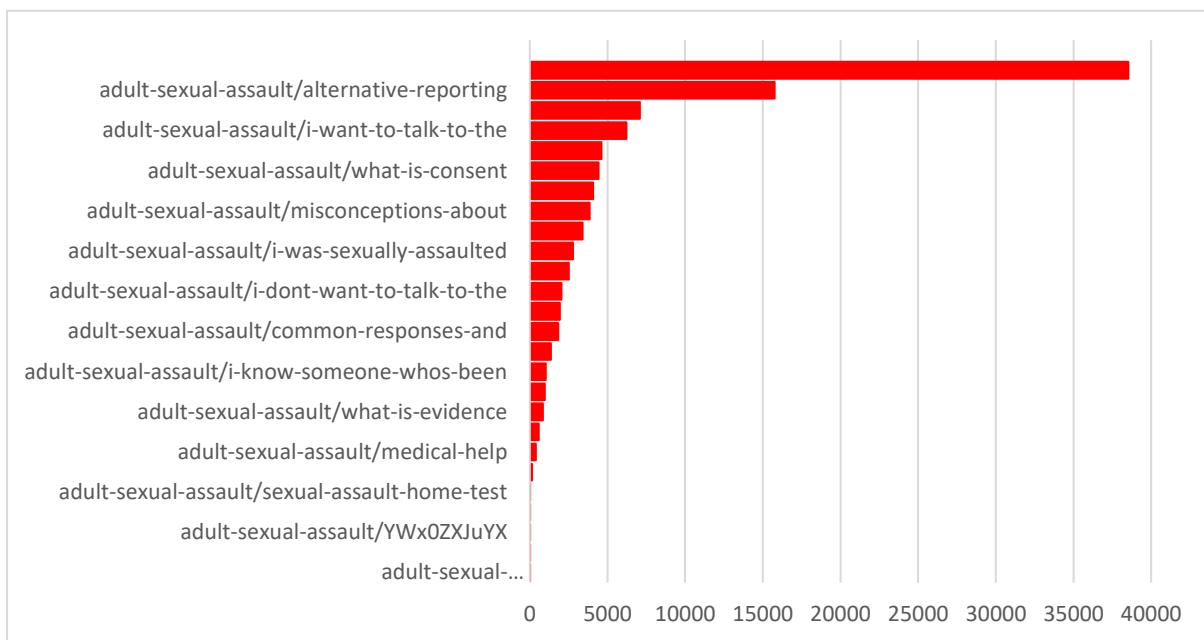
Source: QPS Media and Public Affairs

The next graph, Figure 7.7 (see overleaf) shows which page people visited after viewing the Adult Sexual Assault main webpage. The graph shows that the majority of viewers proceed to the reporting website. Analysing the webpages further indicate a slight downwards trend in people choosing the option ‘I was sexually assaulted page’ as shown in Figure 7.8 (see

overleaf). However, it should be noted that this is only over a short period (April to October 2022).

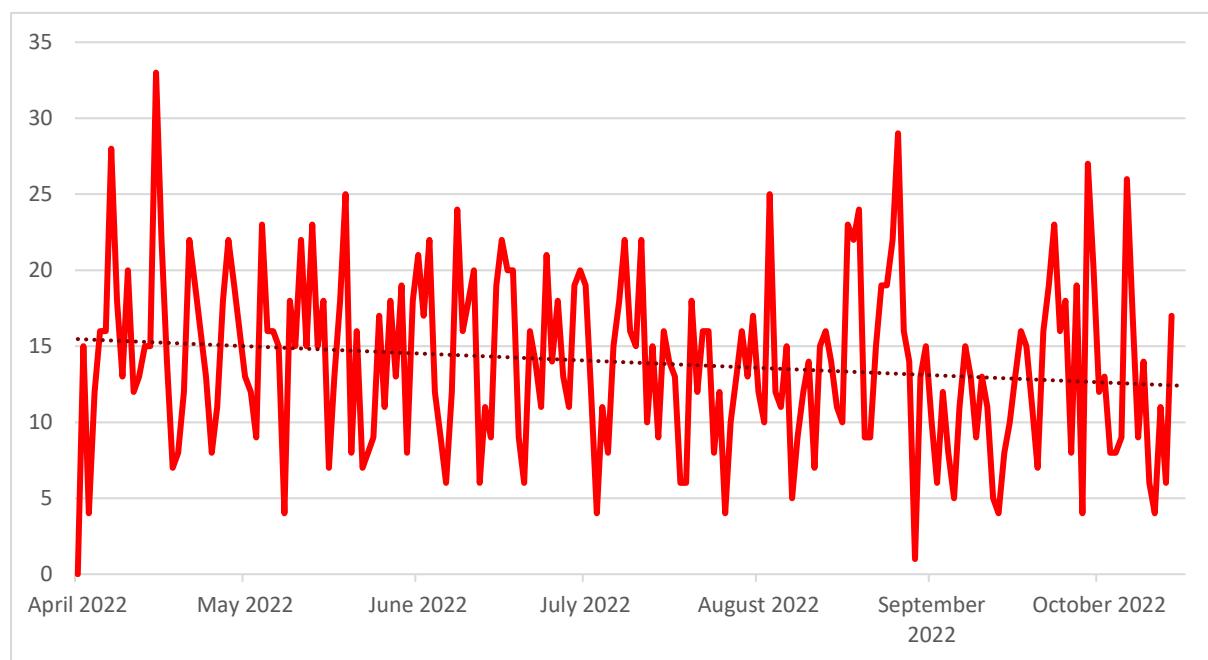
In summary, QPS web traffic data suggest that web traffic to the public facing QPS webpages relevant to the Strategy have generally increased over time and since the introduction of the Strategy.

Figure 7.7 Number of Visits to “Adult Sexual Assault” Homepage by Webpage



Source: QPS Media and Public Affairs

Figure 7.8 Number of Visits to the ‘I Was Sexually Assaulted’ Webpage by Month and Year



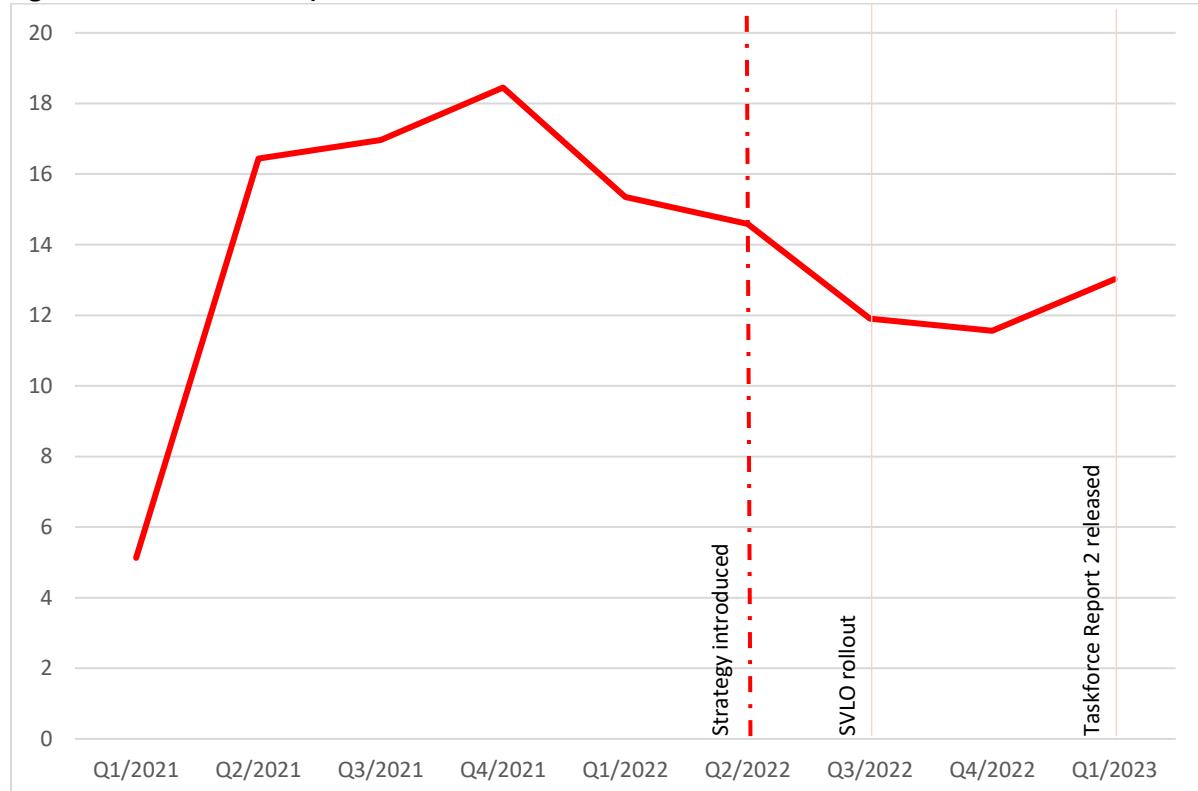
Source: QPS Media and Public Affairs

7.3.1. Reports to Policelink

Another reporting option is via Policelink (i.e., by telephone). To examine whether reporting of sexual violence offences via Policelink have increased over time, the percentage of calls relating to sexual violence as a percentage of the total sexual violence offences reported were computed by fiscal quarter. As shown in Figure 7.9, there was an initial increase in the percentage of sexual violence reports made via Policelink, but no subsequent significant increase over time.⁸² The number of sexual violence offences reported via Policelink has been decreasing over time since Q4/2021. A sharper dip in calls to Policelink since the introduction of the Strategy may align with the increase in the use of the ARO.

⁸² $r=.034$, $p>.05$.

Figure 7.9 Sexual Violence Offences Reported to QPS via Policelink, by Fiscal Quarter and Fiscal Year as a Percentage of the Total Sexual Violence Offences Reported, 2021-2023 (Victim-survivor Aged 16 Years and Older)



Source: QPS Data Analytics

In summary, QPS administrative data suggest there has been an increase in calls to Policelink over time (overall), however, the number of reports made to Policelink have been declining since Q4/2021.

7.3.2. Awareness of ARO

External stakeholders expressed that they did not think that there was much community awareness about the different reporting options (EXFG1, EXFG2, EXFG3); with some participants not aware themselves (EXFG2). A few external stakeholder participants commented that they did not feel that the police were actively promoting the Alternative Reporting Options (ARO), and went even further to comment that police themselves had limited awareness of these options (EXFG1):

most police don't even know about bloody ARO let alone known about the new online reporting, so a lot of police I've spoken to don't know who's the Sexual Violence Liaison Officer (EXFG1).

However, some of the external stakeholder participants commented that they saw explaining the reporting options to a victim-survivor as part of their role:

a very key function of our role is being able to explain and talk to the different options quite clearly, and often the feedback is someone not being aware fully of what their options are with reporting or talking to the police or what their options are around forensic examinations or being able to withdraw their complaints - those types of things (EXFG2)

In summary, key external stakeholders suggested that there was little community awareness regarding the ARO.

7.3.3. Use of Online Reporting and ARO

Some external stakeholders provided feedback that they had a number of victim-survivors that utilised online reporting and were satisfied with that (EXFG2). It had sped up the process of making a statement:

I've supported a few survivors who have started with the online reporting option and then have eventually done a face-to-face statement with police. In one of those occasions, it did make the face-to-face statement with police a lot shorter because they had pre-populated that statement from the information that the person had written, so that had made that I guess direct time in the station much shorter and less arduous for the survivor in that space. So, I think that was a benefit in that particular situation for the survivor (EXFG2)

Online reporting was seen as an option for victim-survivors to report an incident to the police regardless of whether they wish to make a formal complaint (i.e., reporting via the Online Reporting Form or the ARO):

There have been a few other times where I've supported someone and they've put in their online report and then probably at that time haven't really had the intention of making a complete statement with police, but then once police have maybe been aware of who the named perpetrator was or if there was other victim survivors affected by that perpetrator, were contacted by police and then made the decision to do that. So, I think sometimes that had some weight in their decision-making that further follow-up from police and kind of learning a little bit more around yeah if there's been other survivors impacted (EXFG2)

Completing an online form was, however, considered difficult for quite a few complainants (EXFG1, EXFG2, EXFG3); especially for those with limited literacy skills (EXFG2), access to the internet or a computer (EXFG1), as expressed here:

I've had clients that I've assisted to complete an ARO who haven't been culturally and linguistically diverse or First Nations but they have been brought up in a very strict religious background, with a very, very, very strict religious background, so some of the questions on that ARO - I've had grown women not understand the question, I've had to do psycho-education around consent and bodily autonomy and things like that prior to them even being able to answer the questions on the ARO and to send someone off into the wilderness to find a computer and access to internet and then fill it out and know what to say- it's not going to do anybody any favours (EXFG1)

Some external stakeholders felt that online reporting (by the ARO or the Online Reporting Tool) may be used by police as a way to get victim-survivors who attempt to report to police in person to file their own report online, as illustrated in these two examples:

we've had victim survivors be instructed to go and fill it out at the local library, so we've had one gentleman in particular who was very, very traumatized trying to fill out his ARO in the middle of the library with people around him. He was triggered by having to go through the details again and it was a very - completely unsupported process for him (EXFG1); and

some of the feedback that I've had from some women in particular who have completed the form were quite taken aback by actually how triggering it was in completing that form and doing it alone in their house and maybe when the kids have gone to bed or after work and they've thought "yeah ok I'm going to sit down and I'm going to do this" and then when they've completed it they've just been in this space and oh like that was really huge and not always having that support at the time. And I imagine for someone yeah who maybe has limited supports that that would, yeah be hard in that space or if you had any kind of literacy challenges that would be difficult (EXFG2)

The QPS stakeholders also provided feedback about online reporting. They suggested it needs to be clearer about what incidents are appropriate for online reporting (QPI1, QPFG2, QPFG4), and the details that are required (QPFG4). Here, police participants noted that the options of what the victim-survivor expects from the reporting, should be captured explained more clearly (QPI2). One suggested that:

it needs to say in clearer terms what a victim wants, because they don't always want to report, like they may just want to have it recorded, so I think that the ultimate reporting options needs to be highlighted and easier (QPI1)

In some instances, the reports are made by victim-survivors who are on holiday and report it once they get home. Police participants commented that it was then difficult to obtain a statement due to internal QPS processes:

two locations [names withheld] have had since they've had the SDRP⁸³ (Service Delivery Redesign Project) program put in place it's very difficult for them to obtain statements, you have to brief up for Inspector to get it done so (QPI1)

Online reporting also had some negative impact on victim-survivor engagement resulting in a lack of uptake of the investigative processes:

there is a lack of uptake of the investigative process, because they're happy to jump online and do it, but when we reach out then we're getting a lack of engagement from there. So, we're not getting quite the same as if someone rings us directly or comes in, they're more likely to commence the investigation (QPGF1)

However, police participants also provided positive comments, suggesting that it allows for reporting an incident without having to engage with police and/or the process. Police gave examples for where it allowed for a third-party to alert the police of the incident (QPGF1), and allowed for active engagement with other stakeholders (QPGF1):

we had a bit of an influx [from DEIDENTIFIED] where there were sexual assaults being reported often against staff who live in close proximity to each other, isolated and the island management were - in order to try and I guess terminate the employment of the person they thought was responsible, they were forcing their staff to make official complaints and they're

⁸³ SDRP is now known as SDP – Service Delivery Program - In September 2019, following a review of the QPS, the Police Commissioner determined there were significant pressures on the QPS, illustrated by an increase in crime and demand for services. The Service Alignment Program (SAP) was established in January 2020 as a vehicle to bring the review's 22 recommendations to life, with the Service Delivery Redesign Project in Moreton District as one of the cornerstones of SAP. While SAP transitioned to business-as-usual in July 2021, the Service Delivery Program (SDP) will see the continuation of a new service delivery model implemented across the QPS. Through SDP, the QPS will optimise the delivery model for Policelink, police communication centres and policing districts throughout the state. To achieve this, the project focuses on end-to-end processes, understanding and managing demand and process optimisation and engagement. The redesign will be delivered within each district to ensure specific nuances and dynamics of every location is understood. The SDP has rolled out to the Logan District and will roll-out to the Ipswich District in May.

saying 'well we don't want to', so this has been a good platform for them to be able to I guess tell their story, record it somewhere without necessarily going forward to court (QPFG4); and OLGR (Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation) have got a strategy where they've created flyers with a QR code which takes the person directly through to the online reporting portal. And they're placing them in licensed premises now (QPFG1)

In summary, focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders point to limited community awareness of different mechanisms for reporting. Online reporting is viewed as a good alternative to reporting in person (with both the ARO and Online Reporting Form options available) however barriers associated with literacy and information technology access may impact the use of this mechanism.

7.4. Response to Victim-survivors as a Result of the Strategy

External stakeholders commented that they had received mixed feedback regarding the QPS response from the clients they support, as illustrated by some of the following client feedback conveyed by external stakeholders:

I hear some really positive feedback from my clients engaging with the police up here, they seem to be onto being very kind of victim-centric and responsive to them. Of course, there are situations ... (EXFG3);

I have seen a really improved response to a lot of our clients here in regard to good practice from the police. So some of the things that I've noticed just on a local level is increased linkages, so increased referrals through Policelink but also direct advocacy and referral from senior sergeants and things like that which is wonderful to see and wonderful to receive these phone calls from people in the police force saying I've got full permission to link this person and advocate for this person to come in and seek some therapeutic support. ... I have seen that in the last 12 months an improved process of police directly advocating and linking people into therapeutic intervention (EXFG3);

we've got an average of 50% of women reporting, so that in itself is telling us we're getting a better response from the police (EXFG2);

there has been a great improvement in our area with the police attitudes, but that's coming from CIB and CPU, it's not coming from the front desk people. I had a client present at a station and was told to go home and report it on Policelink (EXFG2);

there hasn't been enough time because for us we noticed that the police responses are so inconsistent, we might have someone who had a good response, the next person has had a really horrific horrendous response and so because it's so inconsistent I think you need a little bit more time (EXFG3); and

I had one last week who said "I made a report to police, but I felt that he was looking at me with disdain and then when he instantly asked me whether I was drinking at the time and then even though at school they tell us now that you know when you're drinking, you're not even supposed to - you know you can't consent to it - he still raped me and then the police still looked at me in disdain for being drunk or drinking at the time". So, like things like that, she then said I don't really want to go back to the station for my second statement (EXFG3).

Police participants commented that the Strategy has created more awareness about victim-centric approaches among investigators (QPFG4). For example, the Strategy allows investigators to take more time and to allow the victim-survivor to take their time in considering all their options (QPI2, QPFG1). This was especially so now that they felt that the Strategy approved for that 'extra' time spent on sexual violence matters, thus creating an authorising environment for more specialist and individualised responses to reports of sexual violence (QPFG3):

we'll undertake the more crucial parts of an investigation, obtaining the physical evidence that the sexual assault examination, obtaining a 93A from the victim or a fresh complainant's statement and then once all those steps taken it's - at least we've obtained that evidence and then we sort of leave it to the victim to manage how they would like proceedings to go from that point (QPI2); and

it's validated to some extent what we do and has given us the ability with the bosses to be able to quantify things better and say this is why we're spending more time with this person, these are the reasons behind it, whereas before the policy I guess there was always a push to you know do your job quicker and you know find ways to streamline things, where this has given us the ability to backup how we've practiced and how we've done things (QPFG

At the same time, police participants commented that their ability to refer victim-survivors to support services has improved through greater collaboration with specialist services under the Strategy (QPI2, QPFG1), which was also articulated by some external stakeholders (EXG1):

some of the really good stuff that's come out of the policy is that providing those appropriate support services for sexual violence victims, getting those partnerships so we can do early referrals, get those supports in place (QPFG1)

However, a significant gap in the response, as commented on by police and external participants is the lack of awareness of victim-centric and trauma-informed practice among other police staff, such as front counter staff and general duties police officers:

there is a real need to have a better understanding of the Strategy amongst all police, general duties and first response (QPFG2);

the [Strategy] creates a bit of awareness, an increased awareness within the organization, but as we said perhaps just some more promoting with the uniformed units (QPFG2); and

what we hear from our clients often is that first response from police isn't great and a lot of people are discouraged and feel quite unsafe to report and come forward (EXFG3).

Another difficulty that was raised was the significant overlap between domestic and family violence (DFV) and sexual assault (QPI2, QPFG2), as this police officer commented:

the most overwhelming sexual, vast majority of sexual offences occur between a male respondent and a female victim within a domestic violence setting - a partnership of some kind or ex-partnership (QPI2).

However, it is extremely complex:

The situation when you have a grown female victim that plays the role of the mother in that situation and then you have a male offender, and the sexual violence is a domestic violence setting i.e., male respondent/female victim it becomes inherently more complex. Complex from the mechanics of the offence in the terms of consent and explicit consent and implicit consent and things like that. But also, when this respondent is subjecting the female aggrieved to sexual violence, rapes and sexual assaults within a family environment she's going to feel very, very conflicted about coming forward to this violence that she's suffered, probably 1) from a trauma point of view and probably 2) she's got a concern there for her children, who's going to be supporting this family. We currently have a housing crisis and an occupancy rate

of 99 plus percent, how am I going to find housing in this weird post Covid world? Where's the money going to come from with all this inflation? (QPI2)

General duties police officers are often the ones attending to incidents of domestic and family violence, and during a conversation with the aggrieved, sexual violence incidents may be mentioned. The matter is then to be referred to an investigator (QPFG4). However, the domestic and family violence component is continued to be handled by the general duties officer. In addition, external stakeholders expressed concerns that the incidents of sexual violence do not always receive adequate attention (EXFG2):

the survivors where there's an intersection of domestic violence and sexual assault and oftentimes or something that I see in here is that sometimes the domestic violence might be focused on rather than having separate specialized support as well for the sexual assault. And I guess in terms of prevention of sexual assault there, I think still really exist this strong misconception That when you're in an intimate relationship that sexual violence isn't, there's like an implied consent (EXFG2); and

there isn't always that inquiry when there's domestic violence enquiring about the sexual violence part of that and so I think there could be more work done when we're looking at domestic violent risk assessments (EXFG2).

This is where good partnership engagement is critical:

a good setup that we have is between us, our DV unit and DV Connect. Where we'll have victims of sexual violence in a domestic violence relationship, particularly in that situation where in the initial reporting period they'll make a disclosure about being offended against, however not wanting to provide, you know, reluctant to provide statements out of fear or whatever the case may be. Between our DV unit, DV Connects and more so the DV Connect social workers tie in with the victims in there and we often have the victim attend the station with her social worker from DV Connect that assist in obtaining that statement to enable investigation to progress, but it's actually also good at - conversely it's also good for us to say well to document the incident, we can record we've made quite reasonable steps to try and assist this victim and they're just not ready yet but we've left the door open for them as well (QPFG4)

Further to the above, police and external stakeholder participants commented that there are significant gaps for victim-survivors that identify as First Nations, are from the CALD background, LGBTIQ+ community or are male:

Improve practices for victims of sexual crime from the LGBTIQ community to engage with police safely and particularly transgender women. There needs to be a bit of a, there needs to be improved conversations between Queensland police and how they work with this component of community, and particularly transgender women, because we are seeing more and more often that there's a lack of confidence to engage with the police there in that capacity and it's the same for improved accessibility for people coming from the CALD and linguistically diverse people to police to access information about police processes. So often people in these minorities don't understand those police reporting processes or even how to access the police safely and the same with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well and taking into account the intrinsic differences of this group of people and when it comes to reporting, being able to encourage and support that within that community and taking into account those things that you know straight from those people themselves around what's going to be best practice in regards to being able to safely report (EXFG3); and the actual service runs out of this place called the Women's Centre, which is not very male focused, so I definitely think that could be improved around the men because I know previously when we had male victims it was quite hard to find somebody who would support them (QPGF2).

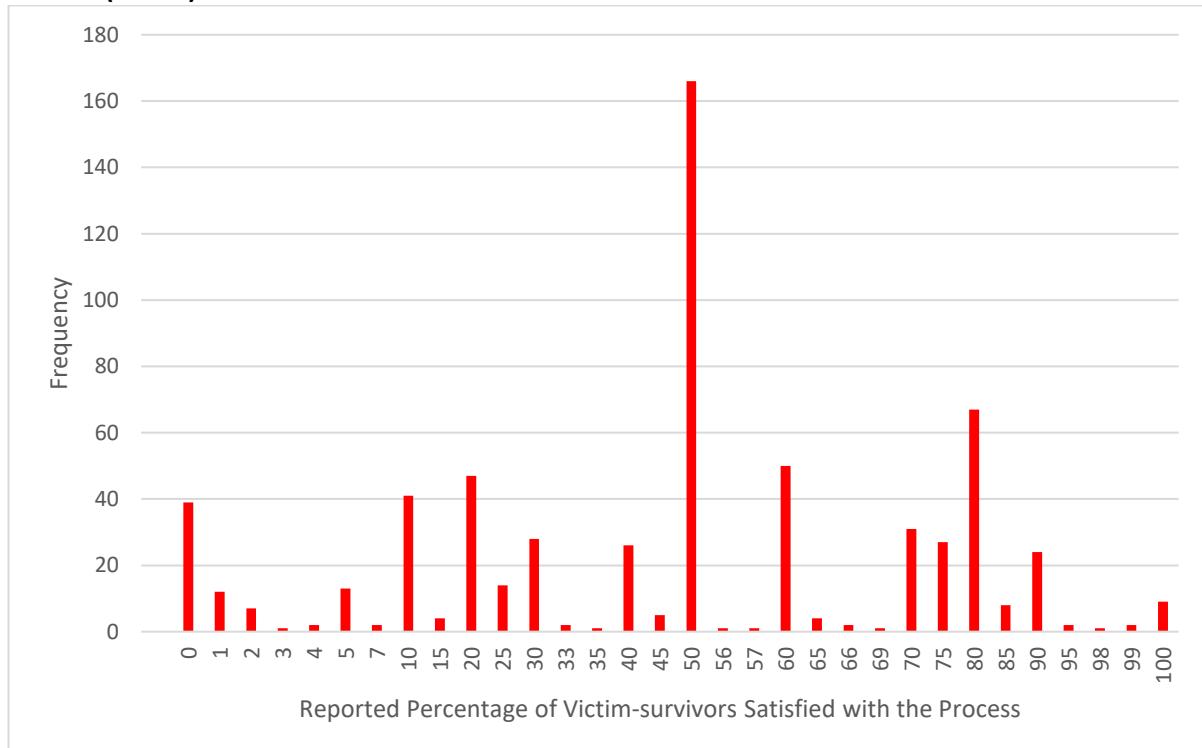
In summary, focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders suggest that there are some inconsistencies in the QPS first response to victim-survivors of sexual violence. This is partially due to the substantial overlap that exists between domestic and family violence and sexual violence matters, and there are different specialist and frontline units responding to the different victimisation experiences. Overall, key stakeholders assessed that the QPS is improving in their awareness and understanding of responding to victim-survivors in a victim-centric and trauma-informed manner (however it is difficult to determine whether this is due to the Strategy).

7.5. Perceived Victim-survivor Satisfaction

In the survey, frontline QPS staff were asked to comment on their perceptions of victim-survivor satisfaction. Participants were asked: "Based on your experience, approximately

what percentage of **victims of sexual violence** do you think are satisfied with the process of investigating their case?”. Participants responded by indicating a percentage ranging from 0 to 100. On average, participants felt that just below 50% of victims were satisfied with the process of investigating their case ($M=46.46$, $SD=27.56$) (see Figure 7.10). This suggests that QPS frontline staff believe there is room for improvement in the process of investigating cases of sexual violence.

Figure 7.10 Frequency Distribution of Estimated Percentage of Victim-Survivors Satisfied with the Process (n=640)



Source: Survey data

Note: Based on Q17) “Based on your experience, approximately what percentage of victims of sexual violence do you think are satisfied with the process of investigating their case?”.

In summary, QPS survey participants believed that just below 50% of victims were satisfied with the process of investigating their case. This suggests that police believe there is room for improvement in the process of investigating cases of sexual violence.

8. Partnership Engagement

8.1. Overview

This chapter focuses primarily on further addressing KEQ 4:

KEQ 4: How has the QPS enhanced collaboration with partner agencies?

To address these questions, the chapter draws on interviews with key stakeholders and QPS administrative data. The chapter first overviews the topic of stakeholder engagement. Second, victim-survivor referrals are charted.

8.2. Stakeholder Engagement

The external stakeholder participants provided mixed responses when asked if they had observed any changes since the implementation of the Strategy. Some suggested that the response from the police is much better (EXFG3), they now have regular meetings since the installation of the new SVLO positions and engagement has improved (EXFG1, EXFG2, EXFG3). Some even commented that the engagement goes beyond their service:

we meet monthly formally and that's got Education, Queensland Child Safety, it's got the corrections, it's got justice, it's got our service, it's got police (EXFG3); and

we are very heavily engaged to police SVLO's, so CPIU and the CIB, we're talking all the time. They've offered me if I hear from a client that they had poor treatment that I report that back to them. So, I've actually been reporting it back to them ... providing an opportunity for feedback and have conversations about the training and what needs to change in their service. They're working with us ... they've been really, really responsive. So, for me locally that's actually been a positive outcome. I certainly know culturally that doesn't look the same. Business Unit Review was a very honest forum that we attended. We're very clear around the culture and the changes that we see that needs to happen (EXFG3)

However, some external stakeholder participants suggested that the engagement is not as a result of the Strategy, but that they already had a good relationship with that SVLO (EXFG1, EXFG2); and in some locations the process is formalised and an MOU is in place for working together, however, this was also implemented prior to the Strategy (EXFG1).

Other external stakeholder participants commented that not much had changed (EXFG1, EXFG2); and there still is little contact (EXFF1) or that the engagement is driven on an individual level, rather than at the organisational level (EXFG1):

if I critically reflect, it's the one person driving it all and if he wasn't around - would there be that level of engagement? ... he's somebody that if he doesn't understand he rings and he asks and if I gently challenge him around attitudes around things and he's really receptive to listening and being educated and getting involved ... if that person wasn't around, I don't know that there would be that level of engagement if that makes sense, because I certainly don't get it anywhere else (EXFG1).

A few external stakeholder participants reported positive engagement changes with their CIB and CPIU units, with investigators now attending the counselling service and taking statements at their office (EXFG1); and that officers are more actively engaging in community events raising awareness for sexual violence (EXFG1).

Similarly, police participants also indicated that they felt that there was increased and more regular contact with their local counselling services (QPI2). Police participants commented that they were also getting more historical complaints (QPI2, QPFG4). Again, other police participants commented that they were already having regular contact with relevant sexual violence and victim support services in their region' (QPFG3, QPFG4). Some police participants commented that the contact with the services was very good, while others suggested that it is more mixed (QPFG3). Some examples of the growing relationships are mentioned below:

I'd say we're very lucky compared to a lot of other areas because we have what's called the Sexual Assault Network, which is all of the stakeholders that get together quite regularly to discuss issues, and we have a specific forensic nurse service here [location withheld] that does all of our SAIK-Kits and things like that, so they're often the first point of call for someone at the hospital anyway. And we're in regular contact with them to organize things so we're very lucky here that we have that good service that we can rely on (QPFG3);

every second Tuesday we go down and sit with her and have conversations with her and we also have made the communication between our two units a lot more accessible. She knows she can call a direct line to either one of their DS' on shift or the DSS officer whenever they need anything, which allows - if they do have a victim come through the door that is high needs, they've got that instant contact. They don't have to worry about going through and calling uniform and then waiting for the response [location x] (QPFG4); and

As a result of the sexual violence strategy being rolled out, they implemented the ... Sexual Assault Network - so we meet once a month. It's the SVLO's all dial in on Teams. We've got DPP, child safety education. Some of the other areas, [name of service provider] who are our sexual assault support service that support and so far, that's been going well, and we've just sort of been troubleshooting through any issues that have been identified and things that have been raised by the partners in the area. We're up to about I think 3 or 4 meetings in now but that's so far, I guess an opportunity for all the stakeholders to get together and address any issues or concerns that they wish to raise (QPFG4).

Some of the relationships have become more formalised as a result of the Strategy (QPFG4), as shown by this quote:

we've got really good relationships with our stakeholders probably something that we don't need to formalize, because it is so strong and it's been like that for a lot of years in the CPIU space, it did come out as one of the recommendations from our sexual violence business review that we (CIB) formalise it ... so that's something that the OIC of the CIB and I are trying to put together so that we can have a formal I guess network with our stakeholders, but it's pretty positive here, we've both got direct lines straight through to our office. They've got the OIC mobiles, if they need something they ring us (QPFG4).

Police and external stakeholder participants from Townsville responded that because of the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)⁸⁴ model they are in a unique place. All participants who were linked in with the SART model, suggested that the Strategy had made no difference on the engagement and relationship:

because of our sexual assault response team and the way that that was structured, it actually made no impact and what we found was like we already had that relationship because we were doing that work in such a way of holistic wraparound response, so it made no difference, but it was because of the difference of SART, it would have been different if we hadn't had SART here (EXFG2)

Police participants further suggested that they had not really seen a change since the implementation of the Strategy; "it was doing something they were already doing", however it is more formalised now (QPI1), and there are now more formalised safeguards in place

⁸⁴ The Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) is a multi-disciplinary, interagency group of professionals comprising of social workers from the Sexual Assault Service, Detectives from the QPS, Forensic Nurses from Townsville Hospital and Health Services, established in 2017 to work alongside victim-survivors of sexual violence to provide a response that is victim-centric and trauma-informed.

(QPI2, QPFG4). However, others suggested that since the Strategy, partnership engagement had improved (QPFG2):

the external focus for me is about those engagements with our local service providers and that's something to be fair I don't think we, well at least myself so personally, I probably didn't really do that well enough before. So, I think the Strategy has helped me focus on making sure I've got good relationships with our sexual assault counselling service, with our local hospitals and that's something we have a really good relationship with now. So, I think that's been a benefit to me from the Strategy. Internally, I think that our office was already doing quite well and prioritizing our sexual violence offences, but I think having better external relationships has been a good outcome of the Strategy (QPFG2).

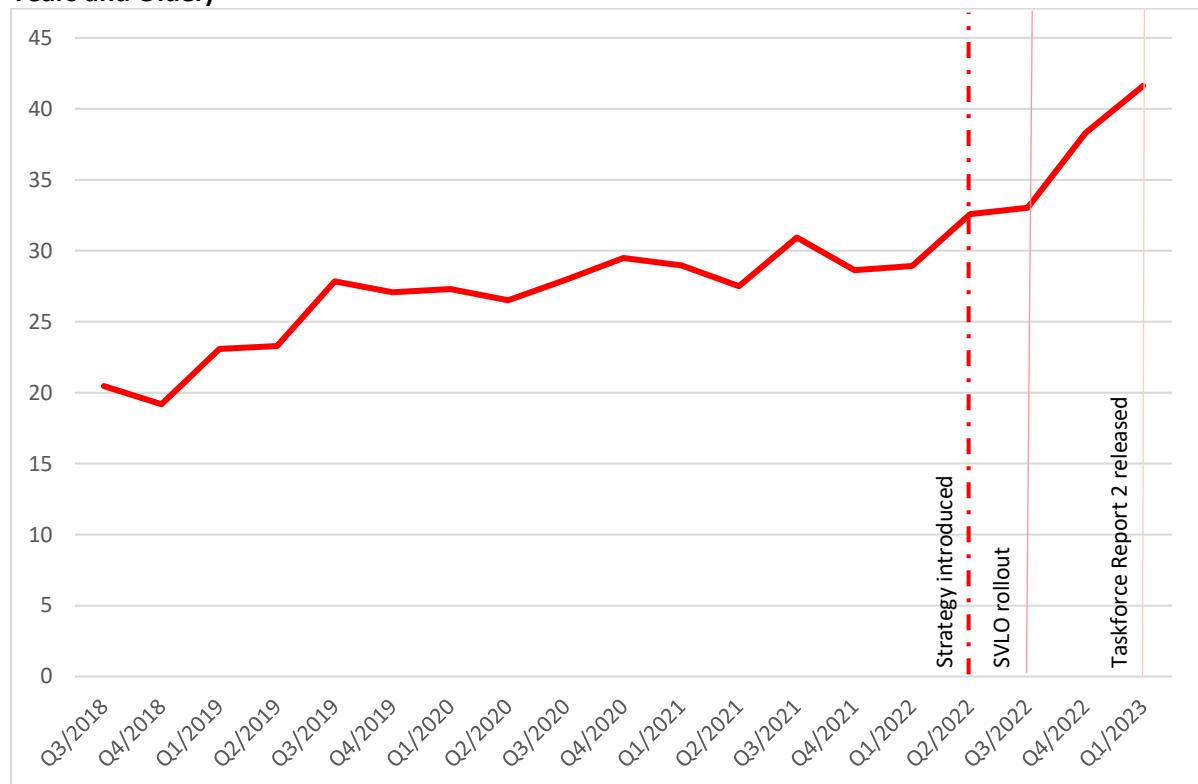
In summary, focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders suggests that QPS engagement with external service provided has improved over time, although there are some concerns that improvements in engagement may come down to individuals (although this is part of the SVLO role). It is not clear whether enhanced engagement is a result of the Strategy.

8.3. Victim-survivor Referrals

To support victim-survivors through the investigative process, the QPS has aimed to increase the number of victim-survivor referrals to external support agencies. To examine victim-survivor referrals, aggregate data were obtained from QPS on the number of victim-survivor referrals by QPS officers over time. Figure 8.1 (see overleaf) reports victim-survivor referrals as a proportion of the total number of sexual violence offences reported (where the victim-survivor is aged 16 years and older). Results were provided and reported on by fiscal quarter. Results show a statistically significant increase in victim-survivor referrals over time⁸⁵ from 20.5% in Q3/2018 to 41.6% in Q1/2023 (essentially doubling over the period). Increased referrals by officers continue post the introduction of the Strategy.

⁸⁵ $r=.900$; $p\leq.001$.

Figure 8.1 Sexual Violence Victim-survivor Referrals by QPS Officers, as a Percentage of the Total Sexual Violence Offences Reported by Fiscal Quarter and Year, 2018-2023 (Victim-survivor Aged 16 Years and Older)



Source: QPrime data

In summary, QPrime data shows that referrals by QPS officers have increased over time, including since the introduction of the Strategy.

9. Conclusion

This chapter brings together the key findings of the Evaluation, concluding with Recommendations. Key findings of the Evaluation highlight the progress made by QPS in improving responses to sexual violence, along with remaining gaps in practice responses, attitudes and beliefs around sexual violence victimisation and its trauma impact on sexual violence victim-survivors. Recommendations provide suggestions for future iterations of the Strategy.

9.1. Overview of Key Findings

Key Finding 1 Awareness and Understanding of the Strategy: Awareness and understanding of the Strategy was found to be limited but growing. While key QPS stakeholders (for example Sexual Violence Liaison Officers) and those at higher ranks were generally found to be more aware of the Strategy than other QPS staff, there remains some confusion about the specific aims and focus of the Strategy. Despite this, QPS staff in general, appear to align with the aims of the Strategy implicitly. Specifically, QPS staff that were interviewed and surveyed reported they were: mostly committed to victim-centric, trauma-informed policing approaches; working toward improved capabilities in responding to sexual violence; and working towards enhanced engagement with external service providers in responding to sexual violence.

Key Finding 2 Practicing Trauma-Informed and Victim-Centric Policing: Results of the Evaluation show that even as QPS staff generally support a victim-centric and trauma-informed response to victim-survivors of sexual violence, there are some issues converting intention into practice. For example, frontline QPS staff surveyed (including sworn and unsworn staff) tended to be supportive of victim-centric and trauma-informed approaches but were less confident about their *understanding* of trauma-informed practice (this was particularly so for unsworn staff, and at the lower ranks for sworn staff). External service providers also expressed concerns that while police will frame responses as “trauma-informed” and “victim-centric” there may be some gaps in the practical application of these approaches to everyday policing responses. At the same time, key stakeholders reported barriers to police providing a purely victim-centric and trauma-informed approach. Notably,

the role police play in collecting evidence (required for a successful prosecution) can sometimes compete with a victim-centric, trauma-informed philosophy.

Key Finding 3 The Sexual Violence Liaison Officer (SVLO) Role: Internal stakeholders viewed the SVLO role as a key component of the Strategy and external stakeholders viewed the SVLO role valuable in responding to sexual violence. Despite this, focus group participants reported there were some challenges involved with the current format of the SVLO role. Specifically, awareness of the SVLO role was limited (that is, not all QPS staff or relevant external stakeholders were aware of the role). Moreover, external stakeholders expressed concerns that the nature of the SVLO allocation means that the SVLO role is automatically given to the Officers in Charge (OIC) of Criminal Investigation Branches (CIB) or Child Protection Investigation Units (CPIU). The “add-on” nature of the role risks increasing the already heavy workloads of OICs which has the potential to negatively impact on external stakeholder engagement.

Key Finding 4 Believing Victims: The survey of frontline QPS staff (included in the Evaluation) gauged QPS staff beliefs about victims. Data shows that the QPS staff surveyed tended to support victim-centric and trauma-informed practices in the policing of sexual violence. QPS members surveyed also tended to report neutral to low misperceptions about victim-survivor trauma responses (central to trauma-informed practice) and neutral to low beliefs about rape myths. However, the Evaluation found that beliefs in rape myths varied according to rank for sworn officers. These results suggest that more can be done to ensure more senior/higher ranked staff promote accurate and informed attitudes about sexual violence. Leadership is needed to ensure that victim-survivors of sexual violence are believed and understood by QPS members.

Key Finding 5 Withdrawn and Unfounded Reports: The percentage of reports of sexual violence cleared as solved, withdrawn and unfounded, versus unsolved (i.e., QPrime data), were examined over time during the Evaluation. Given the recency of the implementation of the Strategy, the time it can take to clear a report, and disruptions due to COVID-19, it is not possible to determine whether the Strategy has impacted on the proportion of reports withdrawn or unfounded in the current Evaluation. What can be reported is that there were some differences in the proportions of cases withdrawn by region during the Evaluation period (notably the Northern Region had significantly fewer withdrawals compared to some

other regions). Key QPS stakeholders also indicated that the 14-day policy (i.e., that a report may not be withdrawn within 14 days) has some benefits but may not be being utilised consistently across the QPS (i.e., the application of the policy may be misunderstood) and may not always be utilised in a way that is compatible with victim-centric practice.

Key Finding 6 The Role of Frontline Responders: Focus group data highlighted the expertise of investigators and SVLOs in responding to reports of sexual violence, however interviewees noted that some sexual assault complaints do not make it past the initial uniformed police response (i.e., complaints are not referred to investigators). It was also noted that front counter staff and general duties police officers do not have the same level of expertise in trauma-informed and victim-centric responses/practices as investigators. External stakeholders reported that the first response from police is important and, when it does not go well, victim-survivors are discouraged from reporting. Moreover, the location at which a statement is taken and the time it can take for police to follow up with victim-survivors can be detrimental to the complainant. While the survey of QPS frontline responders showed that those who indicated they were more likely to respond to sexual violence in their workload also felt more prepared to respond, it was noted that those at higher ranks were at the same time less likely to respond to sexual violence but more prepared to respond. These results indicate that it is important for the QPS to identify those QPS members who are more likely to have contact with victims of sexual violence and, subsequently, to ensure they have the training and capacity to respond effectively.

Key Finding 7 Training: The right training is critical to ensuring QPS staff (both sworn and unsworn) have the capabilities to respond to sexual violence and an understanding of the application of victim-centric and trauma-informed practice. There are several training programs that are available for QPS staff that have the potential to enhance QPS staff capabilities in responding to sexual violence. It was outside the scope of this Evaluation to review and evaluate the components of individual training courses, or to gauge the proportion of staff who have completed training. The survey of frontline QPS staff indicates that approximately one quarter of survey participants had completed some form of sexual violence training in the past 12 months (and, relatedly, approximately half of survey participants had completed domestic violence training in the same period), and that sworn staff were more likely to have undertaken training than unsworn staff. Survey results also

indicate that completion of training does appear to increase understanding of trauma-informed practice. Of those who had completed sexual violence training in the past 12 months, additional training remained of interest to the majority. There was greatest interest in “current procedures” followed by “how to better respond to victims of sexual violence” and “trauma-informed policing practices” with “knowledge about sexual violence” receiving the least amount of interest among this group. These results indicate gaps in the current training. The focus groups with key stakeholders highlighted the usefulness of the ISACURE training (which is currently under evaluation by the University of Queensland), however, they also noted that there are barriers to entry including: 1) the need to complete pre-requisite Phase 2 Detective Training; 2) ISACURE is only available face-to-face in Brisbane; and 3) the ISACURE course takes several weeks to complete. While improvements can be made to training, key stakeholders noted that there is overlap in training courses and that QPS staff were struggling to keep up with the number of training courses they were required to complete; this may result in training fatigue and undermine the efforts of training programs.

Key Finding 8 Alternative Reporting Options: While reports of sexual violence are increasing, key stakeholders commented that one barrier to reporting is the context of the front counter at a police station (e.g., the lack of privacy afforded, it is an intimidating setting etc.). For this reason, the availability of alternative methods of reporting is crucial. In particular, the Alternative Reporting Options (ARO) and the Online Reporting Form, allow victim-survivors to report sexual violence online as the first point of contact (with ARO allowing victim-survivors to report informally). Policelink also provides a mechanism for a victim-survivor to initiate a report without needing to attend the front counter (at least in the first instance). The Evaluation found that the rate of ARO reports and formal reporting via the Online Reporting Form (as well as web traffic to the relevant QPS Webpages) have increased over time, with formal online reports plateauing since the introduction of the Strategy. Calls to Policelink have, in contrast, decreased over time. The proportion of reports made via online mechanisms remains low. Key stakeholders commented that one reason for this may be limited community awareness of the reporting options. Another reason may be that online completion poses difficulties for victim-survivors who have insufficient English literacy skills or limited access to the internet or computer resources.

Key Finding 9 QPS Response to Victim-survivors: Due to the lack of available data, it was not possible to include pre-post comparisons of victim-survivor perceptions/experiences in the current Evaluation. The Evaluation utilised key stakeholders' knowledge and experience with victim-survivors to estimate victim-survivor experience of police responses to sexual violence and to consider whether the Strategy has made an impact in this regard. Key stakeholders reported that there were inconsistencies in the QPS response to victim-survivors during first response. This is partially due to the substantial overlap that exists between domestic and family violence and sexual violence matters. Moreover, there are different specialist and frontline units responding to the different victimisation experiences. Overall, key stakeholders assessed that the QPS is improving in their awareness and understanding of responding to victim-survivors in a victim-centric and trauma-informed manner; however, it is difficult to determine whether this is due to the Strategy. Frontline police officers were also surveyed about their assessments of victim-satisfaction. On average survey participants (QPS frontline staff) estimated that just below 50% of victims were satisfied with the process of investigating their complaint. On the other hand, most survey participants (80%+) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that: "If a friend or family member were a victim of sexual violence, I would encourage them to report to the police". Overall, these results indicate that while QPS is making strides to improve their response to victim-survivors of sexual violence, there remains room for continued improvement.

Key Finding 10 Stakeholder Engagement and Referrals: One of the key strategic areas of the Strategy was to continue to improve engagement with key partners. During focus groups, key stakeholders reported that engagement with external service providers has improved over time and has become more formalised. However, in some areas this process started prior to the implementation of the Strategy. Some external stakeholders raised the concern that engagement can be dependent on one individual. To support victim-survivors through the investigative process, the QPS has aimed to increase the number of victim-survivor referrals to external support agencies. Data show that the proportion of referrals has increased significantly during the Evaluation period, with a continued upward trend.

9.2. Recommendations

The Evaluation led to 16 recommendations:

Education and Training

Recommendation 1: The QPS should more widely circulate the aims and objectives of the Strategy. In doing so they should educate QPS staff about the vision and purpose of the Strategy and associated changes to policy and practice. Education about the Strategy appears to be occurring at the local level; however, a state-wide approach would promote consistency.

Recommendation 2: “Victim-centric” and “trauma-informed” policing responses should be defined and operationalised consistently and clearly so QPS members are aware of how they can put these concepts into practice in a manner that is consistent with their day-to-day operations and job role. This applies to both sworn and unsworn QPS staff. Without clear guidance there is a risk that “victim-centric” and “trauma-informed” philosophies become “buzz words” that lack meaning and practical application.

Recommendation 3: QPS leadership needs to hold accurate and informed understandings about sexual violence and victim-survivor responses to trauma to ensure enhanced practice at all levels of the QPS hierarchy. Specifically, QPS staff at higher ranks should frequently undertake refresher training to ensure an accurate and up-to-date understanding of sexual violence that is compatible with recent innovations and research. This will ensure that QPS cultural beliefs about sexual violence and victim-survivor responses continue to be refreshed, and that cultural change is driven through trauma-informed and victim-centric leadership. (This aligns with Recommendation 28 of the Taskforce Report 2.)

Recommendation 4: The QPS should place particular emphasis on the role of frontline sworn and unsworn QPS staff in responding to sexual violence when seeking to enhance their response. Frontline responders provide the initial response to a victim-survivor reports of sexual violence in a proportion of cases. The initial response of the QPS to a victim-survivor has the potential to either facilitate or discourage the progression of a report of sexual violence. (This aligns with Recommendation 28 of the Taskforce Report 2).

Recommendation 5: The QPS should continue to enhance training in response to sexual violence across all levels of the QPS hierarchy. Both sworn and unsworn staff require training in how to respond to sexual violence. It is particularly recommended that the QPS review the training that is currently available and consider: 1) whether the training is adequate and up-to-date; 2) whether the training is appropriate for specific job roles; and 3) whether the training can be reconfigured to avoid duplication and training fatigue. (This aligns with Recommendation 28 of the Taskforce Report 2).

Recommendation 6: The QPS should remove barriers for entry into the ISACURE training by considering: 1) the need for prerequisites; and 2) the need for staff to travel to Brisbane to complete the training. ISACURE is considered an important training course by internal stakeholders. (This aligns with Recommendation 28 of the Taskforce Report 2).

Policy and Practice

Recommendation 7: As the SVLO role is crucial to the cultural change management process, making it part of the responsibilities of Officers in Charge (OICs) signals this importance. However, although the SVLO role is viewed positively, the leadership aspect of the role is not well-understood by all QPS members or external stakeholders. To reduce confusion about the nature of the role and how it is assigned, clearer internal and external communication about the role and its key responsibilities in relation to sexual violence is needed. (This aligns with Recommendation 29 of the Taskforce Report 2).

Recommendation 8: The QPS should follow a state-wide and consistent policy to encourage enhanced engagement with key external stakeholders. This will ensure engagement does not come down to individuals. External stakeholder engagement should continue to be improved.

Recommendation 9: The QPS should further explore opportunities to apply a data-driven approach to support prevention of, responses to and investigations of sexual violence, including better use of the Dashboard and other available data.

Recommendation 10: The 14-day policy (regarding the withdrawal of reports of victimisation) should be clearly communicated to relevant QPS staff. It is further recommended that the policy be evaluated for its efficacy and alignment with a victim-centric approach to address concerns by police stakeholders raised in the Evaluation. The Evaluation findings indicate that QPS staff understanding of the 14-day policy varies greatly and that there are some concerns

about its alignment with a victim-centric approach. Clarification around the purpose and application of the 14-day framework, while maintaining a victim-centric approach, is required.

Recommendation 11: The wellbeing of QPS staff across all regions and work units is of ongoing concern to the QPS. While QPS frontline staff are frequently exposed to vicarious trauma when responding to domestic, family and sexual violence, child maltreatment, homicide, suicide and road accidents, specialist staff who respond to sexual violence may be at particular risk of poor wellbeing outcomes. The Evaluation did not include data to compare wellbeing across work units but highlighted the need to support officer wellbeing under the SVRS. The QPS should continue to monitor staff wellbeing, taking note of differences across work units and ensuring access to support mechanisms.

Online Reporting

Recommendation 12: The QPS should more widely advertise the availability of the variety of reporting options available (including the Online Reporting Form, Alternative Reporting Options or ARO and Policelink). This can be done via social media and by increasing the awareness of these options among victim-survivor support services. The impacts of advertising campaigns can be analysed using social media impression analyses. Providing a variety of reporting options reduces barriers to reporting.

Recommendation 13: The QPS should make online reporting options available in languages other than English to ensure that access to the Online Reporting Form and to the ARO are made more accessible to those for whom English is not their first language. NSW Police have recently launched online reporting for sexual assault victim-survivors in a dozen languages. The QPS should implement a similar strategy.

Long-term Evaluation

Recommendation 14: To understand the long-term impacts of the Strategy, the QPS should continue to track the percentage of reports of sexual violence that are cleared as solved, withdrawn or unfounded, over time.

Recommendation 15: Victim-survivor complaints (i.e., Ethical Standards) data should be obtained and analysed independently. This data will assist to shed light on client experience. The Evaluation did not include data to assess changes in the number and nature of victim complaints about police.

Recommendation 16: The QPS should implement an ongoing public satisfaction survey. An ongoing survey that occurs annually or quarterly would better equip the QPS to assess the impacts of changes made to policy and practice over time. Moreover, such a change would better facilitate the alignment of QPS policy and practice with victim-survivor voices. When conducting a post-hoc evaluation of strategy implementation it is not possible to observe change in victim-survivor perceptions and experiences over time without pre-implementation data.

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11. Appendices

Appendix A: Key Evaluation Questions and Methodology

Table 11.1 Key Evaluation questions and methodology

	Evaluation Question	Methodology
1	Has the Strategy advanced the QPS workforce towards applying a victim-centric, trauma-informed approach when responding to sexual violence?	
1.1	What internal practices have been implemented to enhance support in the workplace, or influence cultural change? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are QPS members more aware of the Strategy?• Do QPS members feel more supported as a result of wellbeing initiatives?	QPS member survey Focus groups QPS internal stakeholders OPM and district/regional instructions Training data
1.2	How has enhanced sexual violence training improved the QPS's response to victims? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what extent have QPS members completed the specialist sexual violence training?• Has there been a reduction in the complaints against police officers about the QPS response to victims?⁸⁶• Has there been a reduction in withdrawn and unfounded victim complaints?• Have (and in what way) QPS members changed their approach when responding to victims?	QPS member survey Administrative data (QPrime) Training data Focus groups QPS internal stakeholders Police Integrity and Professional Standards System data (complaints against officers' data) OPM and district/regional instructions
2	Has the Strategy improved QPS's capability to prevent, disrupt, respond to, and investigate sexual violence in Queensland?	
2.1	What activities have been undertaken and what capabilities have been developed to facilitate an enhanced response? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How have organisational capabilities been enhanced to support service delivery and QPS members responding to sexual violence?• Has the appointment of a capability owner contributed to a more coordinated response to sexual violence?• To what extent is there an integrated response (both at the commencement and during) in a sexual violence investigative process? (e.g., enhancement of communication)	Focus group with QPS internal stakeholders QPS member survey Administrative data (QPrime) Redbourn referral data Training data OPM and district/regional instructions

⁸⁶ Ethical Standards Data was not provided.

	Evaluation Question	Methodology
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do SVLOs understand their responsibilities in ensuring an integrated response? • Have there been changes in referral rates to victim support services? 	
2.2	<p>How have changes to capturing data/information practices enhanced QPS's capability to respond to sexual violence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the Strategy-related analytical support (e.g., sexual violence dashboard) assisted in District decision making and investigative responses? 	QPS member survey Focus group with QPS internal stakeholders
3	Has the Strategy empowered the community and/or reduced community harm?	
3.1	<p>How has the QPS increased community awareness of the Service's role, reporting avenues and alternative reporting options?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the perspective of victim support services, has there been more communication about the ways in which victims can report and be supported? • To what extent has the volume of, and the use of different avenues for, reporting sexual violence changed? 	Interviews and focus group with external stakeholders QPS member survey QPS media data Administrative data (QPrime)
3.2	<p>What prevention strategies aimed at diverse populations have the QPS supported?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of prevention activities have been implemented by the Strategy? • To what extent are QPS members involved in these prevention activities? 	Interviews and focus group with QPS internal stakeholders Interviews and focus group with external stakeholders including victim support services
4	Has the Strategy facilitated maximised partnerships with key stakeholders?	
4.1	<p>How has the QPS enhanced collaboration with partner agencies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What activities has the QPS undertaken in maintaining and enhancing existing relationships? • What activities has the QPS undertaken to identify and establish partnerships with other stakeholders? • How has integration with partner agencies been facilitated to provide specialist support to victims and offenders? 	Administrative data (Redbourn referral data) Interviews and focus group with QPS internal stakeholders Interviews and focus group with external stakeholders

Appendix B: Griffith University Human Ethics Approval

2022/683 - Full ethics approval

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✉ rims@griffith.edu.au <rims@griffith.edu.au>

Thursday, 15 September 2022 at 2:34 pm

To: c.bond@griffith.edu.au; s.meyer@griffith.edu.au; Ⓜ Margo Van Felius; e.sargeant@griffith.edu.au; +2 more ▾



Human_Ethics_Clear... ▾

98.2 KB

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GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Dear Dr Elise Sargeant

I write in relation to your application for ethical clearance for your project "Commercial Evaluation - Evaluation of the Queensland Police Service Sexual Violence Response Strategy QPS16704 refers" (GU Ref No: 2022/683).

The Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (GUHREC) resolved to grant your application a clearance status of "Fully Approved".

Please ensure that the GU ethics reference number for the project (i.e. GU ref no 2022/683) is included on the recruitment, participant information and consent materials.

Regards

Kim Madison
Policy Officer, Research Ethics
Office for Research
Griffith University | Nathan | QLD 4111 | Level 0, Bray Centre
T +61 7 373 58043 | email: k.madison@griffith.edu.au

Researchers are reminded that the Griffith University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research provides guidance to researchers in areas such as conflict of interest, authorship, storage of data, & the training of research students.

You can find further information, resources and a link to the University's Code by visiting
<http://policies.griffith.edu.au/pdf/Code%20for%20the%20Responsible%20Conduct%20of%20Research>

Appendix C: QPS Research Committee (QPSRC) approval



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

ABN: 29 409 225 509



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY COMMAND
40 Tank Street, Brisbane, 4000
GPO Box 1440, Brisbane, Queensland, 4001

QP 0006
11/08
A2

30 September 2022

Our Ref.: DOC22/1556703
Your Ref.: QPSRC-0922-3.02

Dr Elise Sargeant
Griffith University
e.sargeant@griffith.edu.au

Dear Dr. Sargeant,

RESEARCH REQUEST LETTER OF NOTIFICATION – Evaluation of the QPS Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2021 - 2023

I refer to your application dated 30 August 2022 for permission to conduct research within the Queensland Police Service (QPS). The application has been carefully considered by the QPS Research Committee (QPSRC) and has been *approved* subject to the following conditions:

- 1) You carefully read, sign and return the Formal Deed of Agreement to the QPS Research Committee Secretariat;
- 2) Any data or police resources required for this project must be negotiated and is subject to QPS operational requirements and the provision of this Letter of Notification;
- 3) Sample size and data collection is further discussed and negotiated with Crime and Intelligence Command; and
- 4) Ongoing engagement with other QPS data custodians around the availability and release of training and professional standards/police complaints data.

Your QPSRC Reference Number for this approved research project is **QPSRC-0922-3.02**

QPS practice is to provide approved research with a dedicated liaison officer(s), where applicable, to facilitate access to required resources for your project. Your liaison officer at the QPS will be provided once relevant documentation is returned to QPSRC Secretariat (the Research and Evaluation Unit) via QPS.Research@police.qld.gov.au.

Should you have queries about this, please contact Mrs Sandra Smith, Manager of the Research and Evaluation Unit, on telephone number (07) 3364 8114.

I wish you well in your research.

Yours sincerely

M P VANDERBYL APM
CHAIR, QPS RESEARCH COMMITTEE
A/ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY COMMAND

QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

Appendix D: Screenshots – QPS Adult Sexual Assault Webpage

Home / Units / victims of crime / Support for victims of crime / Adult sexual assault

Adult sexual assault

A guide for victims of sexual violence - my questions and my choices

I was sexually assaulted - what are my options?

I'm not sure if I was sexually assaulted - what is it?

I know someone who was sexually assaulted - how can I help?

Quick links

- What to do if you've just been sexually assaulted?
- Sexual assault online reporting
- Alternative Reporting Options (ARO)
- The police investigation
- What is consent?
- Understanding sexual assault
- Medical assistance
- Support services
- QPS Sexual Violence Response Strategy (PDF)

Source: QPS (2022). *Adult Sexual Assault*.

<https://www.police.qld.gov.au/units/victims-of-crime/support-for-victims-of-crime/adult-sexual-assault>

Appendix E: Survey Instrument and Codebook

Welcome to QPS Sexual Violence Response Strategy (SVRS) survey. This survey is designed to examine your awareness and understanding of the Strategy as well as to document any changed practices since its implementation in October 2021. It is part of a broader evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy commissioned by the QPS. Before taking part in this survey, please click "NEXT" to read the consent form.

QPS SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESPONSE STRATEGY 2021-2023 EVALUATION
Griffith University Ethics Reference Number: 2022/683.

The study is being conducted by: Dr Elise Sargeant (Project Leader) Griffith Criminology Institute Professor Silke Meyer Griffith Criminology Institute Professor Christine Bond Griffith Criminology Institute Margo van Felius (Project Manager) Griffith Criminology Institute The research team can be reached at: m.vanfelius@griffith.edu.au.

We are interested in your opinions about the Sexual Violence Response Strategy, and how it may have changed any of your practices. Our goal is to better understand the awareness and understanding QPS officers and staff members have of the Strategy and how it may have shaped responses to victims of sexual violence.

Participation in the survey involves completion of a questionnaire, which typically takes 15 minutes and is completely anonymous. There are no direct benefits to you. We do not foresee any risks to you as a result of participating in this survey.

Participation is voluntary. Refusal to take part in the study involves no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and you may withdraw from the survey at any time without penalty. As the survey is anonymous, we cannot withdraw your response after you submit your survey.

All responses are treated as anonymous, and in no case will responses from individual participants be identified. The survey program will collect participants' IP addresses, but they will be removed immediately. All data analysis will be conducted on de-identified data. There is no other potentially identifying information collected. All data will be pooled together and reported in aggregate form only.

Data will be stored in the Griffith Research Space, a secure cloud storage interface maintained by Griffith University. The University's document management system involves the storage within the cloud (i.e., sometimes outside of Australia) and as a result, personal information may be stored overseas.

Although the University has entered into arrangements which protect the privacy of this data, any data stored outside of Australia may be subject to compulsory access through processes of law under the relevant jurisdiction in which it is stored. Information collected will be shared with the QPS.

The results may also be shared through academic publications, such as journal articles, and presentations within the discipline.

The research study and protocols have been approved by the Griffith University Research Ethics Committee and the QPS Research Committee. No deception is involved, and the study involves no more than a minimal risk to participants (i.e., the level of risk encountered in daily life). If you have further questions about the study, please contact the Research Team at m.vanfelius@griffith.edu.au. Participants who want more information about their rights as a participant or who want to report a research related concern may contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on +61 3735 4375 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au).

If you understand and agree with the statements above, and freely consent to participate in the survey, select "YES" then click "NEXT" to begin the questionnaire.

A. Your work role

This section asks you about your experience in the Queensland Police Service, particularly around dealing with sexual violence-related incidents.

Q1. [Q1] Over the past 12 months, approximately what percentage of your workload has involved reports of sexual violence?

M		8.97
SD		14.55
Total Valid	[669]	[100.0]
Missing Data	(5)	(0.7)

Q2. [Q2] In your role, how likely are you to communicate with a victim of **sexual violence** in the next month?

			Not at all likely	Slightly likely	Somewhat likely	Moderately likely	Very likely		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	2.73	n	101	239	146	95	82	[663]	(11)
SD	1.24	%	15.2	36.0	22.0	14.3	12.4	[100.0]	(1.6)

Q3. [Q3] How prepared do you feel to respond effectively to **sexual violence** reports?

			Not at all likely	Slightly likely	Somewhat likely	Moderately likely	Very likely		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	3.44	n	43	84	177	236	108	[648]	(26)
SD	1.11	%	6.6	13.0	27.3	36.4	16.7	[100.0]	(3.9)

Q4. [Q4] Over the past 12 months, approximately what percentage of sexual violence reports (that you have received or responded to) have been related to domestic (intimate partner) violence?

M		26.58
SD		35.44
Total Valid	[663]	[100.0]
Missing Data	(10)	(1.5)

Q5. [Q5] In what region are you currently located?

		n	%
	Brisbane	1	182
	Far Northern	2	82
	Northern	3	54
	Central	4	59
	North Coast	5	91
	South Eastern	6	81
	Southern	7	106
	Other	8	5
	Total Valid	[660]	[100.0]
	Missing Data	(16)	(2.4)

Q6. [Q6] How many years have you been employed by the Queensland Police Service?

M		13.22
SD		9.85
Total Valid	[668]	[100.0]
Missing Data	(6)	(0.9)

Q7a. [Q7a] Are you a sworn police officer?

		N	%
	Yes	1	533
	No	2	132
	Total Valid	[665]	[100.0]
	Missing Data	(9)	(1.3)

Q7b. [Q7b] What is your rank?

		N	%
Constable	1	142	27.6
Senior Constable	2	249	48.3
Sergeant	3	99	19.2
Senior Sergeant	4	21	4.1
Inspector or above	5	4	0.8
Total Valid	[515]	[100.0]	
Missing Data	(159)	(23.6)	
No response	(18)	(2.7)	
System	(141)	(20.9)	

Q7c. [Q7c] What best describes your role [select all that apply]?

		N	%
Police Link Staff	1	26	3.6
Client Services Officer	2	27	3.8
Police Liaison Officer	3	25	3.5
General Duties Officer	4	484	67.8
Front Counter Staff	5	34	4.8
Additional Categories Below Were Added Due to Participants Self-Specifying in the 'Other' Category:			
Administration	6	40	5.6
Child Protection Investigation Unit	7	4	0.6
Criminal Investigation Branch	8	2	0.3
Domestic Family Violence and Vulnerable Person Unit	9	4	0.6
Management	10	5	0.7
Officer in Charge	11	8	1.1
Property Officer	12	5	0.7
Rapid Action and Patrols Unit	13	3	0.4
Roster Clerk	14	3	0.4
Supervisor	15	2	0.3
Tactical Crime Squad	16	9	1.3
Watchhouse	17	14	2.0
Liquor Unit	18	2	0.3
Other	19	17	2.4
Total Valid	[714]	[100.0]	
Missing Data	(4)	(0.6)	
No response	(4)	(0.6)	
System	(0)	(0.0)	

B. Your knowledge and training

We would now like to ask some questions about your familiarity with the Strategy and your participation in sexual violence related training.

Q8. [Q8] How would you describe your familiarity with the QPS Sexual Violence Response Strategy (2021-2023)?

			Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Somewhat familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	2.19	n	227	190	140	81	16	[654]	(20)
SD	1.12	%	34.7	29.1	21.4	12.4	2.4	[100.0]	(3.0)

Q9. [Q9] Have you participated in any training on **responding to sexual violence** in the last 12 months?

		N	%
	Yes	1	164
	No	2	460
	Total Valid	[624]	[100.0]
	Missing Data	(50)	(7.4)

Q9a. [Q9a] Please list the **sexual violence training** or trainings that you have completed in the last 12 months:

Categories Below Were Added Due to Participants Self-Specifying:	n	%
OLPs	70	34.0
Domestic and Family Violence: The Holistic Approach	31	15.0
Child Sexual Abuse Fundamentals Education (CSAFE) OLP	19	9.2
Domestic and Family Violence Training	18	8.7
Face to face	12	5.8
Coercive Control OLP	6	2.9
Responding to Sexual Crimes OLP	6	2.9
Trauma Informed, Victim Centric Training	5	2.4
Domestic and Family Violence: The Holistic Approach – Train the Trainer Course	4	1.9
SBS Inclusion Program – Gender Course OLP	3	1.5
Domestic and Family Violence Video Recorded Evidence (VRE) OLP	3	1.5
Power point presentation	3	1.5

Sexual Violence Training	3	1.5
Other	23	11.2
Total Valid	[206]	[100.0]
Missing Data	(466)	(69.3)
No response	(6)	(0.9)
System	(460)	(68.5)

Q10a. [Q10a] What training would assist you when responding to **victims of sexual violence**?

		N	%
Knowledge about sexual violence	1	300	18.9
How to better respond to victims of sexual violence	2	429	27.1
Trauma-informed policing practices	3	374	23.6
Current procedures for responding to sexual violence	4	446	28.2
Other	6	35	2.2
Total Valid	[1584]	[100.0]	
Missing Data	(18)	(1.1)	
No response	(18)	(1.1)	
System	(0)	(0)	

Q10b. [Q10b] Please describe what other training would assist you when responding to victims of sexual violence:

		n	%
Cultural/multicultural understanding	2	5.0	
Interviewing and investigating reports of sexual violence	2	5.0	
Unsure	5	12.5	
None	11	27.5	
Other	20	50.0	
Total Valid	[40]	[100.0]	
Missing Data	(634)	(94.1)	
No response	(0)	(0.0)	
System	(634)	(94.1)	

Q11a. [Q11a] Have you participated in any training on responding to domestic (intimate partner) violence in the last 12 months?

		N	%
Yes	1	378	59.4
No	2	258	40.6

Total Valid	[636]	[100.0]
Missing Data	(38)	(5.6)

Q11b. [Q11b] Please list the domestic (intimate partner) violence training or trainings that you have completed in the last 12 months:

Categories Below Were Added Due to Participants Self-Specifying:	n	%
Domestic and Family Violence: The Holistic Approach	179	38.5
OLPs	92	19.8
Coercive Control OLP	46	9.9
DFV Training	27	5.8
Domestic and Family Violence Video Recorded Evidence (VRE) OLP	22	4.7
All mandatory training	19	4.1
Domestic and Family Violence Policing Enhancement OLP	15	3.2
Academy training	12	2.6
Domestic and Family Violence: The Holistic Approach – Train the Trainer Course	11	2.4
Trauma Informed, Victim Centric Training	9	1.9
Face to face	5	1.1
Other	28	6.0
Total Valid	[465]	[100.0]
Missing Data	(309)	(39.9)
No response	(13)	(1.7)
System	(296)	(38.2)

Q12. [Q12] Trauma-informed practice is central to the QPS Sexual Violence Response Strategy (2021-2023). To what extent do you agree with the following statements about victims of sexual violence?

a. [Q12a] I have a good understanding of trauma-informed practice for sexual violence victims.			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total Valid	Missing Data
			1	2	3	4	5		
M	3.03	n	46	167	191	196	40	[640]	(34)
SD	1.05	%	7.2	26.1	29.8	30.6	6.3	[100.0]	(5.0)
b. [Q12b] I am dedicated to increasing my awareness and understanding of sexual violence.			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total Valid	Missing Data
			1	2	3	4	5		
M	3.93	n	8	17	131	339	145	[640]	(34)

SD	0.80	%	1.3	2.7	20.5	53.0	22.7	[100.0]	(5.0)
c. [Q12c] Addressing the needs of sexual violence victims should be a key part of the mission of the Queensland Police Service.			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	4.10	n	6	20	92	309	214	[641]	(33)
SD	0.82	%	0.9	3.1	14.4	48.2	33.4	[100.0]	(4.9)
d. [Q12d] A victim's display of emotions when telling about the crime is generally an indicator of the truth of their statement.			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	2.70	n	61	200	259	93	19	[632]	(42)
SD	0.94	%	9.7	31.6	41.0	14.7	3.0	[100.0]	(6.2)
e. [Q12e] A victim who displays negative emotions (e.g., crying, despair, clear signs of distress) during their testimony is generally more likely to be believed in court.			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	3.14	n	21	108	297	180	29	[635]	(39)
SD	0.87	%	3.3	17.0	46.8	28.3	4.6	[100.0]	(5.8)
f. [Q12f] A victim who displays positive emotions (e.g., laughter, smiling) during their testimony is generally less likely to be believed in court.			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	3.30	n	17	93	253	222	48	[633]	(41)
SD	0.91	%	2.7	14.7	40.0	35.1	7.6	[100.0]	(6.1)
g. [Q12g] A victim's inability to report details about the event shortly after the crime (less than a day), is generally reason to			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data

question the truth of their statement.									
M	2.16	n	141	297	159	30	7	[634]	(40)
SD	0.86	%	22.2	46.8	25.1	4.7	1.1	[100.0]	(5.9)
h. [Q12h] Details that appear in a victim's memory after a period of time are generally less reliable than those that the victim can report right from the start.			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	2.65	n	52	250	210	101	17	[630]	(44)
SD	0.94	%	8.3	39.7	33.3	16.0	2.7	[100.0]	(6.5)
i. [Q12i] A victim's reluctance to give a detailed account of the crime is generally an indicator of the truth of their statement.			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	2.24	n	115	287	196	26	6	[630]	(44)
SD	0.83	%	18.3	45.6	31.1	4.1	1.0	[100.0]	(6.5)

Q13. [Q13] Approximately what percentage of sexual violence cases do you believe are falsely reported (i.e., a false claim or accusation) to the police?

Mean		19.29
Std Dev		20.52
Total Valid	[652]	[100.0]
Missing Data	(21)	(3.1)

Q14. [Q14] Approximately what percentage of break and enter cases do you believe are falsely reported (i.e., a false claim or accusation) to the police?

Mean		14.12
Std Dev		14.53
Total Valid	[656]	[100.0]
Missing Data	(17)	(2.5)

Q15. [Q15] Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

a. [Q15a] A lot of times,	Strongly	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly		
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women who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regret it.			disagree		agree nor disagree		agree		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	2.36	n	107	261	208	55	6	[637]	(37)
SD	0.89	%	16.8	41.0	32.7	8.6	0.9	[100.0]	(5.5)
b. [Q15b] Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men.			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	2.49	n	87	236	234	72	7	[636]	(38)
SD	0.90	%	13.7	37.1	36.8	11.3	1.1	[100.0]	(5.6)
c. [Q15c] A lot of times, women who say they were raped often led the man on and then had regrets.			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	2.17	n	144	274	184	31	1	[634]	(40)
SD	0.84	%	11.7	43.2	29.0	4.9	0.2	[100.0]	(40)
d. [Q15d] A lot of times, women who claim they were raped just have emotional problems.			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	1.94	n	198	291	142	6	2	[639]	(35)
SD	0.78	%	31.0	45.5	22.2	0.9	0.3	[100.0]	(5.2)
e. [Q15e] Women who are caught cheating on their boyfriends sometimes claim that it was a rape.			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	3.04	n	51	118	243	193	26	[631]	(43)
SD	0.99	%	8.1	18.7	38.5	30.6	4.1	[100.0]	(6.4)

C. Your thoughts on the Queensland Police Service response to sexual violence

This section focuses on your assessment of how well you think the Queensland Police Service responds to victims of sexual violence.

Q16. [Q16] Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

a. [Q16a] The Queensland Police Service has policies and procedures in place to effectively respond to victims of sexual violence.			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	3.73	n	8	48	120	383	72	[631]	(43)
SD	0.81	%	1.3	7.6	19.0	60.7	11.4	[100.0]	(6.4)
b. [Q16b] I believe the Queensland Police Service is working to improve policy around responding to sexual violence.			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	3.80	n	10	32	129	368	95	[634]	(40)
SD	0.81	%	1.6	5.0	20.3	58.0	15.0	[100.0]	(5.9)
c. [Q16c] In my opinion, sexual violence cases are handled very differently now compared to 2 years ago.			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	3.28	n	14	83	269	181	49	[596]	(78)
SD	0.89	%	2.3	13.9	45.1	30.4	8.2	[100.0]	(11.6)
d. [Q16d] Some of my fellow officers make negative comments about victims of sexual violence.			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	2.54	n	106	228	154	104	26	[618]	(56)
SD	1.09	%	17.2	36.9	24.9	16.8	4.2	[100.0]	(8.3)
g. [Q16e] If a friend or family member were a victim of sexual violence, I would encourage them to report to the police.			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	4.29	n	10	20	47	256	300	[633]	(41)
SD	0.86	%	1.6	3.2	7.4	40.4	47.4	[100.0]	(6.1)
h. [Q16f] The Queensland Police Service adequately			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		

considers the needs of victims of sexual violence.			1	2	3	4	5	Total Valid	Missing Data
M	3.67	n	17	52	147	314	95	[625]	(49)
SD	0.93	%	2.7	8.3	23.5	50.2	15.2	[100.0]	(7.3)

Q17. [Q17] Based on your experience, approximately what percentage of victims of sexual violence do you think are satisfied with the process of investigating their case?

M		46.46
SD		27.56
Total Valid	[640]	[100.0]
Missing Data	(34)	(5.0)

D. About you

This section asks a few demographic questions.

Q18. [Q18] What is your age?

	n	%
18 to 24 years	1	17
25 to 29 years	2	74
30 to 34 years	3	66
35 to 39 years	4	93
40 to 44 years	5	99
45 to 49 years	6	107
50 to 54 years	7	92
55 years or over	8	83
Total Valid	[631]	[100.0]
Missing Data	(43)	(6.4)

Q19. [Q19] What is your gender?

	n	%
Male	1	341
Female	2	265
Non-binary	3	7
Other	4	0
Total Valid	[613]	[100.0]
Missing Data	(61)	(9.1)

Q20. [Q20] Do you identify yourself as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?

		n	%
Yes – Aboriginal	1	30	5.1
Yes – Torres Strait Islander	2	7	1.2
Yes – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	3	12	2.0
No	4	545	91.8
Total Valid	[594]	[100.0]	
Missing Data	(80)	(11.9)	

Q21. [Q21] What is your ancestry? For example, is your ancestry English, German, Australian etc.

		n	%
English	1	337	36.4
Australian	2	352	38.1
Scottish	3	62	6.7
German	4	56	6.1
Vietnamese	5	0	0
Indian	6	7	0.8
Other	7	111	12
Total Valid	[925]	[100.0]	
Missing Data	(7)	(0.8)	

End of Survey

Appendix F: Information Sheet and Consent Form – Focus Groups



QPS Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2021-2023 Evaluation CONSENT FORM | Focus Groups

Who is conducting the research:

Dr Elise Sergeant (Project Leader) Griffith Criminology Institute e.sargeant@griffith.edu.au	Professor Silke Meyer Griffith Criminology Institute s.meyer@griffith.edu.au
Professor Christine Bond Griffith Criminology Institute c.bond@griffith.edu.au	Margo van Felius (Project Manager) Griffith Criminology Institute m.vanfelius@griffith.edu.au

Griffith University Ethics Reference Number: 2022/683

Why is the research being conducted?

Police are an important first contact in the criminal justice system response to sexual violence, but research and inquiries have frequently found that the experience of victims with the police has been poor. One of the more recent inquiries, the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, further examined the experience of girls and women throughout the criminal justice system, including with police. In its recently released report, the Taskforce found that there was inconsistent, and at times poor, treatment of victims by police which had led to victims withdrawing their complaints.

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) has taken initiatives to significantly change how it responds to sexual violence and interacts with victims. One of these initiatives is the implementation of the Sexual Violence Response Strategy (SVRS) 2021-2023.

The purpose of the SVRS is to enhance the capacity of the QPS to prevent, disrupt and respond to, and investigate sexual violence, put victims first, and hold perpetrators to account. At the centre of the SVRS is a victim-centric, trauma-informed sexual violence response that aims to protect the community, strengthen public confidence, and contribute to the state and national integrated action plans. To achieve this purpose, the SVRS sets out four strategic priorities:

1. advancing the QPS workforce towards applying a victim-centric, trauma-informed approach when responding to sexual violence
2. enhancing the QPS response by improving their capability to prevent, disrupt and respond to, and investigate sexual violence in Queensland
3. empowering the Queensland community and reduce community harm through proactive engagement and education, and promoting access to victim support services
4. maximising their partnerships with government and non-government agencies, and academia to achieve this aim.

Griffith University has been contracted by the QPS to evaluate the ongoing implementation of the SVRS strategy and examine the short-term outcomes of the strategy.

The basis by which participants will be selected or screened

You have been selected because you are a Police Officer or a civilian member of the QPS; a representative of an agency representing related community interests (e.g. sexual assault support services, community groups who represent culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, LGBTQI+, First Nations, sex workers and people in custody); or a representative of a partner agency involved in working with the QPS during the implementation of the SVRS (i.e. government and non-government agencies), who can provide insight into the implementation of the SVRS and/or short-term outcomes of the SVRS.

What you will be asked to do

We are asking you to take part in focus group, which will take about an 1 ½ hour of your time, through Teams, or similar.

The interview will focus on the implementation of the SVRS and its short term outcomes.

We would like to audio-record the focus group which will then be transcribed. All names will be removed from the transcription.

The expected benefits of the research

The goal of this review is to assess the ongoing implementation of the SVRS and examine its short-term outcomes.

There are no direct benefits to you. However, it will give you the opportunity to reflect on your experience and share insights and what is working well, what is not working well and how and where it can be improved.

Risks to you

We do not foresee any risks to you as a result of participating in the focus group/

Your confidentiality

The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and/ or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential. Your information will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. Your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University's Privacy Plan at <http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan> or telephone (07) 3735 4375.

However, it is important to understand that although the research team will take every precaution to maintain your confidentiality, the research team is unable to fully guarantee your confidentiality.

It is important that you understand that your answers to the questions will be confidential. Your comments will be recorded using an audio recording device to ensure we capture as much information as possible. We will then transcribe all comments and assign a pseudonym (fake name) to the transcript, so all identities remain confidential. We will ask all participants not to disclose your identity and any comments made in the focus group outside the focus group. As required by Griffith University, all audio recordings will be erased after transcription. However, other research data (transcripts and analysis) will be retained in a password protected electronic file at Griffith University for a period of five years before being destroyed.

Your participation is voluntary

Please note that participation in the study is voluntary. This means that participants will not be penalised by Griffith University or QPS for not taking part. Further to this, participants can choose not to answer questions and may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. There will be no ramifications for withdrawal.

Consent to participate

If you are willing to participate, we would like to ask you to sign the attached consent form to confirm your agreement to participate and to indicate your willingness to audio-record the focus group. Thank you for your consideration

Questions / further information

You are free to discuss your participation in this study with Margo van Felius from the research team by either phone 0422367541 or e-mail m.vanfelius@griffith.edu.au

The ethical conduct of this research

Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. This research project has been reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Griffith University in accordance with these guidelines.

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project you can contact the Manager, Research Ethics on 3735 4375 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

Feedback to you

The research results will be reported to the QPS and may also be disseminated via journal articles and / or conference presentations.

Participants can seek information about the findings from any member of the research team (via e-mail).

QPS Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2021-2023 Evaluation
CONSENT FORM | Focus Groups

Who is conducting the research:

Dr Elise Sargeant (Project Leader) Griffith Criminology Institute e.sargeant@griffith.edu.au	Professor Silke Meyer Griffith Criminology Institute s.meyer@griffith.edu.au
Professor Christine Bond Griffith Criminology Institute c.bond@griffith.edu.au	Margo van Felius (Project Manager) Griffith Criminology Institute m.vanfelius@griffith.edu.au

Griffith University Ethics Reference Number: 2022/683

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package and in particular:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will include the participation in a focus group;
- I understand that the focus group will be digitally recorded and transcribed;
- Because of the nature of the focus group, I understand that my anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed;
- I understand that everything that is said in the focus group is confidential;
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand the risks involved;
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research;
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and will not impact my relationship with the Queensland Police Service;
- I understand that my name and other personal information that could identify me will be removed or de-identified in publications or presentations resulting from this research;
- I understand that if I have any additional questions, I can contact the research team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without explanation or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3735 4375 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au), if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
- I agree to participate in the focus group:

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix G: Information Sheet and Consent Form – Interviews



QPS Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2021-2023 Evaluation CONSENT FORM | Interviews

Who is conducting the research:

Dr Elise Sargeant (Project Leader) Griffith Criminology Institute e.sargeant@griffith.edu.au	Professor Silke Meyer Griffith Criminology Institute s.meyer@griffith.edu.au
Professor Christine Bond Griffith Criminology Institute c.bond@griffith.edu.au	Margo van Felius (Project Manager) Griffith Criminology Institute m.vanfelius@griffith.edu.au

Griffith University Ethics Reference Number: 2022/683

Why is the research being conducted?

Police are an important first contact in the criminal justice system response to sexual violence, but research and inquiries have frequently found that the experience of victims with the police has been poor. One of the more recent inquiries, the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, further examined the experience of girls and women throughout the criminal justice system, including with police. In its recently released report, the Taskforce found that there was inconsistent, and at times poor, treatment of victims by police which had led to victims withdrawing their complaints.

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) has taken initiatives to significantly change how it responds to sexual violence and interacts with victims. One of these initiatives is the implementation of the Sexual Violence Response Strategy (SVRS) 2021-2023.

The purpose of the SVRS is to enhance the capacity of the QPS to prevent, disrupt and respond to, and investigate sexual violence, put victims first, and hold perpetrators to account. At the centre of the SVRS is a victim-centric, trauma-informed sexual violence response that aims to protect the community, strengthen public confidence, and contribute to the state and national integrated action plans. To achieve this purpose, the SVRS sets out four strategic priorities:

1. advancing the QPS workforce towards applying a victim-centric, trauma-informed approach when responding to sexual violence
2. enhancing the QPS response by improving their capability to prevent, disrupt and respond to, and investigate sexual violence in Queensland
3. empowering the Queensland community and reduce community harm through proactive engagement and education, and promoting access to victim support services
4. maximising their partnerships with government and non-government agencies, and academia to achieve this aim.

Griffith University has been contracted by the QPS to evaluate the ongoing implementation of the SVRS strategy and examine the short-term outcomes of the strategy.

The basis by which participants will be selected or screened

You have been selected because you are a Police Officer or a civilian member of the QPS; a representative of an agency representing related community interests (e.g. sexual assault support services, community groups who represent culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, LGBTQI+, First Nations, sex workers and people in custody); or a representative of a partner agency involved in working with the QPS during the implementation of the SVRS (i.e. government and non-government agencies), who can provide insight into the implementation of the SVRS and/or short-term outcomes of the SVRS.

What you will be asked to do

We are asking you to take part in an one-to-one interview, which will take about an hour of your time, either by Teams, Skype or similar, or in person at a location of your choice.

The interview will focus on the implementation of the SVRS and its short term outcomes.

We would like to audio-record the interview, which will then be transcribed, and a copy of the transcription will be provided to you for your review. All names will be removed from the transcription.

The expected benefits of the research

The goal of this review is to assess the ongoing implementation of the SVRS and examine its short-term outcomes.

There are no direct benefits to you. However, it will give you the opportunity to reflect on your experience and share insights and what is working well, what is not working well and how and where it can be improved.

Risks to you

We do not foresee any risks to you as a result of participating in the interview.

Your confidentiality

The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and/ or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential. Your information will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. Your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University's Privacy Plan at <http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan> or telephone (07) 3735 4375.

However, it is important to understand that although the research team will take every precaution to maintain your confidentiality, the research team is unable to fully guarantee your confidentiality.

It is important that you understand that your answers to the questions will be confidential. Your comments will be recorded using an audio recording device to ensure we capture as much information as possible. We will then transcribe your comments and assign a pseudonym (fake name) to the transcript, so your identity remains confidential. Once transcribed, you will receive a copy of the transcript. As required by Griffith University, all audio recordings will be erased after transcription. However, other research data (transcripts and analysis) will be retained in a password protected electronic file at Griffith University for a period of five years before being destroyed.

Your participation is voluntary

Please note that participation in the study is voluntary. This means that participants will not be penalised by Griffith University or QPS for not taking part. Further to this, participants can choose not to answer questions and may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. There will be no ramifications for withdrawal.

Consent to participate

If you are willing to participate, we would like to ask you to sign the attached consent form to confirm your agreement to participate and to indicate your willingness to audio-record your interview. Thank you for your consideration.

Questions / further information

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Feedback to you

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Participants can seek information about the findings from any member of the research team (via e-mail).

QPS Sexual Violence Response Strategy 2021-2023 Evaluation

CONSENT FORM | Interviews

Who is conducting the research:

Dr Elise Sargeant (Project Leader) Griffith Criminology Institute e.sargeant@griffith.edu.au	Professor Silke Meyer Griffith Criminology Institute s.meyer@griffith.edu.au
Professor Christine Bond Griffith Criminology Institute c.bond@griffith.edu.au	Margo van Felius (Project Manager) Griffith Criminology Institute m.vanfelius@griffith.edu.au

Griffith University Ethics Reference Number: 2022/683

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package and in particular:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will include the participation in an interview;
- I understand that the interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed;
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand the risks involved;
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research;
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and will not impact my relationship with the Queensland Police Service
- I understand that my name and other personal information that could identify me will be removed or de-identified in publications or presentations resulting from this research;
- I understand that if I have any additional questions, I can contact the research team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without explanation or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3735 4375 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au), if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
- I agree to participate in the interview:

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix H: Interview/Focus Group Schedule – QPS Members

- Acknowledgement of country

Demographics:

- Years in service
- Title (this can be deidentified if need be)

Implementation of internal practices

- We would first like to ask some basic questions about your role in the QPS and the Sexual Violence Response Strategy.
- What is your role in the QPS?
- Can you tell us about your understanding of the Strategy and what it involves?
- How did you become aware of the Strategy?
- How does the Strategy impact on your role?
- Next, we would like to ask you about any impacts or changes as a result of the implementation of the Strategy.
- Have there been changes to police practice as a result of the Strategy?
- If so, what are they?
- Who has led these changes?
- Has the Strategy impacted on your/staff approaches to responding to and investigating sexual violence?
- How so?
- How is this measured? (Withdrawn/unfounded complaints?)
- What has been the impact on victims?
- Has the Strategy impacted the prevention of sexual violence?

- How so?
- How is this measured?
- Has the QPS targeted specific communities for prevention?
- Who?
- How so?
- Have you felt supported to make changes?
- How?
- Are you aware of any wellbeing initiatives implemented as a result of the Strategy?
- Tell us more about that.
- Are you aware of any training implemented as part of the Strategy?
- Tell us more about that?
- Are these impacts specific to your district or are these consistent across the service?
How so?
- What stakeholders do you engage with as part of the Strategy?
- Has the Strategy impacted on your relationships with these stakeholders?
- In what way?
- Have there been any issues with the implementation of the Strategy? If so, what are they?
- What are the strengths of the Strategy?
- How could the Strategy be improved?

Appendix I: Focus Group Schedule – External Stakeholders

We would first like to ask some basic questions about your different roles across the sector and how these relate to the Sexual Violence Response Strategy. Can you please introduce yourself, including:

- Your organisation and role?
- How your role intersects with the Strategy (e.g., direct collaboration with QPS, general sexual violence support service provision, court support services)?
- Next, we would like to get a sense of everyone's awareness and understanding of the Strategy.
- Perceptions and understanding of implementation of the Strategy
- How did you first become aware of the Strategy implemented by QPS in 2021?
- What is everyone's understanding of the Strategy?

In the following section, we will explore what changes the implementation of the Strategy may have generated.

- In your view, has the QPS increased community awareness of its responses to victim-survivors reporting help-seeking for sexual violence, especially with regards to community awareness of reporting avenues for victim-survivors?
- If yes, can you please describe what changes you have noticed?
- community awareness of alternative justice options for victim-survivors affected by sexual violence.
- If yes, can you please describe what changes you have noticed?
- In your view/ practice experience, has the volume of, and the use of different avenues for, reporting sexual violence changed over the past two years since the implementation of the Strategy in 2021?
- If yes, can you please describe what changes you have noticed?

- In your view/ practice experience, have victim-survivor experience with police help-seeking for sexual violence changed since the implementation of the Strategy in late 2021?
- If yes, can you please describe what changes you have noticed?

In the next part, we would like to explore how the Strategy has been utilised to address sexual violence and related support needs among diverse communities.

- Are you aware of any prevention strategies undertaken by QPS that are aimed at diverse populations?
- What types of prevention activities have been implemented by the Strategy?
- To what extent are QPS members involved in these prevention activities?

In the last part of today's focus group, we would like to explore the impact of the Strategy implementation on collaboration between police and the sexual violence support service sector.

- In your view, has the QPS enhanced collaboration with partner agencies around sexual violence?
- In your experience, what activities has the QPS undertaken in maintaining and enhancing existing relationships with key stakeholders?
- In your experience, what activities has the QPS undertaken to identify and establish partnerships with other stakeholders?
- What other changes, if any, have you observed?
- Have responses to victim-survivors of sexual violence been integrated in your area/ locations?
- If yes, how has the QPS facilitated the integration of police and specialist victim-survivor support services responses to sexual violence with partner agencies?
- Are there any other aspects around the Strategy, its implementation and/ or its benefits or challenges for victim-survivors or the sexual violence support service sector that we have not covered, and you'd like to raise?

Appendix J: Fiscal Quarters/Years Mapped to Calendar Months/Years

Table 11.2 Fiscal Quarters/Years Mapped to Calendar Months/Years

Fiscal Quarter/ Year	Calendar Month	Calendar Year	Fiscal Quarter/ Year	Calendar Month	Calendar Year
Q3/2018	January	2018	Q1/2021	July	2020
Q3/2018	February	2018	Q1/2021	August	2020
Q3/2018	March	2018	Q1/2021	September	2020
Q4/2018	April	2018	Q2/2021	October	2020
Q4/2018	May	2018	Q2/2021	November	2020
Q4/2018	June	2018	Q2/2021	December	2020
Q1/2019	July	2018	Q3/2021	January	2021
Q1/2019	August	2018	Q3/2021	February	2021
Q1/2019	September	2018	Q3/2021	March	2021
Q2/2019	October	2018	Q4/2021	April	2021
Q2/2019	November	2018	Q4/2021	May	2021
Q2/2019	December	2018	Q4/2021	June	2021
Q3/2019	January	2019	Q1/2022	July	2021
Q3/2019	February	2019	Q1/2022	August	2021
Q3/2019	March	2019	Q1/2022	September	2021
Q4/2019	April	2019	Q2/2022	October	2021
Q4/2019	May	2019	Q2/2022	November	2021
Q4/2019	June	2019	Q2/2022	December	2021
Q1/2020	July	2019	Q3/2022	January	2022
Q1/2020	August	2019	Q3/2022	February	2022
Q1/2020	September	2019	Q3/2022	March	2022
Q2/2020	October	2019	Q4/2022	April	2022
Q2/2020	November	2019	Q4/2022	May	2022
Q2/2020	December	2019	Q4/2022	June	2022
Q3/2020	January	2020	Q1/2023	July	2022
Q3/2020	February	2020	Q1/2023	August	2022
Q3/2020	March	2020	Q1/2023	September	2022
Q4/2020	April	2020	Q2/2023	October	2022
Q4/2020	May	2020	Q2/2023	November	2022
Q4/2020	June	2020	Q2/2023	December	2022

Appendix K: Results of Logistic Regression Analysis

Table 11.3 shows that, on average, after adjusting for regional, there is no statistically significant effect of year on the likelihood of the withdrawal of a sexual violence report (at conventional levels). However, there are statistically significant differences in some regions, after adjusting for year. Compared to the Brisbane Region, a report is less likely to be withdrawn in the Far Northern and Northern Regions and more likely to be withdrawn in the South Eastern Region.

Table 11.3 Logistic Regression of Region on the Likelihood of Reports Withdrawn, Adjusted for Calendar Year (2018-2021) (n=15,241)

	Coef.	Std. Err.		[95% Conf.	Interval]
Calendar Year	-.006	.016		-.037	.026
Region (reference = Brisbane)					
Central	-.121	.071		-.259	.018
Far Northern	-.377	.080	***	-.534	-.221
North Coast	.088	.055		-.020	.196
Northern	-.428	.073	***	-.571	-.284
South Eastern	.109	.055	*	.001	.217
Southern	-.013	.063		-.136	.110
Intercept	10.731	32.491		-52.951	74.413
Likelihood Ratio Test	88.44***				
Pseudo R Squared	0.0049				

Source: QPrime data

Note: Statistical significance levels ***p≤.001; **p≤.01; * p≤.05

Table 11.4 provides odds ratios and standard errors for results corresponding to those presented in text in Chapter 6. For ease of review, only significant differences are presented. The odds ratios indicate the increase (over 1.0) or decrease (under 1.0) in the odds of a sexual violence report being withdrawn in one region compared to another.

Table 11.4 Odds Ratios of Likelihood of Reports Withdrawn for Regional Pairs, Adjusting for Calendar Year (2018-2021) (n=15,241)

	Odds Ratio	Std. Err.	z	
Less likely to withdraw				
Far Northern vs Brisbane	.686	.055	-4.730	***
Northern vs Brisbane	.652	.048	-5.830	***
Far Northern vs Central	.774	.072	-2.740	**
Northern vs Central	.736	.065	-3.480	***
Northern vs North Coast	.597	.046	-6.760	***
More likely to withdraw				
South Eastern vs Northern	1.711	.131	7.030	***
Southern vs Northern	1.514	.125	5.040	***
South Eastern vs Brisbane	1.116	.061	1.980	*
North Coast vs Central	1.232	.091	2.830	**
South Eastern vs Central	1.259	.093	3.120	**
North Coast vs Far Northern	1.592	.131	5.640	***
South Eastern vs Far Northern	1.627	.134	5.890	***
Southern vs Far Northern	1.440	.127	4.140	***

Source: QPrime data

Note: Only significant results are reported. Statistical significance levels ***p≤.001; **p≤.01; * p≤.05

In Table 11.5, both the Likelihood Ratio Test and non-significant values of all coefficients in the model indicate that neither calendar year, nor region, are significant predictors of the likelihood of cases resolving as unfounded.

Table 11.5 Logistic Regression of Region on the Likelihood of Unfounded Reports, Adjusted for Calendar Year (2018-2021) (n=15,241)

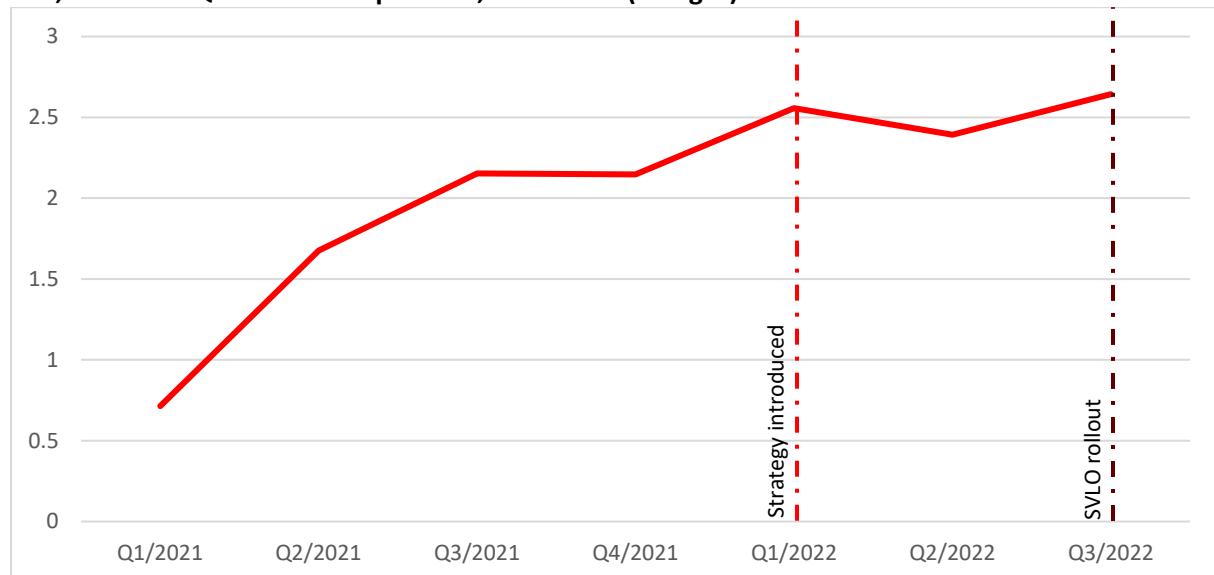
	Coef.	Std. Err.	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Calendar Year	-.010	.024	-.057	.037
Region (reference = BRISBANE)				
Central	-.148	.109	-.362	.066
Far Northern	.052	.110	-.163	.268
North Coast	-.069	.085	-.236	.098
Northern	.016	.101	-.182	.215
South Eastern	.092	.082	-.070	.253
Southern	.023	.094	-.161	.208
Intercept	17.415	48.376	-77.400	112.231
Likelihood Ratio Test	6.41			
Pseudo R Squared	.0007			

Source: QPrime data

Appendix L: Rate Sexual Violence Offences Reported to QPS Online

Rates of online reporting (including those below the age of consent) are computed per 100,000 in the population up to Q3/2022 using Queensland population estimates obtained from the Queensland Government Statisticians Office (2022). Figure 11.6 shows a significant increase in the rate of online reporting per 100,000 in the Queensland population over time ($r=.882$; $p\le.01$).

Table 11.6 Rate Sexual Violence Offences Reported to QPS using the Online Reporting Form per 100,000 in the Queensland Population, 2021-2022 (All ages)



Source: QPS Data Analytics

Note: Population estimates sourced from Queensland Government Statisticians Office (2022).

